

A DISCOURSE
OF THE
SAVING GRACE OF GOD.

By the late Reverend and Learned DAVID CLARKSON, Minister of
the Gospel.

LONDON :

Printed by J. ASTWOOD, for THO. PARKHURST, at the Bible and Three
Crowns, at the lower end of Cheapside, near Mercers' Chapel.

1688.

A P R E F A C E.

THE very title-page, mentioning the subject, and the author of the following discourse, leaves little need of a recommendatory preface.

For what subject can be supposed more inviting than this of the grace of God—represented to such as were lost, and designing their salvation? If we were the inhabitants of some other world, never lost, or in which sin and vindictive justice had no place; it were a grateful contemplation to us, if from thence, we had the opportunity to view the methods of grace for the saving of miserable perishing creatures in such a world as this. As the kindness and benignity of the unfallen angels make them stoop down,^a and pry, with earnest desire,^b and no doubt high pleasure, to observe what was doing to this purpose in this wretched world of ours.

But who can consider himself as lost, and not apprehend the name of saving grace to carry with it a pleasant, joyful sound? It too plainly argues a strange complication of stupidity, and lightness of mind, when to any, who are themselves of that lost race, the grace of God, by which only they can be saved, is unsavoury, and without relish. And it is not less strange if they can expect to be saved without it. There are so many sensible miseries continually urging mankind, that if they be compared with what obtains in the common belief of the most, (of whatsoever religion,) and whereof few profess any doubt, that one would wonder all should not be much taken up in meditating some way of escape, and how they may be saved out of such a gulf as this. For, setting aside the inward evils that infest men's minds, (which carry most of sting and pungency in them, to those of an awakened

^a Παρακύνει ἐπιθυμοῦσι.

^b 1 Pet. i. 12.

mental sense) it is obvious to their duller outward senses, that they are encompassed, and often seized with innumerable calamities, sicknesses, pains, violences from one another, and other disasters, from which they cannot be certain to be safe one moment, and that they are all mortal, and after a little time must certainly die. The most profess themselves to believe they have about them somewhat immortal, and that this world will at length have an end. Divers pagans have agreed with Christians, in the apprehension, that it will end by fire, an universal conflagration, and of an after felicity to be had somewhere else.

Now what power of nature can they think of, that should save them out of so common a ruin? Or, what is left them to think of besides, unless they will yield themselves to perish without remedy (which the nature of man abhors from) but of being saved by grace?

They that have any notion of God, cannot think grace unworthy of him. Some of the Epicurean faith, that thought it unsuitable to the nature of God to be touched with anger, (and who might therefore think our infelicities to befall us of course, without being any effects of Divine displeasure,) yet were less averse to think he might be touched with grace, (as Lactantius^a takes notice,) and so left themselves room for the apprehension, that our felicity should be owing to the benignity and favour before God. But what thoughts of Him can be more unworthy, or less agreeing with themselves, than, while He is acknowledged to be a Mind, a Spirit, the First, Eternal Mind, and the Father of spirits, to suppose He should be less kind, benign, and gracious to our minds, and spirits, than to our baser flesh? Or, that they who expect from his favour a state of future freedom from bodily pains, diseases, and death, should not expect from it much more a felicity suitable to their nobler part, and seek thence what is of so apparent necessity, beforehand, to prepare and form their minds and spirits for such a felicity?

And one would think, that they who are better instructed in the affairs of God's government over men, and that know how to ascribe to him a just displeasure and anger for their common apostacy and revolt from him, that shall be no way unbecoming, but most agreeable to an infinitely perfect Being; should be most

^a De Ira Dei.

apt to approve, and admire the methods, which the grace of God hath pitched upon, for expiating the guilt of sin by a Redeemer: so they should not be unapt to apprehend the necessity of gracious operations upon the spirits of men to deliver them from such distempers and disaffections, as are plainly inconsistent with their final salvation and blessedness: and give them such dispositions as are requisite thereto.

Can anything be more suitable to the grace of God, than, when he hath found out a way, wherein he might, upon terms not injurious to the dignity of his government, pardon their sins, he should also inwardly apply himself to them, cure the blindness, carnality, and aversion of their minds, incline, and enable them to know, trust, love, obey, and converse with him, without which an atonement and pardon would avail them nothing, and in which of themselves they can effect nothing?

It is easy to frame abstract discourses, and general ideas of what might be performed by those noble powers, a man's own understanding, and will: but what can actually be effected, in particular and circumstantiated cases, against the stream of sensual inclination, either to the engaging of intense thoughts, or by thinking, they perhaps are most apt to pronounce confidently, who have least tried.

Nor is anything more congruous to the notion of grace, than that it be at liberty herein. Unfree grace were to every man's understanding a plain contradiction. Neither can any inconvenience or ill consequence follow upon its being apprehended most sovereignly free, or, anything that is not most suitable to God, and to us. It naturally follows that he be not neglected, that he be supplicated, and sought unto, that we absolutely, and with great reverence and hope, surrender, resign, and commit ourselves to him, which how majestic, august, great, and God-like is it, on his part! how correspondent to his very nature! Whereupon we are told, (Psalm cxlvii. 11,) "The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy." And how suitable is it to the condition of wretched and impotent creatures that are perishing, and cannot save themselves! And to such, one would think no subject should be more acceptable than this of the saving grace of God: nor, therefore, a discourse upon it unacceptable.

Especially from such an author, who though his great humility,

and remoteness from all ostentation of himself, did as much avail him, as was possible to him ; yet his singular worth could not be hid, and indeed the less, by how much more he endeavoured it. His clear and comprehensive mind, his excellent learning, his reasoning argumentative skill, his solid, most discerning judgment, his indefatigable industry, his large knowledge, and great moderation in the matters of our unhappy ecclesiastical differences, his calm dispassionate temper, his pleasant and most amiable conversation, did carry so great a lustre with them, as that, notwithstanding his most beloved retiredness, they could not, in his circumstances, but make him be much known, and much esteemed and loved by all that had the happiness to know him, and make the loss of him be much lamented. But he was, by the things that made his continuance so desirable in this world, the fitter for a better, and more suitable world. He lived here as one that was more akin to that other world than this ; and who had no other business here, but to help in making this better. From such an hand one may reasonably expect a treatise very highly valuable upon such a subject. Which I do with so great confidence, that, though I have not as yet (wanting opportunity) thoroughly perused it, I make no doubt to invite such to the reading of it, as apprehend the value of the grace of God, and their own salvation ; earnestly desiring that, as their satisfaction herein may be, in its completion, alike early, so it may be equally great with that, which is with much assurance expected by

One very desirous any way to promote the common salvation,

JOHN HOWE.

CONTENTS OF THE ENSUING DISCOURSE.

	PAGE
That Salvation is wholly and only from Grace, proved	383
Grace free in respect of—1. Constraint; 2. Merit; 3. Motive	384
That Salvation is by Grace, demonstrated from God, from Man	384
1. From man, in several particulars	384
2. From God, demonstrated in several particulars	390
USE. Those condemned who will have us saved by Free-will, and not by Free Grace	394
The Doctrine of Free-will displayed, in four particulars: 1. What Grace the Patrons of Free-will do own, and count sufficient. 2. What they ascribe to Free-will. 3. What is the Tendency of their Principles. 4. What they Object against the Doctrine of Free Grace	394
1. What Grace by them is counted sufficient	394
2. What they ascribe to Free-will	396
3. The Import and dangerous Tendency of the Doctrine of Free-will, in twenty particulars	399
4. Objections against the Doctrine of Grace, answered, and Prejudices removed	427
Some Practical Inferences from the Doctrine of Free Grace	440

A DISCOURSE
OF
FREE GRACE.

“BY GRACE YE ARE SAVED.”—EPHES. ii. 8.

THE apostle, the great asserter of free grace, in the 20th verse compares the church to a temple: and it is his design in this epistle to show the influence grace hath to the raising of this building. He undertakes to prove, that the whole structure of salvation is to be attributed alone to grace.

The foundation was laid from eternity by grace in election; chapter i. 4, 5. The polishing and disposing of each particular stone in the building, by justification and sanctification, were all acts of grace; chapter i. 7, and ii. 5, and iv. 13, 14. And it is grace that lays on the top-stone in glory; chapter ii. 6. So that we may honour this temple with the same acclamations which they used to theirs, Zech. iv. 7, and cry, Grace, grace unto it. The sum of the whole discourse is propounded in the text, “By grace ye are saved.”

We will not divide what God from eternity has joined together, grace and salvation: but from them entirely taken, offer you this

Observation:—Salvation is wholly and only to be attributed to grace.

We need go no further for Divine testimony to this truth, than these two chapters. Election, chapter i. 4, 5. Redemption, verse 7. Vocation, verse 19. Justification, chapter ii. verses 3, 4. Sanctification, verse 5. Glorification, verse 6. What he speaks of the whole here, he affirms of every part thereof in those places. The whole and all the parcels are of grace.

For explication. By salvation, understand both the decree of God, by which the elect were ordained to salvation, and the execution of that decree, begun here, and consummated in glory.

That we may know what grace means, take notice of three words, used promiscuously in Scripture, which yet admit of some distinction; the knowledge whereof will lead us to the distinct knowledge of this term. These are love, mercy, grace.

To love, is *velle bonum*, to will the happiness of the object loved. It is not in God such an affection as in us, though in effect it proves *affectus unionis*, and brings God and his people together.

Mercy does *velle bonum miseris*. So it adds a limitation to the object which love leaves indefinite. It is for those that are miserable.

Grace does *velle bonum liberè*. So this limits not the object, as the former, but qualifies the act. It acts freely.

So that mercy, is love to those that are miserable. Grace is love in him that is unobliged. Unobliged, I say, either by necessity, merit, or motive. Grace then, in God, is nothing but free love.

1. Free in respect of constraint; when there is no necessity he should fix his love upon this object at all, or upon this rather than another, this is *spontaneum*.

2. Free in respect of merit; when there is nothing in the object that deserves love, either absolutely or comparatively, this is *gratuitum*.

3. Free in respect of motive; when there is nothing in the object to move this affection to pitch upon it at all, or upon it rather than another, this is *liberum*, though it express it not fully.

In all these respects, the grace of God in bestowing salvation upon any of the sons of men, is free love.

1. There is no necessity God should save men. He is a most free agent, whose liberty is inconsistent with every degree of necessity *ab extra*. It was in his choice either to have created no man, or to have condemned all men, or to have saved those who are now condemned.

2. There is nothing in man that can merit salvation: for there is no good thing in him that he can call his own. All is of gift; and the best thing in man bears no proportion to salvation: but where there is merit, there must be both propriety and proportion.

3. There is nothing in man can move God to save him. If anything, his misery; but this is no motive absolutely, because it is wilful. Man willingly involved himself in it, and is unwilling to be delivered from it upon the terms propounded in the gospel. Nor can it be a motive comparatively, to save one man rather than another, because all are by nature equally miserable.

So then salvation is by grace, because it is a gift of free love to such in whom there can be nothing to enforce it, nothing to deserve it, nor anything to move him to bestow it.

The demonstrations are drawn from God, from man.

From man. The impotency, deformity, enmity, of man against God, makes it evident, that salvation must be wholly, only from grace.

1. Impotency. What a poor despicable creature is man—the best of men! What a wonder the great God should think of saving him! His rise was from the earth. He is but at best dust and ashes, a poor piece

of clay. He dwells in houses of clay. His foundation is in the dust, and is crushed by the moth, Job iv. 19. A stately thing sure which the very moth can crush, and crumble into his first principle, dust !

The most potent victorious king that ever Israel had, puts a worm among his titles, Psalm xxii. 6, "I am a worm." The greatest man in the East derives his pedigree no higher ; "I have said to corruption, Thou art my father ; and to the worm, Thou art my mother and my sister," Job xvii. 14. And if the greatest men on earth, who best understood themselves, were no greater in their own account ; what do we think men are in God's account ? The numerous posterity of Jacob have no greater title, Isaiah xli. 14, "Fear not, worm Jacob :—" and if that vast multitude, which was like the stars of the heavens, and the sands on the sea-shore, which cannot be numbered, be but as one worm in his eye, what do we think is one man ?

But we are too high yet. Men in the account of God, compared with him, are not so much as worms. Absolutely, in themselves, they are more ; but compared with him not so much, Isaiah xl. 22, "It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers :—" this is something less than worms ; yet less in his eye, than these in ours.

But we yet go lower. Worms and grasshoppers, though most despicable, are yet animate beings ; and the soul of the least creature, in Augustine's account, is more excellent than the body of the sun. This is too high yet ; what then are men in God's esteem ? see verse 15, "The nations are as the drop of a bucket, and are accounted as the small dust of the balance ; behold, he takes up the isles as a very little thing." What ! all the nations of the earth as one drop—as an atom ? What proportion then do ye think we bear to this drop, to this atom, who are but as drops and atoms in comparison of all the nations of the earth !

Sure now we are low enough. Our thoughts can scarce go lower. I,^a but stay, we are not in God's account thus much. A drop, an atom is something, though a very little thing. But verse 17, "All nations before him are as nothing." Alas ! where are we then, so near the low condition of nonentity ? Yes, and lower too ; for it follows, "and they are accounted to him less than nothing."

See then what man is in God's account, as less than that which is less than nothing. And can you imagine anything in this nothing, man, that should oblige the great God to save him ? Oh, sure it is grace, free love, and such as may astonish heaven and earth, that the great God, who measures the seas in the hollow of his hand, who spans the heavens, and weighs the mountains, should condescend to do thus much

for any of those poor despicable nothings ; should contrive their salvation from eternity, and send his Son, the Son of his love, of his delight, to procure it with his blood, and then admit them to an eternal enjoyment of himself in glory.

2. The deformity of man as he is sinful. We showed before, man was nothing, less than nothing, in the sight of God. Now we will show, he is worse than nothing ; even a deformed nothing, or rather nothing but deformity.

It is true, by creation he was a beautiful creature, moulded after the image of the first beauty, bearing the superscription of God. He was then as a bright morning star, when he first appeared in the world. But he forthwith fell from his primitive station, the orb of innocency : he fell from thence into the puddle of sin, into " thick mire and clay," as the Psalmist, Psalm xl. 2. And being drenched in sin, he became more deformed and abominable in the eye of God, than that which is most loathsome to us. The veil of light and holiness, wherewith he was beautified, being torn off the soul, sin besmeared it with ugly filthiness and pollution. The Divine light and holiness, which shined in his soul, is vanished ; and darkness and deformity has seized on him, and overspread him. Holiness was the moral form of the soul ; but now sin gives it morally both its being and denomination. So that, what may be said of sin in the abstract, as that it is deformity, pollution, filthiness, may be said of man in the concrete, he is deformed, filthy, polluted. We have cause to complain of this woeful change, in the words of the prophet, with a little variation, Isaiah iii. 24, " Instead of a sweet smell, there is a stink ; instead of well-set hair, baldness ; and deformity instead of beauty."

Sin has left neither *συμμετρία* nor *εὐχρωία* in the souls of sinners, neither proportion nor good complexion. The fall put all out of joint, and left the soul blind, lame, crooked, diseased, nay dead in sins, &c. These are the familiar epithets which Scripture gives our sinful state.

The visage of the soul is loathsomely bespotted. Nor has sin brought upon it simple deformity alone ; but which is worse, uncleanness, such as is compared to that of a " removed woman," Ezek. xxxvi. 17. Nay, the best thing that is in it, or proceeds from it, is but as a " menstruous rag," Isaiah xxx. 22.

I,^a but though this be noisome and unpleasing, yet there is no danger, no infection in it. Oh, but sin is a contagious pollution, it is like a plague-sore in the heart, an infectious leprosy ; it will diffuse its malignity like the poison of asps.

I,^a but if a man be visited with the plague or leprosy, he seems rather

an object of compassion, than detestation ; rather to be pitied than loathed. Go yet one step further.

Sin is not only contagious, but a loathsome noisome filthiness. The Holy Ghost compares it to the stench of an open sepulchre, to the vomit of a dog, to the corrupted matter of a putrefied ulcer. Such is the temper of a soul by sin.

I will go no further. It may be the hearing of these is offensive ; how much more to see, smell, or touch them ! Yet a sinful man is more ugly in the eye, more offensive to the nostrils, more loathsome to the Lord, than any of these can be to the quickest or most delicate of our senses.

Alas, wretched man ! how justly mayest thou or I speak, what Mephibosheth uses in compliment to David, 2 Sam. ix. 8, " What is thy servant, that thou shouldst look on such a dead dog as I am ? "

Can any soul expect, that such a monster as this should be the object of any one's love, much less of God's ? How hopeless may man's salvation seem, if we look on him in this state ! What ! is the eternal love of God, the precious blood of Christ, for such a wretch as this ? Is there anything in him, in us, to merit, to move love ? Who would not rather think, every son of Adam should with indignation be kicked out of the presence of so holy a God ? Sure if there be any hopes, it must be from grace, free love, and such as could nowhere be entertained but in the breast of infinite goodness.

3. The enmity of sinners against God, this makes it evident beyond all exception. The impotency and deformity of man, in the state of sin, shows there is nothing lovely in him ; but if there were not, yet if he had any love for God, this love, without any other consideration, might be some inducement to move the Lord to love him ; and so his love might seem less free, as having some motive from without.

But the case is otherwise. As there is nothing lovely in him, so neither is there any love to God ; nay, there is a high degree of hatred and enmity.

The wisdom of the flesh, the very best thing in man, " is enmity to God," Rom. viii. 7. And this enmity is manifested in contradicting the will of God, and running cross to his commands ; for if this be our love to God, as the apostle says, " that we keep his commands," 1 John v. 3, then this is hatred of God, that we will not keep them.

And this disobedience of a sinner proceeds from his hatred of the God that commands, and not only of that which is commanded, yea, rather from that than this. For what sinner is there, who does not believe, that what the law commands is just in itself and good for us ?

So that the enmity reaches God himself. " Who is the Lord," says the sinner in his heart, " that I should obey him ? "

Further, sinners revolt from God, and conspire with his greatest enemy, join in confederacy with Satan. They (as those in Isaiah xxviii. 15) have made a covenant with hell ; and with death are they at agreement. They give up their " members as weapons of unrighteousness," to fight against God, Rom. vi. 19. It is the condition of all, by nature. Every sinner, before the Lord conquer him by his grace, is at open enmity with God, and does in effect bid defiance to the Almighty. The acts of his life are acts of hostility against God. Nor is it a defensive war only, that would be more excusable ; but the design is, not to secure himself only, but to put down God, and divest him of his sovereignty. This is the voice of their hearts and lives, We will not have this God to rule over us. Sin, where it reigns, does as much as is in its power to depose the sovereign Lord of the world. It denies in effect that he is God : for that which denies his essential perfections and attributes, does deny him to be God. He that gives up himself to sin, denies in a manner all his Divine excellences, his goodness, wisdom, power, justice, mercy, immensity, Psalm l. 21. He would not go on in sin, if he did not say in his heart that he is not the chief good ; because sin deprives him of this good, cuts him off from the enjoyment of it : or else he believes not that it will deprive him of the chief good, and so denies his truth, who has affirmed and declared it ; and not believing him herein makes him a liar.

He durst not sin, but that he thinks God is not present to see him ; and if so, he denies his immensity. Or if he see him, he thinks he cannot punish him ; and so denies his power. Or if he be able, yet he thinks he will not punish him ; and so denies his justice. He would not turn aside to other ways than he prescribes, but that he thinks he either cannot direct him in the best way, and so denies his wisdom ; or that he will not direct him to the best, and so denies his mercy. And thus much we might show of the other Divine perfections, how it tends to deface them all.

Lo here the horrid enmity of sin and sinners against God. They deny he is God ; call him, constructively and in effect, a finite, a weak, a foolish, a false, an unjust and unmerciful thing.

It is true, sinners cannot do what they say and wish in their hearts. They have not power to undeify God, or to deprive him of his Divine perfections ; but this does not lessen nor excuse their enmity against him : for it is true in evil, as well as in good, where there is a willing mind, it is accounted as if it were done.

Oh, the horrid nature of sin ! Be astonished, O heavens ! and be ye horribly afraid at this prodigious enemy, which is in the hearts of sinners against God. Why is thy wrath restrained, O Lord ? why does not thy indignation break forth, and destroy all sinners from off the

face of the earth? Nay, why was not heaven and earth annihilated at the first appearance of such horrid treason, of such desperate enmity?

But we have not yet discovered the height of this enmity. What is the reason, that a sinner should thus set himself against God? It may be, he despairs of salvation, while the Almighty rules; and therefore the desire of his own happiness may be the cause of this opposition; and so it will not be pure enmity, but some principle of self-love, that may make him so desperate.

It is no such matter; it is not salvation that he cares for. He sets himself against God; not out of any respect to secure his own well-being. For whom would he advance into the place of God? It is the great enemy of his salvation, Satan, 2 Cor. iv. 4. It is he who, by the consent of sinners, is the "god of this world;" it is he they would have to rule in and over them, Ephes. ii. 2. They are children of obedience to him, but of disobedience to God, and will be so, though they perish for it.

Here then is the height of the sinner's enmity against God. They had rather perish eternally under the sovereignty of Satan, than be happy in subjection to the sceptre of God. Nay, sinners would persist in the height of this enmity, and therefore reject all motions of reconciliation, though the Lord condescend to beseech them, with all moving arguments, to "be reconciled," 2 Cor. v. 20. They despise salvation, and the means that tend to it. They manifested it, by crucifying the Lord of life, when he came on purpose into the world to bring salvation. "Come," say they, "this is the heir," Matt. xxi. 38. We cannot reach the Father, he is too far above us; but we have a fair occasion to show how well we wish him. This is the heir, here is his Son, his only Son, the Son of his love and delight, "come let us kill him:" and so they did; and so would other sinners do, if they were in the same circumstances with those that did it. And there are those who "crucify again" the Lord of life. And what do we less in venturing upon ways of sin? since this is it which first crucified him. This is the desperate disposition of all sinners in the state of nature. We had so continued to eternity, if the power of grace had not broke in upon us, and drawn us to terms of reconciliation.

And this being our state and temper naturally, can you think there was anything in us, that could have moved the Lord to save us? What! can hatred, such desperate enmity, such prodigious malice against the Lord, move him to love us? Oh, if free grace had not moved itself, we had persisted in our opposition against the Lord; and had been eternally miserable, as those deserve to be, who are found fighters against God, and open enemies to him!

There are other demonstrations, that salvation is of grace only, which

may be drawn from God himself; the consideration of his all-sufficiency, sovereignty.

(1.) The all-sufficiency and independency of God. He stood in no need at all of man, either for happiness or glory, the least degree of either. He had been eternally as happy, as glorious, if man had never been, or been ever miserable.

1. In respect of happiness. He was perfectly, infinitely happy without us. He did not expect, he could not have the least degree of it from us. All degrees, all fulness of it was in himself, before we had a being. The Divine understanding was infinitely pleased and satisfied in the contemplation of himself, the first truth. The Divine will took infinite contentment and complacency in the enjoyment of himself, the chief good. The object here was infinite and glorious excellences; and the acts were infinitely perfect; and the issue thereof must needs be infinite happiness, both formal and objective. Christ the eternal wisdom of the Father, thus expresseth it, Prov. viii. 22—30. Here are the mutual delights of the Father and the Son; those enjoyments, which hold forth the highest degree of happiness, before any creature had being. The Son was the Father's delights יְשַׁעְשָׁעִים, "daily," every moment, without the least intermission; and rejoiced, the word is מִשְׁחֵקָה, "was laughing before his face." Those happy souls, who are already admitted into the glorious presence, may guess, though not comprehend what happiness there is in those delights: we are in the dark, and can neither express nor conceive how much it is; but though we cannot conceive how great that happiness is, we may easily apprehend, that it cannot be made greater by any creature.

Besides, happiness must arise from union with some good, or the enjoyment of it. Now all goodness in perfection, is included in the Divine Being; and whatever good is in the creature, it is but an imperfect participation of that primitive goodness, or rather but a dim resemblance of it. And shall we think that there can be any addition to his happiness from that which is so imperfectly without him, when all excellences are perfectly, eminently, infinitely in himself? Shall the ocean of blessedness seek an increase from that which is less than a drop? Or the Sun of glory borrow lustre from a glow-worm, a dim spark? Or the universe of all happiness greaten itself by a point, a mote? No, the Lord was blessed for ever, before man was in being; and he had been blessed for ever, if man had never been. And if nothing had moved the Lord to save him, but a design to add to his own happiness, none of the children of men had ever known salvation.

2. In respect of glory. The Lord does not depend upon man more for glory, than happiness. He had been as glorious, if we had continued in the state of nonentity, or if we had perished in our sin, and sunk into

misery. It is true, we say the Lord glorifies his mercy in our salvation; but this is such a glory as he might have wanted, and yet have been no less glorious. To clear this a little. The glory of God is essential or relative. God's essential glory is those infinitely glorious perfections and excellences which meet in the Divine essence. This is that glory, which no mortal eye ever saw, or can see. When Moses desired to see his glory, the Lord says to him, "Thou canst not see my face and live," Exod. xxxiii. 18, 20. The face is the seat of beauty, where all the lines of perfection do concentre, where all the rays of glory are united. These we can no more behold in his face, than a lump of snow can sustain the united vigour of the sunbeams at noon-day.

When the queen of Sheba had seen the glory of Solomon, it is said, "there was no spirit in her," 1 Kings x. 5. The soul, or spirit in her (as in others) has a strong inclination to unite with that which it apprehends to be most good; and beholding something transcendently better without, than in the body, seemed willing for that time to leave the body, that it might enjoy and close with what was more excellent. If the Lord should unveil himself, and let us have a clear sight of his glorious excellences, as they shine in himself; the soul would leave the body, the union between them would be dissolved; the spirit would be rapt away with such a sight, and leave the body dead. This may be the reason of what the Lord said to Moses; "No man can see my face," *i. e.* my essential glory, "and live."

Further, the essential glory of God is God himself, and therefore both infinite and eternal. It is infinite as he is, and to that which is infinite nothing can be added, it can no way be greater than it is already. It is eternal too, and so before anything was created, and consequently no way dependent on the creatures. By which it is manifest, that essential glory is not at all increased by working man's salvation.

For relative glory, that indeed depends on the creatures. But the Lord had been as glorious in himself, if this glory had never been, as will appear from the nature of it. The essential attributes of God are his Divine perfections, absolutely existing, without respect or relation to the creatures. Relative attributes are those essential perfections, as manifested to the creatures, or rather the manifestation of them. If then essential glory be the lustre of those essential attributes, as shining in the Divine essence, which we showed before, it must follow, that relative glory is that which results from the manifestation of those perfections to the creatures. For example, relative mercy is the manifestation of essential goodness in the salvation of the elect, and relative justice is the manifestation of essential righteousness or justice in the condemnation of the reprobate.

Now God had been as glorious in himself, if he had never made

known his mercy or justice to the world, if there had been no world, no creatures made, to manifest these to, if there had been no men or angels to take notice of them. For, is the sun made more splendid or beautiful by our beholding of it? No, it would be as glorious, if no eye ever saw it. Did the Israelites' eating manna add any sweetness to that pleasant food? No sure, it had been as sweet in itself, if no palate had ever tasted it. Even so the Lord had been as powerful, if he had never created the world; no less merciful in himself, if he had never saved any, if there had been none to save; no less righteous, if there had been none to condemn, if he had never condemned any.

But because this may seem strange, and some may stick at it, let me add a reason for it. The manifestation of his attributes to the world is a free act, a transient act. It is a certain rule in divinity, *Quicquid Deus operatur ad extra liberè sit*; every act of God terminated on the creatures, is a free act. A free act is that which may be done or not done. So that it was in the choice of the Divine will (before it had determined itself) to manifest mercy, or not to show it; to save man, or not to save him; to make him, or not. But if salvation did add anything to the glory of God, our salvation had been a necessary, and not a free act; because without it the Lord had wanted some degree of glory, and so had not been most glorious, most perfectly so, and consequently not himself.

Hence, it is evident, that the Lord did not stand in need of our salvation, to make him more glorious any way. He was infinitely glorious from eternity; but these manifestations of himself are in time, therefore can add nothing to his glory, which was infinite before all time. The reason why he revealed his mercy in saving man, was not because this was needful to make himself more glorious. We must, as Christ showed us, find the reason of it in his *εὐδοκία*, the good pleasure of his will, Matt. xi. 25, 26, *ὅτι οὕτως ἐγένετο εὐδοκία*; this was the reason of it, "Thy good pleasure." And to this the apostle leads us, Eph. i. 5, 9.

It is true also, we are said to glorify God by our services, by the acts and exercises of holiness, Psal. l. 23, and John xv. 8. But how is this to be understood? even as he is said to glorify himself, when he manifests to us that he is glorious. So we are said to glorify him, when we acknowledge he is glorious, when we give a testimony to his glorious perfections by word or deed. But neither his manifestation, nor our acknowledgment, does add to his glory. He shows it, we take notice of it, but neither of these imports any addition to it. Hence, Psal. xvi. 2, "My goodness extendeth not to thee." If our apprehensions of God were as high as their object; if our affection to him were more than that of the angels; if all our prayers and praises were raptures, and all our performances screwed up to the highest degree of perfection that a created

being is capable of ; yet were we in this respect unprofitable servants ; the Lord upon this account would have no advantage by us : for as Eliphaz says to Job, chap. xxii. 2, 3, “ Can a man be profitable unto God, as he that is wise may be profitable unto himself ? Is it any pleasure to the Almighty, that thou art righteous ? ” &c. No, the Lord may glorify us, but he gains no glory by us, that is any advantage to him. He stands in no need of us to glorify him ; he had been as glorious if we had perished, or if we had been nothing. Therefore what motive can there be in, or from us, to oblige him to save us ?

(2.) The sovereignty and dominion of God over his creatures. As in respect of his all-sufficiency, he stands in no need of us ; so in respect of his sovereignty he owes us nothing ; he is no way engaged to us, or obliged by us : but may do what he will with us, either to save or not to save us. So it stands with us clearly, if we consider his dominion over us, in antecedence to his purpose and promise.

1. For he might have been satisfied in the sole enjoyment of his blessed self, and never have vouchsafed a being, much less salvation and glory, to any creature.

2. Or if he would manifest himself to the creatures, he might have formed more excellent creatures, and more fit to be the objects of his great and transcendent love : for he did not act as a natural agent *ad ultimum sui posse*, “ to the utmost of all his power.”

3. Or if the Divine will would determine itself to give a being to those very creatures that are now existent ; yet there was no necessity that he should save any of them. He might have annihilated them without any show of unrighteousness : for who can say unto the King of kings, “ What doest thou ? ” Dan. iv. 35. Might he not do with his own what he will ?

4. Or if he would manifest his love and goodness in the salvation of any that he had created ; yet who would not think all the angels (those sometimes glorious creatures) more capable of it, than any of the children of men ?

5. Or if unworthy man must be the subject of it ; yet why so many men ? He might have made fewer vessels of mercy, than are now formed by it, to be for ever filled with it.

6. Or if he would pitch upon so many, yet why upon those who are now set apart for salvation, rather than those who are passed by ? Why are these chosen, and the other left ? Why are these vessels of honour rather than the rest, when all were of the same clay, formed by the same hand ? Rom. ix. 21—25. There is no reason can be given, but his good pleasure, his mere grace. And, oh, what beams of this glorious grace do break forth from this consideration ! What ! must men be chosen from all other creatures to be the objects of God’s peculiar love ? Will

the Lord vouchsafe the eternal enjoyment of himself to none but men alone of all lapsed creatures? "Lord! what is man that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that thou visitest him?"

And how exceedingly does this endear free grace, that any of us should be separated from the rest of perishing sinners; that we should be vessels of mercy, when others are vessels of wrath! Lord, what are we, or what are our fathers? Why hast thou revealed thyself to us, and not to the world? Even so, Lord, because it pleased thee! No other reason can be assigned, but mere grace. There needs no more, to demonstrate that salvation is to be ascribed to grace only.

1. USE.—This condemns their doctrine, who will have us saved rather by free-will, than by grace; which will have the text inverted, and read thus:—By free-will are ye saved, not by grace, but of yourselves.

This has too many patrons, and those of greatest name and ability amongst the opposers of truth. It is the capital error of the Remonstrants, the foundation of their other opinions that concern grace, and with which they all stand or fall. The Socinians, and the worst among the Papists, the Jesuits, join with them, all following Pelagius, condemned by the ancient church as the enemy of the grace of Christ.

That we may the better understand them, and what in them is to be condemned and avoided, let us see,—(1.) What grace they own and count sufficient: for something they must own under this notion, who will not plainly renounce the Gospel. (2.) What they ascribe to free-will. (3.) What is the tendency of their principles. (4.) What they object against the doctrine of free grace.

I. For the first. They count no grace necessary to bring a sinner into a saving state, and continue him in it, but that which they call moral grace or suasion. This consists in a presenting of the object to the will, with motives and arguments to embrace it. Or thus, in a proposal of our duty, with rational considerations to move him to yield to it, leaving us to do as we please. For example, to turn from sin to God, and to believe in Christ, are duties propounded in the Gospel; the advantage of yielding hereto, and the danger of refusing, is there declared; and so it is left to the sinner's choice, whether he will comply or no.

This is all the grace which the Lord affords to save us. It amounts to no more than a moral excitement, or a rational proposal. This proposal is made with some light, tending to excite affection. If it were altogether in the dark, it would be in effect no proposal. Whether this light be natural, or supernatural, they are not agreed. Some, and those most followed, would have the light of natural reason sufficient. Others would rather have it counted a light from the Spirit.

But all agree, that it is no special illumination, but a common light, vouchsafed to all, under the Gospel; and so such as those have, who live and die in the gross darkness of ignorance and wickedness, they must not by their principles deny to heathens. And those, who will have it called the light of the Spirit, count it as weak and powerless as natural light, *i. e.*, of no more power and efficacy to determine or sway the will, than the light of reason; no, nor so much as some dictates of reason are commonly thought to have. The difference is so little (if there be any) as to the thing itself, that those who call it the light of the Spirit, seem but to give it that name and title, to decline the odium of ascribing nothing at all to the Spirit of grace. However a common proposal, with such light, made in the Gospel unto sinners, is all the grace which they count needful.

1. They deny eternal grace, *i. e.*, all free mercy in God to any particular persons from eternity. According to them, he had no mercy, no purpose of it for any, but what he was obliged to by the foresight of the good use of free-will. This is no free mercy, and so no grace.

2. They deny all habitual grace, which is not of ourselves. They will have no such thing wrought in us by the Spirit of holiness. All gracious qualities or principles, planted in the heart by the Spirit, they reject under the notion of infused habits.

3. They deny actual grace, *i. e.*, any operation of the Spirit to determine the will,—all gracious influences whatever that will or can certainly incline it to act, or incline it any more to act than not to act. Grace, with them, only proposes to the will, and leaves the determination to itself; it must be left indifferent to act, or not to act, as it likes.

No other grace, than this of proposing; none, habitual or actual, was designed for any person in the eternal counsel of God, or purchased for any by the blood of Christ, or administered to any by the Spirit of grace. It is enough that it be propounded to the will to turn to God, and arguments offered to that purpose, such as the Gospel contains, and are managed in the ministry of it. So that all the grace, which they count necessary, is no special, sufficient grace.

1. It is no special, but only common grace, afforded equally to those that are damned, as to any that are saved. No other grace, than that which suffers the far greatest part of those who partake of it to perish eternally. That grace, wherewith any man may be damned, as soon as saved. If any be saved in their way, it is without special grace. It is ten to one, for any grace the Lord vouchsafes to sinners, they will never be saved.

2. It is not sufficient grace, unless nature has power enough for saving acts, without the least access of strength from grace: for their grace gives not the least degree of strength to the will; but only rouses its

native power : as Delilah's voice gave Samson no more strength, when she said, "The Philistines are upon thee," but only excited him to use the strength he had. When they will have this suasive grace to be sufficient, they commend not grace at all, but magnify the power of nature, as being great indeed, when it needs so little help for acts of the highest quality and importance. If any be saved in their way, it must be without any grace sufficient to salvation.

3. It is not effectual grace. This is plain by the former. There can be no pretence that that will be effectual which is not sufficient. But suppose it were sufficient, (as they without ground would have it accounted) yet it is not of itself effectual. The efficacy of it, by their doctrine, is not from its own nature and virtue, nor from the Spirit of grace, but from the will of man. If he will, it is efficacious ; if he will not, it is of no effect. So that, if it should prove effectual to save any, yet that is to be ascribed to free-will, and not to grace ; to that which makes it effectual, when otherwise it would be of no effect.

In short, it is not saving grace, take it in any of their senses. As saving grace is peculiar to the saved, so it is far from being saving. In this respect it is no more saving than damning, if so much, since the most incomparably that have it are damned.

Or, if we take saving grace for that which is sufficient for salvation, it is not saving, unless there be a power in man's degenerate nature to save itself ; power enough in the worst for saving acts, such as needs nothing but exciting.

Or, if we take it for that which is effectual to salvation, it has no such efficacy from itself, or from God ; it is only from the will of man that it is effectual to salvation, if ever it prove so. So that in their way, either there is no grace at all that is saving, or none that is saving at a better rate than the will of man can make it so, when it has no saving virtue of itself, or from God.

There needs no other arguments against this doctrine, no artifice to engage us against it, but a true and plain discovery of it. If we be saved by grace, this doctrine tends to lead us out of the way of salvation.

II. Let us see what they ascribe to free-will. And that in general is a power to be willing or unwilling, as to any motion that is made, any object that is offered to it. It has a power of itself, and by its own natural constitution, either to choose or refuse, either to embrace or reject whatever object is propounded, however it be propounded. The will, they say, is never determined *ad unum*, never so set upon one good or bad, but that by rational inducement, *i. e.*, by motives and arguments, it may be led to the contrary ; and never so moved by such inducements, but that it may reject the motion. Never so set upon sin, but

that by suasive proposals it may be moved to leave, not only the acts but the state of sin : nor ever so moved by that, or anything else, but that it may repel the motion, and quite stifle it.

We may view it more distinctly in these two branches.

(1.) A power to choose whatever good is offered. They will have it able of itself to embrace any good object of what nature soever ; not only natural or moral, but what is supernatural, of the highest nature and quality ; and the embracing of it saving, such as will pass a man into a saving state. It has a power to repent of sin, to believe in Christ, to turn to God, to love, fear, and delight in him. Not only a capacity, but an active power for these, &c. Only these things must be propounded to it with some clearness and earnestness, as the Gospel propounds them to all under its ministry. And that such a proposal is required signifies no inability in the will itself for these great things : for the most sufficient faculty imaginable cannot act upon an object that it discovers not ; and the faculty of greatest power may, in some cases, need exciting. And so it is requisite [that] the will have light to discover its object, and some arguments to commend it, at least when the soul is under the disadvantage of rooted prejudices, or habitual and inveterate wickedness.

However, all the help they think needful for the will, is so far from denying its power and sufficiency for those great concerns of salvation, that it supposes the will to have it in and of itself, if saving things be but represented to it as necessary and worthy of its choice and embraces.

(2.) A power to refuse any object, however it be offered, with what advantage soever it be propounded by the Spirit of God, or the ministry of man. For the liberty they make essential to the will, consists, they say, in an indifferency either to choose or refuse, either to act or not to act. And it must be left indifferent in all cases ; so that nothing in heaven or earth can determine it, but itself. God himself, they say, cannot without fail determine it to the choice of this or the other, without destroying it. *Voluntas hominis ad actus suos motione irresistibili determinari non potest ne ab ipso Deo quidem.* "He cannot incline the will irresistibly, he cannot by Divine motion of unwilling make it willing." Whatever power he does or can put forth for this purpose, the will may and can resist it, and render it of no effect. If the Lord do desire and intend to convert a sinner, and do what can be done by the power of his grace in order thereto, yet the will may hinder him. Take it in their own words, "A man may hinder his own regeneration, when God has a mind to have him regenerated, and it is his will to regenerate him."^b Corvinus (the most subtle and cautious of their writers) says expressly,^c *Positis omnibus ad agendum requisitis*, &c., "when all the operations of

^a Syn. Dor. 212. Vid. Ames Rescript. p. 129.

^b Coll. Hag. 282.

Vid. Hickm. p. 33.

grace in order to conversion are passed upon the will, yet it is still in the free power of the will to convert or not to convert itself." So that, when God has done his utmost to bring a sinner into a saving state, yet it is in the power of the will to defeat and hinder him. In plain terms, when God has done what he can, the will may do what it list. They will have the will to be so free, as that it can be under no necessity of any sort, not only such as is natural, or compulsive, or absolute, which is granted ; but such as is only respective, and that in reference to God himself. So that if it be needful in respect of the decree and purpose of God, or in respect of his will and desire, or in respect of his word and engagement, or in respect of his design and intention, that the will should move this way, and not the other ; yet it may incline and determine itself the other way, and so may act counter to God in these his concerns, defeat him in them all, and carry it against him. The purpose, the promise, the providence, the grace of God, the undertaking of Christ, the operations of the Spirit, may be frustrated unavoidably by man's will. So great a power they give it. The Lord shall not have his will, nor make good his word, nor make his grace prevalent, nor accomplish his greatest designs, if man's will comply not ; and it is never under any necessity to comply, but may always resist, when the Lord has done what he can to bring it to a compliance. This is the true visage of their doctrine, if you will see it plain and naked. There needs no ill language to render it ugly.

But as to our present purpose. The first branch of this power, ascribed to the will, makes the grace, which we stand in most need of, to be needless. For if the will can embrace any object in order to salvation, upon a common proposal, there needs no strength from grace to enable it.

The other branch makes all the grace they own, to be fruitless, of no effect, a mere cipher, which stands for nothing, does, can do, nothing but at the discretion of free-will. For the will, when the object is propounded, with what advantage soever the proposal be made, can always resist and reject it utterly. So that the grace of God comes to nothing, at the mere humour of man's free-will.

By the former branch of the will's sufficiency, the power, in matters of salvation, is from free-will, and not from grace : for their grace gives it no power at all, but supposes it there already.

By the latter branch, the act, in the concerns of salvation, is from the will, not from grace : for grace leaves the will indifferent to act or not to act ; and, therefore, its acting is no more from grace than its not acting ; its accepting of Christ no more from grace than its rejecting him.

Now if both the power and the act, in the concerns of salvation, be

from free-will, and not from grace, then it is by free-will, not by grace, that we are saved.

III. Let us view the import and dangerous tendency of this doctrine ; and then you will see sufficient reason to reject it. Every particular will be an argument against it ; and the particulars are very many.

(1.) They make no grace needful, but what was acknowledged by those persons who were condemned by the ancient church as enemies of the grace of Christ. Pelagius, the patriarch of the asserters of free-will, to the prejudice of Divine grace, acknowledged not only a natural, but a doctrinal grace, viz., the word of God discovering and propounding that which is good, and persuading sinners to embrace it ; *suadet omne quod bonum est*, “it persuades to all that is good.” Here is the suasive grace of his modern followers. Nay, he went farther, and not only required an external proposal of the object, in the ministry of the word ; but acknowledged an inward operation of the Spirit, for enlightening the mind, and exciting the affections ; *nos ineffabili dono gratiæ cælestis illuminat*, “he enlightens us with the unspeakable gift of his heavenly grace ;” *futuræ gloriæ magnitudine et præmiorum pollicitatione accendit*, “he inflames us with promise of rewards, and the greatness of the future glory,” and excites the stupid will, by the revelation of wisdom, to desires after God. Some of his late followers think it not fit to come short of him in this, but seem to require some act of the Spirit to enlighten the mind, and to stir up the affections. But others of them, most applauded and followed, deny all necessity of any immediate illumination by the Spirit ; and tell us, “that every one who has the use of reason, may, without any special inward light, very easily apprehend whatever in Scripture is necessary to be known or believed.”^a “And that no immediate operation of the Spirit upon the mind or will, is needful for any one that he may believe.”^b So that no grace is needful with these men, but only an external proposal by the word : for what the word propounds may, without the light of the Spirit, be sufficiently understood and offered to the will : and the will, they say, has unquestionably power to embrace whatever is so offered by the understanding. If anything could hinder the will from embracing the good proposed, it must be some corruption in man’s soul, some strong prejudices or vicious habits determining the will unavoidably to that which is evil : but no such thing can be admitted, as they state the will’s liberty. For, as no power of grace, no operation of the Spirit, can determine the will irresistibly to that which is good, but when it has done its utmost, the will remains free to the contrary evil ; so no power of corruption can determine the will to any evil, but it will remain free to choose the contrary good propounded to it.

^a Episcop.

^b De Perspicuit. Script. Thess. i. et iii. Id. in Syn. Dor. p. 200.

The will of fallen man, notwithstanding any supposed corruption in the soul, native or acquired, still retains its primitive power entire ; only it is under some impediment as to the exercise of it, there is one thing wanting which hinders it from acting ; it cannot act without an object. And this signifies no defect or weakness in the will : for the most perfect faculty of man or angel in heaven must have an object that it may act. Now the object is offered in the Gospel, and the proposal of the object by the Gospel, with the motives and arguments there contained, is all the grace, all the supernatural aid and Divine assistances, which they think requisite to help the will, to believe and turn to God. This is to ascribe less to grace than the old Pelagians did, who yet were branded by the church as the capital enemies of supernatural grace, and upon that account scarce thought worthy to be called Christians.

(2.) By their doctrine, grace is given according to merit. This was the most leprous part of Pelagianism, which the ancient church had in greatest detestation, and for which Pelagius himself had been anathematized, branded with the highest censure, by a synod in Palestine, but that he pretended to renounce it.

Yet merit, in the sense of that age, was a far less thing, and much more tolerable than the Papists' merit of condignity. It was not only a good work, of such value and worth in itself, as that a reward should be due to it in justice ; but merit, as they understood it, was any good act which a man did of himself, upon the account of which grace was vouchsafed. This Bellarmine himself acknowledges, however he was concerned to deny it. "The fathers (says he) understood grace to be given according to merit, when anything is done by our own strength, in respect whereof grace is given, although it be no merit of condignity."^a

And in this sense of merit, the modern asserters of free-will would have all grace given, according to merit. How universal soever they make grace to be, yet no man shall have it unless he merit it. That grace may be universal, they will have it communicated both to those that are without the Gospel, and to those that enjoy it. For those who have not the Gospel, he is ready to give all of them the grace of the Gospel, if they will use the light of nature well ; and he does give it actually to those who, by the good use of their free-will, make such an improvement of natural light. Here the good use of natural light is a good act ; and upon the account of that, the grace of the Gospel is given, *i. e.*, this grace is given according to merit, in the sense of the fathers, who counted it so execrable to have it given according to merit. "Those (say the Remonstrants) whom God calleth, and to whom he does

^a De Grat. et Lib. Arbit. lib. vi. cap. v.

vouchsafe the grace of preaching, we confess, for the most part, to be such men, that their virtues do deserve no less."^a

For those who have the Gospel, God is ready to give further grace to them, if they would be worthy hearers, as they may be, if they would use their free-will well in hearing. "But there are some worthy hearers of the Gospel, and some unworthy, says Corvinus: and sufficient grace is not given to all promiscuously who hear, *sed iis qui digni sunt evangelii auditores*,^b 'but to those who are worthy hearers.'" Which is in effect as though he spoke out, and said, it is given according to merit, which is all point blank against the apostle, 2 Tim. i. 9, Tit. iii. 5.

This they extend to the fountain of all, the eternal purpose of God. All the grace, which is comprised in the election of grace, will be ordered according to merit. Election of particular persons depends upon their faith or works foreseen. The Lord foresees who will believe, and because they will believe, upon the account of this good act he does elect them; so they are elected according to merit. But does he not purpose from eternity to give faith in time? No, by no means; for if he had decreed this, they would be under some necessity to believe; and such necessity is not consistent with the liberty of man's will. Therefore it must be left to their free-will whether they shall believe or no: and when God foresees that they shall make so good use of their free-will as to believe, then upon that account he elects them. In plain English, he chooses those whom he foresees will merit the election of grace by the good use of free-will.

Nay, all the grace, in the great and precious promises, and in the whole covenant of grace, will be according to merit. For they will have the accomplishment of all suspended upon some condition; such a condition, as is to be performed merely by the power of free-will, assisted by no grace at all, but that gentle excitement which they call suasion, which enables not the will to perform the condition, but plainly speaks it able beforehand. Such a condition performed is indeed a cause, a moving and engaging cause, and no less merit, than that which the ancient church condemned in Pelagius. For it is a good act performed by our own strength, upon the account of which the grace of the covenant is vouchsafed, which a Jesuit will not deny to be the merit that is under the curse and execration of synods and fathers twelve hundred years ago. Their other principles overthrow the grace of God, and lay it prostrate; but this quite destroys it, and makes it no grace, if the apostle's arguing be good reason, Rom. xi. 6.

(3.) This doctrine (which owes no more grace, and ascribes so much to free-will) makes God not to be the worker or real cause of the

^a Epist. contr. Walach. p. 44.

In Twiss. 387

spiritual and saving blessings of conversion and regeneration, nor the author and giver of faith, repentance, holiness. These are rather to be ascribed to man, than unto God. This will appear—

1. In general.—Conversion, regeneration, sanctification, perseverance, and what else of this nature is required to our salvation, is to be attributed to a man's self, more than the Spirit of grace; they are the effects and achievements of free-will, rather than of grace.

A man converts and quickens himself, regenerates and begets himself, creates himself so far as he is a new creature, and upholds himself when he is created. This seems strange and uncouth, (not to say absurd and horrid;) but there is plain reason for it, such as may convince any who will yield to evident reason.

Grace, however considered, (either in election, or redemption, or the Holy Spirit's operations,) does no more for the quickening and regenerating of those who are converted, than it does for those who are never converted; therefore it is not grace, but something else, that does the work. If the Lord had done no more for the making of this world, than for making of other worlds that were never made, the creation of the world could never have been ascribed to him. If Christ had done no more to raise Lazarus from the dead, than he did to raise others who continued dead in their graves, he could not have been said to raise him to life. He that does no more towards the effecting of a thing, than when it is not done at all, he cannot be said to do it. Now grace does no more for the quickening of those that are alive to God, than for those who are still dead and will be so for ever. Therefore it is not grace that does the work; it must be ascribed to something else, not to the Spirit of grace, but to a man's self, and his own free-will.

This is evident in the nature, visible in the very complexion of their moral grace. This (which is all the grace they own) consists in suasive proposals. Now he that only persuades or propounds the doing of a thing, does not thereby do it at all, but would have you to do it yourselves, and supposes you can if you will. So that this is the plain import of their doctrine, that men can convert and quicken themselves, and do it if it be done. However any be said to be born of God, yet they may beget themselves; however they be said to be "the Lord's workmanship, created of Christ Jesus unto good works," verse 10; yet they are their own workmanship, and make themselves new creatures. However the apostle saith, verse 1, "You hath he quickened;" yet indeed they raise themselves to life. And since they do it themselves, to themselves they may in all reason ascribe it, and accordingly glory in it. The crown is not to be cast at the feet of Him who sits on the throne. Grace is to have neither throne nor crown; that is to have the crown which does the work: free-will does it, and this must wear it.

2. More particularly, it is manifest, that they make not God to be the real cause of those saving works, or the giver of those spiritual blessings ; because, by their doctrine, neither the power nor the act can be ascribed to him : for they say, he does nothing to this purpose but by virtue of moral grace : and it is evident that this, or he, by this, gives neither the power nor the act, &c.

(1.) Suasive grace, or the Lord by suasive proposals, gives no man power to believe or turn to God ; it rather supposes that he has it already before or without this grace. The virtue of it (of all the grace they own) is only that of advice or suasion : and no man reasonably persuades or advises another to be able, but only to be willing to use what already he has. He that holds forth a light to a man lying on the ground, and moves him with arguments to rise and walk, does not thereby give him legs and strength, but supposes he has these already, if he would use them. He that only shows another what he has to do, and offers reason to persuade him to do it, not taking any other course to strengthen him for it, takes it for granted that he is beforehand able for it. Now this is all that their moral grace pretends to ; it shows the sinner that it is his duty to turn to God, &c., and uses arguments to move him to it, but gives no other strength for it than what this advice includes, which, as persuasion or advice, does indeed give none at all, but plainly supposes it in being. They say, a sinner, under the influence of this moral grace, is able to convert and regenerate himself, to beget himself to a new life. But if he be able, his ability is from nature ; and the power of his natural faculties was not from grace, seeing this their grace is not for the giving of ability where it is not, but only for exciting it where it is before.

(2.) As the power for these great concerns of salvation is not from God or his grace, so neither is the act from him. For, 1. That which gives or works the act, determines the will, or causes it to determine itself ; but the Lord by this grace (which is all they own) brings it only to the will's choice, and leaves it to do as it list, and so plainly leaves the act to itself ; so that, if the soul do actually believe, or repent, or turn to God, this is of itself : their grace leaves the will indifferent to act or not to act, and so no more works the one than the other, and is no more the cause that it acts than that it acts not. It leaves it to the will, either to yield or refuse ; if it yield, it is not from grace, but the will. Grace leaves it in the power of the will to resist ; if it resist not, it is from the will, not from grace. The Lord, by his power, works not the will to turn to God, to love, to embrace Christ, to yield to the Spirit ; but leaves it indifferent to turn to God or against him, to love God or to hate him, to embrace Christ or reject him, to yield to the Spirit or resist him. It must be left indifferent as to either ; grace turns not the scales, but leaves the

will at an equal poise, that the will of man, not the grace of God, may have the casting weight ; if grace should weigh it down, the liberty of the will, they say, would be violated, and its nature destroyed.

(3.) Nay, their grace is so far from working the will to actual faith or holiness, that by their account it seems to lead a man into sin, and *leave* him in it : for it is a sin for a man to be indifferent whether he believe or believe not, whether he accept Christ or reject him, whether he love or hate him : but all that this grace does to the will, is to bring it to such an indifferency ; and so the grace of God with them does no other, no better office for a sinner, than to bring his soul into a wicked posture ; and in that posture it does and must leave the will to itself ; and, there left, if the will be no better to itself than grace is, or can be, it shall never come into a better posture.

Nay, further, the Lord is so far from determining the will, and so from causing the act by making it willing, that it is impossible for him to do it. They say (as was showed before) that the will cannot be determined by God himself without destroying it ; they will have it an inconsistency, and to imply a contradiction. And thus the Lord is so far from being the worker or real cause of actual faith, conversion, sanctification, that it is impossible he should be the cause thereof ; he is so far from actually working these, that he cannot do it.

Let me but add one argument more. This grace is given equally to all, and effects no more in one than another ; and, therefore, can be no more the cause of actual conversion in those that turn to God, than in those that are never converted ; works regeneration no more in those that are sanctified, than in the unregenerate ; *i. e.*, works it not at all, is no cause of it. The Lord, by virtue of this grace, gives actual faith and repentance no more to those that believe and repent, than to such as persevere in impenitency and unbelief ; gave faith no more to Paul than to Judas, repentance no more to Peter than to Simon Magus ; *i. e.*, he gives it not at all.

This is the clear consequence of their doctrine. The Lord is not the author and finisher of our faith, or of our repentance ; nor the real cause of conversion or sanctification, and other saving blessings ; and so, not the author of salvation. It is not by his grace, but of ourselves, both as to the power and the act, in direct opposition to the text and the whole strain of the Gospel. And it is as reconcilable with Scripture and the perfections of God, to say he is not the creator of the world, or the author of anything, as to say he is not the author or real cause of those great concerns of salvation.

(4.) This leads them to deny original sin. They must of necessity make little or nothing of the corruption of our nature, since they will have their suasive grace to be a sufficient relief against it ; as if all the sin in man's nature could be argued out of him without more ado, and

all the power of corruption, natural and contracted too, might be effectually subdued and crucified by rational advice; whereas, this moral suasion is of itself of no efficacy at all for this purpose, and appears to be so in that it effects no such thing in far the greatest part of those who partake of it as much as any, but leaves them altogether as corrupt as it found them.

I cannot discern, that they will acknowledge any corruption at all to be in the will, though Scripture and experience show that it is most of all there. The will seems to be now as sound (by their doctrine) as it was in innocency; nor stands it in need of more help by grace, than Adam before the fall: for then he had and needed suasive grace. "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt die:" here is the duty propounded, and the proposal enforced with a powerful motive by God himself, that is the sum of suasive grace, which the Lord seeing needful for our first parents, did thus administer it, as far from corruption as it was then. And if the will need no more now, it is as free from corruption as it was then. Thus for the affections, there must be no more corruption in them than in the will, these being but the acts and motions of it. Or, if they will consider them as in the sensitive appetite; yet common illumination is enough to heal it there: for thereby the affections are sufficiently excited and quickened. Nor is there any depravation in the mind, but what may be cured by common light, such as the most corrupt and wicked men have.

That which admits so easy a cure must needs be slight and little; and that little too, which they acknowledge, is with them neither sin nor punishment properly, and so not evil at all, unless there be some evil which is neither. The depravation of our natures by the fall, however it be aggravated in Scripture, is not in their account properly either our sin or our punishment; but only our infelicity; and no great infelicity neither, since with them it can be neither spiritual death, nor mortal disease, nor very considerable weakness. For if it were such a weakness, no grace would repair it but that which communicates an answerable strength. But that grace which they think sufficient to repair all, gives not any strength at all, but supposes there is power enough in nature to recover itself, if it be but excited.

This in a manner makes Christ of none effect. The great end of his coming was to restore our natures fallen from God, and made incapable of honouring and enjoying him: therefore he took our nature, and performed and suffered so much therein. But what need all this waste, if we can lick ourselves whole by virtue of a little common light? and so little not needful with some of them. The great Augustine^a reduces the whole Christian doctrine to two heads, the knowledge of the first Adam,

^a De Peccat. Orig. cap. xiv.

and the knowledge of the second: what we suffered by Adam, and what we gained by Christ. But though these be fundamental in the Christian doctrine, how little they stand for in the doctrine of free-will, we may hereby perceive. And it will be further manifest by another fundamental, which, depending on this now insisted on, falls with it.

(5.) By this doctrine there is no need of regeneration. To be regenerate, is, in the language of the Holy Ghost, to be born of God, John i. 13; to be born again, or born from above, John iii. 3; and that is to receive a principle of spiritual life and motion from God.^a But no such principle is necessary in the will, which indeed most needs it. But no habit of holiness is planted there, no good quality created in it by the Spirit; that they say is a necessitating act, and would be prejudicial to its liberty. The image of God needs no repairing in the heart or will, though that be the chief receptacle and subject of it; even the schoolmen making this the principal seat of all virtues. It needs no such infused principle or quality, to incline it to that which is good; they will have it able of itself, by its own native power, to embrace any good, how supernatural soever, which the mind offers to it. It can produce the best acts, without any inward principle suitable or proportionable to them. The tree need not be good, that the fruit may be good; or rather, it is good enough already, it is so naturally. The will or heart of man (how nought soever the Scripture speaks it, representing it to be desperately wicked, Jer. xvii. 9, and the fountain of all wickedness, Matt. xv. 19,) seems by their doctrine to be as good by nature, as God can or will make it; no worse than it was when first formed. It lost no spiritual qualities or accomplishments by the fall, for it had none before;^b so that all regenerating grace as to the will is clearly cashiered. Nor will they allow any new qualities to be infused by the Spirit of grace into the mind or affections, no more than into the will: for that, they say, is repugnant to the administration of the means of salvation. All that they think requisite, is common light, such as they deny not to the vilest men, (nor can well deny to devils: for they discern the truth and goodness of what is proposed in the Gospel;) by the bare help of such light, their own wills can regenerate them, so far as they think any regeneration needful. I find it no easy thing to discern what their regeneration is. The best I can make of it is this. The mind needs no new birth or life, but what it has from common light; nor do the affections need any exciting or quickening, but what that same effects. But though they count this sufficient quickening, they do not call it regeneration: for many, thus quickened, do live and die unregenerate.

^a Vid. Ham. in John i. 13.

^b Collat. Hag. p. 248. *In spiritali morte non separantur proprie dona spiritalia ab hominis voluntate, &c.* Syn. Dor. 196.

It is an act of the will [which] must do the work, and for that the will must be left to itself. The Spirit of God must not touch it, must not give it any principle of life, must not act^a it by any special or immediate influence; but if of its own accord it turn itself to that which is good, the sinner is thereby born again. So that regeneration is completed by a little common light, such as the children of darkness have, and an act of free-will, without any further assistance, or any other work of the Spirit in or upon it.

Thus, by this one act of free-will at first, they are regenerated actually; and afterwards, by repeated acts of free-will, they may be regenerated habitually: for, the will, by repeated acts, can beget gracious habits, and so help them to habitual regeneration; though they deny [that] the Spirit of grace can work in them any such thing as habits or principles of holiness. Now, this is to be "born again of the will of man, not of the will of God," John i. 13. The Scripture declares, that they who are regenerated, are born of God, 1 John iii. 9; born of the Spirit, John iii. 8; but this is to be born of free-will, not of God, nor of the Spirit, unless free-will be God or the Spirit. The apostle says, "Of his own will begat he us," James i. 18; but they must say, of their own wills they beget themselves. Yet, this is all the regeneration which they count necessary, and so make that new-birth a needless thing, which the Scripture calls for and describes by other characters, and declares all access to the kingdom of heaven impossible without.

(6.) This takes sinners off from that which is really saving, and leads them to take up with that which falls short of salvation. It teaches them to rest satisfied with such a faith, a repentance, a conversion, a regeneration, as common light and rational proposals (such as every one meets with in the ministry of the word) are sufficient to effect. But these alone can never produce any saving faith or repentance, any saving regeneration or conversion.

Those who persuade them, that this is enough for those saving effects, go about to delude sinners; and if they look after no more, their souls are like to be ruined for ever. Moral grace may perhaps prevail for some morality; but this alone can never be effectual, to turn a heart of stone into a heart of flesh, to turn the enmity of the will into love to Christ, to turn sinners from the power of Satan unto God, to raise the soul to life that is spiritually dead, to make them new creatures, &c. These are not the effects of a gentle suasion, but of an Almighty power. They mean something else than Scripture intends by these expressions, who make these saving works so low, common, and easy things, and so much in the power, and at the beck of a sinner's corrupted will. Nothing

^a actuate.

more ruins souls, than resting in that as saving which is not so ; and when divines promote the delusion, how pernicious is it like to prove !

(7.) It destroys holy obedience, inward and outward ; leaves no place for the exercise of grace in the heart, or works truly good in the conversation. It plucks up these by the roots, taking away habitual regeneration which is the root of them, the exercise of grace in the acting of an inward gracious principle ; but they say there is no such principle planted in the heart or will by the Spirit of holiness ; and where the principle is not, it cannot be acted. There can be no vital acts, where there is no vital principle ; that which is not alive, cannot put forth acts of life. Or, to use the terms wherein Christ expresses it, “ The fruit is not good, unless the tree be good.” No good acts can be produced by the heart or will, till itself be good. It is not, it cannot be, good, when there are no good qualities in it. It has no good, no holy qualities planted in it by the Spirit of grace ; that (with them) only acts morally, and does no more sanctify those that are holy, than those that are profane. So that, if the will have any goodness, anything that is holy in it ; it has it from itself, not from the Spirit of holiness. Thus the fruits of the Spirit will be no other than the fruits of free-will ; of free-will unsanctified, unless it sanctify itself : and the acts of obedience will be no other than the acts of natural morality, such as man’s degenerate will can produce by its natural power, without any assistance but that of moral or suasive grace ; which begets no good qualities, gives no inward strength, affords no help of any kind, more to those who do most, than to those who do nothing at all.

We need not wonder, if those of this persuasion should satisfy themselves, and would have others satisfied, with such a morality ; their principles do afford, and can require nothing better. But, whether the acts of it be those gracious acts, those fruits of the Spirit, those good works, which the Scripture so much calls for, and makes the way to salvation ; let those consider who are concerned indeed in the way to salvation.

They charge their opposers, for not pressing moral duties. If they mean thereby practical Christianity, there are none in the world [who] press it more. But we are not for a pagan, but a Christian morality ; and think it not advisable to press external acts alone, without minding the principle and root from whence all that is truly Christian must spring. We count it absurd and preposterous to look for fruits where there is no root, for gracious acts where grace is not planted in the heart. They may deck a maypole with as many garlands as they please, and set off a mast with flags and streamers ; but they will never thereby make them fruit-trees. The Lord will condemn those who bring not forth good fruit ; and those also who lead them in a way where they are never like to be truly fruitful, without better conduct.

(8.) This stifles love to God, takes away that which is the foundation and ground of a special transcendent love to him. That which is the rise of our love to God, is "his love to us," 1 John iv. 19; it is this that kindles our affection to him, and raises love into a flame: but he that believes and considers that God had no more thoughts of love for him from eternity, than he had for those who are under his everlasting hatred; and that Christ had no more love for him in the work of redemption; did obey, suffer, satisfy, purchase no more for him, than he did for those who were in hell, when he suffered; and that the Spirit of grace does no more for him, in order to his salvation, than he does for the vessels of wrath, fitted for destruction; will scarce find anything in the love of God (on this consideration) to engage his soul to a special love for God: he will be in danger to love God with no more than a common love, such as a carnal man may have; who believes that the Lord loves him no more, than he loves those who are to be tormented for ever with the devil and his angels. He will find a motive from hence, to hug and love himself rather than God: for, when that which they call love in God, seems but an indifferent respect, not intending more good to one than another, but as themselves determine it; he had got no special benefit, no particular advantage by that love, if he had not been better to himself: the Lord, as they represent him, (whatever is pretended concerning the greatness and universality of his love to mankind) seems indifferent as to love or hatred, as to the happiness or misery of man. The Lord left it indifferent, in his eternal purpose, whether any should be saved or no; and Christ, in the work of redemption, left it indifferent whether any should be actually redeemed or no; and the Spirit, in calling sinners, leaves it indifferent whether any be effectually called or no: there was no affection in all this, but what might have ended in love or hatred, *i.e.*, in the damning of all, as soon as the saving of any. That which determines this indifference, and makes it prove love, is the sinner himself, the good use of his free-will: had it not been for this, for any love that God had for him, for any expression of it from Father, Son, or Spirit, he had been one of the children of wrath, in the same condemnation with others. So that the plain tendency of their doctrine, is to lead sinners to reflect affectionately on themselves, but with indifferency upon God.

Such is the general love which they will have in God to mankind: it is but an indifferent respect to all, which proves love or hatred, as the sinner's will determines it. But when they ascribe any particular love to God, it is no other than what arises from the sinner's love to him: he foresaw that we would believe, and so love him, and therefore he intended life for us: he foresaw that we would embrace and choose Christ, and therefore did he choose us. So that God did not love us

first, but we him, whatever the apostle says, 1 John iv. 10, 19. He did not choose us first, but we did choose him, whatever Christ says, John xv. 16. Thus they stop up the spring of our love to God; they destroy the reason, and raze the ground of our love to him, if that be it which the apostle assigns. It is the greatness, the riches, the freeness of Divine love that engages, that constrains us to love him: but this doctrine not only defaces the riches and freeness, but in a manner takes away the true nature and notion of his love, when it makes it an affection so indifferent to man's happiness or misery.

(9.) It destroys the exercise of faith, and takes them off from a continued dependence on God, and trusting in him. It is inconsistent with that life of faith, which must be the life of every Christian.

This takes them off from depending on God, both in their spiritual concerns, and in common and human affairs.

1. For those affairs which depend on the wills of other men: they cannot depend on God for the ordering of them; for none are to depend on him for things which are not at his disposal: but the wills of men, and so the affairs which depend thereon, are not (with them) at God's disposal; since, by their principles, he cannot sway their wills effectually one way or other; for this, in their account, is to destroy their natural liberty.

2. As to spiritual concerns, for the making of grace, or the means of grace effectual. For the promoting of holiness, for the growth or exercise of it, or for perseverance in it, there is no need to depend on God: for it is not necessary to depend on another for that which is in his own power. Now these things, and the like, are in the power of his own will; he is the master of them, if he will not be wanting to himself. Indeed, it is more in their own power, than in the power of God; for every man's will can determine itself to these things, but God cannot without destroying the will: for if he determine it, he leaves it not indifferent; and if it be not indifferent, it is not free; and if it be not free, it is not an human will: and, therefore, they have more reason to depend on themselves, where they believe the power is, than on God, where they say it is not. If there be any reason to rely on God, it is for further continuance of that which they call sufficient grace: but there is no more need to depend on him for this, than the other; for this is never withdrawn, unless they be contumacious, and obstinately resist it: but then it is in their power not to resist, but comply with it; and if they will not, God cannot help it: for when he has put forth all the operations of his grace upon the soul, the will is at liberty, and has power to do as it list. The power is most in man still; and where the power is, there must be the dependence, upon themselves rather than upon God; though this self-dependence be under the curse of God in Scripture, and plainly deserves his heaviest curse.

(10.) It overthrows humility and self-denial. One may smell from whence it comes, by the rank tendency of it to pride and self-exaltation. The design of the Gospel is clearly to debase man, and take from him all occasion of boasting or glorying in himself; or of ascribing the praise, either of his state or actions, to himself, Rom. iii. 9, 27; 1 Cor. i. 29, 30. But this doctrine obliges a believer to ascribe the difference which is betwixt him and others who are in the state of sin and misery, not unto grace, but to himself; leaves him no ground to imagine that it was grace which made the difference.

Grace is, with them, indifferently afforded unto all sinners under the Gospel at least. Others had the same light, the same rational proposals, with as much clearness and earnestness, in the same degree, and of no less power and sufficiency; it is common in all respects. That which is every way common and indifferent, could not possibly make us to differ. But when they had it in common, this man would make good use of it, without any other help from grace than the rest had; they would not. His will complied with the proposal; their wills, no less assisted than his, resisted. Grace brought it equally to the choice of their wills, and there left it: his will determined itself to comply; their wills determined against it: that made the difference, not grace, which was alike in all, but free-will, which he used better than others. If my will (may he say) had not been better to me than grace, it had been as bad with me as them; for grace was as good to them as me. The apostle asks, "Who made thee to differ?" 1 Cor. iv. 7; supposing none would have the confidence to arrogate this to himself. But he that is for free-will must say, I made myself to differ. Grace brought it to the choice of my will, whether there should be any difference or no; it does no more for any; if there be any difference made, it is free-will that makes it. Those of them that are so ingenuous as to use plain dealing, speak out, and say expressly, *Ego me discerno*, "I make the difference myself."

The apostle says, "By the grace of God, I am what I am," 1 Cor. xv. 10; but they must say, By the good use of free-will I am what I am: for grace is such a thing (with them) as moves all, affects all, leaves all alike: if any one be better than another, as to state or actings, it is not grace that makes him so, for the worst have as much of their grace as the best; the difference must be ascribed to free-will. Nor can their doctrine show them any reason, why they should not ascribe it to themselves, and glory in it, whatever become of the glory of Divine grace.

(11.) It makes it unnecessary or unreasonable, to pray for themselves or others, for those things which we should most of all pray for: this is evident enough, in that it leaves not place for faith and dependence on God, in common affairs, or spiritual concerns, as was showed before.

For we are not to pray to God, but where we may rely and depend on him ; nor seek him for what we may not trust him, Rom. x. 14. But further, the things that Christians are principally to pray for, are spiritual and heavenly blessings ; these are all comprised in, or depend upon, grace. Let us see how favourable their principles are to praying for grace, either effectual or preventing.

As to the former, they need not pray for efficacious grace, for it is in their own power to make it effectual ; and who needs beg that of another, which he has in his own power ? Their grace is effectual in the soul, when it becomes willing, (for then it has its effect ;) but with them, nothing is more in their power and will, than to be willing : and it is needless and senseless to pray to God to make them willing, *i. e.*, to make grace effectual, when they can do it well enough of themselves : *Quid est stultius, quam orare ut facias quod in potestate habes ?*^a “ What more foolish, than to pray God thou mayest do that which thou hast in thine own power ? ” And elsewhere, *Ne fallamus homines*, &c. “ Let us not deceive men, for we cannot deceive God : ” we pray not to God at all, but only feign that we pray, if we think that ourselves, not he doth what we pray for.

And as they need not, so they must not pray, that God would make grace effectual, or make it work effectually in them ; for God cannot do it, and they must not seek that of him which he cannot do. To make grace effectual, is of unwilling to make them willing, to determine the will to what he proposes ; but this (they say) he cannot do, without invading its freedom : all that he can do, is to propose, and leave the will to do as it likes ; if he should bow it effectually one way or other, that would be a breach upon the liberty which is essential to it ; so that to beg this of him, would be to seek an impossibility. So that, unless they will be absurd, they must not pray that God would effectually bow or incline their wills, to believe in Christ, to turn to God, to love him, to fear him, to walk in his ways, to hate sin, or mortify it ; yea, or to avoid it. They must not pray, that God would effectually subdue their wills to his will in anything : for, to be so subjected, though to God, and by a Divine motion, is not consistent with that freedom which the nature of the will requires.

If their petitions be of such import, (as the best petitions of Christians are,) their prayers contradict their principles ; their prayers are a plea for the truth which they dispute against. Whatever they argue with men, they must be for us, when they have to do with God, if they will have anything to do with God in prayer, or pray anything like Christians.

^a August. De Nat. et Grat. cap. xviii.

As for preventing or sufficient grace, they need not pray for that; for they have it already, or they will have it, though they pray not for it; for all have it, even those who never pray while they live.

But if they should pray for it, their petitions must bear such a sense as will be very harsh to any Christian or rational ear. Sufficient grace is that which enables a man to turn to God if he will. So, this must be it they pray for: Lord, give me such grace, that I may love thee if I will, that I may fear thee if I list, that I may obey thee if I please. This grace leaves, and must leave the will indifferent, to choose or refuse, to act or not to act, at its pleasure: for so far the Lord may by his grace proceed with the will, but no farther, without intrenching on its liberty: so that it is this which they pray for; Lord, give me such grace, as will leave me indifferent, either to love or hate thee; either to turn or not to turn unto thee; to obey or rebel against thee; either to believe in Christ, or to be an unbeliever: this must be the import of their prayers for grace, if they be consistent with their principles: but if they will pray with the sense of Christians or sober men, they must renounce their doctrine of free-will.

Further, they must not pray for others more than themselves: not for enemies, that God would effectually turn their hearts, that they may not oppress, persecute, obstruct the Gospel, oppose Christ's interest. They must not pray for children, friends, strangers; that God would effectually turn them to himself, that he would create in them new hearts, or inspire their wills with gracious principles; that he would conquer their rebellious wills, or not leave them in a capacity to resist him, or reject the Spirit of grace. They must not pray for themselves or others, that God will give them any grace, but what will leave it at the choice and arbitrement of their own wills (when there is no good quality in them) as well to resist as not to resist grace, before conversion; as well to expel as to retain it, after conversion.

Prayer is such an acknowledgment of God, so essential to all religion, that without it there can be no religion, either Christian or natural; therefore so far as this doctrine makes it unnecessary or unreasonable to pray, so far it tends to extirpate all religion.

(12.) It is inconsistent with that thankfulness and gratitude which should make up the life of a Christian; with those praises, whereby God is glorified in a special manner, and which must be the employment of eternity. It is the most ungrateful doctrine that ever any under the name of Christians entertained: for hereby, he that is in the state of grace, has no more cause on that account to be thankful to God, than he that is in the state of sin and damnation: for he is not obliged to be thankful for more than he has received; and the best saint, as such, has received no more from God, owes no more to his grace, than he

that continues the worst of sinners. That he is in a happier condition, is from himself, and the good use of his free-will. Grace was common, afforded him and others indifferently ; it was his own free-will that made the difference, so far as there is any. Nay, a saint in glory will, by their doctrine, have no more reason to be praising God, or admiring Christ, than one in hell : but of that hereafter.

The recovery of man out of the state of sin and misery, into which he is fallen, either by Adam's transgression, or his own wickedness, is more to be ascribed to himself, than unto God ; and so he owes more thanks to himself than to God. He does more to convert, to quicken, to sanctify, to establish, to save himself, than God does by his grace ; and so he has more reason to thank himself for all. The Lord does very little, in comparison of what man does in these great concerns ; and that little which God does, would come to nothing at all, if man himself did not give it efficacy, and make something of it : so that there is left very little ground or occasion of giving praise and glory to God, where, if for anything, the highest praise and glory is eternally due to him, and where above all he designed the greatest praise and glory to himself. There seems much more occasion to ascribe the praise and glory of man's salvation, both on earth and in heaven, unto man himself : Not unto thee, O Lord, must they say, not unto thee, but unto ourselves be the praise, or at least more unto ourselves than unto thee. View this doctrine well, and compare it with the doctrine and design of the Gospel, and you will find them just as agreeable as light and darkness.

(13.) It tempts men strongly to neglect God and their souls, to live in any wickedness their inclination leads them to, and not to break off a course of sin by speedy repentance : for their pretended sufficient grace is universal, and denied to none ; that brings repentance to every man's power and choice ; he has grace enough to repent if he will. And since it is in his own power, he may take his own time for it, and need not fear to satisfy himself with the pleasures or advantages of sin.

What is to be feared, to restrain them here from the practice of ungodliness and unrighteousness ? unless they will say, that common grace being abused, may be withdrawn, and the sinner by the judgment of God given up to obduration. Here would be some danger indeed, if that obduration did irresistibly determine the sinner's will to such wickedness : but there is no fear of that ; for, by their principles, the will cannot be so determined, either to good or evil ; it is inconsistent with that liberty which is essential to it, and which it cannot want while it is a will. Therefore no light can be withdrawn, no hardness can be contracted ; but the will must still be at liberty, to turn to God or not to turn, to repent or not to repent, at pleasure. They have security,

from their principles, to go on in their evil ways, till they be in danger to live no longer ; and then it is not a peradventure, if God will give them repentance ; they have enough for that in their own power, and may repent and turn to God when they list. Accordingly, one of the prime asserters of this doctrine, being admonished of his debauches, made this return : “ I am a child of the devil to-day, but I have free-will, and to-morrow I will make myself a child of God.”

(14.) It destroys justification of the Gospel, all justification of sinners, which the Gospel gives notice of : it will have us justified, not by the righteousness of Christ, or of God, but our own righteousness ; by our own righteousness, in the fullest and grossest sense ; by a righteousness which is in ourselves, and of ourselves, and by ourselves : by our own acts or works, not performed by the help of any special grace, but by the power of free-will.

Their justification is thus stated : The act of faith (or sincere obedience, or inherent holiness,) though it be imperfect, yet is accepted of God instead of a perfect righteousness ; and so by it we are justified, as if it were a perfect righteousness. Now those acts of faith, or obedience, or whatever they call it, which they will have to be the righteousness by which we are justified, is not of grace neither : it is not the gift of God, he never purposed or promised to give it unto any : it is not the purchase of Christ, he never merited it for any : it is not the work of the Spirit of grace, he does no more towards it in those that have it, than in those that never have it.

So that the righteousness whereby they are justified, is so far from being that which Christ performed, that he did not so much as merit it ; so far from being the righteousness of God, that he does not give it ; so far from being the issue of God's free grace, that it is the product of our free-will. How sinners are justified, the apostle declares in the text, and Tit. iii. 7, and Rom. iii. 24. But by this doctrine, we are so far from being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, that we are justified without the redemption that is in Christ Jesus ; not freely, not by his grace, but by acts of our own free-will, passing for a perfect righteousness ; when they are no such thing, nor can upon any ground be so accounted.

(15.) It tends to destroy the covenant of grace ; to make it a covenant without grace, I had almost said an ungracious compact ; such, wherein the Lord shows himself less gracious to men, than if they had been left under the covenant of works ; and under which, they are more liable to sin and damnation, than if it had never been made : which thus appears.

The covenant of works required perfect obedience ; and man, being created after the image of God, with holiness and righteousness, was able

to perform that perfect obedience which was the condition of that covenant ; but transgressing it by that first act of disobedience, in eating the forbidden fruit, he lost the image of God, wherein his strength for observing the covenant consisted. The Lord, they say, deprived him of that holiness and righteousness, and thereby of ability to perform the condition. Now they say, a man cannot sin in not doing that which he is not able to perform, though he be disabled by his own fault ; and so in this state of disability, he was not capable of sinning, and consequently was not liable to condemnation.

If things had continued in this state, none could have been damned for actual sin, but Adam only ; and they say, for original sin none are damned.

But the covenant of grace made a sad alteration in man's state and circumstances ; for therein, sufficient grace being offered to all, whereby they may avoid sin if they will, they hereupon become capable of sinning, as they were not before ; and in danger of damnation, when before they were safe. So that their covenant of grace makes man's condition worse than it was, instead of relieving him, so far is it from being truly gracious ; even the supposed grace of it, brings him more within the compass of sin and damnation than he was without it.

(16.) It cashiers the Spirit of grace, and all its special offices and operations. To pass by those who ascribe nothing at all to the Spirit ; those who attribute most to it, so far as I can discern, will have us beholding to him for nothing at all, but common light, such as the children of darkness have ; and so weak and powerless, that the will needs not follow it, is not determined, nor effectually moved or inclined by it. The Spirit of grace (with them) has no immediate influence upon the will or affections ; and this is all, too, which the mind has from the Spirit ; it moves neither will nor affections, but remotely, but by virtue of this light : so that the Spirit of grace does nothing in the whole soul, mind, will, or affections, but what this light amounts to. No more is needful, either for the first rise of holiness, or for the increase and growth, or the strengthening and continuance of it.

At first, the will, by no other help than that of moral grace, (which pretends to no inward operation of the Spirit, but only this common illumination ; for the proposal is by the word without, and the enforcing of motives and arguments, is by the ministry of man,) determines itself to turn to God ; and so, without more ado, is converted and regenerated. There is the rise of holiness ; afterwards, by determining itself again and again, it acquires a habit, and that is a free and permanent quality :^a the will exercises, increases, strengthens, and confirms holiness, as it

^a Hoornb. tom. i. p. 316.

began it, by determining itself: it has power to do this in and of itself, and nothing else does, or can do it. The Spirit, neither by this light, nor by any other gracious influence, does, or can determine it; nor does the will need anything for the exercise of its power, but only light to make a sufficient discovery of the duty or object propounded. Thus all the motions, operations, assistances of the Spirit of grace, are confined to this light: all its healing, strengthening, quickening, and establishing virtue, amounts to no more than this: the soul neither has, nor needs any spiritual life, health, strength, or motion, either first or last, but what this does effect; and yet it effects no such thing in far the most that have it: for those have it, no less than others, who are, in the style of Scripture, not only in the dark, but darkness. And if it have any more effect upon others, than it has upon the children of darkness, yet this efficacy it must have from free-will; not of itself, nor of the Spirit, (whom they call its author,) otherwise it would be equally effectual in all, since all have it equally, and the Spirit is supposed to give it equally to all. And if the Spirit of Christ give it not its efficacy and virtue, but it owes this only to free-will; it is of no worth as it proceeds from the Spirit, of no more value than a fruitless and ineffectual thing; of no virtue, and so of no value, but what it derives from man's will.

Now what honour is it to the Spirit of Christ, to ascribe to him a fruitless, a worthless thing? They seem to honour the Spirit as much, who will borrow no light at all from him, but count the light of reason, with the help of the written word, sufficient: and what great difference is there betwixt them who ascribe nothing at all to the Spirit, and those that ascribe to him that which is nothing worth? That which is fruitless and ineffectual, of no virtue, of no value, but what it owes to man's will, may as well be ascribed to human reason, as the Divine Spirit.

(17.) It tends to destroy the mediation of Christ: that liberty, which they make essential to man's will, makes Christ incapable of being the Mediator between God and man, and so tends to ruin all the concerns of God and man in Christ's mediation. For, either the will of Christ was undeclinably fixed upon that which is good and holy, so that it could not incline to disobedience and wickedness: and if so, it had not that indifferency to good and evil, in which they place the liberty of man's will, and count it essential thereto, so that it cannot be a human will without it; and then Christ, wanting that which is essential to human nature, was not indeed a man, nor did assume our nature; consequently could not be the mediator between God and man, being not the man Christ Jesus.

Or, if his will was not undeclinably fixed on that which was good, but left in a state of indifferency to that or the contrary; so that he might have observed his Father's will, or not observed it; might have

loved him, or not loved him ; might have fulfilled all righteousness, or not fulfilled it : and if he might have sinned, or not sinned, then he was not God ; for he that is God cannot sin.

So that as they state the freedom of man's will, either he was not man, or he was not God ; and either way he could not be mediator, who must be both. Thus all the advantages sinners have by his mediation perish ; and all the glory the Lord designed to himself thereby, is blasted by the extravagant doctrine of free-will.

(18.) It defaces redemption by Christ, and leaves little or no place, or no necessity, either of satisfaction or merit, in his obedience and sufferings.

1. He did not merit faith, or regeneration, or holiness, or perseverance, for all, or for any particular persons. They declare expressly, that it is foolishly said, that Christ procured faith or regeneration for any : their principles engage them to maintain this ; for if he merited these for any, it would have been necessary that these should have been wrought in some of the redeemed ; it would have been necessary, that some or other of them should be believers, regenerate and sanctified, and stedfast unto the end ; but all such necessity they deny, as inconsistent with that freedom of man's will which they contend for. It must not be under any necessity, either from the decree of God, or the purchase of Christ : faith, repentance, sanctification, perseverance, must be mere contingencies, in respect of those former causes ; or else they could not be free acts in respect of the will, their next cause. Christ, by his death and merit, must not be the author or cause of these, though there be no pardon or life without them ; so much must not be ascribed to his merits, lest too little be left to free-will.

2. Upon the same account, Christ did not merit pardon or salvation for any one certainly ; and so his death makes neither the means nor the end certain. After he had done and suffered so much, been obedient unto death, made his soul an offering for sin, and obtained eternal redemption by his blood ; yet there was no necessity that any one sinner should have pardon and life ; no certainty, that any one would be pardoned and saved : Christ left this altogether uncertain, and not to be determined but by man's free-will. After Christ had finished the work of redemption, as all might have been saved, so all might have been damned ; there was no value, efficacy, merit or satisfaction, in Christ's death or obedience, to make more sure work : it was left at uncertainty, as it were at hap-hazard, whether salvation or damnation should carry it ; and free-will alone must have the honour to determine it." Christ, they say, procured by his death a power to destroy unbelievers : so that he no more purchased salvation than damnation : he is, by virtue of his death and obedience, no more a redeemer than a destroyer of mankind :

whether he should prove a saviour of any, or a destroyer of all, is left to the arbitrement of free-will.^a There was, they say, no other necessity, nor advantage, nor value, in the death of Christ, but what might have been perfectly saved, though all the redeemed had perished eternally.

They declare for an universal redemption, and that equally extended to all and every one, and so would seem to magnify it more than others: yet, indeed, it is no other redemption of all, but such as is very well consistent with the damnation of all and every one. Christ loved them all, and washed them from their sins in his own blood; yet for all that, every one of them might have been damned. Though they say, he died and shed his blood for the whole world; yet there is no value, efficacy, or merit, in the death of Christ, in the blood of God, to secure pardon and salvation, or any saving advantage, to any one person in the world. All might have perished, for anything he had effected by the work of redemption; and all had perished certainly, if he had procured no more for them, than the doctrine of free-will can admit of; not one of them can ever come to heaven, if Christ did not procure more for them, and more effectually, than their doctrine will suffer them to acknowledge, or give him any thanks for.

3. If he did not purchase pardon and life certainly for any, nor faith and holiness, or other such necessary requisites thereto, what then did he procure? Why, he procured, they say, a covenant or promise, that all should have pardon and life, if they would believe and obey him.

But if, antecedently to Christ's undertaking, the Lord had declared his willingness to save such as believe and obey, there was no need of such a promise; and so Christ procured a needless thing, or nothing.

Or, if he did not purchase the conditions of this covenant, (*viz.*, grace to believe and obey,) unless it was in the power of their own wills, without Christ, to perform the conditions; still he procured for them as good as nothing.

But if it were otherwise, yet those who would have us to ascribe to the death and obedience of Christ nothing but this, would not have us obliged to ascribe to it either satisfaction or merit. No satisfaction, unless it be to his Father's will, not to his justice in this sense. The obedience and death of Christ was so fully satisfying, so very acceptable to his Father's will, he was so well pleased with it, that hereupon he entered into this covenant. There was no need of other satisfaction than this; it was enough, if he did merit it; sufficient, if his righteousness did deserve such a promise for us.

Nay, there was no need of merit: for, as the Lord was so well pleased with Abraham's faith and obedience, as [that] for his sake he vouchsafed his posterity many favours, though the patriarch did not

^a Grevincov. in Ames. Coron. p. 142.

merit so much ; so the Lord might be so well pleased with the obedience and sufferings of Christ, as for his sake to make such a promise, without any merit obliging him to it. Thus, way is made to strip redemption both of satisfaction and merit, without which it is, it can be no redemption indeed ; the name may be retained, but the thing denied ; all necessity of it, and all advantage by it too, but what is left to the arbitrement of free-will.

(19.) It is inconsistent with the perfections and attributes of God ; with his mercy, power, wisdom, truth, and faithfulness, with his sovereignty and government of the world, and other Divine excellences. But, that I may not stay too long on this subject, let me insist only on these mentioned.

1. It defaces the mercy of God, and makes it in effect no mercy. They pretend indeed to represent God under such a notion as will endear him, and render him lovely to the world, upon the account of his mercy and goodness, the extensiveness and universality thereof ; but when their pretensions are strictly and impartially examined, they prove quite of another tendency ; that mercy which they ascribe to God, is without an object, or without effect, or without grace ; a mercy which is not an honour to him, nor an endearment of him to others.

1. It is a mercy without an object ; a mercy not for any certain person, but for qualities, which are no objects of mercy : a mercy for some, when it appears not who they are or whether there will be any such. A mercy for nobody, which pretends to be for all and every one, when it is not for any one. This is their antecedent mercy, whereby they pretend that he loves all that believe and obey, before he knows who they are, and is uncertain whether ever any such will be. It speaks^a a respect to those qualities, but no love or good-will for any particular person.

2. It is a mercy without effect : they ascribe to him a will of universal salvation ; when they discern it can be no other than a mere velleity, an incomplete intention, a weak, ineffectual desire, a faint and fruitless wishing of such general happiness, when he knows it will never be effected, and is resolved not to take the course to effect it. This is such a mercy, as jostles out and clashes with his other perfections, and is inconsistent with his knowledge, power, sincerity, wisdom, blessedness, and mercy itself in the true notion of it.

With his knowledge ; for who will desire and design that, which he knows will never be effected ? With his power ; for who will not effect that, which he really intends and designs, if he be able ? With his sincerity ; for what ingenuous person will pretend to desire and design

^a bespeaks.

that which he never means to bring about? With his wisdom ; for who will propose to himself an end, and never intend the means which are proper, and alone sufficient to obtain it? With his blessedness ; for to fall short continually of what one desires and intends, is an unhappiness. With the nature of Divine mercy and goodness ; for that is not real goodness, which does no good, or not the good it makes show of. That is not saving mercy indeed, which leaves the objects of it miserable, when it can relieve them ; that wishes them well, but lets them perish eternally. But that which they ascribe to God, is such a mercy, as can well digest the everlasting misery of all mankind : such a love, such a goodness, as could be satisfied, if not one person in the world should be saved.

They decry the doctrine of their opposers, as that which straitens the mercy of God, and confines it to a few ; whereas indeed it makes salvation sure to very many. But by their principles, for any mercy there is in God, all men may be damned ; nay, which is more, no man can be saved. By all the mercy they ascribe to God, no man can escape damnation ; all being left to the arbitrement and indifferency of man's corrupt and degenerate will ; which, without other help than mercy in their way provides, will certainly ruin them eternally. Mercy, they say, will save all that believe, and none else ; but this mercy intends not to work saving faith in any ; there is no decree for that, it must be left to man's will ; and if that be not better to him herein than the mercy of God, he must unavoidably perish. All must be damned, unless free-will help them by its own power, without any effectual assistance that mercy prepared for them from eternity.

3. It is a mercy without grace : a mercy which is not free and gracious, which will not express itself to any, but such as are worthy, such as have some merit, or some motive to oblige him to be merciful. And being a mercy that is not free and gracious, whatever mercy of this nature they ascribe to him, we can never be saved by grace.

Nay, since it is not grace, it is not mercy indeed ; no mercy that the Lord will own, or sinners can have any advantage by : it is affection of their own, not that Divine excellency which he glories in, and glorifies upon lost sinners : for that which saves sinners is free mercy, and free mercy is nothing but grace. So that, if we be saved without grace, we are saved without mercy too, that which is so indeed ; and if they have no salvation for sinners, but that which is without grace and free mercy, they leave them none at all.

That they admit of no free mercy, no grace in God for sinners, appears, in that they make his first purpose of love (the decree, which comprises all the mercy he had from eternity for particular persons) to have its rise from faith or works foreseen. He foresees, that when it is

left to the free-will, to the choice of all, these will of themselves, without Divine determining power, believe and love him ; others will not ; and, therefore, he will love, and purposes to save these, and not others : and so he loves them not freely, but because they oblige him : he loves them, *i. e.*, he purposes to save them, because they love him first. Thus that which God foresees in man, is the condition of the mercy and favour he intends ; and such a condition, as is indeed the cause, the motive, and in the ancient sense of the word, the merit of his favour and mercy ; and so they leave no free mercy in God for sinners ; and sinners, being capable of no mercy at all, but what is free, they leave in him no mercy at all for them. This is, in the apostle's sense, Gal. v. 4, to fall from grace, to deny, to renounce all grace, all free mercy of God which the Gospel discovers. The doctrine of free-will obliges them to disclaim all the mercy of God, by which any sinner can be saved.

2. This destroys the prescience of God : though they be concerned to maintain this, as well as we, and pretend to do it ; yet their doctrine is utterly inconsistent with it, and makes it impossible for him to foreknow certainly anything that depends upon man's will, and so bereaves him of the certain foreknowledge of those things, which are of greatest moment and consequence, both to God and man. For example :

He cannot certainly foresee, whether any will have the Gospel ; the preaching of it depends on man's will. And so, whether any will use the light of nature well ; whether any will have moral grace, any rational advice or excitement by the word : nor whether any will repent and believe, whether any will be justified or sanctified, whether any will persevere to the end, whether any one will be saved, nor whether any would be redeemed ; whether Christ would be put to death, or anything else, to which the concurrence of man's will is necessary. This is plain, because by their principles, the will of man is always indifferent to act or not to act ; and so before, and until it act, it cannot but be uncertain whether it will act or not : (nothing can make it certain, no decree, no act of God, without destroying its liberty ;) and being uncertain, it cannot be certainly foreknown.

All that ever I could hear in answer to this, was only, that God's knowledge is infinite : and though we cannot comprehend, how that which is uncertain can be certainly known ; yet an infinite understanding can reach it, and have the certain knowledge of that which is uncertain.

But this makes it more evidently impossible : for the more perfect any knowledge is, the farther it is from error and mistake. So infinite knowledge must be farthest of all from erring ; but to know that as certain, which is not certain, is not to know, but to err ; not to apprehend things as they are, but to mistake and misapprehend them, to have false and erroneous apprehensions of them. As they state the freedom of the

will, God can have no certain foreknowledge of those things, without false and erroneous conceptions thereof. They leave him nothing here but conjectures, or nothing but mistakes and error.

3. It impeaches the truth and faithfulness of God ; overthrows the truth and certainty of his word, in all the parts of it ; leaves no certainty of his truth and faithfulness in prophecies, promises, threatenings, assertions, contained in Scripture. It cannot be certain, by their principles, that the prophecies will be accomplished, the promises fulfilled, or the threatenings executed ; and so it must be uncertain, whether they are true or false : there is no certainty that they will prove true, they may as well prove false. The same must be said of many assertions too ; there is no necessity, no certainty, that they will prove true, *v. g.*, Cant. i. 4 ; Jer. xxxi. 18 ; Lam. v. 21.

By this doctrine, there can be no necessity that they will turn, whatever course the Lord take to turn them ; or that they will run after him, what course soever he take to draw them : and so those assertions are not necessarily true, but may prove false ; and so may those, and the like to those, Psal. cxix. 33, 34. This is manifest also in those predictions and promises, where the concurrence of man's will is requisite : for as they state its freedom, there can be no certainty, which way it will incline and determine itself, whether with the word, and according to the tenor of the prediction, or against it. Nor will they allow, that God can make sure of it, or take any course that will so determine it, that the accomplishment of his word shall not be defeated. For when he has done what he can to incline it that way which his word requires, that it may prove true ; yet it is, and must be left free to incline the other way, and make his word prove false. Let us clear this by some instances, in each of those parts of the word, wherein the truth and faithfulness of God is (if anywhere) eminently concerned. There is an ancient prophecy, of the " calling of the Gentiles," Gen. ix. 27, " God shall persuade Japhet," *i. e.*, the Gentiles who descended from him, and they shall " join themselves to the people of God." Now by the doctrine of free-will, the Lord is to do nothing that can make it certain, that Japhet's posterity shall comply herewith : he is only to propose it to them by the preaching of the Gospel, and leave their wills in an indifferency, to yield hereto, or not to yield. So that it must be a mere contingency, whether this prophecy would be accomplished or no : if it might prove true, so it might prove false. The same may be said of those expressions, John x. 16 ; Acts xxviii. 26 ; John xii. 32. The truth and faithfulness of God in these and other prophecies is evidently exposed, past all security their principles can possibly give.

So it is likewise in the promises and the covenant of grace, styled everlasting ; everlasting truth and faithfulness being engaged for the

performance of it, Jer. xxxii. 39, 40 ; Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27. Every clause of this may prove false, and not be fulfilled to any one person in the world : for, with them, the Lord does nothing which will certainly change the hearts of men, but only offers arguments to move them to renew their own hearts ; and so leaves it to the arbitrement of their own wills, whether ever the promise shall take effect or not. Now, if it were possible that it should prove true, that man should make himself a new heart ; yet it is more likely that it should prove false, because man's corrupt will, to which it is left, is more inclined to make it false than true. Take it at the best, to make the truth of God in the everlasting covenant to depend on man's will, supposing it indifferent, is bad enough : for if it be indifferent whether God shall be true or no, it must be indifferent whether he be God or no.

Thus it will be, not only as to the promises made to us, but also those which are made to Christ, Isa. xlix. 6, 7 ; and liii. 10 ; and lv. 5 ; Psal. ii. 8 ; and lxxii. 8—11 ; Jer. xxiii. 5, 6. These, and the like, may all prove false : man's will, to which it is left, may so carry it, and this unavoidably, that not one of them shall be made good. Nor will they allow the Lord to take any course with man's will, or have any such influence on it, as will be sure to prevent this, or make it any way certain, that his truth herein shall not fail : he must not determine the will that way which is necessary to secure his truth in performing his promises. Nor in the threatening neither, Rev. xvii. 16, 17. Whatever be said of God's putting it into their hearts, yet they will not have us imagine, that the Lord will effectually determine their wills to this ; but these must be left free and indifferent, either to love or hate the whore ; either to do what is foretold, or not to do it ; to make it true, or to make it false.

Now, if these parts of the word of God may prove false, or if they be not certainly true, all the rest will be suspected, the truth and certainty of all the Scripture is overthrown : if the truth or faithfulness of God may fail us here, where can we be sure of it ? The glory of this Divine perfection is utterly defaced. The truth and faithfulness of God is the ground of all Divine faith. We believe God, because he is infallibly true, and what he says, cannot prove false : but it may prove false by their doctrine, and so the ground of all Christian, of all Divine faith is quite razed, and the foundation of all religion is hereby undermined, yea, quite blown up.

4. It destroys the government of God, as to the greatest concerns of the world. By their hypothesis, the will of man is not, cannot be ruled by him : he must not touch it immediately ; it is a thing so sacred, that a touch, even of God, may violate it. He must not inspire it with any new quality, nor move it by any real influence, but only make his

addresses to it at a distance, by proposing an object, and offering motives and arguments : and if this will not do, (as it does not, nor alone ever can do, in the concerns of salvation,) he must leave it to itself, to do what it list. Now that which is left to do as it list, is not ruled, it is not under government.

They will have the Lord to treat it as an orator, not as a sovereign ruler. The will (with them) seems to have a sovereignty exempted from the sovereignty of God ; not subordinate to it, if not above it ; not subjected to the sovereign government of God, further than to do what it list.

Hereby God is excluded from the government of the world. Men are governed by their wills, that is the ruling, the commanding faculty ; therefore if the will be not under his government, men will not be under it, nor the rest of the world, so far as it is governed by men. If he dispose not of that which orders the rest, what is there left at his disposal ? All the affairs of the world, which depend upon human conduct, will be governed more by the will of man, than by the will, power, and providence of God : by the will of man independently, as if he were God ; but by the Lord of heaven and earth only precariously, and at the pleasure of man's will, as if he were a subject, an underling, an inferior creature.

5. It denies the almighty power of God, will not admit him to be omnipotent, and his power infinite. It is not infinite, if it be bounded and limited ; yet man's will bounds and limits the Divine power. By their principles, the Lord can no way deal with the will, but so that it may resist him, and render all his actings and operations on it ineffectual : he cannot prevail with it in anything so far, but that it may at once stand out and repel his motions, render every Divine attempt upon it successless : when he has done all that can be done by the power of his grace, the will may be too hard for him ; it must be always left to do what it list. He cannot save a man, how much soever he intends or desires it, unless it be the will's pleasure : nor can he take any course to make the will pleased with it. He can neither so change the faculty, nor so represent the object, but the will may still reject it. He cannot work faith in him, nor bring him to repentance, nor create holiness in his heart ; nor can he continue him in a state of holiness, unless it please the will to submit ; nor can he bring it to submit so, but that it may refuse, when all is done that his grace can do. He can make no particular decrees concerning man, that are positive and peremptory, because he cannot master man's will : his purposes must be conditional and respective to free-will. He cannot make good his own word, not verify what he asserts, nor accomplish his own prophecies, nor perform his promises, if man's will stand in his way : nor can he clear

his way of it in any method, but what the will of man may defeat. He cannot accomplish his desires and intentions, if man's will resist him, and can never put the will out of a capacity of resisting and opposing, while it is a will. It is essential to the will, to be always able to resist; and if they stand not to this, they yield all, Psal. cxxxv. 6. No, must they say, there are innumerable things which God cannot do, unless man pleases. [In] Phil. iii. *ult.*, [we read that] Christ has a power, whereby he "can subdue all things," &c. No, must they say, the things wherein he is most concerned of all other in this world, the wills of men, he cannot subdue to himself. [Contrary to] Prov. xxi. 1, No, must they say, neither the hearts of kings, nor of any other men, are thus in the Lord's hands: whatever he does to turn the current of them, they may run in the old channel, and keep their own course for all that: it is not whithersoever he will that they turn, but whithersoever they will, they run, for all his turning.

(20.) It idolises man's will, makes it in divers respects equal with, or above him.

It seems to subject God, and make him an underling to man's will; and that in respect of his will, his word, his grace, his design. Some of these are apparent by what is already said: let me only insist on one particular. It makes God dependent on the will of man, even for his glory; where it is most intolerable for the Majesty of heaven to be dependent, and most inconsistent with his infinite perfection and happiness. The Lord, in all the operations of his grace, leaves the will indifferent either to comply or resist. This leaves it to the determination and arbitrement of man's will, whether God shall have the glory of that, by which he designs to make himself most glorious. It must be in the power of man's will to defeat God there, where he intends most of all to glorify himself; to spoil and deface the glory of his grace and love, where the riches thereof are most displayed: and this is in the greatest and most signal instances of it, and where each person in the Godhead is most eminently concerned.

Whatever decree or purpose of love and grace the Lord had from eternity, to save lost sinners, it must be at the determination of man's will, whether any one shall be saved or freed from misery. After the work of redemption finished by Christ, it must be at the pleasure of man's will, whether any one shall be actually redeemed. After the Spirit of grace has done what can be done, for changing the hearts, and renewing the natures of sinners; yet not one of them shall be changed or sanctified, unless they list.

So that, unless man will, when he is left indifferent to will or not to will, electing grace, redeeming grace, renewing grace, shall be of no effect, shall never arrive at what it tends to. And if it be rendered

of none effect, it is rendered inglorious, it is defeated, defaced, and the glory of it turned into shame. But so it must be, if man will; all the grace of God must be in vain, and all the glory of it vanish.

Thus is God evidently made dependent on man's will, even for his glory, that of his grace; and he will as soon be subjected to the will of man in anything, in all things, as [in] the greatest concerns of his glory.

The grace of God, where it should appear in its greatest lustre, and was designed for the greatest honour of Father, Son, and Spirit; must wait as a handmaid on man's degenerate will, and be ordered at its arbitrement, and stand to its pleasure, whether it shall come to anything or nothing; whether it shall have any glory or none.

Let them believe it who can; I can never believe that the doctrine is of God, which offers such an intolerable indignity to him: if there were no other argument against it, this seems enough to me.

IV. The fourth head I propounded, was to give an account of the objections they make, and the prejudices they have against the doctrine of grace; and to show, [that] the worst they can object against it is as chargeable upon the doctrine of free-will. So that their embracing it seems to proceed from neglect of impartial consideration, and some want of the exercise of that reason which they so much magnify. That uses not to be accounted a rational and considerate^a invention, which serves not the turn for which it was devised, but runs men into the same difficulties which they seek to avoid. Let us see briefly in two or three of the chief instances, whether this be not the case here.

1. They charge us with making God the author of sin: (Tilenus says this was the reason that turned him off to the Remonstrants.) We disclaim and abhor it, and condemn those who assert any such thing. They say, it is the consequence of our doctrine, which will have things so ordered by the decrees and providence of God, that sin is thereby unavoidable. We say, if God be made the author of sin on this account, their own doctrine is to be charged with making him so, by as good consequence. And so they must acknowledge that they wrong us, or else condemn themselves and their own principles.

That they are as liable to this charge, if it be just, does thus appear. He that puts men in those circumstances, wherein he foresees that they will certainly sin, orders things so, that sin becomes unavoidable: but by their doctrine, the Lord decrees to place men, and by his providence disposes them in those circumstances, wherein he foresees they will certainly sin; *e. g.*, the Lord foresaw, that if Adam was created so and so, and set in such circumstances, he would certainly sin and fall by it:

^a well-considered.

yet foreseeing this, the Lord decreed to create him so, and dispose of him in such circumstances, and actually did it. He foresees, that if Peter be put in these circumstances wherein he was found in the high priest's hall, he would certainly deny his Master: but he decreed thus to dispose of him, and by his providence actually did it. This is the plain import of their doctrine concerning a conditional foreknowledge in God, as will be evident to any that understand it. It was an invention of the Jesuits [of] the last age, to make good their doctrine of free-will and moral grace; and to avoid the supposed inconveniences of the opposite doctrine; and is commonly embraced by those who agree with the Jesuits in their opinion about the power of the will: but a very imprudent and unhappy device it was, since it involves them in those very absurdities which it was devised to avoid.

2. They charge our doctrine, as making God unmerciful, because he gives not to the greatest part of mankind, that grace which is necessary to salvation: whereas we deny not that God gives that grace which they count sufficient; we grant he gives all that grace which is necessary by their doctrine, even to reprobates. But we say, their doctrine, how much soever it triumphs in advancing and extending God's love to mankind; yet it makes him far more unmerciful, in that it will not have God to vouchsafe that grace which is necessary or sufficient for salvation, special grace, to any at all. Mere suasive grace, which leaves it to the choice of man's unrenewed will, whether it will turn to God or no, which they say is all that God vouchsafes to any, did never alone, can never of itself save any man: and so they will have, not only some, but all men to perish, for any grace that God gives them. Whatever ostentation it make of magnifying Divine mercy, yet what doctrine can be more unmerciful, than that which leaves all men to be damned, unless their free-will do something more for them than the grace of God?

3. They say, we impeach the sincerity of God, when he by his word calls such as perish to repentance, that they may be saved; and yet has decreed not to give them repentance, but to damn them: so that it is certain (while those invitations and offers are made in the word) that they shall not repent and be saved. This, they say, makes the word and the ministry of it delusive, and no better than simulation, making show of that to sinners which is never intended, and which it is impossible they should have.

The ground of this charge, is a certainty that such shall never repent and be saved: but their own principles make this no less certain: for they say, God foresees from eternity that such will never repent, and so shall never be saved: and what he foresees (his foreknowledge being certain and infallible) will as certainly come to pass, and is as impos-

sible not to be, as that which he decrees. Nay, they say, that the Lord, upon his foreknowledge that such would not repent, did decree from eternity to damn them, and never decreed to give them repentance, nor any grace or aid that would effectually bring them to repentance; no, nor any but what he certainly foresaw would be ineffectual. So that here also they must either justify our doctrine, as to this charge, or condemn their own.

4. They say, our doctrine makes God unjust and cruel, in exacting that from men which they are not able to do; and condemning them for not doing that which he gives them not strength to do; *v. g.*, for requiring sinners to believe and turn to God, and condemning them for not complying with him herein; when he knows they cannot do it of themselves, and when he gives them no grace to empower them for it. They make large harangues on this subject, tending to render their opposites^a odious; and set them off with such similitudes and illustrations as make impression on weak minds, which are more apt to be taken with words, than to weigh and consider things. Whereas after all, the plain truth is, there is no doctrine that I know of more chargeable with this than their own. For it is very evident in Scripture, and in the nature of the thing, that their suasive grace does not give sinners sufficient power to believe and turn to God; it cannot subdue the corruption of the heart opposing this: it pretends not to give any new spiritual principle of life or strength for these effects; it leaves the will in its natural impotency and corruption, to do as it list. And therefore, since, by their doctrine, he gives sinners no more power but this, and yet requires them to believe and turn to Christ, and condemns them for not doing it; he condemns them for want of that which he gives not sufficient power to do.

Can any one imagine, who will not offer plain violence to a multitude of expressions in Scripture, that mere moral suasion, which does not so much as move the will out of its indifferent posture, can quicken those that are dead in sins and trespasses? can take away the heart of stone, and give hearts of flesh; or write his laws in them; or make those hearts that are desperately wicked, to become holy and heavenly? can form new creatures of the old man, and make old things pass away, and all things become new? can give strength and life to those who can do nothing, are without strength and life?

He that cannot believe this, in opposition to an hundred of such passages in the word of God, must believe that their doctrine, concerning free-will and moral grace, makes God to condemn more than any [other] for not doing that which he gives them not power to do.

^a opponents.

5. They say, we destroy the liberty of the will, by bringing it under a necessity of inclining one way, and not leaving it indifferent to incline the other, or to suspend its acts; *e. g.*, when God intends to convert a sinner, and puts forth the power of his grace for this purpose, it is necessary that the will incline no other way than his grace moves it.

But if this destroy the liberty of the will, their own doctrine overthrows it: for they teach, that God, from eternity, before any act of his will, foresaw which way every man's will, in such and such circumstances, would incline. He foreknows certainly and infallibly, that in those circumstances it will incline this way, and not the other. Now if he know that certainly, it must be certain and of necessity: for to know that as certain, which is not certain, is not to know, but to mistake, to apprehend a thing otherwise than it is. And if the will might or could incline otherwise than he foresaw, his foreknowledge would not be infallible: for that excludes, not only actual error, but a possibility of it.

If then it be true from eternity, that the will must incline this one way, it is not indifferent to incline that way or another; and so its indifferency, its freedom from a necessity to incline but this one way, is gone by their own principles. They must either grant, that the liberty of man's will is consistent with a necessity of inclining one way and not another, or yield that their own doctrine destroys its liberty.

Whether they will be so ingenuous or no, it is very certain that some necessity may very well consist with liberty in the freest agents. God is necessarily good, and yet freely: so are the saints and angels in heaven; they cannot but be holy, and act holily, yet they are so, and do so freely. The devils and damned in hell, are necessarily wicked, they cannot be other[wise]; and yet they are so, and act wickedness freely. Wicked men on earth, that are habitually and judicially hardened in wickedness, they are necessarily evil, and cannot but sin, and yet they sin freely. So that this conceit, though it be a fundamental doctrine with them, and the main weight of their cause lies on it, that liberty is inconsistent with necessity, is against the sense, reason, and experience of heaven, and earth, and hell.

Objection. If salvation be of grace, it must be a free gift, offered and given freely. But we see in Scripture (and the promises of saving mercy make it plain) that it is offered, and so given upon terms and conditions required of those that will be saved. The promises are many of them expressly conditional; and so will the covenant of grace be, of which the promises are but several articles. Now that which is not given or promised, but upon terms and conditions, seems not to be given or offered freely; the more conditional, the less free and gracious.

Answer. The offers of salvation, the promises of saving mercies, notwithstanding any conditionalness in them, any terms annexed, are free

and gracious, upon a manifold account : for in many cases, conditions or terms do not hinder a grant or promise from being free.

1. If the condition be so only in respect of outward form and manner of proposal, not properly and really : for then it seems to be a condition, but is not strictly. So here : Gospel promises are conditional *κατὰ τὸ φαίνεσθαι*, not *κατὰ τὸ εἶναι*, *quoad externam formam et modum proponendi*, not *proprie et quoad rigorem* : as to manner of proposal they seem conditional ; but examine them by the laws of conditions, and they will be found rather absolute. If the denomination must be taken *à majori*, or *à potiori*, if the number or weight will carry it, bring them to the test, examine why they should be counted conditional or absolute ; and it will be found, that in more respects, and for more weighty considerations, they ought to pass for absolute, rather than conditional, in the Pelagian sense ; so [there is] no reason to question their freeness.

2. If the condition be our duty. If such, as^a when we perform it, we do nothing but what we owe, and the promiser owes nothing to us for doing it ; then, if he promise anything, he promises freely. It is *promissio indebita pro opere debito*, “a promise not due for a work of obligation,” that is, *gratuita*, “gratuitous.” That which is not *ex debito*, “due,” is *gratuito*, “gratuitous.” These are opposed, Rom. iv. 4. That which is no way due, if promised, is freely promised. Now all that is required, is our duty ; we owe it ; and for all that we can do, God owes us nothing. *Debitum non reddit in Deum : Præmium non est divini juris naturalis* ; his nature engages him not to reward his creatures. That which he does this way is of free-will. *Deus ad præmium nemini est obligatus*, “God is under no obligation to reward any.” Rom. xi. 35. Eternal life had not been due to Adam, if he had performed perfect obedience ; it was only the promise [that] entitled him to it. If not due to him, much less to us ; he might vouchsafe no more reward to us than to the inferior creatures. And since nothing is due from God, what he bestows or promises, he does it freely. When we have done all, we are but unprofitable servants, we have but done our duty, we can challenge no reward : there is none due ; therefore, when he promises any, he does it freely. The condition being but our duty, makes nothing due ; no more than reward is due to him that pays his debts.

3. If the condition be inconsiderable, compared with what is promised. Suppose one should promise his tenant a thousand pounds per annum, if he will pay him a pepper-corn ; would any say, this promise is not free, because of such a condition ? Whatever the Lord requires of us, is no more than this, compared with what he promises to us. Believing and active obeying are not so much as suffering ; yet if the

^a that.

Lord should have made sufferings the conditions of promises, they would have been free in this respect: because the greatest sufferings, (such as Paul's, and those in the primitive times,) would be small and inconsiderable, compared with the glory promised, Rom. viii. 18; 2 Cor. iv. 17. Now if the hardest conditions be so inconsiderable, what are the smallest? even nothing compared with what is promised, grace, glory, God himself, &c.

4. If the condition be not so much for the advantage of the promiser, as to make us capable of the thing promised. That which is not so much for the advantage of the promiser, as for his to whom the promise is made, must needs be from free bounty; the promiser herein more respecting the good of another, than his own. What can be more of grace? Or if the favour promised be not feasible, without that which is propounded as a condition of the proposal: if it be necessary to make capable of that which is promised, then it is rather a direction how the favour may be attained, than a strict condition. It does no way prejudice the freedom of the promise, but rather renders it more free and gracious. But such are many of those things, which the Lord prescribes as conditions; they are more for our advantage than his; he expects, he gets little or nothing by our performance of them, Psal. xvi. 2; Job xxii. 2; Job xxxv. 7, 8. What advantage has the Lord by our mourning, sense of our lost condition, apprehensions of the burden of sin, hungerings and thirstings after righteousness? Why then does he annex these to the promises; but because without them we are not capable of those mercies which he is willing to bestow? Christ comes to seek and save what was lost, Matt. xviii. 11; Luke xix. 10. Why is this condition added? those that are lost, sensible of their lost condition; but because sinners are not capable of this favour till then? they will not be found of Christ, till they feel themselves lost. Why [must they] hunger and thirst, before [they] be satisfied? Matt. v. 6. Because the soul is till then closed, shut up, not capable of satisfaction, Psal. lxxxix. 10. How can it be filled, except first opened? So [speaks the Lord] himself, Matt. xi. 28. Why labour? because not till then capable of rest. When the Lord offers a favour, and withal shows how it may be attained; he deals more freely, more graciously, than if he should barely propound it, and leave us to our ourselves to find out the way and means how it might be effected.

Conditions of this nature are so far from making promises less free, as^a they are rendered hereby more gracious: there is as much of free grace in prescribing these, as in promising to them, because without these the promise might be of no effect, the favour not feasible, the sinner not capable of it.

^a that.

5. If the condition be easy, [and] no cost, charge, trouble or hazard attends it : he that offers upon such easy terms, offers freely. If one should promise to entertain his friend, if he will but come to him ; or visit him, if he will but let him in ; or advance him, if he be willing ; or give him a jewel that will enrich him for ever, if he will but receive it ; or supply him with all his heart can desire, if he will but ask it : would any man have the face to say, [that] such offers were not free and gracious ? Are they not as free as heart can desire ? If a man might choose his own terms, could he imagine, invent, any more easy ?

Such are the promises of the Gospel : the Lord will entertain sinners, if they will but come, Isa. lv. 1. [He will] ease [them,] Matt. xi. 1. [He will] satisfy [them,] John vi. 35. Or, as if it were too much for sinners to come to him, he will come to them, if they but open to him, Rev. iii. 20. Give himself, the pearl of great price, if [they will] but receive him : marry, if [they will] but consent to him, John i. 12 ; Matt. xxii. 2, 3. Give eternal life, if [they be] but willing, Rev. xxii. 17. Give all heart can desire, if [they] but ask it, John xvi. 23. Open the treasures of grace and glory, if [they] but knock, Matt. vii. 7. Be your friend for ever, if [you will] but love him, John xiv. 21. Bear the weight and burden of all your cares, if [you] but lay them on him, Psal. lv. 22. Never fail you in life or death, if [you] but trust him, Psal. xxxiv. 22 ; Psal. xxxv. 1.

Oh how free are these offers ! how easy these terms ! It would be intolerable impudence, to desire these [blessings] upon any terms more free. Would you have Christ your friend, and not love him ? marry you without your consent ? or take care for you, and not trust him ? Who can be so unreasonable ? The conditions here are of such a nature, that it is even all one as if they were absolute : no promise of this nature can be more free, more absolute ; for the nature of what is promised, will admit of no other terms, they are as free as can be. Can Christ come to you, if you will not let him in ? or entertain you, if [you do] not come to him ? or give himself, if [you do] not receive him ? Nor need you say, these are not easy, we cannot do them of ourselves. Christ prevents this ; they are easy, if he concur and assist ; and he engages to assist all those who have interest in the promises, all that come to him.

6. If the condition be promised. He that annexes a condition to a promise, and withal promises to give that condition, does all one as if he promised absolutely. Suppose Hiram had promised Solomon cedars to build the temple, upon condition they were cut down ; if Hiram had also promised to cut them down, his former promise had hereby become absolute. Or suppose Pharaoh had promised Jacob that he should come and be entertained in Egypt, upon condition that wagons were

provided to carry him ; if Pharaoh should also send him wagons, (as he did by Joseph, Gen. xlv. 19,) it is all one, as if the former promise had been absolute.

So it is here : and this is enough, if there were no more, to make this truth evident, and to prove it unanswerably. That which the Lord seems to make a condition in one place, he promises absolutely in another : for the promises of regeneration are absolute : the Lord freely engages himself to implant all spiritual graces and holy affections in the soul. Now to these, either in habit or exercise, are all the promises made, which we count conditional. So that the condition of them being absolutely promised, they are in effect absolute ; *e. g.*, the Lord promises salvation to perseverance, Matt. xxiv. 13. He promises perseverance to faith, Psal. cxxv. 1 ; 1 Pet. i. 5 ; and faith is promised absolutely, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. A new heart is a believing heart ; so that the two former, their conditions being promised, are absolute. He promises life to those that have Christ, 1 John v. 12. He promises Christ to those that fear him, Mal. iv. 2 ; and he promises fear absolutely, Jer. xxxii. 40. So wherever you find anything annexed to a promise, as a condition, in another place you may find it, either expressly or implicitly promised : and therefore all the promises are, in this respect, as good as absolute ; and if absolute, [there is] no reason to question their freedom.

7. If the terms or conditions be such, as it is not possible in the nature of the thing, that the mercy offered should be effected without them ; then the offers of saving mercies are as free and gracious as can be, as there is any possibility they should be ; and no more can be desired.

Let me clear this in one of those terms, which is comprehensive of all the rest. It is required of those who will partake of saving mercies, that they leave sin, [and] forsake their evil ways, Prov. xxviii. 13 ; Isa. lv. 7 ; 2 Tim. ii. 19.

This is the sum of all conditions ; and whatever is required in other terms, is included in this, or may be resolved into it. Now it is not possible, that saving mercies should otherwise be had, that they should be received or enjoyed but upon these terms ; not only because the Lord would have it so, but because the nature of the thing does so require it, that it is not otherwise feasible.

For sin is our impotency. Now can we possibly have strength in the inner man, if we will not part with our weakness ? Sin is our deformity, that which renders our souls loathsome and ugly in the eye of God. Now can our souls be made lovely, if we will not part with that which is our defilement and ugliness ? Can we be made clean, if we will not part with our leprosy ? Sin is our enmity against God, therein it consists. Now can we possibly be reconciled, if we will not lay aside our enmity ? Sin is the poverty of the soul, that which robs and spoils,

and utterly impoverishes the soul. Now can you be made rich, if you will not part with your poverty? Sin is the soul's restraint, the dungeon where it is imprisoned, the bonds and fetters wherewith it is loaden. Now is it possible you should have liberty, if you will not leave your dungeon, and part with your fetters? Sin is the wound, the mortal disease of the soul; and can you be healed, if you will not part with your disease? Sin is your misery; can you be happy, if [you] part not with misery? Happiness consists in the enjoyment of God; but adhering to sin, and the enjoyment of a holy God, are utterly inconsistent: and can you be happy without happiness, or by retaining that which is inconsistent with it?

So that you see, there is an utter impossibility that salvation should be had, but upon these terms: there is an inconsistency, a plain contradiction, in any other supposition. It is an impossibility, not only to us, but to the Almighty; and therefore the terms are as free and gracious as possibly could be; Omnipotent grace itself could not make them more gracious.

To clear this, several things are to be observed.

(1.) The first blessings of the covenant are promised absolutely; effectual calling, faith, repentance, conversion, regeneration are offered, are promised without any conditions. The promises of these mercies are absolute, Ezek. xxxvi. 26; Jer. xxxii. 39, 40; under the notions of a new heart, a new spirit, putting his Spirit, his fear within them, &c., the blessings fore-mentioned, called the first grace, are promised absolutely; and so are the same things in other terms, Jer. xxxi. 31, 32, 33; repeated by the apostle, Heb. viii. 8. There can be no instance given in Scripture, where these things are promised upon condition. Indeed, if they were promised upon condition, grace would be promised to something natural: for this being the first grace, there can be nothing before it to be the condition of it, but what is natural; and to make that which is natural the condition of grace, is gross Pelagianism. If there were any conditions of those first gracious favours, they must be those things, which are previous to, and preparations for them, viz., diligent attendance on the word and means of grace, convictions of sin, legal sorrow for it, sense of wrath and misery, which often go before conversion, and are counted dispositions or preparations for faith. But these previous works are not conditions of conversion, or the other blessings included therein, nor are they promised upon such terms: for the condition is never separated from the favour promised to it; where the condition is performed, the promise is always accomplished: but these preparatory acts have been in many who were never truly converted and regenerated, never had a new heart and a new spirit given them: so that these preparations are no condi-

tions of faith or regeneration; much less is there anything of congruous merit in them. Our divines, that insist on such preparations for Christ, decried the conceit of merit, though in the lowest form. This merit of the Papists, infers a dueness of the thing so deserved; a dueness in congruity, though not in justice: and what is due from the Lord any way, he will infallibly bestow: but there may be these previous dispositions, where faith is never given. There is not so much as a conditional connexion between such preparations and those blessings; they are promised absolutely, without any condition expressed or implied.

(2.) The subsequent blessings of the covenant, those that follow the first, are in some sense conditional, and so offered and promised in a conditional form, and yet are nevertheless gracious. There are terms and conditions, taking the word conditions in a latitude, as comprising qualifications, adjuncts, and necessary antecedents, which do no way derogate from grace; neither detract from its freeness, nor obscure, but rather illustrate it, Rom. x. 8—10; Rev. iii. 20. Upon such terms are justification, adoption, salvation offered, and not offered but upon terms, and yet most freely and graciously, Rom. iii. 24, “freely by his grace,” and yet “through faith,” no otherwise but upon such terms, John iii. 18. Upon the same terms we are adopted, John i. 12; we are saved by grace, but through faith, Eph. ii. 8; and not only faith, but holiness of heart and life, and perseverance therein, are the terms upon which salvation is promised, Matt. v. 8; Heb. xii. 14; Rev. ii. 10; Mark xiii. 13. It is all one as if they were expressed conditionally. This is not because the Lord makes a conditional bargain with us, leaving the condition to our own wills, being uncertain whether it will be made good or no: but the reason is, because Divine wisdom has made a connexion betwixt these blessings, so that they shall never be separated; one of them shall not be had without the other: no justification without faith, no salvation without holiness, no glory without perseverance: and has constituted an order amongst them, so that one of them must go before the other: we must believe before we be justified, and be holy before we can see God. He has appointed one of them to be the means or way to obtain the other: we are justified by faith, we are created unto good works, that we should walk in them. Acts of holy obedience are the way wherein we must walk to salvation: so that here is an anteedence of some duty, and that necessary by Divine appointment and command, and this tending to obtain a favour freely offered.

And by this we may understand what a condition is, in a sense very innocent, and no way injurious to grace. It is an antecedent necessarily required, as the way to attain or arrive at what is promised.

And in this sense it must not be denied that there are conditions in the Gospel, and its promises; unless we will deny that there are duties

necessary to salvation, and made necessary by Divine command: for such a condition is nothing but something of a command joined with a promise in a conditional form; and Divine commands must be no more questioned, when they are joined with promises, than when they are delivered apart. He commands all to repent, and he promises pardon; put this promise and that command together, and it becomes a conditional promise; if you repent, you shall have pardon, or as the apostle delivers it, 1 John i. 9, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

(3.) There are conditions that are injurious to grace, and inconsistent with it. None such are annexed to any promise of the Gospel, none such must be admitted by those who will reserve to the Lord the honour of his grace, or have our salvation entirely ascribed to it.

1. Meritorious conditions, when the condition is presumed to deserve what is promised. There is no such condition of salvation as this, but in the proud fancies of presumptuous sinners. For, 1. There must be a disproportion between that which is procured, and the condition that deserves it: it is of favour, not of merit, if the promised blessing exceed the worth of the condition. To make this plain; suppose the worth of a day's work be twelve-pence; a man promises another a thousand crowns for a day's labour; it cannot in any reason be imagined that his day's labour deserves so much; if he receive so much, he has it of favour, not of merit. Now the disproportion is far greater betwixt salvation, and all that is required of us in order thereto. Sufferings for Christ are more considerable on this account than holy actings; but all the sufferings of this life, such as those of the apostle and the primitive Christians, bear not the slightest proportion to the glory promised, Rom. viii. 18; there is no proportion betwixt them; the glory offered does infinitely exceed them; it is the eternal enjoyment of God himself; and between that which is finite and infinite there is no proportion, 2 Cor. iv. 17. If glory were promised on these terms, as it seems to be, 2 Tim. ii. 12, yet suffering would be far from deserving the crown; there is no correspondent worth in them to so vast a crown. Merit quite excludes grace; for that which is deserved is due in justice, it is a just debt; but that which is of debt, is not, cannot be of grace, if the apostle understood these things, Rom. iv. 4. He makes a plain opposition between grace and debt. And therefore, if by the performance of any condition we can deserve salvation, it will be of debt, and we must expunge the text, and conclude [that] we are not saved by grace.

2. Natural conditions, such as may be performed by the power of nature, without the concurrence of omnipotent or special grace. All that is required to salvation, under the notion of conditions, must be of this nature, by that doctrine which will have nothing necessary for the

performance thereof, but suasive grace : for this gives no power sufficient for performance ; and therefore if there be any performance, it must be by the power of nature. Their grace gives not the power, but supposes it in the will already : all that it can justly pretend to, is to excite what it finds, not what it gives. It does not, it cannot subdue the will's corruptions, natural and contracted, which is its moral impotency : and that which leaves it impotent, as it found it, gives it not power ; it plants no principle of spiritual life and strength in the will, but disclaims these expressly. And as it does not give the power, so neither does it give the act ; it determines not the will, nor causes it to act ; but leaves it to incline as it list, when there is no principle in it to incline it towards that which is saving, and corruption enough to incline it the other way.

The case standing thus, if the will comply with the terms of salvation, it must be by its own power, since it has no more from above : and then, in opposition to the text, salvation will be of ourselves, by our own strength, not by grace ; nor will grace which is saving, be the gift of God : for if he give neither the power, nor the act, who can imagine how it can be counted his gift ? They may as well say, we are saved by the power of nature, as that the conditions of salvation are to be performed by such a power, without any other assistance of grace.

3. [There are] no legal conditions, no conditions performed by us, nor our righteousness. The righteousness by which we are justified, the righteousness by which we have pardon, or by which we have right and title to salvation—neither faith, nor sincere obedience, are required of us for this end ; nor can they, when performed by us, be any such righteousness. It is Christ, and he alone, that is our righteousness ; it is by his righteousness, and that alone, that we are justified : it was he, who by his obedience to death satisfied Divine justice, and procured title to eternal life. It is not pretended that any performances of ours do or can satisfy Divine justice ; nor can it with more reason be pretended, that our performances give us title to life. Those that say he did not both, may as well say he did neither. Our performances may evidence our title, but they give it not, nor are the ground of it. It is Christ, his righteousness, that is the only foundation of our title, Rom. x. 4. The end of the law, *i.e.*, of the covenant of works, was, that man, by the righteousness of perfect obedience, might have title to eternal life. This being rendered impossible in man's fallen and sinful state, how shall the end of the law, which the Lord aimed at, be attained ? Why, Christ attains the end of the law by his righteousness, giving title to life to those who believe.

Faith and obedience are not our righteousness now, as perfect obedience was to be in the state of innocency ; they are not in the stead

of it, they have not the virtue and office of it, they are not conditions of the covenant of grace, as that was of the covenant of works; *i. e.*, they are not the righteousness by which we are justified, and have title to life. It is Christ that is the end of the law for righteousness to those purposes; and to ascribe that to our performances, which is proper to him, is injurious to the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And how is it of grace upon these terms? How is the covenant of the Gospel more gracious than that of works? It cannot be said that it is more gracious, because it requires and accepts less, sincere obedience being not so much as that which is perfect: for sincere obedience may be counted as much to man in his present state of sin and impotency, as perfect obedience in the state of innocency and perfection. But the transcendent graciousness of the Gospel-covenant consists, not in requiring less righteousness to give title to life, than was due at first; but in not requiring a perfect righteousness of us personally for that end, but providing and accepting that of a surety, according to that of the apostle, Rom. viii. 3, 4. The law could not give us life, because, being weakened by sin, we could not perform the perfect righteousness which is required; but what the law could not do, Christ has done, giving us title to life, fulfilling the righteousness of it in our behalf. But does not the Scripture declare, that our obedience is the obedience which gives title to life? Rev. xxii. 14. I answer, there is a double right, *jus ad rem*, and *jus in re*, “a right of title,” and “right of possession;” holy obedience gives us not the title, but leads us into possession. It gives not the title, for that we have in justification, Rom. v. 18. Now obedience is after justification, and so cannot give that which is before itself, and does not give that which is given already. But it leads us into possession, it is the way by which we enter; so the words immediately following “will have it understood. When the apostle had declared that we are saved by grace, Eph. ii. 8, and so excluded works, ver. 9, that we may count this to be our title to salvation, yet he adds, ver. 10, “We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” These are the ways wherein we must walk, if we will arrive at salvation; but they are not our title to it, as perfect obedience would have been in the first covenant, the law of works; they are not such conditions, they are not our righteousness, (upon which our title is founded,) as that was designed to be: they are not legal conditions.

4. Obliging conditions. There is no performance of ours, that can of itself oblige the Lord to perform any promise; the reason [is], because it is defective, and falls short of what is required: and amongst men, he that

promises upon conditions is not obliged, if the terms be not duly observed. The law of our creation required of us perfect performance ; and no less than perfect obedience to God will be due from us, while we are creatures. It is true, man now wants power to answer his engagements, but that was through his own fault ; and the Lord does not lose his due, because man sins against him. Now being defective, and falling short of his duty, it is sinful ; and that which is sinful, is to be punished, not rewarded ; as such it has not a moral fitness for promised reward : that which is sinful, brings the performer under the curse, Gal. iii. 10. ; it deserves eternal death, Rom. vi. 23 ; and so cannot oblige the Lord to reward it.

Upon this account, the best performance of any supposed condition, is so far of itself from making any promised blessing to be due in point of justice, that it cannot make it due in point of faithfulness. That which needs pardon cannot of itself make anything due to us, but punishment. Our faith, our repentance, our obedience, being sinfully defective, cannot as such make anything due to us, but punishment ; and so cannot oblige the Lord to perform the promises, to justify, pardon, or save us : for that which obliges the Lord to execute the threatening, cannot oblige him to fulfil his promise. How then is the Lord obliged ? How come the promises to be accomplished ? Why, not upon the account of our defective performances, but for Christ's sake, and so through grace.

Christ has satisfied for the sins of his people, for the sinful defects of their performances : upon his account they are pardoned and accepted, and so for his sake they are rewarded, and the promises performed. Thus, as 2 Cor. i. 20, all the promises are performed with unvariable faithfulness ; he engages the faithfulness of God to fulfil all the promises, whereas^a our performances, considered in themselves, do oblige him and would rather engage him against it.

5. Uncertain conditions. When it is uncertain whether the condition will be performed or no. Such conditions have place amongst men, and men only, such as suspend the affair *in eventum incertum*, and leave it at uncertainty as to the event ; it is uncertain whether the condition will be performed or not, and so uncertain whether the promise will be performed. The reason why man proposes such conditions, is his weakness and imperfection, for want of power or foresight. He has not the wills of others in his power, cannot make them comply with his will, and so cannot tell what they will do. So that it is also for want of certain foreknowledge or foresight, when we will not bestow a favour on another, but upon terms. If we were certain that the terms would be observed,

^a whereas.

we would promise absolutely ; if we were certain the condition would not be observed, we would not promise at all ; but because we are uncertain, therefore we promise conditionally. Now the ground of these conditions being weakness, they must in nowise be ascribed unto God. It derogates from his infinite wisdom, and infallible foreknowledge ; it derogates from his power and providence over man's will and human affairs : it derogates from the efficacy of his grace, as though this could not determine man's will, or prevail with it certainly and infallibly to comply with his proposals ; but must leave it indifferent, and in suspense, and so at uncertainty, whether it will comply or not comply with what he propounds.

For use.—(1.) Acknowledge this grace. How ? By getting high apprehensions of it, and entertaining frequent thoughts about it. Say, How precious are thy thoughts to me, O God ! how great is the sum of them ! Let the meditation hereof be sweeter than the honey and the honeycomb.

(2.) Let this beget suitable affections ; love, joy, admiration, delight, both in the fountain and streams of free-grace.

(3.) Let it be a motive to all holiness and obedience. Let the grace of God, the love of Christ constrain you to an obsequiousness to him, and affectionateness to one another. If God so loved us, how ought we [to] love one another !

(4.) Let it strengthen our faith, in afflictions and temptations, [arising] from the power of sin and [a] sense of unworthiness.

(5.) Hold it forth to others : take all occasions to magnify it ; oppose every practice and opinion that obscures the lustre of it. Use it as a touchstone, to discover what persons are most holy, what tenets are most true, even those which most illustrate free-grace.

(6.) By glorying in the Lord, [let us] use it to make us and keep us humble. We had nothing to merit, nothing to move, for salvation : what we are, or have, we are by, and have from, this grace. Let no man boast, Rom. ix. 16. If you have any laudable, amiable accomplishments, give the glory to God.

For motives.—1. Consider how thankful God's ancient people were for temporal salvation ; what sweet strains of grateful hearts appear in those songs of praises which we find recorded usually after any deliverance ! And have we not much more reason to be thankful for eternal salvation ?

2. Consider what a comprehensive blessing salvation is, and take an estimate thereof, by comparing it with the temporal deliverances of the Israelites : those proceeded from a common ordinary love, these from a peculiar distinguishing affection. Their deliverances were effected, not without the hazard of their persons ; our salvation is effected only by

the blood of Christ : the issue of theirs was not much more than civil tranquillity, sitting under their vines and fig-trees ; the issue of ours is grace, glory, joy, and those things that eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man to conceive.

3. This is the end of all God does in the world, even to glorify himself ; as Rom. ix. 23, in showing the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness towards us through Jesus Christ. Now we have no other way to glorify him, but by an active, affectionate acknowledgment of his grace.

4. This is the employment of glorified spirits in heaven, to praise, admire, and adore his grace : this is the subject of those seraphic praises, the thoughts of this stupendous love transport angels and men into an eternal rapture. This is the way to be in heaven upon earth, to anticipate glory, to enter into our Master's joy before we come at ^a it : nay, this is the way by which our Master's joy enters into us. Never are our souls filled with such ravishing pleasures, as when we are taken up with such heavenly employment. Never do we rise higher above the world, than when these thoughts wing our souls : nay, sometimes they will steal into heaven, as the Israelites' spies into Canaan, and bring from thence into our souls, grapes, and figs, and pomegranates, some taste of what we shall fully enjoy in the land of promise.

Salvation is a comprehensive blessing ; it includes the eternal love of God ; that is its foundation : which eternal love broke forth in time into such high expressions, as to send his Son, to live miserably, and die shamefully for us, and interest us in all the merits of his death. This was the purchase of salvation, and it is the conclusion ; as though unwilling [that] those whom he loves so well, should be at such a distance from him, [he] takes us to himself, to see his glory, to bathe ourselves in that stream of bliss, in those rivers of pleasure, that are at his right hand. This is the accomplishment of salvation. Surely this deserves to be acknowledged.

^a to.