

T H E

Unreasonableness

O F

RELIGION.

B E I N G

REMARKS and ANIMADVERSIONS

O N

Mr. John Wesley's Sermon

On Romans viii. 32.

By JOSEPH HART.

*Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou
find out the Almighty to Perfection?*

*It is high as Heaven. What canst thou do?
Deeper than Hell. What canst thou know?*

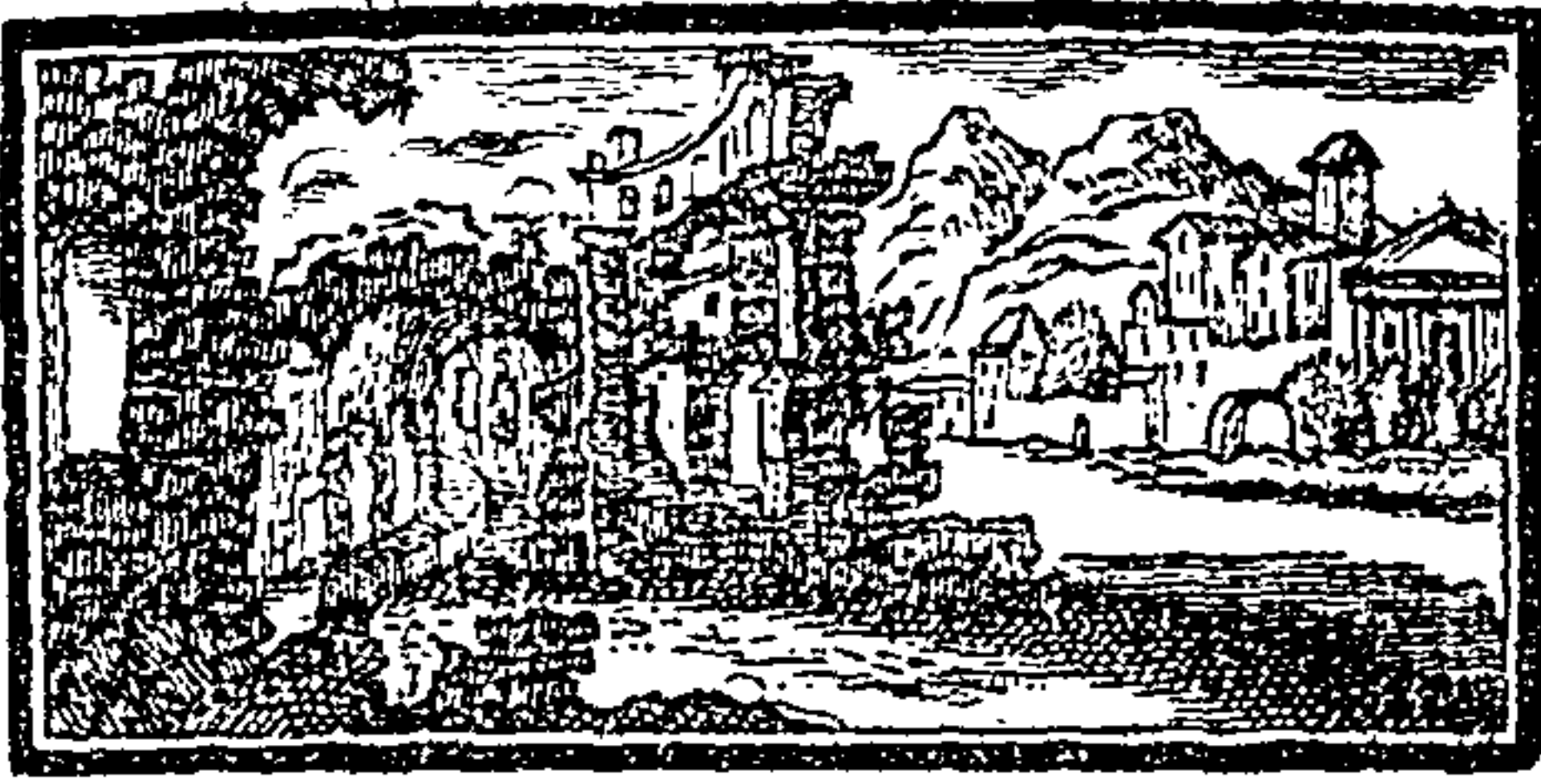
Job xi. 7, 8.

*The Spirit searcheth all things; yea, the
Deep things of God. 1 Cor. ii. 10.*

Printed for the AUTHOR.

M D C C X L I.

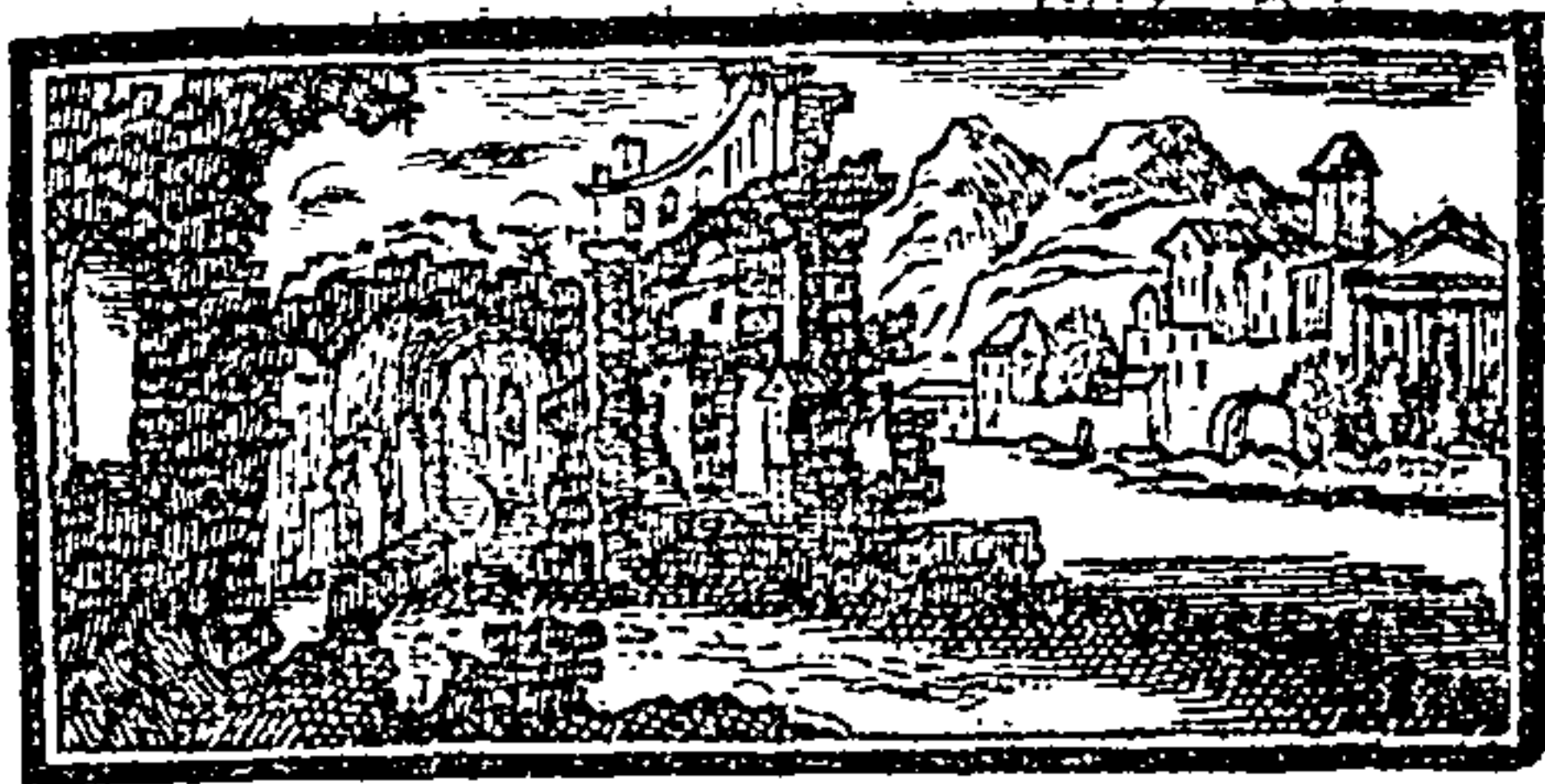
Price, Six-Pence.



TO THE
READER.

THOUGH the Publication of the following Sheets, was Occasion'd by the Reading of the Sermon, in Answer to which they are Written: Yet there are, I am perswaded, some things Contain'd in them, which will be Relish'd and Own'd by Every Experienc'd Christian. To whose Consideration I desire to Offer them: tho' seemingly spoken to, an Unbeliever.

I shall Add but One Remark: which is This. The Contents of the Ensuing Papers are either Truths or Lies. If



TO THE
READER.

THOUGH the Publication of the following Sheets, was Occasion'd by the Reading of the Sermon, in Answer to which they are Written: Yet there are, I am perswaded, some things Contain'd in them, which will be Relish'd and Own'd by Every Experienc'd Christian. To whose Consideration I desire to Offer them: tho' seemingly spoken to an Unbeliever.

I shall Add but One Remark: which is This. The Contents of the Ensuing Papers are either Truths or Lies. If

To the R E A D E R.

*Truths they Deserve not to be Esteem'd
the less, for coming out, under the Pre-
sent Relation. But if they are Lies;
they ought to be Rejected as soon as Dis-
covered, though they had Appeared in
ever so bright a Situation; or been Ar-
ray'd in ever so Glittering a Dress.*



T H E



T H E

Unreasonableness

O F

RELIGION.

IT is a Truth of singular Use, and solid Comfort to those, whose Understandings are enlightened by the Spirit of God to perceive it; That Religion and Reason are not only widely different, but directly contrary, the one to the other. As by Religion I mean, the Knowledge of the True God, the right Way of Worshipping Him here, and the sure and certain Means of Enjoying Him in endless Glory hereafter: So by Reason I understand, the natural Dictates of the Humane Mind; whereby every Man in this fallen State is capable of making rational Deductions, and Argumentations; and so advancing himself by Degrees, in what is generally called Knowledge.

This will evidently appear (to those who are made able to receive it) by instancing in the few following Particulars, the respective Doctrines of those two Principles, so Diametrically opposite to each other.

1. First, Reason bids me expect Acceptance from the Almighty in a Future State, according to the Moral Justice, Equity, and Goodness of mine Actions in the Present. On the contrary, Religion teaches me, that I shall be 'Acquitted, Justified, and Accepted of God, by the Righteousness of Another freely bestow'd, and given me, without the least Regard to my own Personal either Merit, or Demerit.

2. So again Reason tells me, that in order to secure an Interest in eternal Life, I must by mine own Natural Strength, strive, struggle and labour; and pray for the Assistance of God, to enable me so to please Him here, that I may Shun His Wrath, and Enjoy Him in Bliss hereafter. But Religion plainly shews me, that when I was in my Natural State, it was impossible for me to move one Step towards Heaven; no, not so much as to implore the Divine Assistance aright; but was utterly *Dead in Trespasses and Sins*; and as incapable of exerting the least Power, or Motion towards any Spiritual Good, as a Dead Carcass is of performing any Action of Natural Life.

3. Again Reason in Some (for it is no settled Principle; but differing in different Persons; consequently incapable of leading any Man into Truth) asserts, that admitting Man in his Natural State cannot turn or prepare himself to seek the Lord: yet that Divine Power necessary to enable him so to do is given, or rather offered indiscriminately to All alike; (since All alike are the Workmanship of God) and suspended on certain Terms, or Conditions on Man's Part: such as the Closing in with the Offer, and Co-operating with the Grace of God: So that the Compliance, or Non-Compliance therewith renders the Sinner Justified, or Condemned in the Sight of God: And makes him become a Vessel of Mercy prepared unto Glory, or a Vessel of Wrath fitted to Destruction. But Religion in Contradiction to this declares, that the Glory of God is the Ultimate and Only End of all His Works: and that as *even the Wicked made for the Day of Evil* shall be Instruments of setting forth this Glory in their Destruction, which they are utterly unable by any Means to avoid: So on the other hand, *Those who are Predestinated to the Adoption of Sons*, shall be Irresistibly wrought on by the Spirit of God; And shall infallibly Receive the Grace given them here, and Enjoy the Glory prepared for them

in Christ before the Foundation of the World, in a State of Eternal Union with God hereafter.

4. To Instance one more Particular for Ail. Reason in those who are Converted is ever speaking thus. " Altho' I know by
 " Experience, that in my Unregenerate State
 " I was utterly unable to move the least Step
 " forward in the Pursuit of Religion; Yet
 " now I am Converted, and born again, I
 " must *stir up the Gift that is in me.* 'Tis my
 " Duty to Pray to the Lord to *increase my*
 " *Faith.* I must Endeavour to *Grow in Grace,*
 " *and in the Knowledge of my Lord and Saviour*
 " *Jesus Christ.* In a word: I must exert all
 " my Natural Powers, and Abilities to be
 " more and more acquainted with God, and
 " make greater Progress in Faith, and high-
 " er Advancement in Knowledge." In op-
 position to all which, the Voice of Religion
 speaks in this wise. " I plainly See, and
 " Experimentally Feel, that, as before Con-
 " version I could not move one Hairsbreadth
 " towards God and Goodness: So since I am
 " New Created in Christ Jesus, the Old Man
 " in me is as Rebellious, and Stubborn as
 " ever. I have as great, or rather seeming-
 " ly greater inclination to Sin, and hatred
 " to God, than before. And as my New
 " Birth was at first the sole, supernatura-
 " Work

“ Work of the Almighty God: so every new
 “ Act of Faith is a new Miracle of Divine
 “ Power communicated to my Soul, Every the
 “ least Sigh after, or Prayer to God is so far
 “ from falling under the Notion of a Duty,
 “ that it is the Highest Excellency, and
 “ Greatest Privilege communicated to a Be-
 “ liever by the Spirit of God: by whose
 “ immediate Influence alone I am enabled to
 “ Act Faith on the Mediator, without which
 “ all my Prayers are but Vain Repetitions,
 “ and, considered in themselves, abominable
 “ and odious in the Sight of God. In short,
 “ my hardest Work in Religion is (if I may
 “ so express it) to Do Nothing. My Grea-
 “ test Labour, to lie quiet. My Strongest
 “ Strugling, to sit still. And my most Ac-
 “ tive Endeavours to apprehend my self en-
 “ tirely Passive in God’s Hand; A Creature
 “ meerly Recipient of whatsoever Measure
 “ of Good He shall please to Infuse into me:
 “ and to know, and see, my only Business
 “ is to Glorify God; which is done by
 “ Believing, Trusting, Depending, Relying
 “ wholly upon Him, without any Regard to
 “ my own Frame, or Disposition of Mind
 “ at all.”

These are a few of the Numberless In-
 stances, which might be brought to prove,
 at the Dictates of Reason, are utterly Re-
 pug-

pugnant, nay Diametrically Opposite to the Principles of Religion communicated to the Believer by the Revelation of God's Spirit. And that not only in a few, or some; but in all and every Particular.

But here it may be objected. "Are there not many Notional Predestinarians, who have never been wrought upon by the Spirit of God? And are not these taught the Truth by meer Reasonable Deductions? If so; How then are the Dictates of Reason, and the Doctrines of Religion contrary to each other?"

I Answer. That there are many Notional Professors of Election, and Predestination, in reality own. But that they are firm Believers of it, I flatly deny. For all their Lives and Actions Speak the Contrary. For though they pretend to trust to God's Predestination for their Eternal Happiness; Yet they are Notorious Liars, and trust not to it at all: but are always Striving to do something to make their Election sure; and are continually fill'd with Fears and Misgivings, lest they should at last come short: And that especially after they have fallen in a Gross Violation of the Moral Law (for then Doubts and Fears naturally arise in the Minds of Believers themselves; Nor can they be dispersed by Arguments of Reason; but are

overthrown by Faith alone) All which evidently proves, that their Espousing this Doctrine is only, because they think other Doctrines as liable to Objection as this. And they are Professors of Predestination, because they know not what to be else. But supposing they do believe it, (which is certain they do not, but deceive others and themselves too, not knowing what Faith is). Yet they contradict True Religion in this, that they think themselves to be Elected. Whereas Religion plainly declares, that none but such as are Regenerated and made New Creatures, are Elected to Eternal Life, which these Nominal Electionists never Experienced; but Believe they know not what. And therefore, if we could suppose Men made strict Predestinarians by Reason, still this Reason of theirs speaks in direct Contradiction to Religion. But if they think the Doctrine of Election to be True, and on the other hand Believe themselves not Elected, and so perish in Despair, (as many perhaps have done) Then if we suppose them to have gotten this Notion of Predestination from Reason, and not rather from the Literal Reading the Doctrine in the Scriptures, or other Writings; they still contradict the Voice of True Religion; which Teaches all those, to whom it Discloses

closes the Doctrine of Election, that they themselves are also Elected.

This Great and Glorious Truth (though clearly discerned, and heartily embraced by the spiritual Part of those who are made New Creatures, and Born again by the Spirit) meets with strenuous Opposition, and Bitter Hatred from all the Unregenerate Sons of *Adam*. And also from the Old Man, or Principle of Nature in those who are Regenerate, and have their Wills in some measure made conformable to the Will of God. *For the Flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the Flesh: And these are contrary the one to the other.* Galat. v. 17.

The cause of this Enmity, and Opposition in Man to the foremention'd Truth is this: It utterly Debases, or rather destroys all Humane Strength and Skill; overthrowes all tow'ring Conceits of Man's Wisdom; battereth down all the Engines of Pride, and Van-glory; Exalteth None but the Creator alone, and lays the Creature low, very low; Debasing it even to Hell, by Declaring that it has not the least Share, or Part in the Work of Salvation: No, not so much as to Accept it when Offered, or Forward it, when Began: but that it is Entirely Indebted, for the beginning, carrying on, and accomplish-

ing the whole Work to Him, *Who worketh all things according to the Counsel of his own Will.*

This the Natural Man cannot bear. He cannot be perswaded that he Knows nothing, and can Do nothing, but is meerly Dependant for all he is, and all he hath: That God is the sole Proprietor, and Arbitrary Distributer of all his Gifts to whom he will: And that *None can stay his Hand, or say unto him What doest thou?* This galls and frets the Carnal Mind, making it swell with Spleen and Malice, and Vent itself in Bitter Reproaches, and Hard Sayings against the Truths of God contain'd in that Repository of secret Treasures his Written Word, and manifested to his Chosen in all Ages by his Holy Spirit.

From the Fall of *Adam*, quite down to this present Time, thus has the Case stood: There has always been a lasting Enmity between the World, and the Church; the Seed of the Serpent, and the Seed of the Woman. The Former of which have always been by numberless Degrees the most Numerous, and outwardly Powerful. And this Enmity, Ordered and Disposed by Infinite Wisdom for the Illustration of his own Glory, has continually discovered itself in Man, talking, writing, and acting in subtle Treachery, or Open Opposition to the Truth

of God in the Gospel of his Son. And as in Former Times, so in this Degenerate Age in which we now live: when Darkneſs has overspread the whole Earth, when Religion is almost thrown aside, and Faith seems in a manner to be banish'd from the World. When Self-named Preachers of all Professions seem unanimously agreed, in a literal Sense to Do Nothing: Except it be to strive for the Fatteſt Livings, and Wealthieſt Congregati- ons. Even at this Time, I say, when some few have made some faint Essays to Revive the Doctrines of Truth, and Vindicate the Gospel of Christ, according to that small Measure of Light, and Strength, they have receiv'd: It has Alarm'd the Adversary, and Stirr'd up some Zealous Opposers of that little Truth, the others have ventured, tho' darkly, and weakly to Assert. Among which Opposers there has risen a Zealot, who has drawn after him a Number of Followers to hear the Old *Arminian* Errours (in which all Christendom at present lies involved) Debat- ed in the Fields and Streets a little more warmly, than in the Churches, and Meeting- Houses. The Person, I mean, is Mr. *John Wesley*: Who in a Sermon lately come to my Hands, Preach'd at *Bristol*, and Published the Year before last, under the specious Title of *Free Grace*, has (as far as his Measure of Natural Abili-

Abilities would permit him) Debased, and Vilified the Glorious Doctrine of God's Eternal Love to Elected Sinners; bespattering it with all the Slander and Calumny, that the Devil, and his own wicked Heart could invent, in the forementioned Sermon. On which I have at present undertaken to Animadvert.

He begins his Preface thus: *Nothing but the strongest Conviction, not only that, what is here advanced, is the Truth, as it is in Jesus; but also, that I am indispensibly obliged to Declare this Truth to all the World, could have induced me.*—Upon which we may Reflect, How deceitful above all Things, and desperately wicked, is the Heart of Man! When an open Oppugner of the Gospel of Christ, shall be perswaded by the *strongest Conviction*, that to Deny the Faith of God's Elect is to Advance the Truth as it is in Jesus: And that he is *indispensibly obliged to declare it to all the World.* May not this serve to let us in some measure see, how far we should be from placing the least Dependance on the Sayings of any Man, or the Suggestions and Cogitations of our own Hearts? For every Imagination of the Thoughts of Man's Heart is only Evil continually. Therefore, Thus saith the Lord, Cursed be the Man, that maketh Flesh his Arm. And, Blessed is the Man that trusteth in the Lord. Jer. xvii.

He goes on to make *one Request*; That his Antagonist would do all *in Charity, in Love, and in Meekness*. That his very *Disputing* may shew that he has put on as the *Elect of God* (when in his Opinion there are, properly speaking, no such Persons) *Bowels of Mercies, Gentleness, Long Sufferings*. That even according to these *Times* it may be said, "See how these Christians *Love one another*."

To which I Answer,

1. That if the *Flames of Anger or Hatred* were kindled in my *Breast* by any thing, he has uttered, his *Admonitions to Love, and Meekness*, I am apt to think, would be but of very little *Service* in helping me to quench them, however they might induce me to hide them from the *World*. For the *Passions of Corrupt Nature* are not to be worded into *Calmness at Pleasure*, and made obedient by a little *sober Advice*.

2. But I can solemnly protest to him (if that will give him any *Satisfaction*) that I have not any the least *Anger, or Ill-will* to his Person; he being equally *indifferent* to me with any other *Unbeliever*, whose *Face* I have never seen. And I am so far from quarrelling with him for *Declaring his Principles*, that I like him the better for it. And I should be glad, if those, who have received some *Knowledge of God*, and call themselves
Preach

Preachers of the Gospel, had Courage enough to deal so honestly, as plainly to Speak, what they really Believe; and not use Softening Terms, and Equivocal Phrases, for fear of losing their Esteem with their Opulent Auditors, and being forced to quit the bewitching Charms of an Easy, Idle Life. But—As I have no Hatred to him as a Man; so I confess I have no Love to him as a Christian. For Brotherly Love, and Gospel-Charity is in me confined to those only, whom I esteem Believers. Consequently I can have none for Him, out of whose own Mouth I can gather nothing to persuade me he is a Christian, but much to induce me to judge him as yet, quite the Contrary.

The Text, he has made choice of to prefix to his Sermon, is taken from the viiith Chapter of the *Romans*; where the Apostle in his Epistle to all, that were *in Rome*, *Beloved of God*, called to be *Saints*, is *Building up* them, and all Believers of All Ages, to whom the Lord should make his Writing serviceable, in their *most Holy Faith*, by setting before them the Immutability of God's Love to them in his Son; telling them, that *all Things* (nothing at all excepted, neither Persecutions, from the World without, nor Sin and Rebellion from their own wicked Hearts within) shall *work together for Good*. To whom?

To them that Love God. And who are they? Why those, who are the Called according to his Purpose. Who are Foreknown, Predestinated, Called, Justified, and Glorified according to the Eternal Purpose of God himself. Then joining himself with the *Roman* Saints, and all the Elect of God, he is transported with Divine Ecstasy, in this Glorious View of the Everlasting Love of God to all the chosen Members of his Son's Body, in Christ their Head. He is as it were lost in Wonder and Astonishment. He cries out, *What shall we then say to these Things?* (What can be said to Things so far beyond Expression, above Conception, and so directly contrary to Sense, and Reason.) *If God be for US, who can be against US?* And that he is for us, he has given the most undeniable Proof, in that he hath sent his own Dear Son, to Purchase us to himself at no less a Price, than his own Precious Blood: Consequently he will assuredly bestow on us all other Blessings, and Privileges, that can any Ways conduce to our Real Good, both here, and hereafter. *He that spared not his own Son, but Delivered him up for US ALL, how shall he not with him also freely give us all Things?* Upon this Text the Author of the Sermon has endeavoured to build his Doctrine of *Universal Redemption*.

He begins by telling us in a confused manner of the Freeness of God's Love, or Grace. *That it is Free in All and for All. In all, that it does not depend on any Power in Man.* When the Power of Receiving, or Refusing this Free Grace, whatever it is, is lodged in Man alone, according to his Notions, (if he has any at all about it.) But, *It does not depend,* he says, *upon the Good Works, or Righteousness, or Endeavours, or Good Tempers of the Receiver.* Which is such Confused and Beggarly Trash, that it Deserves no serious Answer.

But it is free for All. And yet Many, who are loved with this Free Love of God, shall, in his own Opinion, be never the better for it; but Perish with it Everlastingly. For he has now where said, that he Believes, all Men shall be saved; but seems to grant in several Parts of his Sermon, that many shall fall short of Heaven, tho' loved by God, with this Free Love, or Grace, he is so much Exalting.

But we must excuse this Precipitancy in him, in not letting us know his Meaning concerning this *Free Grace* of his, and the Objects of it. Because he is in a great Hurry to rush furiously into the Battle, and Fight with God's Decree of Election; so has no Time to spare for other Matters; but falls abruptly from Exalting Free Grace in a few
loose,

loose, dark Hints, to Debasing Predestination with all his Might and Main. As not caring, whether, or no, we can see what he does Believe, so he can but let us know, what he does not. As if he had said, Take Free Grace in any Sense you can. But be sure, you take the Utmost Care not to Believe Predestination. For if you do not Believe that, 'tis no matter, whether you Believe any thing else, or no.

Being thus Entered the Lists, he immediately begins the Combat, with the Doctrine, he is so eager to Encounter. Stating it first according to its Utmost Strictness, and Rigour: And then exposing the Weakness of those, who have gone about to make it appear less horrible to Reason, by using more softening, and palliating Expressions, forcing them by Dint of Argument, to own, that they mean no more, nor less, than Predestination, according to the first Scheme, in which he has stated it. Thus he Triumphs over the Weakness of some Notional, and Shallow Professors, (who indeed have given him room so to do) Hectoring, and Vapouring, as having wrested their Weapons out of their Hands, and laid them flat, and Defenceless on their Backs. And all this only by asking a few pert Questions.

But

But hold. Vaunt not too soon. Be not so hasty to boast of that Victory, which you are likely never to obtain. But since you are so good at asking Questions, let us see also, how Expert you are in answering such, as shall be asked of your self. And then if you can give a pertinent, and satisfactory Reply to all, that shall be put to you concerning the Doctrine, you so hotly oppose, I will at once give up the Cause, cease to *Contend for the Faith, which was once delivered unto the Saints*, and not utter one Word more against your Doctrine of Universal Redemption. But if you your self are nonplust at the Questions, I shall ask you, and cannot answer them consistently, and satisfactorily to your self or Others, you must be forced to own, that you have yet no room for Boasting, not having advanced one Step further in Knowledge: but being at best but upon a Level still with a Poor, Ignorant, De-luded Predestinarian. For even in Philosophical Controversies, where the Things Disputed are Natural, and seem more suited to the Humane Understanding, a Man of Sense does not go about to convince, much less to Convert his Antagonist by Noise and Out-cry, but by Reason; not by Calumniating and Vilifying his Adversary's Cause, but by proving and vindicating his own. In short,

not

not by starting Objections, which is easy; but by Answering them (which is far more difficult) when started.

Can you then make it consist with your Natural Notions of Justice and Mercy, that many even in this Life are left to groan beneath almost insupportable Loads of Pain, Misery, and Trouble; while others perhaps more Notorious Offenders in the Sight of Men, and Groffer Violators of the Laws of Justice and Equity, such as Merciless Tyrannical Governours, Griping Extortioners, and Cruel Masters, shall live a Life far more Exempt from Pain and Loss, than those Poor Wretches, who suffer by their Barbarity, Oppression, and Cruelty, and perhaps Endure Pain, Sicknes, Poverty, and a Numberless Train of other Evils: And that too not for a small time; but some, the Greatest Part of their Days; Others all their Life long? Or can you account for Infants bringing with them into the World a Complication of Distempers, gotten from the Contagion of their Parents Disease, oftentimes the immediate Consequents of Lust and Debauchery, and so suffering for the Sins of their Progenitors, and punished for Vices not their own? Things too Evident to be Denied, tho' never to be Reconciled to our Natural Notions of Justice and Mercy. But you will say,

say, perhaps, the Time is shortly coming, when their Sorrows will End. But certainly to them the Time is long. And it cannot be denied, but that it would be more agreeable to our Conceptions of Mercy, and Goodness, that even this Short time should be Clear from these Pains and Miseries. Again. What Recompence for all their Sufferings shall the Brute Creatures ever Receive? Some of which by the Cruelty of Man, undergo as much Misery as they are Capable of bearing: and sometimes sink Under the Pressure? If you say, 'Tis owing to the Wickedness of Man, I grant, it often is. But must still remember; this makes not the Torment of the poor Suffering Creature one Jot the less, or lighter. Surely these things are disagreeable to our Natural Notions of Goodness and Mercy. And yet we see, So they are, and ever have been. How then can any Man presume to say, that the Doctrine of Predestination cannot be True, only because it disagrees with our Reason, and Contradicts our Natural Conceptions of Justice and Mercy?

Again. Do you Believe, some Sinners shall Perish Everlastingly? If you do. Is it in any ways Reconcilable to your own Ideas of Justice; that a Creature for the Offences committed in so small a time as the longest

Duration of Man's Life Amounts to, should Suffer the most Acute Pains, and Bitterest Torments throughout all the Ages of an Endless Eternity? Especially as it is of the very Essence of Punitive Justice, to Proportion the Penalty to the Crime, and not to let the Punishment Outweigh the Guilt?

Once more. Do you Believe, that if God Decreed not, he did at least Foreknow the Damnation of Reprobates? If you do. Can you form any Idea in your Mind of any Material Difference between Foreknowledge, and Preordination? Was the Subject of the Divine Prescience a Meer Contingency? (supposing, any thing could be imagined Contingent?) Was it Possible, that what God Foreknew, should not come to pass? If he certainly Foreknew, that Man would Everlastingly Perish by his own Default; Was it not *better* (according to your own Notions of *Goodness*) not to have created Man at all; or to have forced him into Happiness by an irresistible Compulsion, than to have Trusted him with the Government of himself; when that Trust was sure to prove his Ruin? If God hardened not *Pharaoh's Heart literally*: If, I say, He did it Spiritually, will that please you better? Or did he it Permissively? (for that is the softest Expression it will bear:) If he did, What avails Strife about Words?

Words? Does it not Amount to the Same? For, I suppose, you think, he could have hindered it, if it had so pleased him. But not to hinder an Evil, if Able; what is this but to Consent to it? And is not the Consent of the Will Equivalent to the Operation of the Hand? I appeal to your own Conscience, whether, if we Descend into the Merits of the Cause, it does not according to your own Apprehension, reflect as much on the Mercy of the Creator to say, He Foreknew, and yet *Permitted* the Eternal Ruin of his Creatures, when it was in his Power to hinder it; as to say, He Decreed, they should be for ever Miserable? If a Father was to see a Disobedient Son running headlong into Ruin, and Obstinately Pursuing his own Destruction; Supposing all Admonitions and Reproofs to be lost upon him, Yet if he had it in his Power to Save him, even against his Will; Should we not Reckon him a very Unnatural Parent, to suffer his Child to Destroy himself, when he could have prevented it; and that very easily too, only by using a little Restraint? I doubt not, but you your Self would readily Pronounce him an hard hearted Father; and as Accessary to the Death of his Offspring, as if he had Murdered him with his own Hands.

Thus you see, how much easier it is to

Ask than to Answer Questions. And that *Universal Redemption* is as liable to as many, and equally insuperable Objections as *Predestination*. From whence we may gather how Absurd it is, to attempt to Measure the Ways of God by the Standard of Humane Reason. And yet it is a Fault, of which all Mankind are Guilty. So Natural is it for Proud Dust and Ashes to Quarrel with its Maker, decrying, and Vilifying, what it cannot Comprehend, and Denying the Truths of the Infinite God, only because they Suit not with our Gross and Foolish Conceptions. *Vain Man would be Wise : tho' Man be born like a Wild Asses Colt.*

And now, after all that has been hitherto said in the present Dispute ; I readily own, that it is at best but Carnal Reasoning ; and that a Man may Espouse either side of the Question, and yet be an Unbeliever Still. For though all Believers are Predestinarians, all Predestinarians are not Believers. A meer Notional Assent to the Doctrine of Election is of no more Service to the Soul, than the bare Ocular Sight of Meat is of Nourishment to the Body. For it is not he that *likes* Predestination is a Christian, but he that *lives* it. It is therefore fit that, before I proceed to Consider the Consequences drawn by this Author from the Doctrine in Dispute, I should

Declare, according to the Light of mine own Experience, what is the Faith of Election, that is Effectual to the Salvation of the Soul; and how it is wrought, and Confirm'd in Believers by the Operation of the Spirit of God.

But here it will be Necessary to Premise: That I would not be thought to Confine the Spirit to one particular Method of Acting. For God is not to be tied to Precedents; Neither can we trace him in his Ways. For his *Way is in the Sea, and his Path in the Great Waters, and his Foot Steps are not known.* Various are his Dealings towards his People; and different are the Measures of his Grace communicated to them. Some are *Babes in Christ*; and some are *Strong Men*. Some, who through fear of Death were all their Lifetime subject to Bondage, are comfortably Enlightened in their last Hours, and go off the Stage of Life Triumphant. Some are Converted in their early Days; Receive sweet; and Ravishing Assurances of the Love of God to their Souls; and then are left for a long time to Grapple with Temptations, and Difficulties, Often Cast Down, yet never in Despair, ever Doubting, yet ever Hoping; still Retaining a firm Resolution; however harsh, and severe, the Dispensations of God appear to them at Present, to Confide in his Mercy, and Hope for his Free Salva-

tion; Often Crying out with *Job* in the Midst of their Dejections, and Bitterness of Soul: *Tho' he Slay me, tho' he Damn me, yet will I trust in him.* Others again Walk comfortably with God a great while, Experiencing frequent and repeated Testimonies of his Distinguishing Love; Living in the Sun-shine of his Favour; Daily Receiving fresh Discoveries of Light and Knowledge from the Spirit of Truth; and Enjoying Delightful Communion with Christ by Faith. These are commonly Trained up and fitted for some Work allotted them by God. Either to Vindicate the Gospel, and Suffer for the Truth, or to pass thro' some sore Trial and Temptation; or to fall into Gross, Notorious Sins, for the Glory of God, and the Confirmation of their own, and Others Faith. And according to their Day, so is their Strength. Indeed it would be impossible to Count up the various Operations of the Spirit of God on the Hearts of Believers. Which Differ according to the Purposes of Infinite Wisdom, in such a Manner, as most Conduceth to the Glory of God, and the Edification of his Church. But then it is to be Remark'd, that this Difference is only in Method, or Order, or Degree. For the Influences of the Spirit are the same in Kind in all the Elect. And as Face Answers to Face

in

in a Glass, ſo does the Heart of One Spiritual Man to Another. So that the Experience of One Christian, is in ſome Measure and Degree, the Experience of All.

To proceed then. The firſt thing generally done by the Spirit in the Conversion of a Sinner, is to ſhew him, that he is loſt in himſelf and muſt die Eternally without the Free Grace and Mercy of God in the Mediator. The Man now hangs as it were between Heaven and Hell. In his own Apprehenſion there is but one Step between him and Endleſs Miſery. Thus is he Continually Diſtreſs'd, and Unſatisfied, reaping no Comfort from any thing he Reads or Hears: 'till God ſhall Shine in upon him by his Spirit, Opening his Underſtanding to Underſtand the Scriptures, or the Language of the Scripture ſpoken to him by ſome other Experienced Christian; with whom it is his Lot to be Converſant. He now begins to ſee a Marvelous Light in the Sacred Writings, unknown to him before by the Letter. Chriſt is Exhibited clearly in the Word; and he is enabled to view him with Spiritual Eyes, and to Cloſe in with him Savingly, laying hold of the Promiſes of God, by Faith in his Son, and with an Holy Boldneſs Appropriating them to himſelf, and feeling Raptures and Transports of inexpressible Joy and Comfort.

Thus Faith is kindled in the Soul, never to be Extinguished, 'till it is lost in Fruition. While it Acts, the Soul is in Heaven; the World is despised; Sin is unheeded; the Devil is Defied: for God is with him; and who then can be against him? But this Light of Revelation must be clouded; and Faith must Combat with Difficulties and Dangers. For without Opposition it lies Unactive; and not to be distinguished from a False, and Dead Faith. The Believer has now a more Amazing Sight of his own Vileness, and Deformity, Sees, that every thing he thinks, and acts, is Sin. Yet Faith tells him, he shall notwithstanding be Saved. Anon his Corruptions grow more Prevalent; Temptations to Infidelity Assault him; his Lusts and Vices become Predominant, and he falls into Sins as Gross and as Frequent as before; and perhaps more now than ever. Yet God in the very midst of his Rebellions, or immediately after his Acts of Iniquity, breaks in upon his Soul with new Discoveries of his Unchangeable Love to him in his Son. This greatly Strengthens his Faith, and plainly shews him, that as nothing could Move God at first to place his Love upon him; so nothing can provoke him to take it from him. Nay, the Viler he is, he finds the Lord the More Kind and Merciful to him;

And

And where Sin abounds, Grace to him does Superabound. And his Iniquities are no Hinderers, but Helpers of his Faith. By this he Learns, that the Love of God is like himself, the same Yesterday, to Day and for ever. That it was given him in Christ before the Foundation of the World. He now knows the Doctrine of Election to be True; because he knows himself Elected in his Head Christ Jesus. He feels himself United to him by Faith; made a Member of his Body, of his Flesh, and of his Bone. *And Here I fix my Foot. On this I join Issue with every Arminian.* I see, I know, I feel by Faith, I am One with Christ. If he can Perish, I shall Perish with him. If he is Loved with an Everlasting Love, I am Part of his Body, and am beloved with the same Love. If he was Chosen by God, before the World began; I was Chosen with him, and in him. Upon this Foundation; to wit, my Union with Christ, I Build my Belief of Electing Grace. And I am sure it will Stand to All Eternity. Neither the Persecutions of the World, nor the Outcry of Infidels, nor the Temptations of the Devil, nor mine own Sins and Transgressions, be they ever so Gross, and ever so often Repeated, shall be able to overthrow this my House: because it is founded on a Rock; even that Rock of
Ages,

Ages, Christ Jesus. I know, and feel the Difference between my Present State, and my Former, and consequently between myself, and the Unregenerate World. I am Chosen. And they are left. But if any ask me what will become of the Unbelieving Multitude? I Answer, I am not the Lord's Counsellor. Nor do I desire to pry into things, that do not concern me. I am, at times, enabled to rest satisfied in God's Good Pleasure, and let him do, what he will, with his Creatures. The Judge of All the Earth will do Right, what he sees to be Right; and not what Men think so to be. He Delighteth in his own Glory. And (blessed be his Name) I can sometimes delight in it also. Therefore Ask not me, but Search the Scriptures; and they will tell you, that *He that Believeth, and is Baptized, shall be Saved; but he that Believeth not, shall be Damned.* Mark xvi. 16. What that Damnation is, either as to its Nature or Duration, I am not able to say. The Scriptures use the Terms of *Outer Darkness, Fire and Brimstone*, and such other Terrible Metaphors: And say, it shall *Endure for Ever and Ever.* Thus the Bible sets it forth. And here I leave it, being saved from it by Predestinating, Distinguishing, Electing, Uniting, Love and Mercy. And to the Judgment of God I Refer the Cavilling,
Un-

Unbelieving Reprobates to try the Sad Experiment.

Having thus very briefly Declared, what is the Experimental Faith of God's Elect, I now proceed to Answer the Objections brought against this Glorious Doctrine by the *Arminian* Author, with whom I am at present engaged.

And first, Says the Objector, *If this be so, then is all Preaching vain.* To which I Answer.

I. If the End of Preaching be the Conversion of Souls; Most of the Preaching now used in the World is Vain indeed. His own Preaching, with that of the rest of his Brethren; is *Doctrine of Devils.* And, I Believe, if One were to ask All the Preachers of all Perswasions in *England*, Who bid them Speak in the Name of the Lord: Very few, if any One, of them could Vindicate their Assumed Authority, or Prove their Mission. The far Greatest Part of them, I am perswaded, know nothing of Christ, but by Name only. And those Few, who are Believers amongst them, Preach themselves more than Christ Jesus; And are not Honest enough to Utter, what they know to be the Truth; but Clip the Language for fear of Persecution: And are more zealous of being call'd, *Rabbi, Rabbi*, and of Cramming their Bel-

Bellies, and hoarding up filthy Lucre, than of Publishing abroad the Glad Tidings of Free Salvation to Elected *Sinners*. But this Zealous Priest, I suppose, thinks, his Preaching is of great Use to the People, and therefore is so Assiduous in Preaching about in Fields, and other Publick Places. In which indeed he acts consistent with himself, and to the Shame of his Indolent Brethren: who batten in Ease, and wallow in Luxury; troubling themselves, or others with Religion no oftner (and for the most part not so often) than the Laws and Rules of their Spiritual Polity oblige them to it. And though they pretend to be our Guides to shew us the Way to Heaven; yet if they were not so Extravagantly paid for their Prating, we should soon be left to stumble in the Dark, and go to Hell in our Ignorance for any thing they would do to prevent it, if we were foolish enough to think them able. For the best of them all of every Denomination, keep as it were a Divinity Shop, where they Vend their Religious Wares to their Customers at a certain Price, selling them so many Prayers, and Sermons a Week, for so many Pounds and Shillings *per Annum*. But the Truth is, the Preachers of Free-Will and Universal Redemption may very well refrain from Teaching, because they have

have

have nothing to Teach. For Men are made *Arminians* ready to their Hands. They may sit still, as they do, in Ease and Indolence, and see their Cause go swimmingly on. Few oppose their Doctrine. None Persecute it. Every Natural Man likes it. It grows up with them from their Cradles by Nature only without the Help of Preachers. And they Suck it in as it were with their Milk. The Doctrine of Election indeed, tho' ever so weakly Asserted, and faintly Vindicated, meets with Opposition from the Learned and Unlearned; from the Wise, and from the Foolish. Every One has Wit enough, he thinks, to Cry down, and Ridicule that, tho' he is hardly endowed with Common Sense. All are Wise enough to Condemn what they do not Understand. And to think that beneath the Lowest, which is Infinitely higher than the Highest of them All.

2. But surely All Preaching is not Vain, because Predestination is True. For as God hath Decreed Salvation for the Elect, So he has also Ordained Preaching as a Means to Convert those, to whom the Preacher is *Sent*. Thus God bid the Primitive Apostles, and Teachers to speak to such a Man, or go to such a Place, or continue long in such a City, because he had Ordain'd their Preaching to bring about the Conversion of that
Man,

Man, or of those particular Persons in those Places, who were from all Eternity Predestinated to Glory, tho' as yet Unknown to the Preacher. And his Infinite Wisdom thought fit to Use them as Instruments in his own Hand, to bring to pass his own Purpose.

3. But even the Preaching of this Author, and other false Preachers of all Denominations is not Vain. For that with all other Iniquity shall be Over-ruled, and Made subservient to the Illustration of the Almighty's Glory; in the Day, when the Veil shall be pull'd off from Holy Knavery and Priestcraft; and the Secrets of all Hearts shall be Disclosed; and God shall Confirm, what he spake of Old by his Prophet *Jeremiah*. *I have not Sent these Prophets; yet they Ran. I have not Spoken to them; yet they Prophested.* *Jerem. xxiii. 21.*

The next Objection brought by Mr. *Wesley* against this Doctrine, is, That it tends to Destroy all Holiness. *All Hope of Future Reward, and Fear of Punishment. Hope of Heaven, and Fear of Hell.* To which I readily make this Reply. That it Really does So. It Effectually cuts off all Hope of Reward to Those, who are Working for Life Under *Terms of Acceptance.* And all Fear of Punishment to Those, who by Faith are Enabled

to Apply the *Exceeding Great and Precious Promises* given to Believers under Grace in the Gospel. It utterly Damns all zealous Work-mongers: Who are for patching up a Filthy Garment out of the Nasty Rags of Legal Holiness, and joining it (if it were possible) to the Pure and Spotless Robe of the Mediator's Righteousness, freely given to all the Elect; for whom it was prepared before the Foundation of the World.

As to his saying *If a Sick Man knows he shall unavoidably Die, or unavoidably Recover, tho' he know not which, it is not Reasonable for him to take Physick.* It is a very weak and trifling Objection. But because it is very commonly made, I shall briefly declare mine own Thoughts concerning it. I think then every Man that hath but what is call'd a Common Stock of Understanding, knows, when he is Sick, he shall either *Unavoidably Die, or Unavoidably Recover.* For one of them must *Unavoidably* happen. But he takes Physick in hopes, that it will prove a Means for his Recovery. And this even a True Predestinarian himself may do consistent with his own Principles: But with this Difference. Whereas the *Arminian* takes it *at a Hazard*, and makes his Physician his God: the Other must be fully perswaded, that those are the right Means appointed by God for
D his

his Recovery, otherwise he acts in direct Contradiction to his Profession; as all thro' Natural Weakness and Infidelity often do. And indeed strictly Speaking, nothing deserves the Name and Appellation of *Means*, that does not infallibly produce the End, for which it is Used. For if I drink a Physical Potion, when Sick, in hopes of a Recovery, and nevertheless do not Recover, the Physick cannot be called the *Means* of Preserving Life to Me. But if it contributed (as very probably it did) to Effect my Predetermined End, it was to me the certain *Means* of Death. And I doubt not, but a very great Part of the Physick taken in the World, may justly so be called. But to proceed.

It *directly tends*, says our Author, to *Destroy several particular Branches of Holiness*. Such are *Meekness, Love of our Enemies, of the Evil and Unthankful, &c.* But surely it cannot Destroy what has no Being. For is there any such thing in Nature, as the Love of Enemies, Blessing from the Ground of the Heart (for I grant Lip-Blessings are frequent enough) those, who curse Us? For my Part, I freely Acknowledge, I find no such thing in my Nature, but rather quite the Contrary. Instead of Loving those, who hate me, I am inclined to Hate them with equal Hatred.

Hatred. And so far am I from Blessing those that Curse me, that I am more ready to give them two Curses for their one. This is my Nature. Whoever has a Better, let him Declare it. But you will say, Christ Commands it. True. But instead of Obeying, I mortally Hate this, and all other the Commands of Christ; because they are wholly Contrary to my Lusts and Corruptions. “But ’tis wrought in the Soul by the Spirit of God.” It is so. But then it is only in those, who are Endued with the Spirit. And they are, only such as are the *Called according to his Purpose*: who see by Faith their Election in Christ, before the World began. If these indeed (as it often proves) have any Natural Enmity or Hatred to each other, it is, at times, entirely subdued by the Mighty Operation of the Spirit of Love; and quite banished, and lost, when they can see their Communion, and Fellowship in their Mystical Head; and are enabled to *keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace*. If one of those, thro’ the Weakness of his Love, and the Prevalency of his Corruptions, Vents his Malice in Bitter Reproaches, or Hard Sayings against another: if the Offended is fully perswaded, that the Offender is a Brother, he is sometimes made Able, and Willing, not only Heartily to Forgive him, but also Affec-

tionately to Love him, earnestly desiring his Everlasting Welfare: and wishing that God would *Bless him with all Spiritual Blessings in Heavenlies in Christ Jesus.* Thus Our Lord Pray'd for his Crucifiers, many of whom were his Dear Brethren; the Adopted Sons of his and their Father; the Elected People of his and their God. Thus *Stephen* too Pray'd for his Murderers; those Amongst them, whom by Faith he knew, were to be Converted, and brought into the Church: One of which was the Great Apostle of the Gentiles; who was then *Consenting unto his Death, and kept the Raiment of them that Slew him.* This is what I apprehend by those Commands of Christ and his Apostles. If there is any other Meaning in them (as there may, for ought I know to the Contrary) I freely own, it is not as yet discovered to Me. Nor do I *Experience* any other Sort of Love to Enemies, than that Already mentioned. But that the Doctrine of Predestination tends to inspire or increase *Sharpness or Eagerness of Temper* in those, who hold it, when they are Opposed, is a Notorious Falshood. For as Sharpness, or Eagerness of Temper is a Natural Corruption, equally Common to the Asserters of *Free-Will* with those of *Election*: So a Genuine Predestinarian (for I trouble not my self

about

about the Bastard Brood of Notional Professors) has the least Plea to Vindicate this Corruption; and the strongest Motive to incline him to Stifle, and Subdue it, as much as he can. For if I firmly Believe, and clearly Experience, that the Difference made between Creatures exactly Alike in Nature, is wholly owing to the Will of the Great Creator; I cannot (at least while this Perswasion is warm on my Mind) indulge my self in Anger, or Hatred towards my Fellow Creature. for his not seeing with my Eyes. Because so doing I deny mine own Principle, that God has given me that Knowledge which he has thought fit to withhold from the Other. Consequently Thankfulness to God flows from this Belief: And not Anger towards him, who is not, as yet, Blest with such an Inestimable Privilege; tho', for any thing I know, may be one of those, for whom the Blessing is kept in Store by God in Christ from all Eternity. In short, I, who am a Rank Predestinarian, defy this Author, with all his Universal Love and Charity, to read this mine Answer to his Sermon without stirrings of Anger, or Malice towards me, than I now feel towards him, whose Notions of Religion I abhor, and Detest.

“ But thirdly 'tis an Uncomfortable Doctrine.” Indeed so it is, to those who cannot

see their Interest in it: but Marvelously Sweet and Comfortable to All, who by Grace are made Partakers of it. And for the Uncomfortableness, that Accrues to Others from it, You must Blame the Scriptures, I think, for Setting forth such a Doctrine, as tends to Destroy their Peace and Comfort. For even you, who judge it to be False, cannot but own, that it is expressly Asserted in the Letter of the Word. And so by your Own Confession the Scripture has laid Traps and Snares to Catch Men in this Uncomfortable Doctrine; and Tempt them to Believe this Unpleasant Lie.

And is not Your Doctrine Uncomfortable also? and that not to Some, but to All? For thus must the Universalist Commune with him self. “I am Taught, that Eternal
 “Happiness is in my Power. And that in
 “Order to Obtain it I must be Sincere and
 “Holy. How can I tell, when I am Sin-
 “cere and Holy to such a Degree” (suppos-
 ing him to be in his Natural State, conse-
 quently blind enough to think him self Holy
 at all) “as God will Accept? For if I come
 “not up to the Terms and Conditions Re-
 “quired, but fall short in One Degree, I
 “may be Damn’d even for that. I know
 “not what Measure of Sincerity, and Hol-
 “ness” (as you call it) “will serve my
 “Turn.

“ Turn. If it must be Universal Obedi-
 “ ence, surely there is no such Thing.”
 (For I cannot Believe, any Free-Will-Pro-
 fessor is so inexpressibly stupid, as to think,
 he has no Sin at all) “ But if it may come
 “ short of Universality, and yet be Accept-
 “ ed; I know not, how high a Pitch it must
 “ arrive at, to Stamp it Sterling. I am
 “ therefore much afraid, that this Faith
 “ and Holiness, I must be possess'd of will
 “ Fail, at least of one Degree of being Ef-
 “ fectual. Or if I may have a sufficient
 “ Quantity now; perhaps I shall lose it again,
 “ before I die, having no Eternal Decree of
 “ God for its Foundation; and seeing my
 “ self a Changeable Creature.” This is the
 Natural Language of the Maintainers of, and
 Dependants upon this Comfortable Doctrine
 of Universal Redemption. *Whose Ways, says*
Mr. Wesley, are Ways of Pleasantsness, and all
her Paths Peace.

And now we are going to be put to the
 Trial, and asked, what our Happiness is.
 'Tis not he Hopes (if you can believe he
 hopes so) *a Notion, a Speculative Belief, a bare*
Opinion of any Kind: But a feeling Possession of
God in our Hearts wrought in Us by the Holy
Ghost. It it be so, How comes it to pass
 that this Work of the Holy Ghost in Us,
 is so contrary to what it is in him and his

lowers? I must Confess, that I have no Experience of a Faith Enabling me to Depend on Christ for the Forgiveness of past Sins, and not at the same time taking in the Future also. Nor do I believe, that ever such a Faith was wrought in any Soul by the Holy Ghost. It seems to me to be a very Lame, and Maim'd Kind of Faith: And such as is so far from Supporting the Creature, that it Needs to be Supported, and Expects it too, by the Creature itself. For if I can lose or keep it, as I please, It Relies on me, and not I on It. If ever I have Experienced a Vital Act of Faith, (as I know to my Comfort, I have,) it was such a Faith, as gave me full Confidence and Assurance of the Mercy and Love of God from a Spiritual View of My Eternal Union with him in his Son, without any Possibility of ever being Separated from Him. Because as he is One with his Father, so are Believers with Him. And this Confidence Irresistibly prevails against all Opposition of the Carnal Mind. But for a Man to talk of *Obstructing the Witness of the Spirit*, is to betray his own Ignorance of the Matter. For all the Actings of God upon the Soul are like himself Free, and Omnipotent. And it is as impossible for Fleth and Blood to Obstruct or Hinder them, as it is for the Prince of Darkness to Scale
the

the Walls of Heaven; and to Depose the Eternal God from his Throne of Sovereignty and Absolute Dominion. But tho' every Uniting Act of Faith carries in it this Infalible Confidence of Salvation, consequently Excludes all Fear of Falling away, and by its Sealing Testimony Assures the Soul of Final Perseverance. Yet when the Extraordinary Influences of this Revelation are withdrawn, Fears and Doubts arise in the Soul: and Faith, which when once wrought by the Mighty Power of God, is never Totally lost, is left to fight with Infidelity, and to Encounter Misgiving Fears, and Jealousies, and to Maintain the Field against all Opposition of Doubt, and Unbelief; being often in seeming Danger, yet always Invincible and Safe. Thus is the Life of a Christian a Continual War between Flesh and Spirit, Faith and Infidelity. But to talk of Uninterrupted Assurance without the least Doubting or Unbelief for many Years together (as Our Author pretends) is one of the most Monstrous Notions in Religion, that ever I heard in all my Life; and an Evident Sign (if we can yet stand in Need of any more Signs) that Men, who thus Prate, never in all their Days had any Experience of the least Degree of True, Justifying, Uniting Faith. For Faith without a Contrary Principle of Flesh to Encoun-

ter with, is, in my Experience, no Faith at All: it being one of the Essential Properties of Justifying Faith, *In Hope to Believe against Hope.*

Again it is very Uncomfortable that Thousands and Millions of Men without any preceding Offence (For that, you must know, would much mend the Matter, and make it more Comfortable) were Unchangeably Doom'd to Everlasting Burnings. I own, it is Uncomfortable. And so are all the Ways of God to Flesh and Blood. But to whom? Why peculiarly to those, who being filled with Bowels of Mercy, Tenderness and Compassion, could even wish themselves Accursed for their Brethren's Sake. And who are these Merciful, Compassionate Men? Is Mr. Wesley one of them? Could he wish him self Accurst for my Sake; who am his Brother according to his own Notions of Fraternity? If he could. I grant, 'tis more than I could do for Him, or any other Man on Earth. But if he could not, (as, if he were so ingenuous as to confess the Truth, he must own) then it is impertinent for him to quote a Scripture, which himself allows, he has no Knowledge of. "But Paul did so say." True. He did. But by what Spirit, I won't Answer. Let Paul speak for himself; who often talk'd, and wrote, and acted too as weak and Carnal as other Men; and perhaps this was one of his
his

his Carnal Expressions: But as it never was Revealed to me, I shall pronounce nothing Dogmatically concerning it: for I profess to know no Scripture, but by Revelation.

Fourthly. This Uncomfortable Doctrine tends to Destroy our Zeal for Good Works. And here I will lay hold on the present Opportunity, and Employ it in Declaring to such, as the Lord shall give Power to Receive them, those Conceptions, and Ideas of *Good-Works*, which have been Communicated to mine Understanding by the Revelation of God's Holy Spirit, in Reading his Written Word. *Good Works* then, Spiritually Good are all such, as are done in Faith, with a Single Eye to the Glory of God in the Mediator. Most of the *Good Works* truly so called, Instanced, and Related in the Scriptures were *Immoral*: done in Direct Violation of the Moral Law. Such was *Abraham's* Murder of his Son. The *Israelites* Borrowing Jewels, and Gold of the *Egyptians*, never designing to Repay them. *Rahab's* Lies and Treachery in Concealing the Spies. (which with the forementioned of *Abraham*, are the only two *Works* Instanced by the Apostle *James*) *Elijah's* first Mocking, and then Slaying the Prophets of *Baal*. *Elisha's* Causing Forty-two little Children to be torn in Pieces by She Bears for Childishly Sporting, and Mocking him. With Num-
ber-

berlels Instances in the Old Testament: And in the New Testament we shall find some as little Agreeable to the Common Notions of Universal Benevolence as the other. For even the Healing the Sick, and Curing the Blind and Lame, done by Christ and his Apostles, tho' *Naturally Good* to all, to whom they were done, yet strictly speaking they were but Partial. Some, and not all the Diseas'd were Healed. And of those some, Great Part were either Believers themselves, or the Relations, and Friends of those, who were so. The Nine-Unbelieving Lepers seem to have been Heal'd for the Faith of the Poor Believing *Samaritan*. One Impotent Man at the Pool of *Bethesda* was Cured; when the Great Multitude of Blind, Halt, and Withered, (for any thing we Read to the Contrary) were left to Groan under their Infirmities still; and to wait in the Porches for the troubling of the Waters. *Mary Magdalene's* Breaking the Box of Ointment, and Profusely throwing it on Jesus's Feet was, strictly speaking, little better than Extravagance. For had it Really been sold for more than Three Hundred Pence, and given to the Poor, as *Judas* falsely pretended; he would have it, it would have been much more Agreeable to our Natural Notions of Charity and Alms-giving. But it was done out of Love to

to Christ; and therefore it was a *Good Work*. And the Reading this Passage was the Means made Use of by God to give me an Insight into this Mystery. So again when the Primitive Believers sold their Possessions, and laid the Money at the Apostles Feet; it was but a Narrow-Spirited Charity, if tried by the Common Conceptions of Universal Generosity, and Benevolence. For we do not Read, that they gave one Single Penny to any Poor Unbelievers: but kept it all in their own Community, and shared it among themselves. And yet for keeping back part of the Price of an Estate, *Peter* struck *Ananias* and his Wife dead upon the Spot. Which was also a *Good Work*. It would be tedious to Multiply Particulars. But to what has been said we may Add this one Remark. That the Pronouncing the Decisive Sentence at the Last Day will be according to the Tenour of the Foregoing Description of *Good Works*. For as the Actions of the Sheep, for which they are there Commended, are Works of Charity only to Christ in his Members. So the Goats are said to be Condemned, not for Murther, Adultery, Theft, and the like. But — [I] was an hungred, says the Judge, and ye gave [ME] no Meat. [I] was thirsty, and ye gave [ME] no Drink, &c. They had, no Doubt, been service-

able to each other : and Many of them, I question not, had Actually Reliev'd some poor Members of Christ's Body. But not having Faith to do it purely upon that Account, *because they belong'd to Him*, and therefore to Prefer them to Others, who were not Interested in him, they were Judged Destitute of *Good Works* : and bid to Depart from him into Everlasting Fire prepared for the Devil and his Angels. *He that bath Ears to Hear, let him hear.*

These are the *Works*, that are accounted *Good* in the Sight of God. But there are other Actions of Morality, which have a Relative Goodness in them; and are called *Good Works*, from the Temporal Advantage, that accrues from them to those, who shall Reap the Fruits of their Benefactors Kindness, and feel the Comfortable Influences of their Favour and Benevolence. And these are Common to All the World : and approv'd, and Practis'd as much by Predestinarians, as Others. If I see an Object of Compassion standing in Need of mine Assistance, I am inclined to Relieve him. First. Because I know not, but he may be an Elected Member of Christ's Body, though now shut up under Unbelief. Secondly. If I am not incited to it by this Hope, yet as I have at present no Ill-Will against any Particular Person,

son,

son, I am to leave all Secret Things to God, and Remit all Men to the Disposal of their Common Creator. And in the mean while am Commanded, while I have Time, to do Good unto All Men. Thirdly. Natural Pity and Compassion move me to Succour the Distressed, and Help the Indigent. And in so doing I Relieve, and Ease mine own Mind. For Pity, where ever it Remains, causeth Pain of Spirit. But I am so far from thinking these Actions to be Spiritually Good, that I look upon them as nothing else but Weaknesses. For Natural Pity, (whatever fine Glosses, and Glittering Titles may be put on it by *Pharisees*) is in reality Natural Infir- mity. And I had rather see Ten Thousand Unbelievers Perish for lack of Sustainance, than One Child of God by Faith in Christ Jesus Destitute of the Necessities of Life, when I have it in my Power to help him. As to taking Pains about their Salvation. In his Sense of the Matter I desire to take no Pains about mine own. And as I am neither a *Preacher* nor *Expounder* according to the Mo- dern Acceptation of the Words; nor have any immediate Call to go about to Convert Souls, so the less Pains I take about it the better. Yet had I the Honour to be sent with a Message of Good News to any Poor Elected Sinner, I should reckon it an inef-

timable Favour from God, and Animated by His Spirit should Run to the Work with Joy and Gladness. And after all, I verily Believe, I am as Anxious and Solicitous for the Salvation of Mr. *Wesley* (tho' at the same time I freely own, I have not the least Care about it) as he with all his Zeal, and Universal Charity is, in Reality, concerning Mine.

Another black Charge brought against the Doctrine of Election, is, That *it tends to overthrow the whole Christian Revelation*. Strange indeed! But how does it so? Why by making it *not Necessary*, and therefore *not True*. And how does it make it not Necessary? Why, "If some are ordained to Salvation, and others to Damnation; then no Need of the Christian Revelation." This is much such another wise Objection as the saying, *Then is all Preaching Vain*. God has Elected all, that shall be saved, in Christ Jesus before the Foundation of the World: and has Ordained his Son to suffer for their Sins, and to Purchase them to himself by his own Blood. From thence our Adversary argues. The Coming, Preaching, and Dying of Christ is not Necessary: and therefore, *Tell it not in Gath! Publish it not in the Streets of Ashkelon!*

But

But this is not All. For it overthrow's the Christian Revelation, *in making that Revelation Contradict itself.* To prove this Scripture is brought to fight against Scripture. And a fine Cobweb Notion is ju mentioned of a Chimerical Difference between Foreknowledge and Preordination; And we are told in Words, without an possible Meaning in him that tells Us so, that God is *Willing* to Save Men, but Men will not be Saved. He would have all if he Could: but because they will not, he cannot help it. "But the Scriptures say, God is not Willing that Any should Perish." To which I answer. That the Letter of the Scripture evidently Contradicts it self in many Places, I am so far from denying, that I readily and heartily Grant it. Nay, I believe, it would be difficult to find any humane Writings, either Historical or Philosophical, wherein are jumbled together greater Heaps of Groffer Contradictions, than those contain'd in the Letter of the Bible. And for a Man to go about to make it Consist with it self by any Labour, Study or Skill, is a Bold, Impudent, Antichristian Enterprize, invented by the Devil, and undertaken by Expositors, and Interpreters. And is as vain a Piece of Presumption, as to strive to Reconcile Contraricties in Nature. For after

all, the Scripture is as much a Contradiction to it self, as ever. A Man may study himself Mad, and pore in the Scriptures, 'till he is Blind; and yet not Understand them one jot the better. The Knowledge of the Original Tongues, in which they were written, will avail him nothing. Nor will the Greek Word [*Pistis*] shew a Learned Doctor, what is meant by *Believing in Christ*, one whit better, than the English Word *Faith* will convey the thing to an Illiterate Ploughman. Tho' the Former be capable of Critically laying down the *Etymon* of the Word; and of shewing the *Theme* from whence it is Derived. *He sheweth his Word unto JACOB, his Statutes and Ordinances unto ISRAEL. He hath not dealt so with any Nation: Neither have the Heathen knowledge of his Laws.* Psal. cxlvii. 19, 20.

I Believe, as I said before, the Doctrine of Election to be True: because I Believe myself Elected. *It is so, because it is so*, is good Logick in Religion, tho' Ridiculous in Philosophy. It is to a Believer the Glory of the Scripture, that it contradicts it self. Because Faith has thence the greater Ground for Triumph. In short. The Literal Contradictions of the Scripture, the Lusts and Corruptions of Nature, the Sins and Iniquities of the Flesh, and the Persecutions, and

Reproaches of the Unbelieving World are so many Glorious Trials of a Believer's Faith. And are so far from Hurting him, or Hindering his Happiness, that they all work together for Good to Every Elected Member of Christ, in proportion as he is Exercised therewith.

But neither is this All. For 'tis a Doctrine full of such *Blasphemy*, as the Good Man would *Dread to mention*, but that the *Honour of his God, and the Cause of his Truth will not suffer him to be Silent.* But you must take care, *as you will answer it at the Great Day,* not to charge the Blasphemy upon him. But suppose the Doctrine of Predestination should happen to prove true: whose would the Blasphemy be then? For he expressly asserts this Blasphemy as a Consequence drawn from it. *And the more you are grieved with them, that do thus Blaspheme, see that you confirm your Love to them the more.* You need not doubt, but he knew by his own Experience and Practice, that this Lesson is Possible, nay Easy to be Learned by Admonition, and Precept. Love to those with whom we are most grieved, is, according to *Mr. Wesley*, a Principle easy enough to be acquired, to what Perfection, we please: if we would but be so good as to take Pains, and Try about it. But what is this Blasphemy of
this

this Doctrine? *Why it Represents our Lord as an Hypocrite, a Deceiver of the People, a Man void of common Sincerity.* Indeed it does Represent him as such to his Mind, and that of every other Man, (be he never so much in Esteem for Piety and Knowledge,) that has no other Apprehensions of Christ, or Conceptions of his Words, but what are Learned in the School of Nature, and drawn from the Corrupt Principles of Humane Reason. But how is this Charge maintain'd. *Why, it cannot be denied, he says, but that he every where speaks as if he were willing that all should be Saved.* No? Certainly it can be denied. For my part, I confess, I can see nothing like it in many of his Sayings, but rather quite the Contrary. And if this Author had but given us some Meaning of that *Mysterious Text*, that tells us of Christ's weeping over *Jerusalem*; it might have carried some seeming Colour of Argument. But as he has not, I must take the Liberty to Retort the Charge of Blatphemy back upon himself. For as it is Blasphemy to accuse Christ Jesus with Lying to *Jerusalem*, in saying he would have gathered them; when he designed no such thing. So it is as horrid Blasphemy to say, He Lied in his Prayer to his Father; where he says, *I pray for them. I pray not for the World, but for them which*

thou hast given me: for they are thine. John xvii. 9.

But there is more Blasphemy behind still. For just as it Honours the Son, so does this Doctrine Honour the Father. It Destroys all his Attributes at once. And what is meant by His Attributes? Certainly when Men use the Word *Attribute* they can have no other Idea of it in their Minds, but what is Agreeable to their Conceptions. Whatever then is by Men *Attributed* to God, is called by them an *Attribute*. And then, say I, may all these *Attributes* be for ever *Destroy'd*. For whatever is *Attributed* to God by any Man, is like himself, Corrupt, and False, and quite Beside the Divine Perfections. Philosophical Reasoners may perplex and tire themselves all their Life Long in searching into, what they call the *Perfections*, and *Attributes* of God's *Nature*: and after all is done; they will not have, in the Minuteest Degree, any clearer Knowledge of the Deity, than they had, when first they Began to Learn. No, not though they take in the Letter of the Scripture likewise as an Help to their Enquiries. For the True Knowledge of God is given to his Own without any Pains, or Labour in them at all. Let this then suffice for an Answer to all the like Cavils of this Noisy Objector. For if I go about to Re-

con-

concile the Ways of God to the Conceptions
 and Apprehensions of the *Natural Man*; I
 make my self a Transgressor, by Building up
 with one Hand, what I am Destroying with
 the other. For I at first Asserted, and do
 still Maintain: They are Irreconcilable. I
 desire (if it were possible) never to Form or
 Entertain the least Thought of God out of
 Christ. Because I can have no Apprehen-
 sions of him so, but what are either wild
 and confus'd, or Terrible, and Affrighting;
 Representing him as a *Consuming Fire*. But
 tho' the Carnal Mind is at Utter Enmity
 with God, always *Replying against Him*: be-
 cause his Dispensations are Disagreeable to
 Natural Reason; (and all Endeavours to Re-
 concile them, are Wicked, and Fruitless)
 Yet the Soul, that is Renewed, and Born a-
 gain by the Spirit, is Taught to let the
 Glory of God be its Chief Delight. And is
 Enabled, at times, to Lay down all the Wea-
 pons of Flesh and Blood, the Reasonings and
 Cogitations of the Humane Mind; which
 are ever used in Rebellion against the Lord
 of Life; and to Close in with the Promises of
 God in his Dear Son: to Rest satisfied in the
 Ways of God, Letting him do what he
 Will, with his own. And being fully Per-
 swaded of God's Love to itself, Desires to
 know nothing, but Jesus Christ; sees its
 own

own Ignorance, Vileness, Nothingness, and cries out with Joy and Wonder past Expression, *O the Depth of the Riches both of the Wisdom, and Knowledge of God! How Unsearchable are his Judgments, and his Ways past finding out!* Then with a Calm Resigned Humility Submits itself to the Divine Will: and says to God from the Bottom of the Heart, cheerfully relying on the Mediators Blood, Lord, here am I. Do with me whatsoever seemeth thee Good.

He now goes on from Accusing the Doctrine of Blasphemy in Respect to God, to Charge it with Foolishness in Relation to the Devil. For it makes Satan Act Inconsistently in Tempting those to Destruction, who are before Decreed to become his Prey. But if this be all the Folly of it, we may readily plead Guilty to the Indictment. For I am so far from Denying it, that I Positively Affirm, that the Devil and all Mankind are Inconsistent in all their Ways. That Men are so, I Believe, Few will Deny. And that Satan is so likewise, appears to all Believers in this: That he is ever, out of Malice, and Hatred, Tempting them to Evil: Yet all his Temptations shall infallibly be turned into Blessings, and contribute to Advance their Eternal Welfare. Nay their Sins do not Destroy, but often Increase their Comfort even here:

here. And this, which I have my self Experienced; and All, who are Converted, in some Measure do, is certainly Great Inconsistence in Him, if he Knows it: If not; it proceeds from the same Ignorance in Him, which Appears in all his Disciples and Instruments, the Preachers of Free Will, and Universal Redemption. This is Certain, and beyond Dispute, That He was so Foolish as to have a Trial with Christ Himself: Tempting him to Worship Him, and Destroy himself. And no *Arminian* or Universalist can dare to say, that there was a Possibility of Christ's Falling a Prey to the Temptations of the Devil.

Before I Dismiss this Author, I shall just take a Short View of his Scheme of Predestination at the Latter End of his Sermon. Which in Effect is this. "Man may be Saved if he Will, if not he may let it alone." Consequently 'tis in the Power of Man, whether any one Single Person shall be Sav'd, or no. And so Christ may Purchase no People by his Blood; and his Death may happen to prove Vain, and Insignificant. For to say, God Foreknew, some would Certainly be saved, is Tantamount to saying, he Fore-Ordained it. As has been hinted already. This Scheme, he say:

is *Worthy of God*, and every way *Consistent with all the Perfections of his Nature*. Upon which I will ask him One Question. Is this Scheme Satisfactory to his own Mind? And does he See a Perfect Harmony, and Consistency in it? If he says, he does. He is Certainly one of no great Depth of Thought (as we say) but is easily Satisfied with any thing. But if he owns, (as I think he must) that he is not Satisfied with it. What is it better than downright Lying, thus to Dissemble with others, by telling them of a Consistency in those Notions: Which neither himself, nor any other Man, ever was, or ever will be Able to Discover? As to the Heap of Scriptures Cited to prove (if possible) this *Consistent Scheme* I shall only Remark: that 'tis easy, very easy to bring Scripture to Countenance any Opinion. And nothing is more Common, than to see Authors, and Hear Preachers, mention Scriptures by Wholesale in their Books, and Sermons, without Understanding the Spiritual Meaning of one Single Text.

Thus have I Examined Mr. *Wesley's* Sermon of *Free Grace*; which Title how well it Deserves, I leave Any One, who has the least Measure of Spiritual Understanding, to Judge.

And now perhaps some One may Ask me, If I profess, Every Man's Knowledge is Circumscribed by God: And no one can Know any Truth in Religion; but what He has Decreed to Teach Him. Why I should trouble my Self to write this Pamphlet, to Declare Truths, which none can *Savingly* Receive, but those who are Predestinated to know them. To which I Answer.

1st, As God has Everlastingly Decreed; whatever shall come to pass: so he has consequently Ordain'd the Publishing these Papers.

2dly, The Motive, that induced me to Write, was a Strong Inclination so to do. And I love to Gratify mine Inclination. And as it is my Principle; That all things shall Contribute to the Glory of God. So, I am perswaded, shall these Writings. Either, they shall be Instrumental in God's Hands to Teach the Truth to those, who yet Know it not. Or to Confirm it in Those, who Know it. Or they shall serve to Stir up the Enemy to Rage and Malice against the Gospel: and to harden the Hearts of the Sons of Perdition. Or Lastly. They shall be thrown by with the Insignificant Works of that innumerable Herd of Authors of all Ages. And so at last shall be a Means to let

as know. That Man's Thoughts and Works
are all vain. That the Lord's own Arm Ef-
fects his own Purposes, making Use some-
times of Despised Instruments, and sometimes
of none at All. That Man can do nothing
by Prating, or Writing. But *the Help that is
done in the Earth, He doth it Himself.*

F I N I S.

