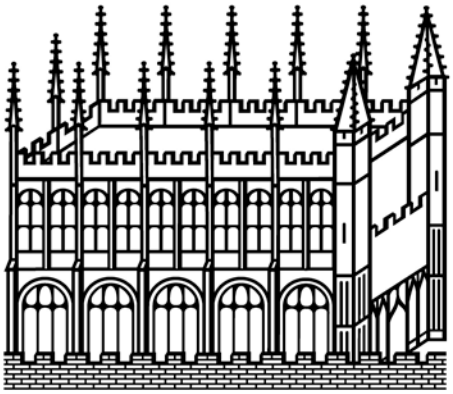


Bodleian Libraries

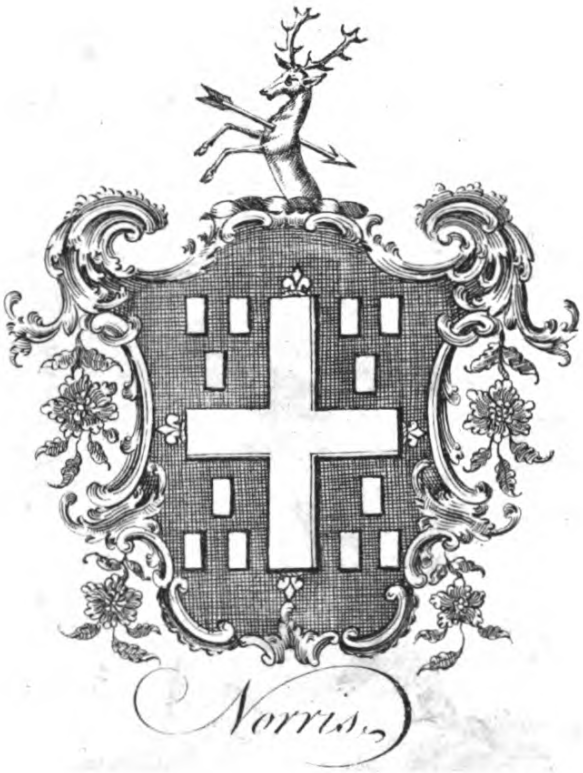
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

This book is part of the collection held by the Bodleian Libraries and scanned by Google, Inc. for the Google Books Library Project.

For more information see:

http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/dbooks

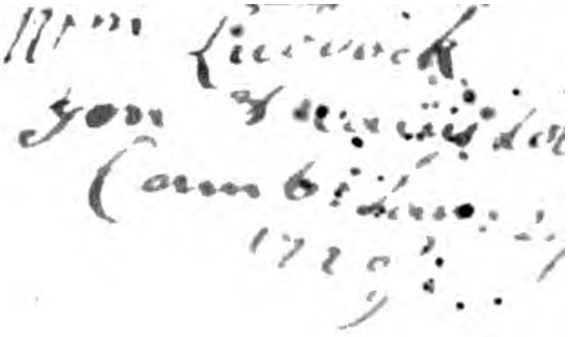
This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 2.0 UK: England & Wales (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0) licence.

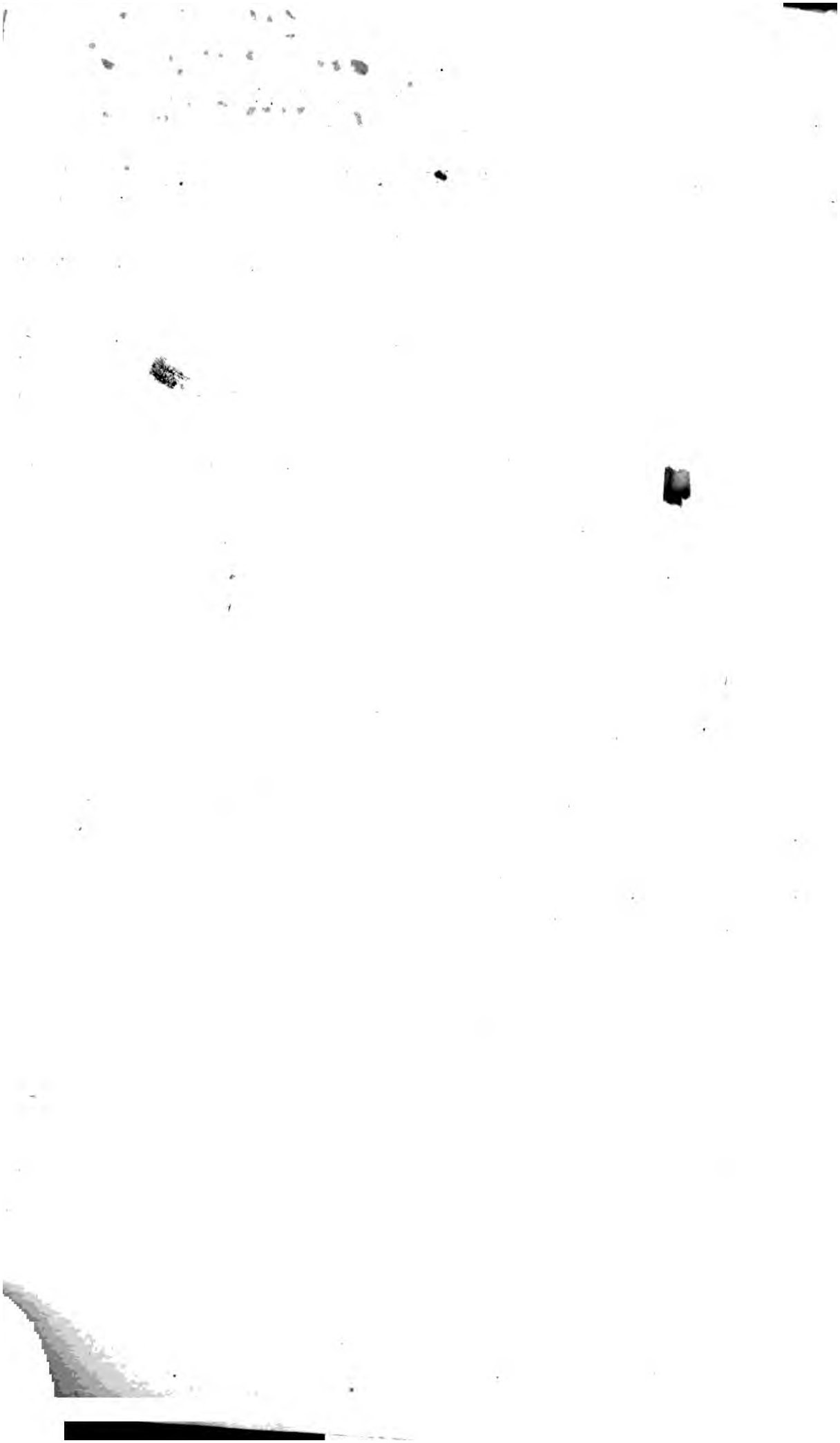


5/3

~~Ashel. K. VII. 9.~~

126 e. 35





FATE and DESTINY, Inconſiſtent with CHRISTIANITY:

OR, THE

Horrid Decree

Of Abſolute and Unconditional Election and Reprobation,

FULLY DETECTED.

SHEWING,

The Grand Error, of aſſerting, that CHRIST did not Die for All Men, but for an Elect Number only.

In Eight CONFERENCES, between EPENETUS and EUTYCHUS:

WHEREIN

The moſt material Pretences, urg'd in Favour of thoſe Principles, are clearly Stated, and Anſwered; And Man prov'd to be the ſole Efficient Cauſe of his own Deſtruction.

By EDWARD BIRD.

Hoſ. 13. 9. *O Iſrael, thou haſt deſtroyed thy ſelf, but in me is thine help.*

Job 34. 10. —— *Far be it from God, that he ſhould do wickedneſs, and from the Almighty, that he ſhould commit iniquity.*

Job 5. 27. *Lo this, we have ſearched it, ſo it is; hear it, and know thou it for thy good.*

LONDON:

Printed for CHARLES RIVINGTON at the *Bible and Crown* in St. *Paul's Church-yard.* 1726.

BODLEIAN L'P
13
FEB
1928
OXFO

To the Reverend

George Stanhope, *D. D.*

Dean of CANTERBURY,

Chaplain in Ordinary to His MAJESTY.

Reverend SIR,

I *Humbly take Leave of doing my ſelf the Honour of this* DEDICATION; *and I am the more embolden'd, from the Encouragement I have received from You, to* Print *the following Sheets, having firſt favour'd me*

with a Peruſal of them in Manuſcript.

Indeed, Your Example to promote True Religion, and Sound Principles, is ſuch, that it would be Arrogance and Preſumption in me, to attempt a Deſcription thereof. For Words *need not be uſed to form an Idea, of what the Public have more happily Enjoy'd from your Pious Labours, both from the Pulpit and the Preſs, (eſpecially this Pariſh) by many Years* Experience.

The Subject-Matter I have treated on, is built upon a Large and Noble Foundation, no leſs than that moſt Amiable and Comfortable Attribute of God, his Infinite Love and Beneficence; *an Attribute which he ſeems moſt De-*

Delighted in, and for the Honour of which, to have a more Tender Regard, than for any other.

Therefore thoſe Perſons who ſhall preſume to Detract from this Attribute, are guilty of the greateſt Sacrilege they can commit; becauſe they rob God of the brighteſt Pearl of his Divine Majeſty. For God is LOVE: His tender Mercies are over all his Works, *Pſal.* 145. 9. *So that nothing can bring a greater Scandal, nor do more Harm to Religion, than thoſe Principles of* ſome Perſons, *which confine God's Mercies to a very* Few *only: Who make a great Noiſe, and pretend a mighty Zeal in Magnifying the* Freeneſs *of God's Grace, and at the very ſame*

time, take away the Fulneſs *of it; and ſo form baſe and narrow Conceptions of Almighty* GOD; *repreſenting him a* Being, *full of* Partiality, Cruelty, *and* Injuſtice; *Contriving and Reſolving on the Ruin of his Creatures, on* Purpoſe *to ſhew his Abſolute Dominion over them. In direct Oppoſition to what God has deliver'd to us, in the Holy Scriptures, where we are told, That* his Ways are equal, *Ezek.* 18. 29. *That* there is no reſpect of Perſons with him, *Rom.* 2. 11. *That* he is rich in Mercy towards all, *Eph.* 2. 4. *Rom.* 10. 12. And abundant in Goodneſs and Truth, *&c.*

My Deſign in the following Diſcourſe, is to Reſcue (if I

can)

can) *ſome Well-meaning People, and to Secure others, from the Danger of the contrary Opinions; and accordingly I have compris'd, in as little Compaſs, and with as much Plainneſs as I could, many Important Truths and Arguments, which otherwiſe might coſt my* Readers *a great deal of Time and Expence, to Furniſh themſelves withal. So that thoſe Perſons, whoſe Misfortune it is to be Miſtaken, as to the Subject here treated on, may ſee the falſe Notions and groundleſs Principles they build upon.*

And as I have omitted nothing which I thought Neceſſary on this Occaſion; ſo I have taken Care, not to inſert any Thing that might ſeem Impertinent, but have endeavour'd to make the Whole

as Uſeful and Inſtructive as poſſible.

May what I have done, tend to the Glory of God, *the* Convincing of the Erroneous, *and the* Satisfying of the Doubtful and Scrupulous, *is the ſincere and hearty Prayer of him, who with the utmoſt Deference and moſt profound Reſpect, aſſumes the Liberty of Subſcribing himſelf,*

Reverend SIR,

Your moſt Obedient,

and moſt Obliged,

Humble Servant,

EDWD. BIRD.

THE PREFACE TO THE READER.

THE Occaſion of the enſuing Treatiſe, is, the Affection I have for ſeveral Young Men of my Acquaintance, who have lately imbib'd and drank in that Dangerous Principle of *Abſolute and Unconditional Election and Reprobation.* A Principle they were once Enemies to, but now pretend to Embrace, not ſo much upon *Reaſon* and *Judgment*, as upon greater Illumination.

I had ſeveral Debates with them, and did endeavour, according to that Judgment I had in their Cauſe, to prevent their firſt going over to thoſe Principles.

I have

I have ſince read the Motives and Inducements written by One of them, as the *Grounds* of his Converſion, and which were handed about to make Converts of others: But finding the Whole to contradict the Scripture, and the Principles of the Church of *England*, which they profeſs themſelves Members of, I thought ſomething offer'd to them in a Way, wherein they might weigh the Argument *Quiet* and *Alone*, might be more ſerviceable to them, than any thing offer'd in a Perſonal Diſcourſe; and prevent that Heat, and (very often) Breach of Charity which happens that Way between Diſputants.

I muſt confeſs, I debated a-while within my ſelf, which would be the moſt Prudent and Chriſtian Courſe, whether to be Silent, and ſuffer them to make what *Proſelytes* they could to their Cauſe; or to let thoſe Well-meaning Perſons ſee the Gulf of Abſurdities into which ſome have, and others are in Danger of falling, while they ſtand hovering (as a learned Author ſays he once did) "betwixt the Abſoluteneſs of a Decree, "and the Liberty of a Will, like a tremb-"ling Needle between two Loadſtones; "or rather, like a Man that is juſt learn-"ing to Walk the Rope, who ſo poiſeth "his Body with his two Hands, that his "continual Fear of falling down, is the on-"ly Means by which he ſtands."

It hath often grieved me, to ſee ſo many *Young Perſons* juſt entring upon a Religious Converſation, ſo unwarily to ſuck in ſuch Dangerous Principles, which cannot in the leaſt be pretended, to make them better *Men*, or better *Chriſtians*, but may tend to make them *worſe:* Therefore, a Concern for their Welfare, was the Motive that ſet me on Writing.

I do allow, that in many Caſes, it is dangerous to Speak; but when the Conſequence of Silence may do much more Harm, Speech then becomes exceeding neceſſary: For what a great Trouble would it be, to ſee *Truth* falling in the midſt of the Streets, if there were none endeavouring to hold her up? *Jer.* 9. 3. From ſuch Conſiderations as theſe, (and to ſet them right concerning me) I have offer'd to their Peruſal, a Diſcourſe according to my Faith, not grounded on the hidden Myſteries of God's *ſecret Will*, but from the cleareſt Expreſſions of God's *written Word.*

I believe them to be ſincere, tho' miſtaken Perſons; and if after what I have ſaid, they ſtill continue in their *Errors*, I ſhall eſteem them as Objects, not of my *Envy*, but *Pity.* I here point out to them thoſe fatal Rocks, which ſad Experience hath taught me, ſo many have been *ſhipwrack'd* on. I only endeavour to keep both them and my ſelf from the Rock of Preſumption, and the Gulf of Deſpair. And in order to ſteer as carefully

as

as I can between two ſuch imminent Dangers, I have *collected* ſuch Arguments, as may make a right Diſtinction between the Nature of God's Will, and the Condition of my own; that ſo my *Hope* may conſiſt with my *Fear*. I dare not impute to *God* what is unworthy of *Him* to own; nor aſſume to my *ſelf* what is peculiar to *Him* only. For I believe, that nothing *Evil* is to be imputed to God, and that all that Evil of Sin which dwelleth in me, or proceedeth from me, is not *His*, but entirely my *own*: And that all the Good which I do, proceedeth, not from any thing in my ſelf, but that I receive it from the ſpecial Grace and Favour of Almighty God, who *worketh in me both to will and to do of his good Pleaſure*, Phil. 2. 13.

" But that God ſhould decree without " Omniſcience, or be Omniſcient without a " Preſcience or Knowledge of all Events, I " cannot believe: Or, that God ſhould have " Preſcience without Conſideration, or Pre- " determine, compel, and neceſſitate a Man " to commit that Sin which he hateth and for- " biddeth, and therefore forbiddeth becauſe " he hateth it: " This is a Doctrine, I can by no Means ſubſcribe to. For them to tell me, *That Chriſt died only for ſome Few Men*, when the Scripture ſaith, he *died for All Men*; or, that he is only the *Propitiation* for the *Leſſer Part of the World*, when the Scripture tells me, he *is the Propitiation for the Sins of the Whole World*; or, that he who giveth

giveth his Commands to *All*, is ſecretly unwilling to be Obeyed by *All*; when the Scripture openly profeſſeth, that He is *willing*, nay, and requireth All to Obey him, upon Pain of Damnation. I ſay, for them, or ev'n Perſons far ſuperior to them, both for Skill and Learning, to tell me ſuch Things, I can no more believe, than that Twice Three makes Eleven, or that it is but a Furlong from *York* to *London*.

And how RIGID ſoever theſe Men have ſaid I am, or may yet think me to be; I muſt tell them, It is my hearty Deſire to be always RIGID againſt *Hereſy* and *Falſe Doctrine*, being what our moſt excellent *Church* teacheth us to pray every Day againſt.

It is the Honour of God, the Truth of our Holy Religion, which I aim at, in theſe following Papers. And as the *Church of England*, to her Honour be it ſpoken, makes neither Authority nor private Judgment, but *Evidence*, her Rule; ſo has ſhe always allowed to her *Members* the *Word of God* to be read by them, and bids them ſearch *That*, whether theſe Things be ſo or no; I do acknowledge my great Inſufficiency for ſuch a Search, and the Diſproportion of my Faculties to undertake and manage the great Abſtruſeneſs of the Subject I have treated on: A Subject, which has employ'd the Pens of the moſt Judicious and Learned. But all that I endeavour in the following Diſcourſe, is, to prevent my *own* and *others* Feet from ſlip-

ing

ing and to raiſe up *thoſe* that are already down; and withal, to ſhew, that I have not imbib'd any *Principles* either pernicious in themſelves, or deſtructive to others; but have followed the Works of thoſe worthy *Prelates* and *Paſtors* of that *Church* whereof I have the Happineſs to be a *Member*; many of whoſe *Opinions* I have produced in the following Tracts, and many more I might have produc'd, had I thought more would have been neceſſary to prove what I contend for, namely, "That the moſt High God hath "not appointed any Creature to do Wickedly, but hateth Sin with an unfeigned and "perfect Hatred. That God doth not give "a Neceſſity to all Events, but to thoſe only as are agreeable to his Holineſs; theſe "being only the Objects of his Abſolute and "Unconditional Decree. That God's Decree of *Reprobation* was Eternally Reſpective; and Reſpective of Sins, as well *Actual* "as *Original*. That God's Decree of Election "was Eternally Reſpective of our being *in* "*Chriſt*, and of our *abiding in him unto the* "*End*. That Jeſus Chriſt is a General, "but a Conditional *Saviour*; a *Saviour* to All "that Obey his Commands; to None, without it. That they who ſtand, may fall "for ever, and muſt therefore very watchfully *take heed leſt they fall*, 2 Pet. 1. 10. "Hebr. 12. 15. 1 Cor. 10. 12. *Ever giving* "*all Diligence to make their Calling and E-* "*lection ſure.*" Theſe, I ſay, are the *Doctrines*

ſtrines I contend for: And for theſe, I do chuſe to hazard ſome Loſs of *Time*, as well as *Labour*, to reſcue the Lives and Converſations of certain Seduced and Miſtaken Perſons, whom the contrary Opinions are wont to carry into Lewd Practices.

And tho' it muſt be acknowledg'd with Joy and Comfort, that through the Grace and Mercy of our God, many Men have been preſerved from putting in *Practice*, what thoſe Errors of *Judgment* ſeem too naturally to expoſe, and tempt them to: Yet, when I conſider ſeriouſly, how *Few* there are, and what Multitudes of People make the Reſult of their *Principles*, the Spring and Motion of their *Actions*, aſcribing to *God's Decree*, their blackeſt and moſt frightful Deeds, and ſo running to Hell, upon a Belief that they are ſhut out of Heaven by a peremptory Decree; or elſe affirming, *That God ſees no Sin in his Elected Ones*; or, that a Man is never a *true Saint*, 'till he has had a *ſound Fall*, ſuch as *David*'s with *Bathſheba*; "and that (as "Mr. *Baxter* has ſaid) it is exceeding hard "to determine, how many, great, and long "the Sins of a true Believer may be; and "that (*a*) *Hell-falls of Sins cannot ſeparate "us from Chriſt*;" affirming, that St. *Paul*, Rom. 7. ſpake of himſelf, and did not perſonate an Unregenerate Perſon, when he ſaid, *he did thoſe Sins which he did not allow of*, &c.

(*a*) Mr. *Rutherford's* Letters.

and

and ſo making the Height of Carnality conſiſtent with a State of Grace; and making God either the *Author*, *Commander*, *Counſeller*, or *Adviſer* in Evil; aſcribing their Sins, not to the Paſſive Permiſſion or Forbearance only, but to the Active Providence and Abſolute Decrees of Almighty God, *who is of purer Eyes than to behold Evil, and cannot look on Iniquity*, Hab. 1. 13. I ſay, when I ſee and hear theſe Things, it is from hence I think it the Duty of every Chriſtian, (as far as in him lies) to vindicate the Glory and Honour of his *Creator*, where-ever he finds it traduced and vilified with the fouleſt Slanders and blackeſt Enormities; and ſo free his own Soul, whatſoever Influence he may have on others, *Ezek.* 3. 19. *Levit.* 19. 17. *Thou ſhalt in any wiſe rebuke thy Neighbour, and not ſuffer Sin upon him.*

And if the Steps I have taken, are thought to be *wrong*, by thoſe *that think themſelves only in the right*, they can conclude no worſe of me, than that I am not Infallible. And this I muſt tell them, that if I *Err*, it is not for want of a Willingneſs to *Learn*, but for want of a Confutation of thoſe *Reaſons* and *Arguments*, which have render'd me, and thouſands of thouſands which have thought, and do ſtill think as I do, *invincibly Ignorant*. Therefore, I hope I ſhall not ſeverely be cenſured, for being every whit as dull as other People, who have larger Abilities, more Time,

and

and of greater Penetration than ever I could boaſt of, and yet (as I ſaid) Believe juſt as I do.

But however, this one Favour I beg, that whatever Faults I may ſeem, by *ſome Perſons*, to be guilty of, they would lay them on my *Perſon*, rather than impute them to my *Cauſe*. And may they who hate me moſt for what I have done, be profited moſt by my Endeavours: Therefore whatever ſome Men may plead againſt me, in Revenge for my having pleaded for God himſelf, (pardon the Expreſſion,) however I may be ſullied by ſome Men, and eſteemed by them of a foul Complexion, yet I will *poſſeſs my Soul in Patience*; nay, I will endeavour to take ſome Pleaſure in thoſe Afflictions, tho' never ſo *foully* caſt upon me, meerly for proving, That God is *Pure*; *That he cannot endure to behold Iniquity*; *That he cannot away with it*; *That his Soul doth hate it*; *That 'tis a Trouble unto him*; *That he is weary to bear it*; That he will rather have us Die, or be temporally Undone, than commit it in the leaſt meaſure; ſeeing we are able to avoid it, *thro' him that ſtrengthens us*. See *Pſal.* 145. 7. *Hebr.* 1. 13. *Iſa.* 1. 13. *Mat.* 10. 28. *Rom.* 3. 8. *Phil.* 4. 13. Theſe are Truths, which, in my ſhallow Judgment, ought faithfully to be embraced by every one that calls himſelf a Diſciple of Chriſt: I ſay, in my ſhallow Judgment; which becauſe it is ſhallow, I ſubmit to

thoſe of deeper and profounder Penetration.

For I do believe, it is a leſs Evil to aſcribe unto the Devil, ſome good Works of God, than to charge God fooliſhly with the Evil Works of the Devil. It is abominable Wickedneſs in Men, to be Falſe-witneſſes againſt God; but ſure, it is a Sin of the higheſt magnitude, to wreſt and corrupt his *Sacred Word*, and make him bear Falſe-witneſs againſt *Himſelf*. Who could think, that ſuch Impieties as theſe, ſhould ever be embraced for *Soul-ſaving Doctrine?* or, that Perſons poſſeſs'd with ſuch abominable Principles, ſhould call themſelves the *Godly*, the *Saints*, the *Elect*, and *choſen Veſſels* of God? Certain I am, that Blaſphemy is not the leſs ſo, for being found in the *Works*, and profeſſed by the *Mouths* of ſome *Chriſtians*, any more than *Pontius Pilate* can be ſaid to be a better Man, becauſe his *Name* ſtands in the *Apoſtles Creed*.

And how great is that Blaſphemy that aſcribes to God (as the Principal *Cauſe* or *Contriver*) the very worſt and blackeſt of Deeds that can poſſibly be imagined! For that muſt needs be the worſt and blackeſt, which is the very worſt Thing in the *Devil* himſelf; the *Devil* having nothing worſe in him, *than a Neceſſity of Sinning*, or an *Impoſſibility to abſtain from Sin*.

There-

Therefore, to ſay that God Almighty did Eternally *cauſe* or *contrive*, *decree* or *predeſtine* a *Neceſſity of Sinning* in a great part of the Angels, and in the greateſt part of Mankind; is the greateſt Blaſphemy to be imagined.

From hence, I eſteem it to be the Duty and Privilege of every one to oppoſe thoſe Tenets, which bring Diſhonour to God, and a Scandal to Religion.

Neither ought any Chriſtian, who is confident of the Goodneſs of his Faith, to fear its being try'd by any Touch-ſtone. "True "Religion is not a Thing gilded over, but "Gold it ſelf; the more that's ſcraped and "diſcovered, the brighter and goodlier it "is." The *Jew* is loth to reaſon with the *Chriſtian* touching *his Law*; and the *Turk* is forbid to diſpute of *his Alcoran*; becauſe their Religions are brittle like Glaſs, broken with the leaſt Touch. But the *Chriſtian Religion* is not ſo: Her Truths have been more Illuſtrated and ſet forth, by being call'd in queſtion by her Adverſaries, than ever their Silence could have done. "Let us not fear, "(ſaith a certain Author) leſt our Faith, "when it is laid open, appear filthy to the "Eyes of the Beholders. Let falſe and ſu-"perficial Religions, in which there is no "Soundneſs, be afraid of this."

But I muſt remember, I am writing a Preface: Therefore, all that I crave in Behalf

of the following Papers, is, That they may be no otherwiſe attended to, than as they bring *Truth* and *Evidence* along with them. And how inconſiderable ſoever I may juſtly be eſteem'd to be, or any thing that I can ſay on ſuch a Subject as this; yet, if it ſhould come into the Hands of any, who value themſelves on their *Sincerity*, with Regard to the contrary Principles, I only beg of them, to read without *Partiality* and *Prejudice*; and that none may be ſo far wanting to themſelves, in a Matter of ſuch vaſt Conſequence, in which their Eternal Salvation is concern'd, as to ſlight and deſpiſe the Evidence of Truth, tho' the Author, in their Eyes, ſeem never ſo mean and contemptible.

I have uſed the greateſt Plainneſs imaginable; my Deſign being not to *Confound*, but to *Convert* thoſe that are *already Fallen*, and to Strengthen thoſe that *Stand*.

The Work has much increaſed on my Hand, beyond what I at firſt deſign'd: And therefore, to avoid the Tediouſneſs of one continued Diſcourſe, and to render the Reader's Peruſal as pleaſant and eaſy as poſſible, I have divided it into ſeveral *Parts*, and furniſh'd each with ſuch Variety of Arguments, as may be agreeable to his Fancy, give him a Breathing-time, and make a greater Impreſſion on his Judgment.

The

The true End of *Reading*, is *Improvement*: And he that ſincerely deſires to be really benefitted by what he reads, will take Care to digeſt it in his Thoughts, and then reduce it to Practice, and try to get his Life Amended by it.

I ſhall Conclude all, in the Words of our moſt excellent *Litany*, *That it may pleaſe God to bring into the Way of Truth all ſuch as have erred and are deceived.* Amen.

EDW^D. BIRD.

DEPTFORD,
Nov. 17th,
1725.

THE CONTENTS.

The First Conference.

Abſolute Election ſtated, Pag. 4
Concerning God's Decree, and the Execution of it, ibid.
Abſolute Election deſtroys the Neceſſity of Faith and Obedience, ibid.
Reprobation ſtated, 5
The moving Cauſe thereof, 6
Its Conſequences, ibid.
God does not require Impoſſibilities, 7
Reſtraining and Renewing Grace, ibid.
Their Conſequences, 8
All the Good we do, proceeds from God, 10
His Gifts and Graces lent as Talents, not to hide, but multiply, 11
Grace doth not take away the Liberty of the Will, ibid.
Proved by Scripture, 12
God worketh nothing but what is good, 13
Permits Sin, ſo as to be Innocent, ibid.
Doth not compel Men to be Good, whether they will or no, 14

Much leſs to be Evil, Pag. 14
We can do nothing Good without Chriſt, 16
But we may do Evil without his Aſſiſtance, ibid.
What we loſt in Adam, *was purchaſed again for us by* Chriſt, ibid.
God's Foreknowledge Infallible, ibid.
It extends to Evil, as well as Good, 17
Yet not the Cauſe of Evil, which might have fallen out otherwiſe, for any thing God had decreed to the contrary, ibid.
God's Knowledge doth not confound Things, 18
That nothing happens without his Permiſſion, is Matter of Comfort, 19
The Difference between God's Foreknowledge and his Decree, ibid.
The Liberty of Man's Will, 20
God's Grace may be reſiſted by it, 21
Dangerous Aſſertions maintain'd by ſome, 22
The Blaſphemous Diſtinction of making God's Secret Will to be contrary to his Revealed one, 23
God giveth his Commands, in order to be obeyed, ibid.
Forceth no Man to be miſerable, 24
Univerſal Redemption, 25
God not guilty of Mental Reſervations in the Scriptures, ibid.
But is moſt ſincerely willing to be underſtood, ibid.
Chriſt the Propitiation for the Sins of the Whole World, 26
The Abſurdity of aſſerting Chriſt Died Sufficiently, *but not* Intentionally, *for All,* ibid.
Chriſt Died for All, 28
General Redemption, the Doctrine of the Church of England, ibid.
Aſſerted by Biſhop Beveridge, 29

The CONTENTS.

The Second Conference.

1 COR. 4. 17. *Explain'd,* Pag. 31
How one Man may truly differ from another, 32
Every Man bound to be thankful for what he receives, 33
Wicked Men have the ſame Obligations of Gratitude to God, as well as Good Men; proved by Biſhop Tillotſon, 34
God's Decree of Election, Conditional and Reſpective, 35
Sin the only Cauſe of Reprobation, 36
Faith in Chriſt, the Condition of Life Eternal, 38
Of the Means, and the End, 39
The Uſe of the Means abſolutely neceſſary, in order to obtain the End, 40
None Damned for Impoſſibilities, but that every Man may be Saved that will; which was the Opinion of Biſhop Beveridge, 41
And Dr. Gregory, 42
God's Commands equally oblige all Men, 43
His Promiſes and Threats Conditional 44
Election made upon a Foreſight of our being in Chriſt, ibid.
Biſhop Uſher *rejected Abſolute Reprobation,* 45
In what Particulars God hath been pleaſed to obligate himſelf to Mankind, 46
God never Commands, without giving Power to Obey, 47
Man puniſh'd for waſting his Talent, 49
Chriſt died for every Man, 50
The Reaſon why All are not ſaved, 52

The

The CONTENTS.

The Third Conference.

OF *General and Special Grace,* Pag. 53
General and Univerſal Redemption, aſſerted by Biſhop Uſher, ibid.
That Chriſt Died for, and Redeemed all Mankind, is the Doctrine of the Church of England, 55
Of God's Will, ibid.
Of Preterition, or Negative Reprobation, 57
A Priority of Order in God's Will, not at all againſt his Immutability or Omnipotence, 59
God's Foreknowledge of Things Future, doth by no means infer his Decree *of bringing them to paſs,* 61
The Blaſphemy of making God to Will what he Foreknows, 64
God's Decrees, not the Cauſe of Mens Actions that are ſinful, 65
Whoever compels another to hurt himſelf, is as truly a Cauſe of that Miſchief, as he that acts it, 66
God never does Evil, that Good may come, 67
Nothing done thro' Neceſſity, *can be ſaid to be done* Willingly, 68
God a neceſſary Cauſe of our good Actions, not of thoſe that are ſinful, ibid.
How God is the Cauſe of all Things, yet not the Cauſe of Sin, 69
God made Adam Able *to ſin, but he did not make him to* Will *Sin,* 71
Blaſphemies, truly ſuch, ibid.
God is Juſt, and cannot require Impoſſibilities, 73
So that Men periſh, not for want of Means and Mercy on God's part, but for want of Wills on their own, 75
John 12. 39, 40. *Explain'd,* 77

The

The CONTENTS.

The Fourth Conference.

GOD very deſirous of being underſtood by us in the Scripture, Pag. 79
He doth not reject Men, meerly for his Pleaſure, 80
To ſay, Men are Saved without a Condition, render's God's Word falſe, and thoſe Miniſters False-Teachers, who preach up the Neceſſity of good Works, ibid.
Abſolute and Unconditional Election and Reprobation, renders the Sacraments meer Blanks and empty Ordinances, 81
Deſtroys the Benefits of God's Gifts, ibid.
Making God to beſtow them on wicked Men, not to raiſe them up to Heaven, but on Purpoſe to ſink them lower into Hell, 82
God enter'd freely into Covenant with his Creatures, 83
He will perform his Part, ibid.
Rom. 9. 16. *Conſider'd,* 84
The Jews were rejected for their Unbelief, 85
Election is properly an Act of Judgment, 86
God choſe Believers before Unbelievers, the Better before the Worſe, ibid.
The word Faith *and* Elect, *Titus* 3. 1. *how to be underſtood,* ibid.
In what ſenſe Men are ſaid to be Elected and Choſen, 87
The Promiſes and Threats in Scripture run all Conditionally, 88
Neceſſity and Compulſion, how underſtood, 89
A good Intention cannot juſtify a bad Action, 90
To ſay, God wills Sin, tho' for never ſo good Ends, makes him the Author of Sin, 91

Repro-

Reprobates not compell'd to be Wicked, by any Impulſe from God, Pag. 93
God willeth the Salvation of All, upon the Condition of Faith and Repentance, 94
The Condition poſſible to be performed, ibid.
The Wickedneſs of affirming the contrary, 95
Dangerous Principles taught by ſome, ibid.
What God cannot do, 96
It is better to be annihilated, (if that could be) than to be tormented in Hell for ever, 97

The Fifth Conference.

MEN made capable of diſcerning between Right and Wrong, Good and Evil, Juſt and Unjuſt, 100
God gave them Reaſon, for this very Purpoſe, ibid.
Abſolute Reprobation, no part of God's Revealed Will, 101
God could not Reprobate any, without Intuition of their Sins, becauſe he is Good and Juſt, 103
Of a Thing being firſt Intended, and laſt Executed, ibid.
Faith and Perſeverance come from God, 105
None puniſh'd Eternally, meerly for Adam's Sin under the Second Covenant of Grace, without incurring it, ſome way or other, by actual Sins of their own, 106
Touching God's doing what he will with his own, 107
Of God's Counſel being Unſearchable, and paſt finding out, 109
The Scriptures, the good and perfect Will of God, 110
Of God's paſſing by thoſe in Maſſâ, *or the Loyns of* Adam, ibid.
Of God's decreeing from Eternity to permit Sin, ibid.

How God may be ſaid to harden Men's Hearts, to deliver them up to a Reprobate Mind, to ſend them ſtrong Deluſions, that they ſhould believe a Lie, &c. Pag. 111
God omits nothing that may tend to our Converſion, 114
Will not ſuffer us to be tempted above what we are able, ibid.
We are God's Creatures, but Sin is of our own Creating, 115
Hell made by God to keep Men from it, as well as to puniſh thoſe that would needs go to it, 116
Chriſt the Lamb ſlain from the Foundation of the World, to ſave Sinners; therefore he could not will the Death of any one of them, ibid.

The Sixth Conference.

GOD doth not bring Men under a Neceſſity of Sinning, 118
That Cauſe cannot be called an Accidental one, when the Effect is look'd for, and aim'd at in it, ibid.
Chriſt would have ſaved thoſe who would not be ſaved, 119
God intendeth Good in his Forbearance, ev'n to thoſe very Perſons who deſpiſe it, ibid.
Hell not at firſt prepared for Men, but for the Devil and his Angels, 120
God's Mercy is over all his Works, 121
But it is many times abuſed by wicked Men, 122
Where much is given, much will be required, ibid.
To ſay, God Abſolutely rejected Men from Grace and Salvation, is an Encouragement for Men to ſin, ibid.
Deſtroys Repentance, 123

Overturns all Governments and States, Pag. 123
Renders the beſt Laws ineffectual, ibid.
And all Deſigns and Endeavours, to be nothing worth, 124
How Men may be ſaid to be Ordained to Condemnation, ibid.
Of our Saviour's Prayer, John 17. 9. 127
God willeth not the Death of them that periſh, 129
But would have Mercy on All, ibid.
A Collection of Blaſphemous Expreſſions, 130
The Wickedneſs of charging God with their Concluſions, ibid.
God hath given us his Oath, that he wills not the Death of a Sinner, 131
The Scriptures deny God's working in Sin, ibid.
Of Joſeph's *Brethren ſelling him into* Egypt, 132
Of God's Hardening Pharaoh's *Heart,* 133
How God hardened the Hearts of the Canaanites *againſt* Iſrael, 134
Of Pharaoh's *Oppreſſing the Children of* Iſrael, 135
Of Abſalom's *Defiling his Father's Concubines,* ibid.
Of God's bidding Shimei *curſe* David, 137
Of putting a Lying Spirit in the Mouths of the Prophets, 1 Kings 22. 22. 138
Of God's Deceiving the Prophet, Ezek. 14. 9. 139
Of God's giving the Spirit of Slumber to the Jews, *and Eyes that they ſhould not ſee,* 140
Of God's ſending ſtrong Deluſions, 2 Theſſ. 2. 10, 11. 141
Some Places in Scripture muſt be underſtood Figuratively, 142

The Seventh Conference.

NO *Comfort to be received from the Doctrine of Abſolute Election and Reprobation,* 145

It tends not to the Mortifying or Subduing our Paſſions, but to the Indulging of them, Pag. 145
It encourages us in Sin, 146
It makes none Good upon Principle, 149
But if Men who entertain ſuch Principles are Good and Virtuous, it is owing to God's Providence, ibid.
And to his Word, &c. 150
For to ſay, our End is decreed in Heaven, taketh away the Uſe of Means, 151
Cauſeth Men to become Looſe and Profane, ibid.
Renders the Miniſters and Stewards of God's Holy Word, uſeleſs and needleſs Perſons, 153
The Saints and Godly may fall from Grace, ibid.
Totally and Finally, 154
No other Aſſurance to be truſted and confided in, than the Goſpel affords, 157
Our Labour ſhall not be in vain in the Lord, ibid.
It is poſſible for Chriſtians to become Apoſtates, ibid.
And to make Shipwrack of Faith and a good Conſcience, 158
St. Paul *was afraid of this,* 159

The Eighth and Laſt Conference.

MAny Men periſh, who had ſufficient Grace to bring them to Salvation, 163
Proved from the Holy Scripture, ibid.
Abſolute Reprobation makes Sin only an Opinion, ibid.
It is full of frightful Conſequences, 164
Driveth Men into the deepeſt Deſpair, ibid.
It cannot bring them out of it, 165
But maugreth all Arguments in order thereunto, 166
And therefore the moſt Umcomfortable Doctrine in the World, and contrary to the Goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt, 168

Two frightful Examples of it, Pag. 168
Reprobation, in its Principles, fruſtrates the Deſign of the Goſpel Miniſtry, 170
Renders all Endeavours vain and fruitleſs, 171
Oppoſeth the ſoundeſt Reaſoning, 172
And is bad in its Conſequences, ibid.
Chriſt is wanting to none, who are not wanting to themſelves, 174
Therefore if Men are miſerable, 'tis long of themſelves, 175
God waiteth for the Converſion of Sinners, ibid.
He bore long with Men, before he brought the Flood, 176
He would have ſpared Sodom *and* Gomorrah, *for ten righteous Perſons,* ibid.
And he ſpared Nineveh, *upon their Repentance,* ibid.
God forſaketh none, 'till they firſt forſake him, 176
God's Love Immenſe, without Bounds or Limits, 177
And therefore inconſiſtent with that Horrible Decree of Abſolute Reprobation, 178

THE Horrid Decree OF Abſolute and Unconditional ELECTION AND REPROBATION, Fully Detected, &c.

CONFERENCE I.

Eutychus.

GOod Morrow to you, Sir; I'm heartily glad to ſee you: but may I take the freedom to ask, what earneſt Buſineſs makes you in ſuch haſte this Morning, and eſpecially ſo early?

Epenetus. Sir, Yeſterday a Perſon brought me word, that one of my Tickets in the preſent

State-Lottery, was drawn againſt a Prize of 1000*l.* and it being but doubtful News, I'm going to *London*, to ſearch the Books, whether there be any Certainty in it: For the Thought of ſuch a Prize hath ſo tranſported me, that (if you'll believe me) I could not ſleep two Hours laſt Night, for ruminating upon it; yet I'm willing to be ſure of the Truth, leſt it make too deep an Impreſſion upon me; and the Thoughts of being deceived, ſhould torment me, as much as the Certainty of it, may rejoyce me.

Eutychus. I cannot blame you for your ſudden Joy at ſuch Information; but if the News be true, as I hope it is, yet a Man's Life conſiſts not *in the abundance of Things which he poſſeſſeth*, as our Saviour obſerves. And indeed, how welcome would you have been to me, and what a happy Hour ſhould I have eſteemed it, to have met with one that ſhould have told me, that his Sins were ſuch a Burden to him, and his Wickedneſs ſo affrighted him, *that they would not ſuffer his Eyes to ſlumber, neither the Temples of his Head to take any reſt*; and that this Morning he was very ſolicitous how *to make his Calling and Election ſure*. Here is the Inheritance worth the purchaſing; this is worth our Daily Travel, and our Morning Thoughts, yea, and our Night Watches too.

Epenetus. My Dear Friend, I muſt ſubmit my Senſe and Judgment to the Power of your Reaſon: But, Sir, give me leave to tell you, that the beſt of us are apt, ſometimes, to be too ſolicitous for the Things of this World: And tho' our Saviour has indeed told us, That they that *have Riches, ſhall hardly enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*; yet He has not told us, it is impoſſible. I will not go about to juſtify my ſelf in all Particulars; I confeſs, and deſire to do it, with Shame and true Compunction of Soul, that I have been a great Sinner, tho'

tho', I thank my God, I have made it my ſtudy, through the whole Courſe of my Life, to forſake my Sins, and to live in the Practice of the contrary Virtues, relying upon God, through Chriſt, for the Pardon of my Sins, and Ability to reform and amend; yet not ſo exactly, but that after all the Care I have hitherto taken, I muſt acknowledge, that I have Buſineſs enough ſtill to do, in order to the trimming my Lamp, and fitting my ſelf for my Lord's Appearance, that I may be found one of thoſe whom He will accept at his Coming.

Eutychus. Alas, Poor Man! I muſt confeſs, I like your Diſcourſe concerning your relying upon Chriſt, for the Pardon of your Sins; but, I pray, what can we poor impotent Creatures do, in order to trim our Lamps, and fit our ſelves for Heaven? For the Apoſtle *Paul* tells us, *Eph.* 2. 8. *By Grace ye are ſaved, through Faith; and that not of your ſelves: it is the Gift of God:* and ver. 9. *Not of Works, leſt any Man ſhould boaſt.* And I have learn'd, that (*a*) "In the Covenant betwixt Chriſt "and His, there is no more for Man to do, but "only to know and believe, that Chriſt hath done all for him;") ſo that I am afraid you are ſtill carnal, and that you never felt the ſweet Influence of Chriſt's Spirit working irreſiſtibly upon your Soul.

Epenetus. I confeſs, I am not able to tell you the Text, nor the Sermon, neither the Day, nor the Hour, much leſs the Minute, in which I was effectually called: Yet, I hope, that I am in a ſtate of Grace, and that I have been Obedient to the Call of God; tho' I cannot tell the Hour and Minute (as I ſaid before) when ſuch irreſiſtible Converſion was wrought upon my Soul.

(*a*) *The Marrow of Modern Divinity*, pag. 119. Edit. 3.

Eutychus. If you never felt the Divine Impulſe of God's Grace working irreſiſtibly upon your Soul, I much doubt of your Converſion; for a Natural Man, dead in Treſpaſſes and Sins, is not able, by his own Strength, to convert himſelf, or to prepare himſelf thereunto.

Epenetus. Sir, I perceive, by your Diſcourſe, that you come very nigh the Doctrine of Abſolute and Inevitable Election and Reprobation.

Eutychus. Why, to give you my Opinion freely, and as briefly as I can, I do believe, (*a*) "That "Election is the Eternal Decree of God, whereby "he freely and infallibly appointed, for the Glo- "ry of his own Name, to bring ſome Men to "Everlaſting Life, through Chriſt."

Epenetus. But what do you take to be the Moving Cauſe of this Election?

Eutychus. (*b*) "Neither foreſeen Faith, Works, "Freedom of Will, Nobleneſs of Birth, nor Merit "of Chriſt, but only the good Pleaſure of God."

Epenetus. I can by no means concur in your Opinion; becauſe, the Reaſon of Man's Salvation, in Scripture, is not ſaid to be given barely from the Will of God, but from the Faith and Obedience of Men; for it is an Act of Rewarding Juſtice, as well as Paternal Love and Mercy; and therefore we muſt diſtinguiſh very nicely between the Decree of God, and the Execution of it. For if Unbelievers, Diſobedient, and Rebellious Perſons be choſen to Salvation, and it is not in God's Power to revoke that Election, (as is concluded by ſome) I can ſee no Neceſſity of Faith and Obedience; for if God chuſeth us to Salvation, that is, if He wills to ſave us, being Diſobedient, having no Regard to

---

(*a*) *Fiery Pillar*, pag. 7. Edit. 10.

(*b*) Ibid. *pag.* 7.

Faith,

Faith, Works, *&c.* what Reaſon can you aſſign, why he ſhould not be able to make us Partakers of Salvation, being Diſobedient? Is not Election the Decree of Saving? And doth not God execute his Decree, for the ſame Reaſon for which he made it? If ſo, why can he not actually ſave us, without Faith and Obedience, as well as Decree or Will to ſave us without them?

Eutychus. He decrees to ſave us, merely for his good Pleaſure; but he will actually ſave us, in a Way of Juſtice mingled with Mercy; and therefore he hath choſen us (*a*) " in *Chriſt*; *now* " *he that is in Chriſt, is a new Creature.*"

Epenetus. If ſo, then the Decree, and the Execution of the Decree, are inconſiſtent one with the other; for you ſaid above, that neither foreſeen Faith, Works, nor Merits of *Chriſt* were the Cauſe of Election; and now you crudely affirm, That God hath choſen us in *Chriſt*; adding, that *he that is in Chriſt, is a New Creature:* which plainly implies, that the Object of God's Election, are the Faithful and Holy.

Eutychus. I deny that; for my Belief is, that God carrieth himſelf abſolutely throughout, according to the meer Pleaſure of his Will; without conſidering any thing in Man, but giving Faith and Repentance to ſome, and denying them to others, of his own good Pleaſure, without any thing foreſeen in Man.

Epenetus. Then I perceive your Opinion is, that God (*b*) " hath Rejected ſome, as well as " Elected others?"

Eutychus. Yes.

Epenetus. What do you take to be the Moving Cauſe thereof?

(*a*) *Eph.* 1. 4. 2 *Cor.* 5. 17.
(*b*) *Fiery Pillar*, Pag. 7.

Eutychus. (*a*) The good Pleaſure of God.

Epenetus. Then it is in vain to take any Pains to be Religious; for if Men be ordained to Deſtruction, it will be to no purpoſe to ſtrive, for they ſhall loſe all their Labour; but if they are ordained to Salvation, tho' they live never ſo wickedly, it cannot prejudice their Salvation, for they muſt come to their appointed End.

Eutychus. But God has commanded us to uſe Means; and ſuch Commands are Encouragements, that God will not deny Men the End and Bleſſing to Them that uſe the Means as well as they can.

Epenetus. But ſtill, Sir, this does not remove the Stumbling-block out of my Way. For Men of your Perſwaſion tell us, that theſe Bleſſings are really given to none but the Elect: (*b*) "As for the Reprobates, all "the Water of Life runs quite beſide their Mill; "all Gifts whatſoever are unprofitable to them: "And the Congregational Churches, do, in their "Declaration, tell the World; (*c*) That they who "are not Elected, altho' they may be called by the "Miniſtry of the Word, and may have ſome com-"mon Operations of the Spirit; yet, not being ef-"fectually drawn by the Father, they neither do, "nor can come to Chriſt, and therefore cannot be "ſaved."

Eutychus. I muſt confeſs, that I don't think it poſſible for a (*d*) "Reprobate to live a Godly Life, "or an Elect Perſon to live always Lewdly and "Looſely; for the ſame God that ordains the End, "ordains the Means.

Epenetus. Sir, you have abundantly confirmed what I have ~~here~~ endeavour'd to prove you guilty

(*a*) *Fiery Pillar*, p. 7.
(*b*) Mr. *Norton's Orthod. Evan.* pag. 164.
(*c*) *Declaration*, chap. 10. n. 4. pag. 8, 9.
(*d*) Mr. *Dyke*, in *Myſtery of Self-deceiving*, pag. 245.

of,

of, namely, the rendring fruitleſs all Endeavours, either to obtain Life, or avoid Deſtruction. For who, but a Fool or a Madman, will trouble his Brain, or ſpend his Labour about Impoſſibilities? Now, if God gives a Man Power to do his Duty, then his Commands for Obeying are poſſible to be comply'd with; but if God gives us no Ability, either by with-holding his Talents, or not allowing Time or Opportunity to improve them, I cannot ſee how God can be ſaid to *render to every Man according to his Work.* Neither can I think, that God would commit to my Truſt and Stewardſhip Talents of Silver, and then expect that I ſhould turn them into Talents of Gold. He knows his poor Creature hath no Philſopher's-Stone of ſuch Virtue; he expects but an Improvement in the ſame kind of Talents: for you may as reaſonably expect that a Man may beget an Angel, as that he ſhould turn from Vice to Virtue, if he be a Reprobate, in Your Sence of that Word. For, how unreaſonable is it to expect a Machine to act above the Sphere of its Activity? Will you expect a Watch ſhould go twenty four Hours, when the Spring was made to go but twelve? or that a Gun ſhould carry a thouſand Yards, when the Charge that was given it will carry but five hundred? no more can it be thought that any Man can flie an Eagle's Pitch with Bats Wings. But theſe are and muſt be the Conſequences of your Doctrine, which ſaith, That (*a*) "Reſtraining and "Renewing Grace, differ in their Cauſe, Effect, "and Extent: *1ſt*, In their Moving Cauſe, Renew-"ing Grace cometh from the ſpecial Love of God; "but Reſtraining Grace (which is common to "the Reprobates as well as the Elect) proceedeth

(*a*) *Fiery Pillar*, p. 72, 73.

" from the general Mercy of God. 2*dly*, In their " Effect; Renewing Grace changeth the Nature of " Man, mortifieth and deſtroyeth Sin, and makes a " Man new throughout; Reſtraining Grace doth on- " ly inhibit the Exerciſe of Sin, working no real and " gracious Change in Man. 3*dly*, In their Extent; " Reſtraining Grace is common to Good and Bad; " Renewing Grace is proper to the Elect effectual- " ly called; Reſtraining Grace keeps a Man back " from Sin for a ſeaſon; Renewing Grace ſo keeps " Man, that he returns no more to Sin. "

Eutychus. Sir, I believe there is a vaſt differ- ence between Saving, and Common Grace: For I believe, (*a*) " I may have a Notional Knowledge of " Chriſt, and the Neceſſity of his Blood, and of " the Excellency of Salvation, and yet periſh; I " may weep at the Hiſtory of his Paſſion, when " I read how he was uſed by the *Jews*, and " yet periſh; I may come deſirouſly to his Word " and Ordinances, and yet periſh; —— I may " obey him in many Things, —— eſcape much " of the Pollutions of the World, by his Know- " ledge, and yet Periſh; I may ſuffer much, and " loſe much for him, ſome parts of my Plea- " ſures and Profits I may part with, in hopes of " Salvation, and yet periſh; I may be eſteemed " by others, a Man zealous for Chriſt, and be " loved and admir'd upon that account, and yet " periſh; I may be a zealous Preacher of Chriſt " and Salvation, and reprove others for their Neg- " lect of both, and lament the Sin of the World " with moſt bitter and paſſionate Expreſſions, and " yet periſh; I may verily think that I ſet more " by Chriſt and Salvation, than by any thing elſe " whatſoever, and yet be miſtaken, and periſh

(*a*) Mr. *Baxter's* Sermon, *of making light of Chriſt*, pag. 55, 56.

ever-

" everlaſtingly. Again, (*a*) By Common Grace, a " Man may not only know, but love God alſo; and " love him as Merciful and Gracious, as better " than the Creature, as beſt for him; yea, he " may love God, under the Notion of the chiefeſt " Good, and moſt deſirable End, in whoſe Sight " and Fruition everlaſting Happineſs conſiſteth; " and by Common Grace, he may believe in " Chriſt, or deſire him as a Saviour, to free him " from every Sin, and from Sin as Sin, or as it " is againſt God, and yet periſh. "

Epenetus. If the Caſe be ſo, I pray, what can a Regenerate Man do more? And how is it poſſible to form a right Diſtinction between Saving, and Common Grace? All this would be but cold Comfort to a diſconſolate Soul, to tell him (or indeed, any one elſe) that he may love God, believe in Chriſt; and that, tho' Belief and Love are real Acts, and phyſically true, and have a Being, yet they are morally defective and inſincere; not the ſame Things which have the Promiſes made to them in the Goſpel; and conſequently, are no Evidences of Spiritual Life in the Soul. And Mr. *Baxter* ſays, (*b*) " It is extream hard to de- " termine how great, many, or long the Sins of a " true Believer may be; " [which, by the way, is very repugnant to what he offer'd juſt now, as Marks to ſhew how far a wicked Man might go in Goodneſs;] and if thoſe Sins be Murder, and Adultery, or the like, and long continued in, ſhall that Believer be certain ſtill of his Election? Shall he not rather ſuſpect it was Common Grace that wrought him to that Belief? I am ſure, he hath

(*a*) See Mr. *Baxter*'s additional Sheet at the end of his *Treatiſe of Saving Faith.*

(*b*) Mr. *Baxter's Diſpute of Right to the Sacr.* Diſpute 3. pag. 337.

reaſon

reaſon enough to ſuſpect it, according to your former Diſcourſe, unleſs he add Preſumption to his other Crimes: So that, upon the whole Matter, without a ſpecial Revelation, a Man cannot be ſure of his Election 'till the Day of his Death, becauſe he knows not what Temptation he may fall into, nor how he may demean himſelf under it. By which it is plain, that your Principles are nothing but a Syſtem of Contradictions. For do but conſider, *Firſt*, You ſay, a Man may love God, believe in Chriſt, eſcape many Pollutions of this World, bewail the Sins of it with moſt paſſionate Expreſſions; yea, may think, he ſets more by Chriſt and his own Salvation, than by the whole World it ſelf, and yet all this may be the Effect of Common Grace only, and he a Reprobate. And preſently, Men of your Way tell us, That it is very hard to determine how great, many, or long, the Sins of an Elected Perſon (endued with Saving Grace) may be.

Eutychus. Pray, Sir, ſince you ſeem ſo very Earneſt, let me ask you one Queſtion: Do you believe, that all the Good which a Man does, comes from the ſpecial Grace and Favour of God, *who freely worketh in us both to will and to do, of his good pleaſure?* Phil. 2. 13.

Epenetus. I do firmly believe it: But then I believe alſo, That all the Evil of Sin, which dwelleth in me, or proceedeth from me, is not imputable to God's Will, but entirely to mine own. I believe alſo, That no Man can come to Chriſt, unleſs it be *given him*, (that is, unleſs the Father *draw him:*) For, firſt, the Father loves the Son; next, he loves us in the Son; then, he endows us with his Spirit: ſo endowed, he elects us; ſo elected, he predeſtines us; ſo prdeſtin'd, he will glorify us, by crowning his Gifts and Graces in us. *His* Graces, I ſay; becauſe not acquired by Us, but infuſed by Him; nor

ſo

ſo properly given, as lent us: lent us as Talents, not to hide, but to multiply. So that we owe it wholly to God; not that he gives us his Grace only, but, that he gives us Grace to deſire his Grace, as well as to uſe it to the advancement of his Glory; and we are to thank him, as for all other Mercies, ſo for this alſo, ev'n that we have the Grace to thank him. This I always deſire to believe, that as we cannot ſpiritually be nouriſh'd, unleſs the Father of Mercies doth reach out unto us the Bread of Heaven; and that we cannot take it, when offer'd, unleſs he give us the Hand of Faith: ſo cannot we poſſibly deſire to take it, unleſs he give us our very Appetite and Hunger; we cannot pant after the Waters of Life, unleſs he give us our very Thirſt. I believe that there is no good Thought ariſing in us, which is not ſuggeſted by his Preventing Grace, *Phil.* 1. 6. & 2. 13. no, nor encreaſing in us, unleſs ſtrengthned by his ſubſequent Grace, *Luke* 19. 13,26. no, nor conſummate in us, unleſs perfected by his Grace of Perſeverance, 1 *Cor.* 15. 10. That, if I am better than any Man, it is God that makes me differ, 1 *Cor.* 4. 7. *Jam.* 1. 17. 1 *Cor.* 1. 31. *Pſal.* 115. 1. That *every good Gift is from Above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights.* And therefore, *he that will glory, let him glory in the Lord*; ſaying, with the Pſalmiſt, *Not unto Us, O Lord, not unto Us, but unto thy Name give the Praiſe.*

Eutychus. I am very glad to ſee you ſo Calm again; for now I hope you will allow, that God's working upon the Wills of his Elect is by ſuch a phyſical immediate change of the Will, as doth not only produce a certain, but a neceſſary Effect?

Epenetus. By no means; for I do not think, that the working of Grace upon the Will, doth take away the Liberty of the Will. Grace doth correct, but not deſtroy. Grace doth ſtrengthen,

but

but not compel. Grace doth guide, but not neceſſitate. Grace makes Men able to chuſe Good, but not unable to refuſe it. For, if it were not ſo, Man would not be a Voluntary, but a Neceſſary Agent: And when we take from Man the Qualities peculiar to him, as Man, we make him unfit to be an Object of Rewards and Puniſhments. Therefore, I think it a great Abſurdity, to ſay, that a Man is forced by God Almighty to be Happy: And I have read, in Mr. *Baxter*'s *Call to the Unconverted*, That he was at laſt of Opinion, That that there was no carrying Madmen to Heaven in Fetters, whether they wou'd, or no. But if I am not too tedious, I will endeavour to give ſome light to the Matter in hand, out of ſome clear Paſſages in Scripture; and, in my weak Opinion, there is none more pertinent, than that of St. *Paul* to the *Philippians*, chap. 2. 12, 13. *Work out your ſalvation with fear and trembling; for it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleaſure.* Obſerve, 1*ſt*, He bids them *work*, becauſe God *worketh*; which they need not have been bid to do, if God had *work'd* after an irreſiſtible manner. 2*dly*, That they might not be betrayed into a yawning Expectation of their being acted upon, or their Salvation, in a manner, brought about for them, whether they wou'd or no; he bids them *work it out with fear and trembling*; (as our Saviour bids us *ſtrive to enter in at the ſtrait gate; becauſe many ſhall ſtrive, and ſhall not enter:*) which they needed not to have done, had their Salvation been (not only certain, but withal) a neceſſary unavoidable thing, and ſo inconſiſtent with Choice and Option. 3*dly*, The Apoſtle tells them, (in the next Verſe) that *it is God which worketh in them*, not only *to do*, but, *to will, and to do*: By his Preventing Grace, he worketh in them *to will*; by his

Aſſiſting

Aſſiſting Grace, he worketh in them *to do:* by neither ſo irreſiſtibly, but that they muſt work it out themſelves too; and that not only by Expectation and Hope, but *with fear and trembling.* God worketh in us *to will,* (ſaith the Apoſtle;) not without, or againſt, but according to the nature of that very Will with which he made us. Grace doth not deſtroy, but eſtabliſh, ſtrengthen, and perfect Nature. Shall we ſay we do a thing without Liberty and Choice, becauſe *God worketh in us to will, and to do?* Is the Liberty loſt, becauſe it is guided and enabled to do that which is Good? If *I can do all things through Chriſt that ſtrengthens me*; then I can (through him) both refuſe the Evil, and chuſe the Good. Which would not be Choice, if it were, whether I would or no.

Eutychus. But does not the ſame Apoſtle tell us, *Eph.* 1. 11. That *God worketh all things after the counſel of his will?*

Epenetus. I do not take that Place to mean, That God deſtroys, or takes away our Wills, by the working of his own; the Place will not bear that Conſtruction: For the Apoſtle ſpeaks it of God's Election, which he predeſtin'd in his Son, and the Means conducing to ſuch an End, which are none but Good; not at all of Reprobation, the Means in order to which are none but Evil. For the words, [*he worketh all things,*] are infinitely far from being meant either of Sin, or Reprobation; ſo far from that, that I believe God does not permit Sin, as Permiſſion ſignifies Connivance or Conſent; but that he permits it ſo, as that ſignifies, [not to hinder by main Force.] To make it plain, by a Compariſon: If I ſee a Man Robbing my Neighbour, and ſay nothing to him; I ſo permit, as to be guilty: but if I warn and exhort, if I promiſe and threaten, and do all I can to hinder him (without killing him,) I ſo permit, as to be innocent. And is not the Caſe

the

the ſame in God's Permiſſion? Does not he warn, exhort, beſeech, invite, yea and threaten too? yet he ſuffers us to live, and have that Nature of the Will with which he made us? Whereas, to deſtroy us for the prevention of Sin, and to take away our Option of Good or Evil, and ſo make us to become like Stocks or Stones, or wooden Engines which are moved only by Wires, at the meer diſcretion or pleaſure of the Engineer; were, by inevitable Conſequence, to unmake his Creature: *I can do all things, through Chriſt that ſtrengthens me,* (ſaith the Apoſtle.) Now, I pray obſerve, to *ſtrengthen* is not to *neceſſitate*; for then, to ſtrengthen, would be to weaken: becauſe to neceſſitate or compel with an Irreſiſtibility, is to vanquiſh and over-maſter; not to give Strength, but to take it away; for that is called Irreſiſtible, which is of ſuch an over-ruling Power and prevailing Force, that a Man cannot withſtand it, although he would. And dare we charge God with exerciſing ſuch Power on the Wills of the Reprobates, in order to bring them to Deſtruction? God forbid: He doth not only offer, and propoſe to his Peoples choice, but deſires them alſo to chuſe: *I call Heaven and Earth to record this day againſt you,* (ſaith God, by Moſes) *that I have ſet before you Life and Death, Bleſſing and Curſing; Therefore, chuſe Life, that thou and thy ſeed may live.* But we may as well diſcern Colours without Eyes, walk without Legs, ſpeak when we were born dumb; as chuſe, if God works in us irreſiſtibly. Which is plain by Reaſon: For, to chuſe irreſiſtibly, is a Contradiction *in adjecto:* For it is to will a thing whether one will or no. He that ſaith, God worketh in us to chuſe irreſiſtibly, doth in effect ſay, He ſo worketh in us, that we cannot chuſe but chuſe; which is as much as to ſay, not only that we do what we cannot do, but that we therefore do it, becauſe we cannot do it. He that cannot

chuſe

chuſe but chuſe, doth chuſe becauſe he cannot chuſe; which is as bad as to ſay, that the thing is neceſſary, becauſe it is impoſſible. To make this plain to the meaneſt Capacity, we need only conſider theſe Particulars: *1ſt*, He that is wrought upon by God to believe, obey, or perſevere irreſiſtibly, cannot poſſibly do otherwiſe than believe, obey, and perſevere. *2dly*, He that cannot poſſibly do otherwiſe than he doth, cannot poſſibly chuſe but do what he doth. *3dly*, He that cannot chuſe but do what he doth, doth clearly do it, whether he will or no. *4thly*, He that doth believe, obey, or perſevere, whether he will or no, doth do it by as evident undeniable Neceſſity, as that, by which a Stone tends downwards; which tendency of the Stone, tho' it is ſpontaneous, yet it is not Voluntary; and as it is not by Violence, ſo it is not by Choice neither. *5thly*, He that willeth to believe, obey, or perſevere, whether he will or no, doth it by a Neceſſity, by which a Stone tends upwards, when it is thrown; which tendency of the Stone is ſo far from Voluntary, that it is not ſpontaneous; it is not only an irrational, but an unnatural thing, and implies a Contradiction in a Voluntary Agent, which cannot take place in an Involuntary Stone. For to ſay, a Man willeth to obey or believe, whether he will or no, is to ſay, he willeth it either without his Will, or againſt his Will, or elſe not having a Will at all; which is as bad as to ſay, that he muſt needs will it, becauſe he cannot any way poſſibly will it.

Eutychus. Indeed, I cannot ſee how to take off the Odium of theſe Abſurdities, without denying your Definition of Irreſiſtible, which were not to eſcape, but to change and contract more: Yet methinks your Opinion ſeems to patronize the proud Error concerning Free-will; for if God doth

not

not neceſſitate our Actions, but leave them to our own Inclinations, ſo that is in our Power to work or not to work; does not this infer, that we have Freedom of Will to do, or not to do, juſt what our Fancy leads us to? contrary to what our Saviour ſaith, *John* 15. 5. — *without me you can do nothing.*

Epenetus. Nothing that is Good can be done without Chriſt: But I hope you will allow, we may do Evil without his Help and Aſſiſtance; for tho' we ſay, many Things are done Contingently in reſpect of God; yet many, we ſay, are done by God's ſpecial Determination. As for our Natural Actions, ſuch as Eating, Drinking, Walking, *&c.* I believe that ordinarily we perform them freely and contingently, in reſpect of God. And I believe likewiſe, that good Duties, properly ſo called, are never performed without Choice and Freedom; which Freedom, tho' loſt by *Adam*, I take to be one of thoſe Privileges purchaſed again for us by Chriſt, and reſtored to us under the Goſpel Diſpenſation, and ſo a neceſſary part of our Redemption. *If the Son make you free, then are you free indeed; and were the Spirit of the Lord is, there is Liberty.* Indeed, were we left to our ſelves, our Wills are ſo crooked, and our Appetites ſo debauched, that we cannot but ſin: But our Saviour has told us, *his Grace is ſufficient for us:* He has trod down Satan under our Feet, in order that we may trample upon him; and I cannot but obſerve, that tho' He tread him down with his own Feet, yet it is ſaid to be trampled under Ours.

Eutychus. Pray, Sir, ſaving your Diſcourſe, let me ask you one Queſtion: Do you not allow, that God's Foreknowledge of all Events, is moſt infallible and neceſſary?

Epenetus. Yes, I do allow it.

Euty-

Eutychus. Then all Events, in reſpect of Him, fall out neceſſarily; otherwiſe, you muſt allow, it is poſſible for God to be deceived: yea, if many things fall out Contingently, or as it were by Accident, God's Foreknowledge of them can be but Contingent, depending, after a ſort, on Man's Free-Will.

Epenetus. Your Objection ſeems plauſible at firſt view, but I hope I ſhall give you a full Anſwer. I know that it is ſaid, God's Preſcience ſucceeds his Preordination, by Men of your Principles, and therefore (ſay they) muſt give a Neceſſity to all Events. Now you muſt allow, it is one thing, to know a Thing will Neceſſarily be done, and another, to know Neceſſarily that a Thing will be done. God doth neceſſarily and certainly foreknow all that will be done; but he doth not know, that thoſe Things which ſhall be done Voluntarily, will be done Neceſſarily: He knoweth that they will be done; but he knoweth withal, that they might have fallen out otherwiſe, for ought He had order'd to the contrary. So likewiſe, God knew that *Adam* would fall, and yet he knew that he would not fall neceſſarily; for it was poſſible for him not to have fallen. And as touching God's Preordination going before his Preſcience, and ſo the Cauſe of all Events: This would be, to make God the Author of all the Sin in the World; his Knowledge comprehending that, as well as other Things. God, indeed, foreknoweth all Things, becauſe they will be done; but Things are not [therefore] done, becauſe he foreknoweth them. The Infallibility of his Knowledge, conſiſteth not in the Immutability of his Decree, but in the Prerogative of his Deity: It is impoſſible therefore that any Man, by his voluntary manner of working, ſhould delude God's Foreſight; but then, this Foreſight doth not neceſſitate the Will to certain Effects; for this were, to take it wholly

away. For, as the Knowledge of Things preſent, doth import no neceſſity on that which is done; ſo, the Foreknowledge of Things future, lays no neceſſity on that which ſhall be: Becauſe, whoſoever knows and ſees Things, he knows and ſees them as they are, and not as they are not: So that God's Knowledge doth not confound Things, but reaches to all Events, not only which come to paſs, but as they come to paſs, whether Contingently, or Neceſſarily. As for Example: When you ſee a Man walking upon the Earth, and at the very ſame inſtant the Sun ſhining in the Heavens; Do you not ſee the firſt as Voluntary, and the ſecond as Natural? And tho' at the inſtant you ſee both done, there is a Neceſſity that they be done, (or elſe you could not ſee them at all;) yet there was a Neceſſity of one only, before they were done, (namely, the Sun's ſhining in the Heavens;) but none at all of the other, (*viz.* the Man's walking upon the Earth.) The Sun could not but ſhine, as being a Natural Agent; the Man might not have walked, as being a Voluntary one.

Eutychus. But does not this Doctrine plainly contradict the Scripture? I'm ſure our Saviour intimateth as much, when he told his Apoſtles, that *the very Hairs of their Head were all numbred, and* that ev'n a poor contemptible *Sparrow falls not to the Ground without his heavenly Father*; which evidently ſhews, that the pettieſt Matters in the World are determined by God Himſelf.

Epenetus. I do grant, that ev'n a Sparrow cannot fall to the Ground, without God's Permiſſion or Knowledge; but I don't think, from thence, that God hath made any ſpecial *Decree* concerning Sparrows. And the Scope and Meaning of our Saviour, in this Place, I take to be this, namely, the Comforting and Encouraging his Diſciples, whom he was now ſending abroad into the World

as Sheep among Wolves; and that if ſuch Trifles as a *Hair*, and a *Sparrow* could not fall, without his Permiſſion, how much reaſon they had to place their Confidence in God, who was their ſpecial Obſerver, and moſt loving Father; who, they might be ſure, would never ſuffer any thing to befal them, but for his Glory, and their Good: ſo that you may ſee the Ground of your Miſtake, by confounding Permiſſion with Preordination. For whilſt I hear a Man ſpeak, it is neceſſary that he doth ſpeak, but upon ſuppoſition that I hear him ſpeaking, his Speech is ſtill a Voluntary Contingent thing. For he ſpake when he pleaſed; and he might have been ſilent when he pleaſed; [but ſtill with a Proviſo of God's Permiſſion. Indeed, whatſoever I do, there is an abſolute Neceſſity that God ſhould foreſee; yet God foreſeeing my voluntary Action, does not make it neceſſary, but on ſuppoſition that it is done. As for Example: We are now Diſcourſing, and God foreſaw that we are Diſcourſing; yet it does not follow that we muſt needs Talk, for we can forbear, if we pleaſe. What God foreſees, muſt neceſſarily come to paſs, it muſt come to paſs in the ſame manner that he foreſees it. He foreſaw that we will Diſpute; not becauſe we are neceſſitated thereto, but upon choice; ſo that his Foreſight does not make an abſolute and peremptory Neceſſity, but infers a Neceſſity upon Suppoſition: And there is a vaſt difference between the making, and inferring a Neceſſity; ſo that tho' God's Preſcience is a Conſequent of the Thing's coming to paſs; yet its Infallibility of coming to paſs, is inferred from his Preſcience only by way of Conſequence. What God foreſees ſhall come to paſs, ſhall infallibly come to paſs, and that, becauſe he cannot err, who is Omniſcient. On the other ſide, what God decrees ſhall come

to paſs, muſt come to paſs of Neceſſity; becauſe He cannot be reſiſted, who is Omnipotent. Hence we may learn to diſtinguiſh between thoſe Things, which have been ſo often and ſo unhappily confounded, namely, Sufficient, Effectual, and Irreſiſtible Grace. 1*ſt*, Sufficient Grace, is that, which poſſibly *may* produce that Effect for which it was given. 2*dly*, Effectual, is that which certainly *will*. 3*dly*, Irreſiſtible, is that which neceſſarily *muſt*. For that which is Irreſiſtible, doth carry away its Object to what it pleaſeth, like a mighty Torrent, by indiſputable Force, maugre the greateſt Oppoſition that can be made; and therefore cannot take place in the Election of the Will; which ceaſeth to Elect after the nature of a Will, in caſe it be made to do any thing whether it will or no.

Eutychus. But I wou'd fain know how the Will can be ſaid neceſſarily to chuſe Good, when, without Grace, it is altogether inſufficient to chuſe any Good at all? nay, ev'n not ſo much as think a good Thought?

Epenetus. My Opinion is, That the Will, in this Caſe, is neceſſary, not as a Cauſe, but as a Condition: My meaning is, That we cannot do any thing that is Good, purely by virtue of our Wills, becauſe our Will it ſelf is given us from God; but yet, without our Will, we cannot chuſe at all. God's Grace alone is the Cauſe of the Good, but Man's Will is as really the Inſtrument of the Choice. We can do Good, as God's Engines, without a Will; and ſo did *Balaam*'s Aſs, without the Gift of Reaſon: But we cannot chuſe Good, without a Free-Will; as that Aſs could not poſſibly underſtand what ſhe ſpake, without Ratiocination. To make it ſtill more plain by an Illuſtration: We know the Sun is the Fountain or Cauſe of Light; and Light, the only Means by which we ſee: but yet, the opening of the Eye-lid, is a neceſſary

ceſſary Condition; becauſe if I wink, I am dark at Noon; and if my Eye-lid is held open by Force, my Eye, in that caſe, cannot chuſe but ſee, and therefore cannot chuſe to ſee; my Sight may be with Delectation, but not properly with that which is called Election. ———

Eutychus. Pray, Sir, not too faſt. If Man's Will hath ſuch a Determining Power in the Operation of Good and Evil, how muſt we reconcile *Act.* 4. 27, 28. where it is ſaid, that *Herod, Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Iſrael were gathered together, for to do whatſoever God's hand and counſel determined before to be done?*

Epenetus. With Submiſſion, I take this place to mean no more than this; That God determined not to hinder, what He foreſaw Men wou'd do if they were not hinder'd. For if God had by his Power determined their Wills to the acting what they did, how could our Saviour have prayed for them, as Sinners, *Father, forgive them,* &c. if what they had done had not been voluntary, but of neceſſity? And as to the Power of the Will, I believe that Man hath a Power to reſiſt that Grace, which was ſufficient in it ſelf, and deſigned by God to work upon him for Converſion. But here I would not be miſtaken: For in ſaying what I have ſaid, I do not explicitly or implicitly deny, that God may (if he pleaſes) interpoſe his Power, and actually, and infallibly, and irreſiſtibly convert him; yet I find no Ground or Cauſe of thinking, that God ever did, or ever will thus Convert any one ſingle Perſon: And therefore I think it very unſafe and unchriſtian, to teach Men to depend upon this Abſolute Power, and ſo let ſlip thoſe bleſſed and gracious Opportunities, which, by the Grace of God, may be embraced and made uſe of, and may coſt us dear if they are not. For I dare not ſay, as Men of your Principles have

done, namely, " That Sin is abſolutely willed by God " Almighty : That God did voluntarily decree it : " That God doth determine it ſhall be done : That " God doth tempt Men to it, " *&c.* And theſe Aſſertions they pretend to ground on ſuch Texts as theſe, 1 *Kings* 22. 23, 24. where God ſaith to the *lying Spirit, Go forth and prevail:* Ezek. 14. 9. where God is ſaid to have *deceived the Erring Prophet*, &c. (which ſhall be further conſidered hereafter.) In the mean while, how muſt we reconcile thoſe Texts, if taken in their literal ſenſe, with thoſe which God intended we ſhould underſtand literally ? ſuch as, when God *ſweareth he hath no Pleaſure in the Death of the Wicked*, Ezek. 33. 11. nor is *willing that any ſhould periſh, but that all ſhould come to repentance*, 2 Pet. 3. 9. and *will have all Men to be ſaved*, 1 Tim. 2. 4. and *taſted death for every man*, Hebr. 2. 9. and *is the Propitiation, not for our Sins only, but alſo for the Sins of the whole World*, 1 *John* 2. 2. and *commandeth all men every-where to repent*, Acts 17. 30. Can there be any Tricks or mental Reſervations in theſe Words ?

Eutychus. I grant, that the Revealed Will of God, hath offered Salvation to all that will accept it ; but I do not think, from hence, that God intended they ſhould accept it, becauſe he hath decreed the contrary ; the Revealed Will of God, being not properly his Will, as that by which he decreeth a thing ſhall actually be done : It indeed (*a*) " ſheweth (as I have learn'd) what ought to " be performed by us : Not that God hath, " in his ſecret Will, decreed we either can, or " ſhall be enabled to perform the ſame. So " that, when God revealeth his great Unwilling-

(*a*) *Fiery Pillar, &c. pag.* 17.

" neſs

" neſs that Men ſhould Sin, it is only a Sign that " Men ought not to Sin; not that they ſhall or " can avoid it."

Epenetus. If it be as you ſay, That God's Revealed Will, is, That all ſhou'd Repent; but his Secret Will, That very few ſhall: The Conſequence is, That it is his Will, that his Will ſhould *not* be done: and that when Reprobates ſay the *Lord's Prayer*, they only pray for their own Damnation, included in theſe Words, *Thy Will be done:* which makes one Will of God the ſame with that of the Devils. Nay, if God did abſolutely decree the End, which is Damnation, and the Means conducing to that End, which is Final Impenitency, it would be the Reprobate's Duty; and ſo, conſequently, ought to be his Prayer that he might be Damned: And endeavouring his Salvation, would be a Sin; becauſe it were ſtriving againſt the Stream of God's Abſolute Will. If all Men are to chuſe, and withal, to execute the Will of God, and that it is the Will of God that the greateſt part ſhould be damn'd; it will then be a Duty in the greateſt part of Men, to go induſtriouſly to Hell; and to do Good, will be Vice, becauſe it tends to carry Men to Heaven; and ſo the croſſing an abſolute, irrevocable Decree. But who dare entertain ſuch Notions of the Moſt High GOD? who hath declared himſelf *a God of Mercy, forgiving Iniquity, Tranſgreſſion, and Sin*, ſincerely deſiring the Happineſs of all Mankind; I mean, their Repentance, Obedience, Holineſs and Perſeverance in this Life, and Eternal Happineſs in the World to come: That *he hateth nothing that he hath made*, nothing but *Sin*, which he hath *not* made: That when he commands, he is ſincerely willing to be obeyed, and therefore giveth a Paſſive Power to receive his Grace; and by that, an Active Power to perform ſuch Obedience as he will mercifully accept. But, as I ſaid

before, he forceth no Man, compelleth no Man, neceſſitateth no Man, by Grace irreſiſtible, to be eternally Happy, do he what he can to the contrary; any more than he neceſſitateth or forceth any Man, by any irreſpective unconditional Decree, to be eternally Miſerable, do he what he can to be otherwiſe. So that ſuch as are not ſaved, cannot ſay, they are not ſaved for want of Means and a Poſſibility, for want of a Ranſom or a Saviour, or for want of God's Willingneſs that they ſhould be ſaved; but, for want of their Willingneſs to do their Duties, the Conditions of the Covenant; upon the performance or non-performance of which, Salvation either may, or may not be had.

Eutychus. I do readily grant, that the Death of Chriſt was ſufficient to atone for the Sins of Ten Thouſand Worlds; and I believe that Jeſus is a Saviour of the Reprobates ſufficiently, but not intentionally. I believe the leaſt Drop of Chriſt's Blood, to be more valuable than the whole World: But yet I believe it was ſhed for a few Perſons only, who were Elected from all Eternity, out of *Maſſa Corrupta*, and left the greater part of Men, who were (*a*) "eternally rejected or paſſed by in "that corrupted Maſs, to be utterly incapable of "being ſaved by any part of his Merits." For indeed, how can Chriſt be ſaid to *die for all*, when *all* are not ſaved? (*b*) "The Father did not "chuſe all, therefore neither did the Son die for "and redeem all. For had Chriſt laid down his "Life a Ranſom for all Men, then the Juſtice of "God being once ſatisfied, a ſecond Puniſhment "could not, without Injuſtice, be inflicted." *Mat.* 20. 28. *Iſaiah* 53. 11, 12.

(*a*) *Fiery Pillar*, &c. *pag.* 9. (*b*) Ibid. *pag.* 31.

Epene-

Epenetus. Sir, I am not a little ſtartled at your Opinion, which I think pernicious to the laſt degree, contradicting both Scripture and Reaſon, ev'n the cleareſt Scriptures that can be named; for I'm ſure the Scripture ſets forth Univerſal Redemption in the plaineſt manner that the Tongue of Men and Angels are able to expreſs. *1ſt.* By an Univerſal Collective, He *is the Saviour of all Men*, 1 *Tim.* 4. 10. *2d*, By an Univerſal Diſtributive, He *taſted death for every Man*, Hebr. 2. 9. *3d*, By an Univerſal Indefinite, not to a Part, but, He *is the Saviour of the World*, Joh. 4. 42. *4th*, by an Univerſal Expreſs, He *is the Propitiation for the Sins of the whole World*, 1 *Joh.* 2. 2. an Univerſal Subject; to one, as well as an other. *5th*, By Univerſals Affirmative, as in thoſe juſt mention'd, and many more. *6th*, By Univerſals Negative, He *was not willing that any ſhould periſh*, 2 *Pet.* 3. 9. *7th*, By an Univerſal Command to uſe the Means of Salvation, and that Univerſal to Places, as well as Perſons; not to all Men in ſome Places, nor to ſome Men in all Places, but, He *commandeth all Men every where to Repent*, Act. 17. 30. From all which, I obſerve, That an Univerſal Creation is not aſſerted to us, by Scripture, in ſo great a variety of plain Expreſſions, as an Univerſal Redemption is found to be. But in your Objection, you charge God with mental Reſervations, when he tells us he is not willing that *any ſhould periſh*, but, on the contrary, *that all ſhould come to Repentance* 2. Pet. 3. 9. You ſay, his Decree from all Eternity, is, That he is willing that almoſt all the World ſhould Periſh, and very few come to Repentance. But if the Holy Ghoſt ſhall be affirmed not to intend what he ſpeaketh, in thoſe plain Places of Scripture where he ſaith, *all Men*, and *every Man*, *the World*, and *the whole World*, *not only, but alſo*, *not willing that any*, *but willing that all*, &c.

How

How may a Man be taught to Disbelieve him in all other Places and Affirmations, where his Expreſſions are not ſo plain? How can a Man learn any one Duty, or refrain from any one Sin, upon any Motives in Scripture, if the moſt plain Paſſages are ſo liable [by certain Tricks and Diſtinctions] to be eluded, and made to ſpeak what was never intended? If a Man will pretend to hold, by Scripture, [that Chriſt died only for the Elect] for which there is not one word in Scripture; How much greater Reaſon hath the *Arian* for his Hereſy, from the plain letter of the Text, [*My Father is greater than I*, Joh. 14. 28.] or the *Papiſt*, upon his better Pretenſions, [*This is my Body?*] *Mat.* 26. 6. I will ask you one Queſtion: Pray, Sir, When Chriſt is ſaid to be *the Saviour of the World*; (and more emphatically) *the Lamb of God, that taketh away the Sins of the World*; whether it be meant of the Whole, or of a Part only?

Eutychus. I believe, that it was in Part only, *he gave his Life a Ranſom for many*, *Mat.* 20. 28.

Epenetus. How flatly do you now contradict the Apoſtle, 1 *Joh.* 2. 2. where, *to the World*, he addeth [*whole?*] And if Whole, it muſt ſignifie the major Part, both according to the Maxim which is in every Man's Logick, That the *Whole*, is greater than a *Part*. And becauſe it is ever ſo uſed in Scripture, 1 *Joh.* 2. 2. Now then, you muſt confeſs that the Reprobates make up the major Part, and by conſequence, that Chriſt is the Saviour only of the Reprobates; which abominable Abſurdity you cannot poſſibly eſcape, but by a full Confeſſion of Univerſal Redemption.

Eutychus. I do allow that Chriſt died for every Man in the World ſufficiently, but not intentionally, (as I ſaid before.)

Epenetus. Now you have betrayed your Cauſe worſe than before. For, I pray you, how will you

you make it appear that our Saviour died ev'n ſufficiently for all Men, when you ſaid above, Chriſt did not die for all, becauſe, as God, he had determined to paſs by the greateſt Part of Mankind, leaving them utterly incapable of being ſaved, by any part of his Merits? Could he be able to reſiſt himſelf, or to reverſe his irreſiſtible Decree? and ſuch was that of Reprobation, (ſay you.) From whence it muſt follow (according to your way of arguing,) That Chriſt was not ſufficient to have ſaved all the World, but only thoſe that he had Elected to be ſaved: He could not poſſibly ſave them to whom he had deny'd a poſſibility, and the very paſſive Power of being ſaved. From whence it follows, that Chriſt might have been a ſufficient Saviour for all the World, from all Eternity, if he had pleaſed. But you ſay, he was not pleaſed; yea, that he was pleaſed *not* to be their Saviour; and then how could he be their Saviour againſt his Will and good Pleaſure? and yet you ſay, he ſaved all ſufficiently: who did nothing towards it, nor ever had it in his Thoughts. That is to ſay, [He is their Saviour, becauſe he was able; and He is not, becauſe he would not do what he was able.] Very fine Logick indeed! We may as well ſay, That God made a Thouſand Worlds with Inhabitants beſide this, [and add the Diſtinction not *intentionalitèr* but *ſufficientèr*] becauſe he was able, and might have done it, if he had pleaſed. Or, that he deſtroyed this very Globe of ours 10 or 20 Years ago, becauſe he had Power ſufficient to have deſtroy'd it, if he had not decreed it a longer time of Duration. Or, that every Rich Man who is worth more than he owes, is truly a Payer of all his Debts, tho' he never doth pay them, nor doth ever intend it; but deſigns to cheat them all. And I believe, had you ſuch a Debtor who ſhould refuſe to pay you the greateſt

greateſt Part of what he owes you, and yet confidently affirm that he pays you All, [explaining himſelf, that he was ſufficient, but never meant it;] I am apt to believe you would call it Lye, or a Jeer, and but faintly thank him for ſuch Payment. Far be it from me to think thus of our Redeemer. He offered up himſelf, not only ſufficiently, but intentionally, for All. He earneſtly deſires that every one ſhould come in, upon the Preaching of his Word, and receive the Benefit of his Death and Paſſion. His Warnings are not in Jeſt, his Invitations are Serious: *Depart from me, ye Curſed,* ſaid he, to affright us, and make us take heed to avoid that dreadful Sentence. He is unwilling any ſhould be caught in the Serpent's Snare, and therefore ſhews to All, without exception, *a way to eſcape. He is not deſirous to Strike, before he bids us look to our Poſture, and ſtand upon our Guard,* (as an Excellent Biſhop ſpeaks.) He ſhews his Power to Puniſh none, but only thoſe that refuſe his Mercy; and would not damn any one, without reſpect to Sin. So that, from what has been ſaid, it is my humble Opinion, that Chriſt died for all Men, yea, ev'n thoſe that took his Life away: for he *prayed for them earneſtly*, yea, at a time when they curſed themſelves; *His Blood be upon us*, ſay they: Yet, ſaid the Meek and Merciful Jeſus, *Father forgive them:* He deſired his *Blood might be upon them*, (but not in their barbarous and cruel Senſe;) for they meant the Guilt, but he meant not to Accuſe, but Cleanſe them. And I am certain, the *Church of England* teaches me this wholeſome Doctrine of General Redemption, in her xxxix *Articles*, her *Homilies*, her *Liturgy*, her *Catechiſm*, her *Book of Ordination*, and her *Book of Conſtitutions and Canons.* For, can Words be more expreſſive in aſſerting Univerſal Redemption, than thoſe in her 31*ſt Article*, where it is

ſaid,

ſaid, *That Chriſt is a perfect Redemption, Propitiation, and Satisfaction for all the Sins of the whole World*, both Original and Actual. Alſo the Liberty of the Will, and the Co-operation of it with Grace, are aſſerted in the 10*th Art.* wherein there is not the leaſt Sound of Irreſiſtible Working upon the Hearts of Men. So that if all are not ſaved, as you objected, it is not for want of a Redeemer, but for want of complying with thoſe Gifts and Graces purchaſed for them, and given to them in order to obtain Salvation. Shall I illuſtrate, by a familiar Compariſon, how all are redeemed, tho' all are not ſaved. (*a*) Suppoſe the King of *Spain* had a Thouſand Chriſtian Subjects taken Captive by the *Turk*, and ſhould agree for the Ranſom of them all, and accordingly pays down the Price agreed upon; are not all equally Redeemed? tho' ſome perhaps be carried many Miles up in the Country, to ſome obſcure or remote Parts, and ſo never hear of it; others who hear of it, may yet not believe it: and there may be ſome ſo ungrateful, who yet tho' they hear of it, and believe it too, yet have been ſo long accuſtomed to their Slavery, that they prefer it, before their Liberty, and ſo loſe the Benefit of their Redemption. But further: That we may rightly underſtand the Diſtinction of being Sufficient to do a thing, and the doing a Thing ſufficiently, which are ſo falaciouſly confounded, (the latter uſed for the former;) let us proceed with our Compariſon a little further. If the King above mention'd ſhould have given as much for the Ranſom of two or three hundred, as would have been required for all the whole Thouſand, but yet he will give the whole Sum,

(*a*) *Agreeable to Biſhop* Beveridge's *Catechiſm, compoſed by him, for the Dioceſe of St.* Aſaph.

becauſe

becauſe he will, and only releaſe two or three hundred, and not the whole Thouſand, merely becauſe he will too, intending all the reſt ſhall be Captives ſtill, and this he will do, to ſhew his Power over the greateſt Number, and his Partiality towards the leſſer; Can that King ſay, with Truth or Modeſty, that he is the Redeemer of all thoſe Captives, becauſe he paid a Sum of Money which had been ſufficient to Redeem them all, but did not intend they ſhould be taken into the Bargain? No, It only proves that he is not their Redeemer, but might have been if he had pleaſed; and that the *Turk* was leſs mercileſs than he, who would have given all back, if the King of *Spain* would have had him. The Caſe is the very ſame, in ſaying, Chriſt is the Saviour of Reprobates, Sufficiently, but not Intentionally. And now, my good Friend, being pretty nigh my Journeys End, I heartily thank you for your good Company, and ſhould have been glad of enjoying it longer: but I am willing to hear what News at *Guild-Hall*, and ſo I bid you heartily Farewel.

Eutychus. I humbly thank you for your good Converſation, but I wiſh I could have had it longer; you ſeem indeed to talk very well, and I have ſo much Charity for you, as to think you are Miſled, and that if you were but rightly informed in the Doctrine of Abſolute Election, and what its Principles tend to, you would have a greater value for the Sweetneſs of Chriſts Electing Love, than you ſeem to have.

Epenetus. Sir, I was always of a teachable Temper, and ſhould be very glad of embracing every Opportunity of being undeceived of any Error I am poſſeſſed withal, and, with your leave, I will wait on you to Morrow at your Dwelling Houſe.

Eutychus.

Eutychus. I am very much obliged to you, for your kind Offer, and ſhall be heartily glad to ſee you there, as early as you can. In the mean while, I heartily bid you Adieu.

The End of the Firſt Conference.

CONFERENCE II.

Epenetus.

I Am come to pay you a Viſit, acording to my Promiſe; but I muſt ask Pardon for ſtaying ſo late; Buſineſs falling out croſs, hinder'd my coming ſooner.

Eutychus. Pray, my Friend, ſit down: I was juſt now ruminating upon what you ſaid Yeſterday; neither can I be reconciled to your Opinion; for, in my ſenſe, it detracts from the Merits of Chriſt, arguing that a Man may do ſomething to diſcriminate himſelf in the Work of Grace and Salvation; and ſo, in ſome ſort, making Man become his own Saviour; which ſeems to me directly contrary to the Apoſtle, 1 *Cor.* 4. 7. where he ſaith, *Who maketh thee to differ from another? And what haſt thou, that thou didſt not receive? Now if thou didſt receive it, why doſt thou glory, as if thou hadſt not received it?*

Epenetus. I have endeavour'd to inform my ſelf touching that Text, and I have learn'd, that it it ſpeaks not of Sanctifying Grace, but of ſuch as was given to thoſe Teachers; not ſo much for the private

private good of themſelves, as for the publick Benefit of the Church, as appears 1 *Cor.* 3. 5. Chriſt had no Univerſities, in thoſe Days, to bring up Apoſtles in; but finding very few, if any, fit for the Work of the Miniſtry, which he had occaſion to employ them in, he made them fit by Miracle; and being qualified upon that account, the Apoſtle juſtly checks their Arrogance, for glorying of ſuch Gifts, as were not acquired by their own Study and Induſtry, but inſpired into them immediately of the Holy Ghoſt. So that there is a wide difference between thoſe Supernatural Gifts and Graces, which brake in upon them irreſiſtibly (like Light, at the firſt Creation, 2 *Cor.* 4. 6.) and thoſe Gifts of ſaving Faith and Holineſs, whereof the Poſſeſſion is a matter of free Choice and Acceptation, *Deut.* 30. 19. *Luke* 10. 42. *Prov.* 1. 29. This Light may be excluded and reſiſted, *Joh.* 1. 5. and *Joh.* 5. 35. *Job* 24. 13. *Joh.* 3. 19. Such therefore as do embrace this Light, may very well be ſaid to difference themſelves from ſuch as do reject it. For when our Saviour tells *Martha*, *One thing is needful: Mary hath choſen the good Part*; Doth he not commend *Mary* for ſuch a Diſcrimination? But if this had been made in her, by the ſole Irreſiſtible Operation of Divine Grace, *Martha* might very eaſily have excuſed her ſelf, and have charged the Fault [that ſhe had not made the like Choice] upon His Deficiency, in a Matter ſo needful to her. Again; Why was our Saviour ſo tranſported with Admiration at the Faith of ſome, as well as at the Unbelief of others, *Mat.* 8. 10. if that Faith were wrought ſo irreſiſtibly, that the Believer contributed nothing towards it? Tis certain, ſome do neglect the Gift that is given them, and bury their Talents, and do receive the Grace of God in vain: others are careful to retain, and ſtir up, to employ and improve

improve what they have received. Now, does not he that obeys God, certainly differ exceedingly from him that obeys him not? and does not his Obedience (which is his own Act and Duty, performed by the Aſſiſtance of God's Grace) help to make the Difference? nothing, I preſume, can be more evident: If Man can do nothing to difference himſelf, Why doth God give ſo many Commands to him, for his Renovation and Improvement? (*a*) Why doth he render *Praiſe* and *Glory* to his Saints, (*b*) and ſo often commend them, ſaying, *They are worthy?* (*c*) Why doth he ſo earneſtly invite them to their Duty, by Promiſes and Threatnings? (*d*) Why doth he upbraid Unbelievers for *rejecting the Counſel of God againſt themſelves* (*e*), *and judging themſelves unworthy of Eternal Life?* and finally brands them with Shame, Confuſion, and Eternal Torments?

Eutychus. But will not this be apt to make the Regenerate Man Unthankful? ſeeing (by you) they receive no more than the Unregenerate do? And does not this (as I ſaid before) make Men their own Saviours, and give the determining Vote on humane Liberty?

Epenetus. Tho' the Faithful and Unbelievers receive alike in Preventing Grace, yet the Faithful receive ſuch aſſiſting and following Grace, which the others receive not. For, *to every one that hath,* (that is, makes a good Uſe of what he hath) *ſhall be given more.* Beſides, am not I obliged to be thankful to my Benefactor, altho' others do undervalue and ſlight his Bounty? Shall not the Children of *Sion be joyful in their King, and ſing Ho-*

(*a*) Deut. 10. 16. Jer. 4. 4. Ezek. 18. 31. Eph. 4. 22. 2 Cor. 7. 1. (*b*) Job 2. 2, 3. Rom. 2. 29. Mat. 25. 23. (*c*) Rev. 3. 4. (*d*) Rom. 8. 13. Iſa. 1. 19, 20. Rom. 2. 6, &c. (*e*) Luke 7. 30. (*f*) Acts 13. 46.

Sanna to the Son of David, altho' others cry out, *We will not have this Man to reign over us?* And as to Mens being their own Saviours, (*a*) "All this is "mere Cavil, (ſays Biſhop *Tillotſon*) as will ap- "pear to any one by this plain Inſtance. A Re- "bel is Convicted, and liable to the Sentence and "Condemnation of the Law; he ſues for a Pardon, "and obtains and accepts it; will any Man now "ſay, that becauſe he asks and accepts it from the "King, and the King does not take his Hand and "open it, and violently thruſt the Pardon into it; "that this Man ſaves himſelf, and takes away the "Glory of the King's Grace and Mercy; and that "he owes his Life to himſelf, and not to the King's "Bounty and Goodneſs? A Man would be thought "very ſenſeleſs, that ſhould ſo aſcribe this Man's "Deliverance to any Act of his own, as not to think "it wholly owing to the King's Grace and Favour. "I think the Caſe is the very ſame, concerning "Man's not complying with that Grace which "God affords them for their Repentance unto Life. "I would fain know (as he goes on) of thoſe ſub- "tle Objectors, whether *Moſes*, when he ſays, "*Deut.* 30. 19. *I have ſet before you Life and* "*Death, Bleſſing and Curſing, therefore chuſe* "*Life*; do not, in ſo ſaying, plainly ſuppoſe that "Men may chuſe Life, or refuſe it? And if ſo, "whether he intends to make Men their own "Saviour?

Eutychus. But if this be ſo, then every Repro- bate, yea, *Judas* himſelf, has as much cauſe to thank God, as the Elect; ev'n *Peter* himſelf, and the reſt of *Chriſt*'s Diſciples.

Epenetus. (*b*) "And who ever deny'd, or can de-

(*a*) *Tillotſon*'s Sermons, Vol. Xth. Sermon 13.
(*b*) *Ibid.*

ny

" ny (ſaith the Biſhop) that a Rebel who refuſeth " a Pardon offer'd to him by his Prince, hath not the " ſame real Obligations of Gratitude to his Prince, " with him that accepts it? The Prince offers the " ſame Favour to both, and the Obligation is equal; " and tho' he that accepts it, do not ſave himſelf; " yet he that refuſeth it, deſtroys himſelf: And at " the Judgment of the Great Day, all impeni- " tent Sinners, under the Goſpel, ſhall be for- " ced to acknowledge the Grace of God to them, " in affording the Opportunity of Salvation, " and ſhall only blame and condemn themſeves for " neglecting that happy Opportunity. But if an " irreſiſtible Degree of God's Grace be neceſſary " to every Man's Salvation, it is plain that impe- " nitent Sinners never had the Opportunity of Sal- " vation; and conſequently cannot condemn them- " ſelves for the neglect of it." Thus far the Arch-Biſhop.

Eutychus. But is not Election ſaid to be *not of works, but of him that calleth*? Which by no means allows of an Election upon Intuition or Foreſight of what we can do. For when God is ſaid to Predeſtinate, it is ſaid to be done *according to His good pleaſure, which he hath purpoſed in himſelf*, Eph. 1. 9. So that here is nothing for Man to boaſt on. It is God that makes the Difference, as well as God that chuſeth.

Epenetus. I confeſs, with you, that it is God that maketh the Difference; becauſe without his Grace, we could do nothing that is good. But then, I humbly conceive, there muſt be a Difference, before there can be an Election. Love is indeed an Act of Favour, but Election is properly an Act of Judgment; a preferring the Better before the Worſe. For is it not ſafer to ſay, that thoſe Men are choſen by God, that Believe in Chriſt, and that others are rejected by him for their Infidelity, than to ſay,

(with you) we are Elected and Reprobated, without any Regard to our Actions, whether good or bad? So that when we are ſaid to be Elected by *his good pleaſure*, I do not think the word *good pleaſure* doth ſignifie the Abſoluteneſs of his Will, but the Reſpectiveneſs of it; for it relates to ſomething in which God is *well-pleaſed*, and that is Chriſt. It being impoſſible for God to be pleaſed with Mankind, or that Mankind ſhould be acceptable to God, any otherwiſe than in Chriſt, of whom it was ſaid, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed.* Which ſhews, that Election is Reſpective and Conditional; and that there is no other Predeſtination, than in and through Chriſt. Which agrees exactly with the 17th Article of the Church of *England.* And this is the Style and Language of the New Teſtament, namely, That the Promiſes of Eternal Life are Conditional. *If thou ſhalt confeſs with thy mouth the Lord Jeſus, and ſhalt believe in thine heart*, &c. *thou ſhalt be ſaved*, Rom. 10. 9. From whence it follows, That if thou ſhalt *not confeſs with thy Mouth*, nor *believe in thine Heart, &c.* thou ſhalt be damn'd. *If ye forgive not Men their Treſpaſſes, neither will your Father forgive your Treſpaſſes*, Mat. 6. 15. *If we ſuffer, we ſhall alſo reign with him: if we deny him, he alſo will deny us*, 2 Tim. 2. 12. *Except ye repent, ye ſhall all likewiſe periſh*, Luke 13. 5. *If ye believe not that I am he, ye ſhall die in your Sins*, Joh. 8. 24. In a word: The very End of our Saviour's coming into the World, was, *To ſave us from our Sins*, Mat. 1. 21. *To redeem us from all Iniquity*, Tit. 2. 14. Now, the End (we know) is the prime Condition, the greateſt Requiſite of all; which to neglect, is the true Cauſe of Condemnation: For ſo runs the Sentence of our Saviour, *Mat.* 25. 41. *Depart from me, ye curſed, into everlaſting Fire.* Why? For what Reaſon? He gives the true Reaſon in the next Verſe,

Verſe, (not becauſe ye were Reprobated by an abſolute Decree, not becauſe ye were ordain'd to be *Veſſels of wrath*, by a meer Irreſpective and Inexorable Will; but) becauſe *I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat:* Becauſe *I was thirſty and ye gave me no drink:* (Which how could they have given him, if it had not been given them *from Above* to give?) From which, and a thouſand Texts beſide, we may learn, That no Man is Infinitely puniſhed by an Unavoidable Neceſſity, for not doing his Duty, when it was not in his Power to do it. Impoſſibility is not a Sin; and therefore I believe no Man is puniſhed for not doing that which it is Impoſſible for him to do. *Adonibezek* indeed was cruel, in cutting off Mens Thumbs, and then making them *gather up Meat under his Table*, Judg. 1. 7. *Pharaoh* more cruel, in requiring a *Tale of Bricks*, where he gave *no Straw*. But I tremble to think what God muſt be, if Men are caſt by him, into a Lake of Fire and Brimſtone, there to be tormented to all Eternity, and this by an Abſolute Irreſpective Decree. No, our Maſter whom we ſerve, is *no Reſpecter of Perſons*, Rom. 2. 11. but will *render to every Man according to his Works. For whatſoever a Man ſoweth, that ſhall he alſo reap*, Gal. 6. 7. Chriſt is called *the true Light, which lighteth every Man that cometh into the World*, Joh. 1. 9. So that if any are in the Dark, it is not for want of Light, but becauſe they will not ſee; which is the very Interpretation that St. *John* himſelf gives it, *chap. 3. ver.* 19. *This* (ſays he) *is the Condemnation, that Light is come into the World, and Men loved Darkneſs rather than Light, becauſe their Deeds were evil.* Now, I pray you, conſider a little with your ſelf, Was not the Reaſon of their Condemnation, the Condition upon which they were determined to be Damn'd? I am ſure you muſt allow nothing can be ſaid more plainly, or more convincingly, to prove that it was ſo.

And indeed, if we look into God's Promiſes and Threatnings, they all run Conditional; which none, I think, can deny, witneſs the Denunciations of Deſtruction to the *Ninevites*, *Jonah* 3. 4, 10. and of certain Death to *Hezekiah*, 2 *Kings* 20. 1, 5. Yet the firſt was not *deſtroy'd*, nor the ſecond did not *die* at that determinate Time when God had threatned they ſhould; of which no Reaſon can be given, but that God's Purpoſes, Decrees and Threats were Conditional: On Suppoſition of their Impenitence, he threatned to deſtroy; and therefore, on Sight of their Repentance, he promiſed to preſerve. From hence let us thus argue, Is God ſo merciful to the Bodies of Men? And is he leſs merciful to their Souls? Does he decree Temporal Judgments conditionally, becauſe he is pitiful? and will he decree Eternal Ones abſolutely, meerly becauſe he will? Is he ſo unwilling to inflict the *firſt Death*, and will he ſhew his Power, his Abſolute Power in the *ſecond*? Did he ſpare *Nineveh* in this Life, becauſe they were Penitent? and will he damn them in the next, becauſe they were Heathens, by his Peremptory Decree?

Eutychus. Sir, what you infer, ſeems very Natural, but yet I think your Doctrine ſeems to allow of no other Cauſe of Election and Reprobation, but Faith and Infidelity; which derogates from the Mercy of God, and the Merits of Chriſt.

Epenetus. Here you are under a miſtake, I never ſaid that Good Works were a Cauſe of our Election, but only that they are required as a neceſſary Condition, tho' utterly unworthy to be the Cauſe of our Election. I allow that Chriſt is the Means, the Meritorious Cauſe of our Election: But I believe that God gave the Promiſe of Eternal Life, upon the Condition of *believing in his Son*, Joh. 3. 16. And I hope you will put a difference between the Cauſe,

and

and the Condition.. God never adopteth a Child, nor acknowledgeth him for his own, ſo as to give him Eternal Life, unleſs it be for the ſake of his only begotten Son. Indeed God pitied a woful World; then he loved what he pitied; next he gave his own Son to ſave what he loved; but it was upon the Condition of *believing in his Son*, that he gave the Promiſe of *Eternal Life*. For in the 3d of St. *John* verſe 16. Believing is ſo interpoſed between *Love* and *Life*; *God ſo loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth in him, ſhould not Periſh but have Everlaſting Life.* Whence it is plain, that *God loved the World*, before he he gave his Son for it; for therefore gave he his Son, becauſe he loved it. So that I believe the World could not be capable of a Love to Everlaſting Life, but only in and through the Son, and this upon Condition of our believing in him. It muſt be therefore in Preſcience of our believing in Chriſt, that God Elected us to Life Eternal. For Chriſt is not only the Means, but the meritorious Cauſe and Head of our Election. Chriſt was foreknown, 1 *Pet.* 1 2. and we in him, *Rom.* 8. 29. Chriſt was predeſtined, and we by him, *Eph.* 1. 5.

Eutychus. I do believe that Eternal Life is promiſed and deſigned Conditionally, namely, upon our Believing; but the Means thereto, ev'n Faith, and Repentance, are promiſed Abſolutely.

Epenetus. If the Means are Abſolutely decreed, in order to obtain the End, conſequently the Elect muſt uſe the Means, whether they will or no; and the Reprobate muſt be damned, for not uſing thoſe Means to obtain Salvation, which it was never deſigned they ſhould uſe; becauſe their End was to be damned, by reaſon of God's Eternal Decree. So that a Man may truly argue thus with himſelf, (according to your Principles,) Our City is (they ſay) juſt begun to be Infected: But if I muſt die

of this Infection, I muſt; if I ſhall not die, I ſhall not; and therefore, I need not uſe Means to avoid or eſcape it. But however, if I muſt uſe Means, I muſt, if I muſt not, I muſt not: becauſe God's Decree neceſſitateth as much to uſe, or omit the Means, as to obtain, or loſe the End. Pray, Sir, is not this quite contrary to Scripture, where God's Promiſe of the End, doth not acquit us of uſing the Means; as we may ſee in the Example of King *Hezekiah*, he was ſick unto Death; but, upon his Devotions, his Prayers, and Tears, God was pleaſed to ſend his Prophet to him, with the joyful Meſſage of his Recovery, *Behold I will add to thy days fifteen years?* Iſa. 38. 5. And yet, to ſhew they ſhould not rely upon God's Intent and Promiſe for the End, without the Uſe of the Means, the Prophet commanded, *Let them take a lump of figs, and lay it for a plaiſter upon the Boil, and he ſhall recover.* And the Example of the Apoſtles *Voyage* is very remarkable, *Acts* 27. wherein being in extream Danger by Reaſon of the Tempeſt, *the Angel of God* (at laſt) appears to Paul, *ſaying, Fear not, God hath given thee all them that ſail with thee*, ver. 24. Yet to ſhew the uſe of Means was neceſſary for obtaining the End, namely, the Safety here promiſed, the ſame *Paul* (when he ſaw the Shipmen about to flee out of the Ship) ſaid to the Centurion, and to the Soldiers, *Except theſe abide in the Ship, ye cannot be ſaved*, ver. 30. 31. Now, is it not very plain, that had not the Plaiſter of Figs been applyed to the Sore of *Hezekiah*, he had not recovered: and had not the Centurion and Soldiers kept the Seamen in the Ship, they had ſuffered Shipwrack. But if the Lord had abſolutely decreed the recovery of *Hezekiah* by ſuch a Plaiſter, and had abſolutely promiſed too, that he would infallibly apply it himſelf, the *Prophet* had been (at leaſt) impertinent in preſcribing the Application to

be

be made by others that attended on him. In like manner, had the Lord abſolutely decreed the Safety of all the Paſſengers in the Ship, upon Condition of the Mariners Preſence and Labour in it, and had abſolutely promiſed to make good the Condition alſo, that is, by Force to cauſe thoſe Mariners to abide and labour therein, (which is the very Caſe in the Matter of Salvation objected by you) *Paul*'s Jealouſy of the Seamens Departure out of the Veſſel, had been Culpable, and his Motion to the Centurion and Soldiers Impertinent; nay, his Advice and Acting herein, had been ſo far from Prudence and a Duty, that it had argued in him a piece of Infidelity, a Diſtruſt of God's Power and Faithfulneſs. Pray, Sir, reſolve me one Queſtion: Dare you affirm, that God hath Conditionally decreed the End of the Malefactor; but the Means to be uſed by him, in order to bring him to that End, (namely, the Gallows) are abſolutely decreed? No certainly; for as God never decreed any Man to an ill End, ſo neither hath he decreed the Means, in order to that End. God never made Men Murderers, that they might die Malefactors; nor forbid it only in Formality, but decreed Men ſhould act it in Reality. You ſay, indeed, that Salvation is Conditional, but the Means thereto are Abſolute; and if thoſe of Salvation are Abſolute, ſo muſt thoſe of Damnation: Which is juſt as if you ſhould put out a Man's Eyes, and then ſay to him, If you can tell me the Colour of this Ribbon, I will ſave thy Life; but if not, I will kill thee. For a Blind Man may, with leſs Injuſtice, be Murder'd, becauſe he cannot diſtinguiſh between White and Black; than a Reprobate Damned, for not performing Obedience to the Laws of God, when his End was decreed long before he was born; and conſequently, the Means thereto: which, you ſay, are Abſolute, in order to the End.

Hear,

Hear, I pray you, what a Learned Doctor of our own Church ſays on this Particular, (*a*) "Upon the "Performance of God's Covenant, we may ſtill be "ſaved; and Perform it, every one of us may, if "he pleaſe." [Agreeable to what Biſhop *Beveridge* ſays, in his *Private Thoughts*, I believe every Man may be ſaved that will.] "For though we "can do nothing of our ſelves, yet we may *do all "things through Chriſt that ſtrengthens us.* He has "adapted his Covenant to our Capacities, rendred "our Duty, ev'n under thoſe Ruins and Decays "of our Nature, in all its Parts, practicable; and "made his *Yoke eaſy, and his Burden light.* His "Diſpenſation, does not, like that of *Pharaoh*, require "us to make *Brick without Straw*; or to fulfil his "Precepts, without ſupplying us with Strength to "do it. —— For to what Purpoſe does he ſo "warmly, ſo earneſtly invite us to return to him "and live, if he puts it not into our Power to ac-"cept theſe Invitations? To what Purpoſe ſo zea-"louſly endeavour to allure us into our Duty, by "his Promiſes of Pardon and Peace, of Life and "Happineſs, if we are not enabled to lay hold "upon theſe Promiſes? To what purpoſe, by ſuch "vehement and ſolemn Proteſtations, continually "aſſure us of his infinite and boundleſs Compaſſion "for Souls, if he inexorably holds back his Hand, "and denies them his Aſſiſtance to recover out "of that Pit, wherein he knows they muſt neceſſa-"rily and unavoidably periſh? Theſe Proteſtations, "theſe Promiſes, theſe Invitations, at this rate, "would be uſeleſs and inſignificant, irrational and "abſurd, unkind and reproachful: no leſs inſig-"nificant, abſurd, and reproachful, than 'twould "be for one of us to hold forth a Crown of Gold "to a Man that hath loſt his Arms, and importune

(*a*) Dr. *Gregory.*

"him

" him to accept it, and place it upon his Head; " or to entreat a Man that lies upon the Ground, " bound Hand and Foot with ſtrong Chains and " Fetters, to riſe up and walk. ——

Eutychus. But theſe Invitations (*a*) " are moſt " properly to the Elect, accidental to the Repro- " bate, as they are mingled among the Choſen; " ſo that God's Invitation to Reprobates, is to this " good End, namely, reſtraining them from run- " ing into the higheſt exceſs of Evil, though he " communicate not Renewing Grace unto them."

Epenetus. How expreſsly this contradicts the Scripture, in all thoſe Places where God's Commands run in general Terms, to one as well as another, I have fully prov'd already: Yet, that I may give you what Satisfaction my weak Judgment is capable of, I will go on a little further. In my Opinion, you allow but ſmall Comfort to the Sinner; indeed, you have leſſen'd his Puniſhment, but ſtill he muſt be damn'd. *God commandeth*, indeed, *all Men every where to repent:* But you allow of another Command more ſecret, that they ſhall not repent. And this cannot be called two different, but two contrary Things in God; a Command to be obey'd, and a Command not to be obey'd. For tho' *he would have all Men to be ſaved*; yet you ſay, he denies the Means of Salvation to Reprobates, whereby they ſhould be ſaved. Which agrees exactly with what you ſaid once before, That the Means are Abſolute, tho' the Promiſe be Conditional. Therefore, ſeeing you do allow of a Conditional Promiſe, you muſt allow, that this Promiſe, tho' made in Time, was decreed to be a Conditional Promiſe from all Eternity; which yet, it could not be, if God had not conſider'd

(*a*) *Fiery Pillar*, pag. 71, 72.

the

the Condition, as well as the Promiſe to which it cleaves. And I hope you'll allow, God is not inconſiderate in any Thing or Circumſtance that he decreed: and a Decree of any Thing, in Conſideration of a Condition, is exactly the Thing I mean by a Conditional Decree. And what is thus argued from the Promiſes of God, which are Conditional touching Election, may equally be argued from his Conditional Threats for his Conditional Decree of Reprobation: For, as the Promiſe was Eternally in Idea or Conception, ſo alſo was the Condition; and as the Condition is Temporally in Act or Exiſtence, ſo alſo is the Promiſe. And this agrees with the Apoſtle, 2 *Theſſ.* 2. 13. *God hath from the Beginning choſen you to Salvation*, (he doth not ſay abſolutely, but) *through Sanctification of the Spirit, and Belief of the Truth*; which God foreknew when he choſe them, and according to *Fore-knowledge* they were choſen or elected, as St. *Peter* ſaith expreſsly, 1 *Pet.* 1. 2. as 'twere, defining or explaining a Conditional Election: And St. *Paul* doth put Fore-knowledge before Predeſtination, *Rom.* 8. 29. which you may compare with *Rom.* 11. 2. & *Acts* 2. 23. And this is the Doctrine of the Church of *England*, in her 17th Article, where Conditional Predeſtination is ſufficiently, tho' implicitly aſſerted; ſhewing clearly, That God's Eternal Decree of electing Men to Life Eternal, was made in Intuition of their being *in Chriſt*.

Eutychus. But if this be the Doctrine of the Church of *England*, many of her beſt Members have taught the contrary; witneſs Biſhop *Uſher*, Mr. *Perkins*, Dr. *Twiſſe*, &c.; and by what I can learn, it was taught many hundred Years ago, and ev'n by the moſt eminent Men in thoſe Days; ev'n St. *Auſtin* himſelf, a Man ſo much admired by Proteſtants

as

as well as Papiſts. And I am ſure, in his *Meditations* he ſpeaks full to the Purpoſe.

Epenetus. I can't ſee how They can juſtly be called the beſt Members of a Church, who teach Doctrines repugnant to her Injunctions and Principles: Beſide, how many are there, that have been ſtrenuous Aſſertors of thoſe Abſolute Decrees, in their Days of Ignorance and Youth, who growing to riper Underſtandings, and reading better Books, as well as converſing with better Company, and ſo duly weighing the Argument, by letting their Paſſions and Prejudices cool a little, have diſcern'd thoſe Fallacies wherewith [before] they have been blinded. This was the Caſe of Biſhop *Uſher*, who, though late, yet, I verily believe, was a ſincere Convert; it having been more than enough proved, that he affirm'd, not long before his Death, to ſeveral Perſons of great Note, That he utterly rejected all thoſe Opinions of Mr. *Calvin*. And as to St. *Auſtin*, his Words on this Particular (as cited by a Learned Divine of our own,) are, " *Nemo eligitur, niſi jam diſtans ab illo qui rejicitur: Unde quod dictum eſt, [quia elegit nos Deus ante Mundi Conſtitutionem] non video quomodo ſit dictum, niſi de Præſcientia, Fidei, & Operum pietatis, & mox. —— Jacobus non electus eſt, ut fierit bonus, ſed bonus factus, elegi potuit. (Auguſtin. ad Simplicianam,* lib. 1. quæſt. 2.) That is, " No Man is Choſen, unleſs as differing from him " that is Rejected: Nor know I how it is ſaid, " That *God hath choſen us before the Founda-* " *tion of the World*, unleſs it be meant of his " Preſcience of Faith, and good Works. —— *Ja-* " *cob* was not choſen, that he might be good; " but having been ſeen to be made good, was " capable of being choſen. " And if St. *Auſtin* was ſo ſtrenuous for Conditional Election, how much more for Conditional Reprobation? as may

See Pag 53, 54

be

be ſeen in the Book above quoted, *Noluit ergo Eſau, & non cucurrit, ſed etſi voluiſſet, & cucurriſſet, Dei adjutorio perveniſſet, niſi Vocatione contempta reprobus fieret*; " that is, *Eſau* wou'd " not, and did not run; for if he had, he had " attained, by the help of God, unleſs he wou'd " be made a Reprobate by a Contempt of his " Vocation. " And as another Father truly ſays, *Omnium quidem hominum Deus Creator eſt, ſed nemo ab eo ideo creatus eſt ut pereat:* " God is " the Creator of all Men, but no Man was cre- " ated to the End that he may periſh."

Eutychus. God, indeed, created Man upright; but ſince he hath loſt that Image of God, thro' his own Fault, God is not bound to reſtore it to him again: As a Maſter is not bound to renew his Servant's Stock, if he hath waſted it by bad Husbandry.

Epenetus. Tho' God is not ſimply and abſolutely bound to any Man, being *Agens Liberrimum*, a moſt Free Diſpenſer of his own Favours, where, when, and to whom he will; yet he is Conditionally bound; for he hath been pleaſed to determine and tie himſelf ſeveral ways. *1ſt*, By Decreeing, That Men ſhould be endued with ſuch Gifts, as ſhall enable them to perform Obedience to his Laws. And whatſoever He hath Decreed to Men, He is bound to give them, by Virtue of his own Decree, or elſe he would be Mutable. *2dly*, By Promiſing. For if God hath made a Promiſe to beſtow any Gift or Grace to Men, his Goodneſs and Veracity bindeth Him to Performance: For we uſually ſay, A Man, by Promiſing, is ſo far a Debtor, that he cannot break ſuch a Promiſe, [where he was free to make it,] without an Act of Injuſtice. He that Promiſeth, and Performeth not, is guilty of a Treſpaſs, (witneſs *Ananias* and *Sapphira*) and unworthy the Kingdom of Heaven,

Pſal.

Pſal. 15. 4. 3*dly*, By giving Men a Law to keep: But if he deny them ſupernatural Grace, they can no more keep it, than they can drink up the Ocean. By this Law, God bindeth himſelf to his People, to give them ſuch a Power, as may enable them to keep that Law; or elſe He becometh (as that evil Servant, in the Parable, ſtiled him) *a hard Maſter, reaping where he ſowed not*; and by Conſequence, the true and proper Cauſe of the Tranſgreſſing that Law. Do we not ever find, that God always giveth Strength, where he giveth a Command? Did not He give the Creatures a Multiplying Virtue, when he commanded them to *Encreaſe and Multiply*? If he bids the Lame Man *Riſe and Walk*, he puts his Limbs in an Ability of Walking. That God ſeems obliged to vouchſafe to Men the Power of keeping his Laws which he gives them, I conclude, for theſe Reaſons: 1*ſt*, Becauſe He was pleaſed to enter into a new Covenant of Peace with them, when he needed not. 2*dly*, In that Covenant, He requires Obedience at Mens Hands, ev'n at theirs that Periſh. 3*dly*, Becauſe He promiſeth Eternal Life to every Man, if he obey and keep the Covenant. 4*thly*, Becauſe He puniſheth the Diſobedient with Everlaſting Death. From all which, I learn, That tho' the moſt Free God was Abſolutely Bound to None, yet (theſe Particulars being granted, and ſince God hath been ſo gracious as to enter into Covenant with Man) He may be ſaid, without detracting the leaſt from his Divine Prerogative, to be ſo far Obliged to Mankind, as to vouchſafe them a Power of Obeying, where He hath uſed his Authority in Commanding. Or elſe we may as well ſay, That a King, having put out the Eyes of a Subject for an Offence, may afterwards, without any Injuſtice, command him to read a Book; and becauſe he readeth not, put him to Death. Or that a Maſter,

(to

(to uſe your own Compariſon) may take away that Stock from his Servant which he hath miſ-employ'd, and afterwards exact of him a juſt Employing of the ſame Stock, and puniſh him becauſe he improveth it not. But how Irrational and Hard-hearted would this be! If I am commanded to Believe; and if God's Commands are juſt, light and eaſy, and *not grievous*; there muſt go along with that Command a Power to make it poſſible: But, if to make a Man Believe, be God's Irreſiſtible Work, accompliſh'd by his Almighty Power, not inferiour, in Mightineſs, to that whereby he did *Create the World*, and *Raiſe the Dead*; How can this be a poor Creature's Duty? Could we think it juſt, in a tender Father, or can it be conſiſtent with Humanity, to impoſe an intolerable Burden on his Child's Shoulders, and to whip him barbarouſly becauſe he doth not carry it, when ſuch is his Weakneſs that he ſinks under it? ſurely this wou'd be extream Severity: And ſhall we attribute the ſame to God? God forbid.

Eutychus. In Anſwer to what you have ſaid, I I muſt, and ever did allow, that the Goſpel is a Covenant of Grace; and that all Men are called upon to Believe: and that Grace, and Salvation may be ſaid to be offer'd unto All, upon Condition of Faith, though Faith it ſelf cannot be ſaid ſavingly to be offered; but as for Exhortation and Motives unto Faith, this Grace the Reprobates in the Church of God are Partakers of, as well as God's Elect.

Epenetus. If Grace and Salvation are offer'd to the Reprobates, under this new Covenant, not in Jeſt, but in Earneſt, and if God doth intend not to delude, but to ſave them, in this Offer; how dare you affirm, that it is impoſſible the Reprobates ſhould ſavingly Believe? All Legacies under an impoſſible Condition, the Learned in the Law do account unworthy a wiſe Teſtator; and therefore they conclude, they

ought

ought in Juſtice to be paid abſolutely, as if there were no Condition at all added to them: But a Stipulation, and any other Contract under an impracticable Condition, is accounted null and void. And are ſuch Covenants applicable or becoming to the Majeſty, Goodneſs, or Sincerity of God? Does it not ſavour too much of Hypocriſy, to offer Pardon and Eternal Life, upon Terms impoſſible? Suppoſe you and I were Travelling together, and there ſhould come a Nobleman and tell us, that if we would mend our Pace, and follow him into ſuch a City, he would give us Ten Thouſand Pounds; and when we came juſt into the City, we ſhould find that it was impoſſible to enter, except over one narrow Bridge, which having firſt entred himſelf, ſhould then draw the Bridge after him, and ſeeing us at a ſtand, ſhould then call and invite us, importune and intreat us to come over, yea, make many ſolemn Vows and Proteſtations, to ſignify the Reality and Earneſtneſs of his Intentions; could any but a Madman think his Invitations and Promiſes to be ſerious, when at the ſame time he had made it impoſſible for us to enter? Or if a Man is made a Captive, and kept manacl'd and fetter'd in Priſon, tho' all the Priſon-Doors be opened, and the Priſoner invited to come forth, with all the Rhetorick poſſible to be uſed; yet if his Fetters be not unlock'd, and his Chains taken off from his Legs, whereby he may be enabled to walk, all Invitations to ſet him at Liberty would be nothing but a piece of Mockery.

Eutychus. I find that you are ſtill upon your Topicks of Conditional Election, and General Redemption.

Epenetus. I am ſo; for nothing ſeems more plain to me, than that God doth not puniſh Man becauſe he hath no Talent, but becauſe he ſquandereth it away; ſo that every Sinner had Grace,

for this very Reaſon, that he hath loſt it. He was *alive*, for this very Reaſon, that he is *dead:* He came alive out of God's Hands, but he falls deſperately by his own. So that when a Man is ſaid in Scripture, to be *ſpiritually dead in Treſpaſſes and Sins*, he is imply'd in that Expreſſion, to have been *ſpiritually alive.* And as to General Redemption, one would have thought enough had been ſaid already to ſatisfie any reaſonable Man; but I will proceed a little further touching that Point. You know it is ſaid by St. *Paul*, 1 *Tim.* 4. 10. That Chriſt *is the Saviour of all* Men, *ſpecially of thoſe that believe.* And as if the Apoſtle had foreſeen an Objection, that the Word [*All*] might be reſtrained unto the *Houſhold of Faith*, he prevents it by a diſtinction of General and Special. For if he is a Special Saviour of Believers, he is a General Saviour of Unbelievers: not that Unbelievers can be ſaved, whilſt they are obſtinate Unbelievers, but upon Condition they will Repent and Believe; or elſe why ſhould the Apoſtle affirm Chriſt to be a Saviour of *All*, and then come off with an [eſpecially] to them that believe? certainly if it be every Man's Duty to *believe* in Chriſt, Chriſt died *for every Man.* But this is further confirmed by the Apoſtle's way of arguing, (2. *Cor.* 5. 14.) *If one died for all, then were all dead.* This is the major Propoſition of an Hypothetical Syllogiſm, or beginning of the Condition: in which the thing to be proved is, *that all were dead*; and the medium to prove it, is, *that one died for all.* Now every Man that knows how to Reaſon, muſt allow, that the Argument for Proof of any thing, muſt be better known, than the Thing in queſtion to be proved: ſo that if it be clear, that all Men were dead by the Fall of the *firſt Adam*, it muſt be clearer (as St. *Paul* argues) that Life was offered unto All, by the Death of the *ſecond Adam:*

Adam: For if he had died for none but the *Elect*, then the *Elect* only were dead: for the Word *(All)* muſt ſignify as amply in the minor Propoſition as in the Sequel of the major; or elſe the Reaſoning will be fallacious or imperfect. The Apoſtle argues thus; *If one died for all, then were all dead:* But *one died for all*; (that muſt be the minor Propoſition) *Then were all dead.* Now if you deny the minor, you muſt condemn the Sequel of the major, and ſo give the Lie to the very Words of the Text; which none, I think would do, but ſome daring Hereticks, who would conclude the greateſt Falſhoods from the Word of Truth. But this Point is yet more confirmed, from the Saying of the Apoſtle, (*Rom.* 11. 32.) that *God concluded all in unbelief*, (the *Gentiles* firſt, *ver.* 30. and afterwards the *Jews*, *ver.* 31. *that he might have mercy upon all.* From whence we may infer, that if this laſt *(All)* belong to none but the Elect, then none but the Elect were *concluded in Unbelief.* But it is plain, that all, without exception, were firſt or laſt *concluded in Unbelief:* therefore, the Mercy was meant to All, without exception. In fine, this Doctrine is confirmed from thoſe *falſe Prophets* and *falſe Teachers* (2 Pet. 2. 1.) *who though privily bringing in damnable Hereſies, ev'n denying the Lord that bought them, and bringing upon themſelves ſwift deſtruction*; yet it is plain, they were ſuch whom the Lord had *bought.* So far is God from being the Cauſe of Man's Deſtruction, by an abſolute, irreſpective, unconditional Decree, that he gave himſelf a Ranſom ev'n for them that periſh. They were not left out of the Bargain which was made with his Juſtice, but the Apoſtle tells us, they were actually *bought.*

Eutychus. Pray, Sir, If Chriſt gave himſelf a Ranſom for All, yea ev'n for thoſe that periſh, does not this infer, that Chriſt's Merits were deficient,

and that the Blood of Chriſt was ſhed in vain; or, that Chriſt was deceiv'd in his Work of Redemption, having paid down the Price for *All*, but receiving but *Part* of his Purchaſe?

Epenetus. That All are not ſav'd, is a melancholy Truth; and that Chriſt is the Saviour of All, is as certainly true; becauſe he only offers, does not obtrude himſelf upon us. He offers himſelf to *all*, but moſt refuſe him. He whoſe Blood was ſufficient for Ten Thouſand Worlds, would not grudge its Extent to the major Part of but One. He was merciful to All Men, but the greateſt Part of Men are unmerciful to themſelves. *He will have no Man to periſh*, but *repent*, by his Antecedent Will; but by his Conſequent Will, he will have every Man periſh that is Impenitent. And I hope you will not ſay, the Apoſtle thought Chriſt's Blood was ſhed in vain; or, that he was deceiv'd in his Work of Redemption, when he ſaid, Rom. 14. 15. *Deſtroy not him with thy Meat, for whom Chriſt died:* And 1 Cor. 8. 11. *And ſhall the weak Brother periſh, for whom Chriſt died?*

Eutychus. But methinks you detract from the Free Grace of God, making no Difference between the Eſpecial Grace procur'd for me by Chriſt, and vouchſaf'd to thoſe whom he hath choſen, than you do between thoſe ordinary Gifts and Graces conferr'd on the Reprobates.

Epenetus. I do allow of Free and Eſpecial Grace, as much as any Man living; but I believe there is a General, as well as a Special Grace; neither do I think affirming both, is denying either.

Eutychus. Sir, If you allow of Special Grace, I can't ſee how this can be conſiſtent with General or Univerſal Redemption.

Epenetus. Sir, I muſt be going; pardon my Abruptneſs; I ſhall be glad of another Conference with you: In the mean while, I would have you con-

conſider what hath been already ſaid, and the Lord give you Underſtanding: And ſo, Sir, I take my Leave of you.

The End of the Second Conference.

CONFERENCE III.

Epenetus.

SIR, I am very glad to ſee you; are you going this Way?

Eutychus. Yes.

Epenetus. Sir, Don't you remember, the laſt Time we were together, you told me, if I allowed of Special Grace, you could not ſee how it could be conſiſtent with my allowing General and Univerſal Redemption alſo?

Eutychus. I did ſo.

Epenetus. I am very ſorry you can't ſee it; but I hope what *you* cannot conceive, is not for that Reaſon inconceivable. You have heard already, that Chriſt is a Conditional Saviour, who will not give a ſecond Talent to him that ſquanders away the firſt, or wraps it up in a Napkin. Hear what the learned Biſhop *Uſher* hath ſaid on this Point, that by Vertue of Chriſt's Death, "(*a*) God is

(*a*) Biſhop *Uſher* of the *True Intent and Extent of Chriſt's Death*, pag. 6.

" made placable to our Nature, but not actually " appeas'd with any, until he hath receiv'd his " Son. All Men may be ſaid truly to have an In- " tereſt in Chriſt, as in Common, tho' all do not " enjoy the Benefits thereof." If you ask, Why? the Biſhop will tell you, " Becauſe they have no " Will to take it, they (*a*) refuſe to accept the " gracious Offer that is made unto them." Now, that every Man in the World is made Savable by Chriſt, until he wilfully forfeiteth his Intereſt therein, the Biſhop proves invincibly from theſe two Grounds of Reaſoning, which cannot fail, Firſt, " That it is every Man's Duty to accept of Chriſt " thankfully, and to apply him with Comfort un- " to his own Soul. Secondly, (*b*) That no Man is " bound by the Command of God to believe an " Untruth. (*c*) That Chriſt hath prepar'd for thee, " [O Man, whoſoever thou art,] and the Goſpel hath " offer'd unto thee, a ſufficient Remedy for the " taking away of all thy Sins." Theſe are that pious Biſhop's own Sentiments, in his riper Years, whatever he formerly entertain'd in his Youth. But I cannot take my Leave of him yet; and I hope, your Patience will pardon my Digreſſion, ſeeing I am ſo prevented by him. " God (ſaith he) hold- " eth out unto us the Golden Scepter of his Word, " and thereby not only ſignifieth his Pleaſure of " admitting us unto his Preſence, *&c.* but alſo ſends " an Embaſſage unto us, and entreats us, that we " would *be reconciled unto him*, 2 Cor. 5. 20. The " Well-ſpring of Life is ſet open to all, *Rev.* 22. 17. " The Matter of our Redemption purchas'd by " Chriſt, lieth open to all, all are invited to it; " none that hath a Mind to accept of it are ex- " cluded from it."

See Pag 45

(*a*) Biſhop *Uſher*, *ibid.* p. 8. (*b*) *Ibid.* p. 24, 25, *eſpecially* p. 27. (*c*) *Ibid.* p. 7.

For

For, if Chriſt dy'd *for us Men and for our Salvation*, (as in the *Nicene* Creed it is expreſſed by an Indefinite Equivalent to Univerſal,) or *for me and all Mankind*, (as the Catechiſm hath it,) or *for all the Sins of the whole World, both Actual and Original*, (as the Church hath it in her Articles;) I would fain know, how the greateſt Part of Mankind can be paſs'd by in *Maſsâ*, or Abſolutely Reprobated, without reſpect to their Actual Sins?

Eutychus. Sir, ſince you are ſo much againſt Abſolute Election and Reprobation, you ſeem to rob God of his Omnipotency, allowing no other Will to be in God, than a Hypothetical, or Conditional one.

Epenetus. This Objection need no other Anſwer, than what I have already ſaid, (Page 19 of the Firſt Conference;) for I never deny'd, that God hath an Abſolute Will, as well as a Conditional one: But then there is a Diſtinction between an Abſolute Neceſſity, and a Neceſſity *ex Hypotheſi*; whereof the former doth infer a very Abſolute Will in the Almighty. Such was his Will, that all Men ſhould be mortal; that heavy Bodies ſhould tend downwards; that Fire ſhould burn; and innumerable others: So that when I ſpeak of Conditional and Reſpective, (excluſive of Abſolute,) it is only in relation of Eternal Puniſhment and Reward, which is the very Way of Expreſſion in Scripture upon thoſe Points; neither do I believe any Chriſtian ever did deny Abſolute Decrees, no, not even *Arminius* himſelf. But then we are to diſtinguiſh rightly of God's Will. I have learn'd to diſtinguiſh between God's firſt and ſecond Will. His firſt Will is, that the Sinner ſhall not die, but *rather return from his Wickedneſs, and live:* His ſecond Will is, that he that refuſeth to return, ſhall receive the Wages of Iniquity. *Secondly*, I have learned to diſtinguiſh between an Antecedent and Conſequent

Will: The Antecedent is that, by which he wills that every Sinner ſhould repent: His Conſequent is that, by which he pre-ordaineth the Damnation of the Impenitent. Which Diſtinction is made, not in reſpect of God's Will ſimply, (in which there cannot be either *priùs* or *poſteriùs*, a Firſt or a Laſt) but in reſpect of the Things which are the Object of his Will: For every Thing is will'd by God, ſo far forth as it is good. To make this plain by a Compariſon: A Judge, by his Antecedent Will, deſires every Man ſhould live; but by a Conſequent Will, decrees the Death of the Murderer; tho' at the ſame time, he wiſheth the Man were not a Murderer, and condemns him, not as a Man, but as a Murderer: For, whilſt he hath a Will to hang the Murderer, he hath at the ſame time a Merciful Willingneſs to ſave the Man: He hangs the Man indeed, becauſe he is a Murderer; but, if it lay in his Power, he would deſtroy the Murderer, to ſave the Man. But neither the one, nor the other is an Abſolute, but a Conditional Will: He would ſave the Man with an *if* he were not a Murderer; and doth deſtroy the Murderer with a *becauſe* he is a Malefactor. Juſt ſo God's Antecedent Will is; that *every Man would repent*, that ſo they may not periſh: It is his Conſequent Will, that every one may periſh, who will not repent. Both the one, and the other, is Reſpective and Conditional. *Thirdly*, I have learn'd to diſtinguiſh between an Inviting and Revenging Will. The Inviting Will is that, by which all are *bidden* to the *Wedding-Feaſt*: His Revenging Will is that, by which he puniſheth thoſe that *will not come*. Or, *Fourthly*, I diſtinguiſh of the Will of God's Mercy, and of the Will of his Juſtice. It is the Will of his Mercy, that Chriſt ſhould die for the Sins of *All*; but 'tis the Will of his Juſtice, that all ſhould periſh, who come not in to him when they are called; or who only ſo come,

as

as not to continue, and perſevere unto the End. By this Diſtinction, we may learn to reconcile many ſeeming Repugnances in Scripture: For when it is ſaid, that *God repenteth*, 1 Sam. 15. 35. it is meant of the firſt Will; and when it is ſaid, he *cannot repent*, it is meant of the ſecond. God's Mercy is above and before his Juſtice; and therefore it is his firſt Will, *that all ſhould be ſaved, and come to the Knowledge of the Truth*, 1 Tim. 2. 4. but yet ſo, as that his Juſtice is not excluded by his Mercy: And therefore it is his ſecond Will, that ſo many ſhould be damn'd as *hated Knowledge, and did not chuſe the Fear of the Lord*, Prov. 1. 29. It is the Will of his meer Mercy and Goodneſs, that all ſhould live; whereas the Will of his Juſtice, that ſome ſhould die, depends upon ſomething in the Creature: So that the firſt ſhews him a tender and compaſſionate Father; the ſecond ſpeaks him an impartial and righteous Judge: Both proclaim him a powerful and an holy God. And now I appeal to you, whether what I have ſaid, robs God of his Omnipotence, as you juſt now objected?

Eutychus. What you have ſaid ſeems very rational; but yet, tho' we ſhould grant, that God doth not Poſitively Reprobate any Man, yet he may Negatively, by paſſing by a great Part of Mankind, as they have All ſinned in *Adam.*

Epenetus. Sir, I am very glad, that you begin to be aſham'd of that rigid and frightful Doctrine of Abſolute Reprobation, and Damnation; which you are forced to diſguiſe with thoſe invented and ſmoother Terms, of *Preterition*, or *Negative Reprobation.* But what if it appear, that there is no real Difference between Preterition and Reprobation, or between a Negative, or a Poſitive Reprobation; as you and others are fain to Cant it? For, if Men are paſſed by, for not being approved, they that are not approved, muſt be rejected, and they that are

rejected

rejected, can't avoid being damn'd. The Caſe is plain, that this is only a Trick, inſufficient to buoy up a ſinking Cauſe: For, I pray you, What is it to reprobate, but not to approve, or to reject? And what Senſe is it to ſay, there is a negative, not approving, [or Reprobation,] and a poſitive, not approving, [or Reprobation:] Or, if Reprobation is taken in a poſitive Senſe only, (as it cannot be both at once poſitive and negative,) what Senſe is it to ſay, there is a Negative Poſitive, and a Poſitive Negative? Therefore, my dear Friend, conſider, when all that are paſſed by are damn'd, and all are damn'd that are paſſed by, what real Difference can you aſſign between Preterition and Damnation? Sure, the not approved are rejected, becauſe they are not approved; and the rejected are not approved, becauſe they are rejected, (ſuppoſing the Rejection to be made either in, or before the Fall of *Adam*.) And this need no better Proof, than that Saying of Mr. *Calvin*, who, I am inform'd, thus ſpeaks, (*a*) *Quos præterit reprobat, nec aliâ causâ, niſi ab hæreditate quam filiis ſuis prædeſtinat, illos vult excludere.* In *Engliſh* thus, "Whom God paſſeth by he reprobates, and for no "other Cauſe, than his Will to exclude them from "the Inheritance which he predeſtines to be his "Sons." Now, what a Mockery is this to the Juſtice, Mercy, and Goodneſs of God, and what a bitter Jeer to the greateſt Part of Mankind, to ſay, they are rejected, without Reſpect unto their Sins; and yet not damn'd, without Reſpect unto their Sins: But if All have ſinned in *Adam*, and he *who hateth nothing that he hath made*, hath paſſed by the greateſt Number, without providing any Remedy, or giving Chriſt to die for them; it follows,

(*a*) *Calvin* Inſt. *l.* 3. *cap.* 23. ſect. 1. fol. 322.

that

that if ſome of thoſe that are paſſed by ſhould die in their Infancy, or in the Womb, before they commit Actual Sin, they muſt be damn'd, meerly upon the Sin of *Adam*. Contrary to *Ezek.* chap. 18. For if Chriſt *taſted Death for every Man* that fell in *Adam*, there could be no Preterition, or Negative Reprobation of any one. And if there are Multitudes for whom he died not, nor was intended by God to be a Ranſom for them; then, as they were paſſed by in *Maſſâ*, ſo were they alſo in God's Decree condemn'd to be reprobated in *Maſſâ*. For ſo they certainly muſt be, who being fallen in *Adam*, were never ſo much as intended to be raiſed by *Chriſt*.

Eutychus. But, Sir, I have one Objection, which I cannot get rid of, and that is, If God's Decree of Man's Salvation be Conditional, how is this conſiſtent with God's Eternity, Immutability, Omnipotency, Simplicity, or other excellent Perfections of his Nature? For, that which is Abſolutely Eternal, had nothing going before it; for it is *Abſolutè Primum:* But all God's Decrees (being Acts within himſelf) are Abſolutely Eternal; therefore they can have no Condition or Conſideration of any Thing, without himſelf going before them.

Epenetus. If you mean a Priority of Order, and from thence infer the Impoſſibility of Conditional Decrees, becauſe whatſoever is Eternal, hath nothing going before it, then your Arguing is againſt the Trinity of the Godhead; for the Father is the Firſt Perſon, the Son the Second, and the Holy-Ghoſt the Third; and, by a Priority of Order, (tho' not of Time,) the Firſt is before the Second, as the Second before the Third. So that according to your way of Reaſoning, the Second and Third Perſons cannot be Abſolutely Eternal; becauſe (ſay you) whatſoever is ſo, is *Abſolutè Primum*. Therefore, conſequently, the Second

cond and Third Perſons not being the Firſt Perſon, (according to your Reaſoning) are not Abſolutely Eternal. But, I pray obſerve, the Three Perſons are Co-eternal, tho' they differ in Order, the Firſt from the Second, and the Second from the Third, Nay, they differ alſo in their Properties and Manner of Working: The Father Exiſting and Working from Himſelf; the Son from the Father; and the Holy-Ghoſt from both: As you your ſelf cannot deny. Now, that which is of it ſelf Only, is before that which is of Another, in ſome reſpect: Therefore, that which is Eternal, may have ſomething going before it, by a Priority of Order. As when we ſay, *God is Juſt*; we imply his Being in the *Firſt, Word* and his Attribute in the *Third.* Again, there muſt be Men, before they can be Happy: So, God's Decree that there ſhall be Men, is (by one kind of Priority) before his Decree that they ſhall be Happy. And Divines do uſually place an Order in God's Decrees, wherein one thing goes before another: For as now, in Time, Sin goeth before the Puniſhment; ſo, from all Eternity, God foreknew this Priority of the Sin, and the Poſteriority of the Puniſhment: Nor could he poſſibly decree the *Second*, until he had foreknown the *Firſt.* For he decreed to puniſh Sinners, according to his Foreknowledge that they would ſin; becauſe, whatſoever he did decree, he did not decree it Cruelly, or by Chance, nor at a Venture, but *knowingly*, *wiſely*, and *righteouſly* decree it. So that God's Foreknowledge and Decree, were neither one before the other, in Order of Time; (for that wou'd imply a Contradiction;) although, in Order of Nature, his Foreknowledge of Sin, did precede his Decree to Puniſh Sinners; and his Foreknowledge that Man would Sin, did precede his Decree to Permit it. For Example: God foreſeeing or foreknowing that *Adam* and *Cain* would determine

their

their Wills to ſin, decreed to permit, and to puniſh both. In which Caſe, his Preſcience was in Order before his Decree; becauſe his Decree to puniſh, was made, in a Preſcience that they would determine their Wills to ſin: But, by your way of Reaſoning, God did Abſolutely Decree that *Adam* ſhou'd Eat againſt Precept, and that *Cain* ſhou'd Kill his Brother.

Eutychus. Why, don't you think, that God's Preſcience of a Thing future, muſt needs preſuppoſe a Predeſtination or a Foreordaining of it?

Epenetus. No, by no means; for then (as I ſaid juſt now) his Decree would go before his Preſcience: which, I have proved, can't be, becauſe it would make God the Author of all the the Sin in the World; for if God foreſaw nothing but as being fore-ordained or decreed by him, then his Fore-knowledge of all the Wickedneſs in the World could not be, 'till he had predetermined or foreordained it ſhou'd be done. Which makes God (I tremble to ſpeak it!) worſe than the Devil; for the Devil can only tempt Men to ſin, cannot force them to commit it: Whereas you imply, that God from all Eternity (before Man or the Devil had any Exiſtence) predetermined not only the Temptation of Sin, which is the Devil's Work, but alſo the yielding to that Temptation; yea, the Determination of both their Wills to both their Sins. Beſides, God, in his Law, has forbid all Sin in general: How is this conſiſtent with Abſolutely and Irreſiſtibly tying up Mens Wills to Sin? I am pretty confident, that not making a right Diſtinction between God's Preſcience or Foreknowledge, and his Decree, has been the principal Cauſe of your's and others Erring in this Point. Now, in order to ſet you right in this Particular; conſider That to Know, is properly an Act of the Intellect; but to Decree or Determine,

is

is an Act of the Will. The Act of Knowing, preſuppoſeth the Object, which muſt needs be knowable by a Priority of Nature, before it is poſſible to be actually known. So that I do not think God's Foreknowledge, doth make Things ſimply to be, or not to be, by an Abſolute Neceſſity; but his Decree (I ſpeak of) muſt needs do both. This may be illuſtrated, by a Phyſician's Foreknowledge of Alteration in the Patient upon a certain Day, which yet hath nothing of his Efficiency in its coming to paſs: But if the Phyſician decree to work a Change in the Patient, by ſuch or ſuch Means as he reſolves on, he is then the Author of ſuch a Change; and if it be on Purpoſe to Diſpatch the Patient, it is not his Foreknowledge, but his Murder. Again: If God's Foreknowledge did imprint a real Neceſſity on Things foreknown, this monſtrous Abſurdity would unavoidably follow; That he muſt act in nothing Freely, but in every thing as a Neceſſitated and Limited Agent. A Blaſphemy not to be eſcap'd, but by denying his Omniſcience from all Eternity; which is as great a Blaſphemy as the former. Further: If God's Fore-knowledge did neceſſitate the Things foreknown, it was either ſimply, as Fore-knowledge, or as God's Fore-knowledge in particular. Now, it could not be the firſt, becauſe then the Foreknowledge of every Prophet, were the Cauſe of Things future, which they foretold. *Cyrus* had then been beholden to the Prophet *Iſaiah* for his Birth, becauſe the Prophet foreknew it a hundred Years before: Nor yet the ſecond, for God himſelf foreknew what himſelf would chuſe to do, yet did not neceſſitate himſelf. And, as I ſaid before, the Object of Knowledge is before the Act, how long ſoever it may be after by a Poſteriority of Time. God foreknew all Things that are good, as being certain that he would do them; and he alſo fore-

knew

knew all things that are evil, as being certain that wicked Agents would freely do them, if they were not hindred; and as certain that he would not hinder, but permit, or ſuffer them to be done: both were preſent to his Omniſcience from all Eternity. Now all Acts of true Knowledge, muſt needs imply Infallibility; or elſe it cannot be perfect Knowledge, but ſome other thing; ſo that all Acts of true Knowledge, infer a Neceſſity, altho' they cannot make any. But then, ſuch a Neceſſity is inferred from every true Knowledge of what is paſt, as well as from a Knowledge of what is to come. And for want of rightly conſidering this Point, you have confounded it with Antecedent and Abſolute Neceſſity, or a Neceſſity of the Thing, as of the Conſequent or Effect. Now, to ſet this in a proper Light, conſider the following Illuſtration. If I hear a Man Blaſpheme againſt God, it doth neceſſarily follow that he Blaſphemeth; for if he doth not, I do not hear him, it being impoſſible to hear what is not to be heard: but this being granted, that I do really hear the Man Blaſpheme, his Blaſphemy is inferr'd by a Neceſſary Conſequence. Yet this is only a Neceſſity of Conſequence, ariſing from the Truth of a Propoſition; wherein the Reality of my hearing his Blaſphemy being ſuppoſed, the Reality of the Blaſphemy doth unavoidably follow. But my hearing him Blaſpheme, doth not Neceſſitate his Blaſpheming; for it would be what it is, if I did not hear it. And tho' I hear him Blaſpheming at the ſame time he Blaſphemes, yet, in Order of Nature, his Blaſphemy hath the Priority; for he muſt be to be heard, before I can hear him. From whence it is manifeſt, that here is not any Abſolute or Antecedent Neceſſity, or a Neceſſity of the Thing, as of the Conſequence or Effect, but his Blaſphemy is a Voluntary and Contingent Action. From what

has

has been ſaid, the meaneſt Capacity may diſcern, that if God Foreknew from Eternity this Blaſphemy of the Man, then, by a Neceſſary Conſequence, the Man doth really Blaſpheme: For if he doth not, God could not poſſibly Foreknow he doth. But this is only a Neceſſity ariſing from the Truth of that Propoſition, That God's Foreknowledge is Infallible, or not capable of Erring; and that what he foreknows, is really foreknown; but not a Neceſſity of the Exiſtence of the Thing, imprinted on the Blaſphemer, by God's Foreknowledge; but ſtill the Blaſphemy is a Voluntary and Contingent Action: which it could not be, if the Man did commit it by an Antecedent Neceſſitation: and if he did, ſuch Antecedent Neceſſitation muſt have proceeded from God's Omnipotence, and not at all from his Foreknowledge; it being the Nature of Knowledge, not to produce its Object, but to ſuppoſe it. God doth contemplate by his Knowledge, what he effecteth by his Power: but it is not in his Power to be Effective of Sin; much leſs, in his Foreknowledge, to be Neceſſitative of Blaſphemy.

Eutychus. Suppoſe that we allow (with you) that God's Preſcience doth not Neceſſitate Sin; yet I do believe that God is not an idle Spectator of this World; for nothing is done, or can be done in it, but what God hath decreed ſhall be done: (*a*) " For whatſoever God foreknows, that he " willeth; becauſe nothing can come to paſs, which " he willeth not. "

Epenetus. Then it is certain, that three parts in four of the Things done in this World are Sins; therefore, according to this Opinion, God is the principal Cauſe of Sin, (as I have ſaid before;)

(*a*) *Fiery Pillar*, pag. 15.

Devils

Devils and Men are but his Inſtruments. For Abſolute Neceſſity hath that Influence on the Effect, which Preſcience cannot be thought to have. For Inſtance: If I decree that my Servant ſhall rob my Neighbour, I do contribute more towards it, than if I foreſee that he will voluntarily do it: And ſuppoſing my Decree to be Irreſiſtible (as 'tis ſuppoſed to be in God,) it muſt produce a Cauſal Neceſſity.

Eutychus. I do not think, that becauſe God is the Cauſe of all the Actions that are Sinful, that therefore he is Author of the Sinfulneſs of thoſe Actions. He is the Cauſe of all our Works, but not of our Faults and Imperfections: He did decree that Man ſhould ſin, but yet that he ſhould ſin freely. As he that rides upon a Halting Horſe, is the Cauſe of his Motion, but yet not of his Halting.

Epenetus. To ſay, God decreed Man ſhould ſin freely, implies a Contradiction: For, I pray you, how can Man ſin Freely, if God had Abſolutely decreed that he ſhould Sin? Is not that which is a Principal Cauſe of any Action, a Cauſe of thoſe Events which neceſſarily accompany that Action? This muſt and will be an Infallible Rule. Therefore, if God by his Decrees do force us to thoſe Actions which cannot be done without Sin; God himſelf (I fear to ſpeak it) muſt needs be guilty of Sin. For Example: If God decreed that *Adam* ſhould of Neceſſity eat the forbidden Fruit, and ſeeing the eating of that which was forbidden to eat, muſt needs be a groſs Violation of the Law of God; how will you, by this Diſtinction, juſtify God? For *Adam* ſinned becauſe he eat the Fruit forbidden: But you ſay, God decreed Neceſſarily and Unavoidably that he ſhould eat that which was forbidden. The Conſequence of which, is a Blaſphemy not to be often repeated. According to

this diſtinction, a Murderer at the Bar, might tell the Judge, that he did indeed cut the Deceaſed's Throat, but it was not that which took away his Life, but the extinction of his Natural Heat and Vital Spirits. Who would not admire the Weakneſs and Extravagance of this Defence? yet ſuch a Frenzy as this, you charge upon God, making his Decree the Cauſe that *Adam* took the Fruit, and put it into his Mouth, cauſing him to eat, what he was commanded upon pain of Death not to eat, and yet ſay, God was not the Cauſe of his tranſgreſſing that Command. Your Example of the Lame Horſe, is a meer Impertinency, not being applicable to us, (becauſe we halt Naturally;) but ſuppoſe it were, yet *Adam*, before eating, was ſound; and therefore God's neceſſitating him to ſuch an Inconveniency, he dealt with him, juſt as if one ſhould drive a ſpecious Nag into ſuch rough Paſſages where he muſt needs break his Legs. Neither, as I ſaid before, is it applicable to us who are the Lame Poſterity of *Adam*. For he who rideth upon an Horſe who was lame before, altho' he be not a Cauſe of the Impotency which he findeth in the Horſe already, yet in urging him to Motion, he is now a Cauſe of the Actual Imperfection in the Motion, and ſo perhaps a Cauſe of encreaſing the Impotency for the future; tho' he were not the Cauſe of his Lameneſs, yet he is of his Limping at that time. Let the Horſe ſtand ſtill, and ſee whether he will halt or no. Indeed, if the Horſe go of it ſelf, then the Rider is no cauſe of his halting; and ſo we may ſay, that all our Haltings are from our ſelves, without any Inſtigation from God. I beſeech you, Sir, if a Man put a Burthen upon another's Shoulders, which he that bore it could not afterwards throw off, and by that means he ſhould break his Ribs, would not he that put on ſuch a Burthen, be looked

looked on as the Breaker of his Ribs, eſpecially if he had known the Event of the Action?

Eutychus. Moſt certainly.

Epenetus. Shou'd a Man puſh another, walking by a River-ſide, into the Water, who ſhou'd there be drown'd; ſhou'd we not ſay, that he who thruſt him in, drown'd him?

Eutychus. Certainly.

Epenetus. How will you then reconcile this, with what you have ſaid before. For if nothing can come to paſs, but what God willeth, and if what God permits, ſhould be called an efficacious Permiſſion, whereby God does ſomething, ſo that Sin neceſſarily follows; then, as he that breaks down a Dike is the Cauſe of loſing a Field, becauſe he did that which neceſſarily produced that Loſs, ſo God is the Author of Sin, ſince he has put Man under a Neceſſity of ſinning; and ſo muſt be the Cauſe not only of the Action, but of the Viciouſneſs of the Action; which you deny.

Eutychus. May not God work moſt Holily in thoſe very Actions wherein Man works unrighteouſly?

Epenetus. By no Means. God indeed does often *bring good out of evil*, but he never *does evil that good may come.* For this would imply, that he is the Author of Sin in others, but ſins not himſelf. That he co-operates with the Sinner to the effecting of Sin; but being God, he is not guilty. And it's plain Men of your Principles have ſaid, "That the very ſame Sin, namely, Murder or "Adultery, as it is the Work of God, the Author, "Mover and Compeller, it is not a Crime; but "as it is of Man, it is a great one."

Eutychus. I do not believe that God's Decree doth compel any Man's Will to any thing ſo far, that he ſhould do ſuch a thing whether he would or no; but yet I believe God ſo diſpoſeth and

worketh it, that it ſhall deſire that which he would have done; and therefore Man hath ſtill the Uſe of his Will; becauſe whatſoever he doth, tho' neceſſitated by God, yet he doth it willingly.

Epenetus. A poor Shift indeed! The Privilege of a Voluntary Agent, conſiſts in doing that which it deſireth to do: But according to you, Man deſireth the Thing, becauſe it is to be done; yet it is not to be done, becauſe he deſireth it freely and without violence, but becauſe it muſt be done by an Abſolute Neceſſity. A Stone hath a Natural Propenſion to fall downward; yet becauſe this Propenſion is reſtrain'd neceſſarily to this term, ſo that the Stone muſt needs fall down, it cannot be ſaid to deſcend Voluntarily, in any Propriety of Speech. Is not this juſt a Man's Caſe, according to your Objection? A Man drinks, you grant, Voluntarily; yet his Will is ſo reſtrained by God's Decree to this Action, that it was not poſſible for him to omit it. What difference is there now, I pray you, between the Will of a Man, and the Will of a Stone? For, according to your Principles, I eat, drink or walk, with as much Neceſſity, as Lead ſinketh downwards: God hath decreed that *that* ſhould ſink, and therefore it muſt; and ſo God hath decreed that I muſt walk a Mile, and therefore I muſt.

Eutychus. But does not the Scripture ſay, *Act.* 17. that, *In him we live, move, and have our being?* by which words we are taught, that all our Motions, of what kind ſoever, whether Natural or Moral, Vital or Rational, are not only *guided*, but alſo *cauſed* by God Himſelf. So that God being the Firſt Cauſe of what we do, conſequently whatſoever we do, we do neceſſarily in reſpect of him.

Epenetus. If God be a Neceſſary Cauſe of all our particular Actions, then our Actions, in reference to ſuch and ſuch Things that are ſinful, muſt needs imply

imply God to be the Author of our Obliquities For Inſtance, to Swear, in a Lawful Cauſe before a Magiſtrate, is no Sin, but a Religious Act of Duty, acknowledging God's Omniſcience in the Truth of what we ſay. But to Forſwear our ſelves either for Profit or Advantage, is an expreſs Breach of Duty, a Violation of our Saviour's Command. Now then, if God be a Cauſe of this Action in reference to this Object, (as he muſt be if he be the Cauſe of every particular Action) it is impoſſible that your Doctrine ſhould excuſe God from Sin. Eating, in *Adam*, was a Natural Action, both for the Neceſſity and Comfort of Nature; but eating the forbidden Fruit, was a Sin; but you teach, that he could not have eat without God's ſpecial Determination. I ſhall endeavour, as briefly as I can, to ſhew how God is the Cauſe of all Things, yet not the Cauſe of Sin, yea, the Cauſe of all good Things, yet ſo as that many good things are Contingent alſo. For Example: God then is the Firſt Cauſe that all Things do work, and that they do work in certain Kinds. Now this being granted, then God is the Cauſe that many Things are done Contingently; becauſe by his appointment, one of the chiefeſt ſorts of ſecond Cauſes do work Voluntarily, and therefore Contingently, which has more than enough been proved before. This being rightly underſtood, will inſtruct us, not only that it may be ſo, but that alſo ſo it muſt be. For tho' God be the Neceſſary Cauſe of all good things, yet all ſuch things are not Neceſſary Effects of him. For Inſtance: It is impoſſible that Man ſhould do any good Thing without God, therefore God is a Cauſe Neceſſary to the Being of all Things effected by him; yet becauſe many things done by the free Choice of Man, might as well have been omitted, (God no ways conſtraining him to them) theſe are not Neceſſary Effects

of God. The Reaſon is plain, becauſe God hath Decreed that Man ſhould work Voluntarily, having liberty to do one thing, as well as another, yet ſo, that God giveth him the Strength to do whatſoever he chuſeth to do, and Ability to chuſe what he will, without Limitation of his Choice; or elſe this were to take it away, and to make Man an Involuntary Agent. To make this plain by an Example: God hath given thee Strength of Body, he hath given thee alſo Ability to chuſe in what Exerciſe thou wilt employ it; thou chuſeſt perhaps to Run, or Walk: God then the Author of thy Strength, is the chief Cauſe of theſe Exerciſes, yet ſo as they are Contingent in Reſpect of him, becauſe thou mighteſt have omitted them had'ſt thou pleaſed. By all which we may plainly ſee, how, and in what manner, God is the Principal Cauſe of all Things, of which he is capable to be a Cauſe; and yet many Things are Contingent, in Reſpect of him. This I hope being clear'd, I may with the more facility prove how, and in what ſenſe, God is the Cauſe of all we do, and yet we our ſelves only the Cauſe of Sin. Now it is certain, God ſuſtains us, when we are about our Sins; ev'n then, *in Him we Live, Move, and have our Being*, as well as when we are better Employ'd, God giveth that Strength by which we commit any Sin, yet ſo as he doth not neceſſitate or incline unto it, but we of our ſelves abuſe it to Wickedneſs. God hath ſtill the Part of a Creator, we only are ſinful. I will illuſtrate what I have offered, by a familiar Compariſon: Suppoſe a King ſhould deliver to one of his Subjects, Men, Arms, and Amunition, that he may Fight for his Honour againſt his Enemies, yet his Subject ſhould prove a Traytor, and uſe all his Sovereign's Strengthag ainſt himſelf. Now tho' his Sovereign is a Cauſe, that he hath the Command, and beareth the Office of a Captain, yet you

can't

can't ſay he is the Cauſe of his Treachery, the Offence is only the Captains, and the Injury and Wrong, is only the Sovereign's. This is juſt the Caſe between God and us; God hath given us many excellent Faculties, both of Body and Soul, which he intended we ſhould uſe to his Glory, in Obedience to his Commands; that we ſhould reſiſt the Devil, both our Enemy, and his too; yet we have moſt traiterouſly ſided with Satan, have abuſed God's Gifts to His Diſhonour, have been ſtubborn Rebels to him, when he did the Part of a Creator to us; ſo likewiſe, Man only ſinneth, God is diſhonoured. The King indeed made his Subject able to Rebel againſt him, by delivering his Military Furniture unto him; the greater Villain he, that did Rebel againſt him. So God made *Adam* indeed able to ſin, but he never intended that he ſhou'd ſin with that Ability. Hence you may learn, that of all our good Actions God is the firſt Cauſe, we the ſecond; but of all our evil Actions, we are the proper Cauſe, God is only the Condition, without whoſe Permiſſion they are not.

Eutychus. But when we miſplace our Affections upon an unlawful Object, it muſt be done by Choice and Election, and this it is that maketh us Sinners; now this being an Act of the Will, it muſt ſuppoſe alſo the Concurrence of God.

Epenetus. This may be eaſily ſolved, by what has been ſaid: God made *Adam* able to be willing to ſin, but he made him not to will Sin: God ſet before him *Life and Death:* That he did *chuſe Death*, was indeed by the Strength of that Will given him by God; but God did not bind him to chuſe Death, for that were a Contradiction, namely, a neceſſitated Choice. But Men of your Principles have ſaid, "That God's firſt Conſtitu-
"tion was, that ſome ſhould be deſtined to eternal
"Ruin. And to this End, their Sins were ordain-

" ed; and deſertion and denial of Grace, in order " to their Sins. That Reprobates are compelled " with a Neceſſity of Sinning, and ſo of Periſh- " ing, by this Ordination of God, and ſo com- " pelled, that they cannot chuſe but Sin and Periſh. " That it is Incomprehenſible, yet believed by " us, how it is Juſt to damn ſuch as do not de- " ſerve it. That by a Neceſſity of Divine Provi- " dence, though not of Nature, the Fall of *Adam* " did Neceſſarily happen: yea, that God made " the Protoplaſts to this very Purpoſe, that he " might ſuffer them to be tempted, and led into " Sin; and that by force of his Councel or Decree, " it could not otherwiſe be but that they muſt " ſin. That we cannot ſay of *Eſau* being reject- " ed by God, I would to God, he had died an " an Infant: For he could not die whom the Di- " vine Providence created to this very End, that " he might live, and that he might live wickedly. " That God abſolutely wills that Sin ſhall fall out, " and that God doth determine it ſhall be done. " That he did Voluntarily Decree it ſhould fall out. " That his Permiſſive Will of Sin is efficacious," *&c.*

Eutychus. Theſe are Horrible Aſſertions indeed! ſuch as I can by no Means allow, becauſe the Scripture requires all Men to Believe in Chriſt for Salvation, and if they Believe not, they commit a moſt grievous Sin, *John* 16. 8, 9. *He will reprove the World of Sin, becauſe they believe not on me.*

Epenetus. Pray, Sir, do you think that God requireth Reprobates to Believe, as well as others?

Eutychus. Yes, every Man, without exception; as well the Reprobate (*a*) " as the Elect, (ſaith " Mr. *Perkins*) tho' for a different Reaſon; the

(*a*) *Perk. lib. de Prad.* pag. 89. Obj. 3.

" Elect

" Elect, that by Believing, he may be Saved; " the Reprobate, that by *not* Believing, he may " be without Excuſe: and this out of the very " Purpoſe of God."

Epenetus. This muſt certainly be againſt the Juſtice of God; becauſe it maketh him require Faith in Chriſt, of thoſe, to whom he hath preciſely denied, by his Abſolute Purpoſe, both a *Power* to Believe, and a *Saviour* to Believe in. For how can they Believe, if they be abſolute Reprobates? They want Faith, and they muſt want it for ever; God hath decreed they ſhall never have any to their dying-day. For no Man can be juſtly ty'd to Impoſſible Performances; becauſe no Man can fly like a Bird, or reach Heaven with the top of his Finger: Therefore God cannot with Juſtice exact of any the Performance of theſe Actions; nor can he, of Reprobates, the Obedience of Faith, if it be not poſſible to them. Again: Can any Man ſay, that it is God's ſerious Will that ſuch a Man ſhall Live, when it is his Will that he ſhall never have the Concurrence of his Providence, and the Act of Preſervation? Will any Man ſay, that God doth Will in good-earneſt that thoſe Men ſhould Believe, whom he will not furniſh with neceſſary Power to Believe? I'm certain, we may better ſay, it is God's unfeigned Will that they ſhall not Believe; becauſe it is his Will they ſhall want Power to Believe: For it is a Maxim in Logic, He who willeth a thing in the Cauſe, willeth the Effect that neceſſarily floweth from that Cauſe. Now if it be the certain Will of God, that Reprobates ſhall in no-wiſe Believe, he cannot with Reaſon and Equity tie them to Believe; for that wou'd be to tie them to an Act contrary to his Determinate Will. But further: The Reprobates can't be ty'd to Believe; becauſe they have no Object of Faith, no Chriſt to Believe in. The Devils have

no

no Part in Chriſt, or the New Covenant: Now can we ſay, that it wou'd be Juſt in God to bind them to Believe, or puniſh them as Tranſgreſſors of the Covenant for Believing not? No more can we ſay, that God can juſtly require Faith of Reprobates, or deſtroy them for Believing not, when they have no more Part in Chriſt, or in the Covenant of Grace, than the Devils have. For you and your Party deny that Chriſt died for Rebrobates; calling it a Lye, to ſay he did die for them; And can God juſtly bind Men to believe a Lye? If a Man ſhould command his Servant to Eat, and puniſh him for not Eating, and in the mean time fully reſolve that he ſhall have no Meat to eat; wou'd any reaſonable Man ſay, that ſuch a Man was Juſt in the Command, or Puniſhment. Change but the Name, and the Caſe is the ſame. For as Biſhop *Uſher* hath ſaid, (*a*) "What would not a "Man fly unto, rather than yield that Chriſt died "in no-wiſe for the Reprobates, and that none but "the Elect had any kind of Title to Him; and yet "many thouſand Reprobates ſhould be bound in "Conſcience to believe that He died for them, and "and tied to accept him for their Redeemer and "Saviour, yea, and ſhould be condemned to ever-"laſting Torments, for want of ſuch a Faith, (if "we may call that Faith, which is not grounded "on the Word of Truth) whereby they ſhould "have believed that, which in it ſelf was moſt "untrue, and laid hold of that, in which they had "no kind of Intereſt." And how contrary would this be to the Spirit of our Bleſſed Saviour, who was too pitiful, and of too ſweet a Diſpoſition, to upbraid or jeer a poor Creature, much leſs to Puniſh him for being ſuch as God had made him;

(*a*) *The Primate's Judgment of the true Intent and Extent of Chriſt's Death*, pag. 24, 25, 26, 27.

or

or for being ſuch as he muſt needs be, whether by *Fate and Deſtiny*, or by a *Natural Infirmity*. We read, our Saviour did indeed upbraid *Chorazin and Bethſaida*, (Mat. 11. 21.) becauſe they repented not; which he could not have done, had it been impoſſible for them to Repent; for he tells them, *if the mighty Works which were done in them, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented in Sackcloth and Aſhes.* Which was as much as to tell them, that it was not at all for want of *Means and Mercy* on God's Part, but for want of *Will* on theirs, that they did not do what was commanded to be done. And tho' he ſaid it ſhould be worſe with them, than with *Tyre* and *Sidon* in the Day of Judgment, worſe with *Capernaum*, than for *Sodom*, worſe for the *Jews* than for the *Ninevites*; yet it is not becauſe one had a greater Neceſſity of Sinning than the other, but becauſe one was guilty of greater Contempt than the other; not becauſe God had Abſolutely Decreed a greater Puniſhment to the one, but becauſe the one had Means of Sinning leſs than the other. Or elſe we ſhould make God guilty in the ſame kind that we ſhould be, who ſhould upbraid a Stammerer for not ſpeaking plain, or Reproach a Man, not for being willfully, but Naturally Blind. Nor ought any Man to be reproached for being *born Deaf*, but for being *like the deaf Adder that ſtoppeth her Ears*. He that bindeth my Feet, and then invites me to come unto him, intends nothing towards me, but a bitter Jeſt; for if he were ſerious, he would ſet my Feet at Liberty, that I might come in good earneſt, and not ſay to me, as we do to a Child that is fallen down, [Come hither to me, and I will lift thee up.] Yet this is what Mr *Calvin* is fain to ſay, (being pinch't with that Text *Ezek.* 18. 23. *Have I any pleaſure at all that the Wicked ſhould die, and not that he ſhould return from his ways and live.*) "That

"God

" God wills not the Death of a Sinner, ſo far " forth as he wills his Repentance; which Ex- " perience teacheth us, he doth ſo Will, as not " to touch his Heart that he may Repent: " which is all one as to ſay, he wills it ſo, as to command it: but he does not will it ſo, as to leave it poſſible; that is, he wills it in Shew, but not in Reality. Now dare we think, that the *Father of all Mercies, and God of all Conſolation, who ſpareth when we deſerve Puniſhment*, did Determine us to Puniſhment, without any Reſpect to our Deſervings? He that had Mercy upon wicked *Ahab*, (1 *Kings* 21. 29.) meerly becauſe of his Attrition, ſure did not damn him Abſolutely before he had done Good or Evil, yea, ev'n before the Foundations of the World were laid. *He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the Children of Men*, Lam, 3. 33. much leſs doth he damn Men for his meer Will and Pleaſure. When God doth execute a Temporal Puniſhment only upon thoſe that have deſerved it, he comes to it with Reluctancy, and therefore calls it *his ſtrange Work*, (*Iſai.* 28. 21.) a *Work* he loves not to be acquainted with: a *Work* which he doth ſometimes execute, becauſe he is juſt, but ſtill unwillingly becauſe he is Merciful, *Lam.* 3. 33. and therefore he ſo expreſſes it, as we are wont to do a thing we are not uſed to, and know not how to ſet about it. Hoſea 11. 8, 9. *How ſhall I give thee up, Ephraim? how ſhall I deliver thee, Iſrael? how ſhall I make thee as Admah? how ſhall I ſet thee as Zeboim? Mine Heart is turned within me; my repentings are kindled together.* And again: *I will not execute the fierceneſs of mine Anger, for I am God, and not Man.*

Eutychus. There is a Text of Scripture juſt now occurs to my Memory, which ſeems to make againſt what you have ſaid; it is *John* 12. 39, 40. *Therefore*

fore they could not believe, becauſe that Eſaias ſaid again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they ſhould not ſee with their eyes, nor underſtand with their heart, &c. Now does not this imply the Impoſſibility of their Believing; or elſe God's Foreknowledge in that Particular muſt be defective?

Epenetus. Not at all; for it does not follow from theſe Words, that there was an *Abſolute Neceſſity* of their not Believing; but only according to the Hebrew Phraſe, that they *did not* Believe: Which Phraſe is uſed in many places of Scripture, not to denote the Impoſſibility of a Thing's being done, but only that it was not done, or not convenient or neceſſary that it ſhould be done, as *Gen.* 19. 22. where it is ſaid to *Lot*, that *Sodom could not* be deſtroy'd 'till he was come into *Zoar*. Which only ſignifies, that God *did not* deſtroy it 'till then, for he cou'd have deſtroy'd it before; which none can deny. The like Phraſe is uſed in *Mark* 6. 5. *And he could there do no mighty work*, &c. Which only implies that he *did not*; for he had Power to work, if he had pleaſed. The like we meet with in *John* 5. 19. —— *The Son can do nothing of himſelf:* —— that is, as I humbly conceive, he doth not. And that thoſe words in St. *John* chap. 12. 39. — *They could not believe*, are ſo uſed, is plain from the words following, namely, *becauſe that Eſaias ſaid again.* For that Prophet's Prediction was not the Cauſe of their Unbelief, any more than an Almanack is the Cauſe of the Eclipſe which it foretelleth; but only a Sign or Argument, or an infallible Token of its Event. Neither doth the word [*That*] always denote the End or Final Cauſe of the Thing ſpoken of, but often referreth to the meer Conſequent or Event. As when St. *Paul* ſaith, *Rom.* 5. 20. *the Law entred*, [*that*] *the Offence might abound*; he

cannot

cannot poſſibly mean, that the abounding of the Offence, or encreaſe of Wickedneſs, was the very End or final Cauſe for which the Law was intended by God Almighty; far be it from us to ſpeak, or ev'n think ſo wickedly: but only, that it was the Event or Conſequent of God's giving the Law, as that by which it received its Aggravation. For, as the ſame Apoſtle ſaith, Rom. 5. 13. *Sin is not imputed when there is no Law.*

Eutychus. Methinks I begin to be affected with what you have ſaid, but there are many more Obſtacles in my way, which hinder my embracing your Notions. And as to what you ſaid laſt,—but leſt I ſhould be too troubleſome at this time, I beg the Favour of a further Debate on this Point, when your Occaſions will permit, and at preſent I take my Leave of you.

The End of the Third Conference.

CONFERENCE IV.

Eutychus.

MY good Friend, I am glad of having the Happineſs once more to ſee you; I am exceedingly obliged to you for all your Kindneſſes; and in particular, for the long Trouble I gave you Yeſterday.

Epenetus. I wiſh I were capable of being more truly ſerviceable to you than I am: But aſſure your

your ſelf, my beſt Endeavours ſhall not be wanting.

Eutychus. I ſhall be ſtill farther in your Debt for any Time you ſhall ſpend with me. You were always very kind, which makes me take this Freedom of diſcloſing my Objections to you.

Epenetus. Pray, what was that you were going to make, when we were laſt together?

Eutychus. It was this: May not God ſpeak in the Scripture in ſuch a Phraſe, as that he may not deſire to be underſtood by wicked Men? nay, the Scripture is and will be a killing Letter unto them.

Epenetus. I believe it is killing to them only thro' their own Obſtinacy; but not at all thro' the Deſign and Intent of God's ſpeaking to them: And as for God's deſiring to be underſtood by wicked Men, let me ask you, whether God doth not deſire they ſhould repent and live? *Ezek.* 18. 23. & 33. 11. Is there not *Joy in Heaven* at the Converſion of ſuch? *Luke* 15. 7. And came not Chriſt into the World *to call Sinners to Repentance?* And is not all this, a Willingneſs to be underſtood by them? Certainly God doth deſire ſeriouſly the Repentance of a Sinner, ſo long as he offers him the Means of Repentance, which he never deprives him totally of, until after a long Impenitence, he finally gives him over, as he did *Pharaoh* after the Sixth Judgment wrought for his Converſion.

Eutychus. Sir, ſince you interpret Scripture ſo well, what do you think of that Paſſage in *Iſaiah.* 46. 10. *My Counſel ſhall ſtand, and I will do all my Pleaſure?*

Epenetus. I do not think from hence, that God hath decreed all Things whatſoever Men or Devils do; nor doth the Words ſay ſo. But only, that he effecteth all Things which he decrees,

which

which muſt needs be good, if he decrees them. But to ordain Man to the Bottomleſs-Pit, without any Regard to his Sins, but only becauſe he will have it ſo, I have ſufficiently proved to be contrary ev'n both to the *Will* and *Pleaſure* of the Almighty, and therefore cannot be meant in thoſe Words juſt cited.

Eutychus. But is it not ſaid, *Rom.* 9. 11. *For* the Children *being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil,* that *the Purpoſe of God, according to Election, might ſtand, not of Works, but of him that calleth?* &c. And may we not ſee from theſe Words, that nothing is the Cauſe of Election, but the Will of God's good Pleaſure, and that *Eſau* was rejected meerly for God's good Pleaſure?

Epenetus. Thoſe Words, I take to mean only, God's chuſing the Jews, the Seed of *Jacob*, to be his Elect and Peculiar People, unto whom God vouchſafed many Temporal Bleſſings, ſuch as *delivering unto them the Oracles of God*, and *as of whom, according to the Fleſh, Chriſt came:* Privileges not granted to the Poſterity of *Eſau*; but by no means implying, that either the Perſon of *Eſau*, or his Poſterity, were by an Abſolute Decree doom'd to Eternal Condemnation, and that without Conſideration of the leaſt or greateſt Sin committed by them. To grant this, would be to make God a meer Deluder of miſerable Men, calling them to Salvation in the Name of his Son, exhorting them by his Word and Miniſtry; yet, at the ſame time, altho' he pretendeth their Good, he fully intendeth their Ruin. Beſide, the Miniſters alſo of this Word muſt be Falſe-Witneſſes, if your Notion be true; becauſe they, by their Miniſtry, offer Salvation Conditionally to many whoſe Damnation is determined Abſolutely. Now, if the Word and Miniſtry offer

fer Salvation Conditionally, and you wou'd prove by this Scripture, in your Objection, That God by his Decree, hath ordained Salvation and Damnation without any Condition; may not Reprobates juſtly complain, "Lord, do'ſt thou puniſh "us for not believing in thy Son, when thou "didſt call us to believe by the Preaching of "thy Word? But why? thou didſt decree to leave "us (woful Men!) in *Adam*'s Sin, to give us nei-"ther Power to believe, nor a Chriſt to believe "in. How canſt thou juſtly charge us with Sin, "or encreaſe our Puniſhment for not believing in "him, whom thou didſt reſolve before the World "was, that we ſhould never believe in?" So likewiſe the Sacraments, by this Opinion, do ſignify nothing, ſeal nothing, confer nothing, to ſuch as are not ſaved, but are meer Blanks, and empty Ordinances to them at the beſt; not thro' the Fault of the Men, but by the Primary and Abſolute Will of God. But it's certain, our Church is not of this Barbarous Opinion; for ſhe commands her Miniſters, in her Communion Office, to tell All, without Exception, that Chriſt dy'd for *Them*; ſaying, at the delivering the Bread, — *Take and eat this in remembrance that Chriſt died for* [*Thee*,] &c. Now it is very plain, That ſhe means the Reprobate as well as the Elect, or elſe it would be to command her Miniſters to deliver the Sacrament with a Lye in their Mouths; unleſs you will allow, that every one that eateth the Bread and Wine, are precious Veſſels of Election, which I believe, you'll hardly do; it being too melancholy a Truth, that many *eat unworthily*, and ſo are *guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord.* But to proceed, this Principle renders all God's other Gifts, of what Kind or Quality ſoever, to thoſe that receive them, Unprofitable, (ev'n in God's Abſolute Intention,)

being ſuch, as ſhall never do them good, in reference to their Eternal Condition: Nay, not only Unprofitable, but Hurtful too, given them not out of Love, but extream Hatred; not that they might uſe them well, and be bleſſed in ſo doing, but that they might uſe them ill, and ſo procure to themſelves the greater Damnation: Nay, it wickedly inferreth, That God lifteth them up to the Pinnacle of the Temple, (as the Devil did Chriſt,) that ſo they may fall the lower. He loadeth them with Knowledge and other excellent Endowments, that with the Weight of them, he might ſink them down to Hell: Theſe are, and muſt be the Conſequences of Abſolute and Irreſpective Election and Reprobation, making God's Gifts Snares to entrap Mens Souls. For Men that have them, have little Cauſe to be proud of them, and leſs Reaſon to be thankful, or love the Giver of them, but rather to hate him, becauſe they are giftleſs Gifts, of the ſame Nature with a griping Uſurer's Bounty, or a Bait for a poor Fiſh, which he ſwallows with a Hook to boot.

Eutychus. But the End that God aims at, is his own Glory; for he made all things for himſelf, neither could any Man challenge any thing from him; he may give, or with-hold his Gifts, when, and to whomſoever he pleaſeth, without any Injuſtice; Therefore he was pleaſed (ſays the Aſſembly of Divines at *Weſtminſter*,) according to the Unſearchable Counſel of his own Will, whereby he extendeth or with-holdeth Mercy as he pleaſeth, for the Glory of his Sovereign Power over his Creatures, to paſs by, and to ordain them to Diſhonour and Wrath for their Sin, to the Praiſe of his glorious Juſtice.

Epenetus. I find you ſtill allow the whole Matter of Reprobation, [as well touching the

Things

Things decreed, as touching the Act of God Decreeing,] to be finally reſolved into God's meer Pleaſure, to ſhew his Sovereign Power; for you ſay, he makes a Law to bind Men to repent and believe, upon Pain of Damnation; and this Law he makes for his meer Pleaſure: You affirm alſo, that he Decrees to deny Sufficient and Neceſſary Grace to enable Men to repent and believe, and this of his meer Pleaſure too; and from hence, it doth unavoidably follow, that he doth ordain Sin, and the Introduction of it, as the Means of Damnation, and that of his meer Pleaſure too.

Eutychus. God may give what Laws he pleaſe; for his Sovereignty is Abſolute, his Dominion Uncontroulable, he is Bound to none, and gives Account of his Actions to none.

Epenetus. Sir, Tho' 'tis impoſſible God ſhould be obliged to his Creature, whether upon the Account of any Law made by it, or of any Benefit receiv'd from it; yet the very Nature of God, and that Natural Equity moſt eminent in him, God eſteems as a Law to himſelf, and doth never tranſgreſs the Dictates of it. Now God having entred freely into Covenant with his Creatures, by giving them a Law, and making them a Promiſe; this Law could not, in ſtrict Juſtice, have been Obligatory, if God's own Natural Equity had not engaged him to beſtow Strength and Ability to keep it: So likewiſe, as to the Promiſe, if he promiſe a Thing Abſolutely, he binds himſelf Abſolutely to perform it; if he promiſe a Thing Conditionally, the Condition being fulfilled. he is tied upon the Honour of his Veracity and Juſtice, to make the Promiſe good, *Mat.* 25. 24. *Heb.* 6. 10. 1 *John* 1. 9. And if there be no Promiſe made, what Encouragement have we to ſet about any Duty? Ev'n Prayer itſelf, without a Promiſe, would be uſeleſs and inſignificant.

Eutychus. But doth not the Apoſtle ſay, *Rom.* 9. 16. *It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that ſheweth Mercy?*

Epenetus. The Apoſtle does not here ſpeak of Salvation or Election unto Glory; but of giving the Goſpel, and calling Men unto Chriſtianity. Now it is plain, the *Gentiles* were in no Capacity, much leſs in any Forwardneſs to enquire after it, 'till God was pleaſed to give it them by Revelation, as the Apoſtle obſerves from the Prophet, *Rom.* 10. 20. *But Eſaias is very bold, and ſaith,* I was found *of them that ſought me not*; I was made manifeſt *unto them that asked not after me.* Hear what Mr. *Baxter* himſelf ſaith of this Paſſage, "That the Meaning is not, that "our Salvation is not in him that willeth, or "in him that runneth: The Apoſtle talketh of "no ſuch Thing; but it is about the giving of "the Goſpel to them that had it not, and taking it "from them that had forfeited it by their Sin." Neither doth the Goſpel offer Salvation to any, but ſuch as both *Will* and *Run* too, which is apparent from ſuch Exhortations as theſe, *Heb.* 12. 1. — *And let us run with Patience the Race that is ſet before us.* 1 Cor. 9. 24. *So run that ye may obtain.* And ſuch as deſiſt, faint, or ſtep aſide from the Courſe of Chriſtianity, are reprehended for it, *Gal,* 5. 7. *Ye did run well, who did hinder you, that ye ſhould not obey the Truth?* There is the ſame Reaſon alſo for our *Willingneſs*, which the Scripture inculcates with no leſs Importunity; inſomuch that it is ſaid, *Rev.* 22. 17. *Whoſoever* [*will,*] *let him take the Water of Life freely.* And, *John* 7. 17. *If any Man will do his* [*God's*] *Will, he ſhall know,* &c. And ſuch as remain in Unbelief, are reproved upon this Account, becauſe they *would not come to Chriſt, John* 5. 40. They *would not* be gathered to Chriſt,

Mat.

Mat. 23. 37. Now, if God's Purpoſe were to ſhew Mercy and Salvation to us, without our *Willing* and *Running*, why did he give us thoſe Laws and Abilities? and ſo earneſtly exhort us to a Performance of them: *To walk worthy of our Calling: To give diligence to make our Calling and Election ſure: To work out our own Salvation with fear and trembling?* Eph. 4. 1. 2 Pet. 1. 10. Phil. 2. 12.

Eutychus. But I am apt to believe, there is ſomething more in the Apoſtle's Meaning, elſe why doth he ſilence all Objections againſt this great Point, with his, *Nay, but, O Man, who art thou, that replieſt againſt God? Rom.* 9. 20. He reſolves the whole Reaſon of this Affair into the Will of God, and would have us diſpute no further.

Epenetus. The Apoſtle only uſeth that Expreſſion, to ſtop the Mouths of any bold or inſolent Objector againſt God's Will, why he determined of his meer Pleaſure to Save the *Gentiles* for their Believing, or to Reprobate the *Jews* for their not Believing: For the Apoſtle gives a clear Deciſion of that Point, *ver.* 30, 31, 32. Not according to that Principle of an Irreſpective Election and Reprobation, but upon Account of Faith and Unbelief Reſpectively. For he proves, that ſuch as were now rejected from the Lot of God's People, *were broken off, becauſe of their Unbelief*; and that ſuch as were Elected to it, did *ſtand by Faith*, Rom. 11. 20. And this is to be reſolved wholly into the Arbitrament of God's Will, who was freely pleaſed thus to determine and ordain touching the Sons of Men; *That whoſoever believeth, ſhould have eternal Life: He that believeth not, ſhould be condemned*, John 3. 16, 18, 36. So that the Preſcription of Faith unto Salvation, is therefore of the Free-will of God alone, who was graciouſly pleas'd to appoint it on ſuch Terms.

Eutychus. I have been taught, that Faith and Holineſs are not the Cauſe of our Election, and that we are choſen unto Salvation and Glory, not as Holy or Believers, but to the End we may be made ſuch; according to that of the Apoſtle, *Eph.* 1. 4. *He hath choſen us in Chriſt, before the Foundation of the World, that we ſhould be Holy and without Blame, before him in Love.*

Epenetus. I never ſaid, that Faith and Holineſs were abſolutely the Cauſe of our Salvation, but a Neceſſary Condition, as I have elſewhere ſhewn; for the Scripture very frequently aſcribes the Name of the Effect, to the Counſel or Decree it ſelf, as you may obſerve in thoſe Texts, 2 *Tim.* 1. 9. *Titus* 1. 2. *Epheſ.* 2. 5, 6. And the Apoſtle's Words before cited, may be interpreted of God's chuſing us *through Chriſt*, unto a State of Grace, to the End we may lead a holy Life. For, as I formerly told you, Election is properly an Act of Judgment; a preferring of the better before the worſe. For thoſe that are in Chriſt (by what Means whatſoever) are Abſolutely better than thoſe that are out of Chriſt, (by what Means ſoever;) and if ſo, then God's Electing ſome, *as conſider'd in Chriſt*, and rejecting others, *as conſider'd out of him*, plainly ſhews, that God chuſeth the better before the worſe. He choſe St. *Peter* and St. *Paul*, &c. whom he foreknew would believe, becauſe out of his meer Pleaſure and gracious Will he would ſave Believers.

Eutychus. But the Apoſtle tells us, 2 *Theſ.* 3. 2. *All Men have not Faith*; and, in *Titus* 1. 1. He makes Faith a Thing proper to the Elect only, calling it *the Faith of God's Elect.*

Epenetus. The Faith there meant by the Apoſtle, if rightly underſtood, ſignifies no other than the Chriſtian Faith in general; which every one is bound to believe; and not the Virtue of Faith,

by

by which we do believe; as you may ſee, *ver.* 4. of this very Chapter, *To Titus mine own Son, after the common Faith*, &c. and *Jude*, ver. 3. *Act* 6. 7. *Rom.* 1. 5. Neither are we to underſtand by the word *Elect* in that Place, ſuch Perſons as were from all Eternity choſen Abſolutely, and by Name, to Glory; for if we ſay, they were elected to Glory before they did believe, becauſe the word *Elect* is firſt in Propriety of Speech, then, by the ſame Parity of Reaſon, Holineſs and Sanctity goeth before Faith; becauſe we read, *Rev.* 13. 10. *Here is the Patience and the Faith of the Saints.* And, in St. *Jude*'s Epiſtle, *ver.* 3. *Contend for the Faith which was once deliver'd unto the Saints.* And we might with equal Authority conclude, that *Vocation* doth precede *Election*, becauſe, *Rev.* 17. 14. they are ſaid to be *called, and choſen, and faithful.* So that by the word *Elect*, in that Place, we may underſtand ſuch as are Elect to Grace, or called unto the Faith by a gracious and divine Election, and obey that Call: For the word *Elect* is not always a Participle, but ſometimes a Noun, and ſuch a Noun as both in the Old and New Teſtament denote ſome excellent and remarkable Quality; by reaſon whereof, a Thing is ſaid to be *Elect*; for Example, *Jer.* 22. 7. and *Ezek.* 31. 16. *Elect or Choice Trees*, for their Tallneſs. 1 *Sam.* 26. 2. and *Jer.* 48. 15. *Elect or Choſen Men*, for their Valour. 2 *King* 3. 19. *Elect* or *Choice Cities*, for their Strength and Beauty. And in this Senſe it is, that Men are called *Elect* or *Choſen Men*, in regard of their Probity of Mind, and their Readineſs in aſſenting to thoſe Rules and Laws preſcribed by the Goſpel. They may be alſo called the Elect of God, in regard of their Conſtancy of Faith, and their Exemplary Obedience among the reſt of the Faithful. The Proof of which, you may

ſee in thoſe Places of Holy Scripture, *Mat.* 24. 31. *Mark* 13. 27. *Luke* 18. 7. 2 *Tim.* 2. 10. *Rom.* 8. 33. *Col.* 3. 12. *Rev.* 17. 14.

Eutychus. But it is ſaid, *Eph.* 1. 5. That we are *predeſtinated according to the good Pleaſure of his Will*; which plainly ſhews, that our Salvation is Irreſpective, and without any Condition.

Epenetus. This word [*good Pleaſure*] doth not ſignify the Abſoluteneſs, but the Reſpectiveneſs of his Will, becauſe it relateth to ſomething in which God is well-pleaſed, and that is, in Chriſt. It being impoſſible for God to pleaſe himſelf with Mankind, or for Men to be acceptable or well-pleaſing to God, any otherwiſe than in Him, of whom it is ſaid, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed*, as I have formerly proved. And if you'll allow the Scripture to be true, then you muſt allow the Promiſes therein, all of them, to run Conditional, ſuch as *Joh.* 8. 51. *If a Man keep my ſaying, he ſhall never ſee death.* Gal. 6. 7, 9. *Whatſoever a Man ſoweth, that ſhall he alſo reap.* Rev. 3. 20. *If any Man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will ſup with him* &c. And, *We ſhall reap if we faint not.* So likewiſe the Threatnings of God are not in Jeſt. For, *Depart from me, ye Curſed*, was not foretold as a Bugbear to ſcare Children withal, but that every one might beware, and not bring himſelf under that Sentence. He cannot be willing that any ſhould be caught in the Serpent's Snare, who has ſhewed to All, without Exception, a Way to eſcape. Chriſt's Invitations are ſerious, He would have every one come in at the Preaching of his Word. And as he *died for all*, ſo he earneſtly deſires that *all* may be ſaved, and ſhews it is our own fault if we are not.

Eutychus. I believe, that Wicked Men are the Cauſe of their own Miſery; for the Will is determi-

termined to an Object two Ways: *1ſt*, By Compulſion, againſt the Bent and Inclination of it. *2dly*, By Neceſſity, according to the Natural deſire and liking of it. And by this laſt only it is, that God's Predeſtination determineth the Will to Sin; it forceth no Man to do that which he would not, but only carries him towards that which he would. For tho' it be true, when Men Sin, they cannot chuſe; yet, it is as true, they will not chuſe.

Epenetus. This fine Turn, is nothing at all to the Purpoſe; for I have been told, that Authors make no Diſtinction between theſe two words, *Neceſſity*, and *Compulſion*, but uſed them in this Argument promiſcuouſly; denying that God did Neceſſitate Men to Sin, leſt they ſhould grant him hereby to be the Author of Sin. For that which Neceſſitates the Will to Sin, is as truly the Cauſe of Sin, as that which forceth it; becauſe it maketh the Sin inevitably to be committed, which otherwiſe might be avoided. Nay, that which Neceſſitates the Will to Sin, is more truly the Cauſe of Sin, than the Will it ſelf, becauſe it over-ruleth the Will, and taketh from it its true Liberty, by which it ſhould be Lord of it ſelf, and Diſpoſer of its own Actions; making it become but a ſervile Inſtrument, irreſiſtibly ſubject to Superior Command and Determination; and conſequently muſt be a truer Cauſe of all ſuch Acts and Sins, as proceed from a Will ſo determined, than the Will is. For when two Cauſes concur to the producing of an Effect, the one a Principal over-ruling Cauſe, the other but Inſtrumental and wholly at the Deciſion of the Principal, then is the Effect, in all reaſon, to be imputed to the Principal, which by the force of its Influx and Impreſſion produceth it, rather than to the Subordinate and Inſtrumental, which is but a meer Servant in the Production

ction of it. We find it ordinary in Scripture, to aſcribe the Effect of Subordinate or Voluntary Acting, to the Principal Agent: As *Mat.* 10. 20. *It is not ye that ſpeak* (ſaith Chriſt) *but the Spirit of your Father that ſpeaketh in you.* 1 Cor. 15. 10. *I laboured more abundantly than they all; yet not I, but the Grace of God which was in me.* And Gal. 2. 20. *I live,* (ſaith the Apoſtle;) *yet not I, but Chriſt liveth in me.* But further, that which maketh a Man Sin, by way of Neceſſity only, that is, with, and not againſt his Will, is the Cauſe of his Sin, in a worſe manner than that which conſtraineth him to Sin againſt his Will; as he which by powerful Perſwaſions draweth a Man to ſtab, hang, or poyſon himſelf, is in a groſſer manner the Cauſe of that Evil and unnatural Action, than he that by Force compelleth him; becauſe he maketh him to conſent to his own Death. So likewiſe, if God's Decree do not only make Men Sin, but Sin willingly too; not only *cauſe* that they ſhall [*malè agere*] *do evil,* but [*malè velle*] *will it too,* it hath the deeper hand in the Sin.

Eutychus. Sir, I don't think that God Predeſtinates Sin as it is Sin, but as a Means of declaring His Juſtice, in the Puniſhment of wicked Men, and ſo is not the Author of Sin.

Epenetus. I remember a Paſſage, *Rom.* 6. 1. to this purpoſe, That we *muſt not do Evil that Good may come.* From whence we may learn, that a good Intention cannot, alone, make a bad Action good; it remaineth evil, tho' the End aim'd at be never ſo good. So that the End, Manner, yea, and Matter too, muſt be good, or elſe the Action is nanght. For Example: He that ſhall ſteal that he may give an Alms, or oppreſs the Poor to teach them Patience, or kill a wicked Man, that he may do no more hurt with his Example; I ſay, tho' his End he aimeth at be never ſo good, he ſinneth notwithſtanding.

withſtanding. The Reaſon is plain, becauſe the Evil of Sin, is greater than any Good that can come by Sin; becauſe Sin is an Affront and Wrong done to the Majeſty of God, and ſo directly Prejudicial to His Glory as any thing can be. Whoſoever therefore willeth a Sin, tho' for never-ſo good an End, he willeth that which is truly and formally a Sin; and conſequently, tho' we ſhould grant, that God wills Sin, for Ends never-ſo good, yet willing it with ſuch a Powerful and Effectual Will, as giveth a Neceſſary Being to it, he becometh Author of that which is formally Sin. Beſide, this Diſtinction faſtneth upon God a further Aſperſion, and loadeth him with theſe Indignities, namely, a want of Wiſdom, Sincerity, and Mercy. Of Wiſdom, in that his Counſels muſt needs be weak, if he can find out no Means, to Glorifie His Juſtice, but by the bringing Sin into the World, which *his Soul hateth*, and appointing Men to commit it, that ſo he may manifeſt forth his Juſtice in puniſhing them for it. Want of Sincerity and Plain-dealing with Men, in that God having decreed and appointed Men, by his Abſolute Will, to Eternal Perdition, does alſo decree that they ſhould Sin, that ſo they might be damned for thoſe very Sins which he decreeth and draweth them into; and ſo diſſembleth, becauſe he ſlaughtereth them under a ſpecious ſhew of Juſtice, in puniſhing them for their Sins, when at the ſame time they are what he had in his Eternal Counſel appointed for their Ruine. Juſt as I have heard it reported of *Tiberius*, who having a Purpoſe to put *Druſus* and *Nero* to Death, (the two Sons of *Germanicus*) uſed ſundry cunning Contrivances, to Cauſe them to revile him, that ſo he might find occaſion againſt them, to put them to Death: And herein is juſtly cenſured for his great Hypocriſy. Again, want of Mercy, in a high degree; juſt as if God delighted

ſo

ſo in Blood, that rather than not deſtroy Mens Souls, he will have them live and die in Sin, that he may deſtroy them. Like to thoſe Pagan Princes, of whom it is reported, " That they were " afraid that all ſhould be Juſt (meaning the Chri- " ſtians) leſt they ſhould have none to puniſh: " But this is the Diſpoſition of hang-men rather " than of good Princes." And ſhall we dare to caſt theſe foul Enormities (eſpecially this latter) upon the God of Truth and Father of Mercies? God forbid!

Eutychus. But we muſt make a Diſtinction between a Thing brought to paſs, as an Effect flowing from ſomething as the Cauſe thereof; as you know the ſtinking of an impure Dunghil proceedeth from the Sun's ſhining upon it; and yet the Sun is not the Cauſe of thoſe impure Vapours that aſcend, but the Dunghil it ſelf. Now as the ſtinking of the Dunghil is a Conſequent, but not an Effect of the Shining of the Sun; ſo Sin is a Conſequent of Reprobation, but not an Effect of it: and in this reſpect it is that God worketh upon the Wills of the Reprobates, or ſtirs them up to unjuſt Acts.

Epenetus. Juſt now you ſaid, That Sin muſt be the Cauſe of Puniſhment, in order to vindicate God's Juſtice in Damning the Sinner; and now you ſay, That Reprobation goeth before, and Sin followeth as a Conſequent: Two Abſurdities which has been ſufficiently anſwer'd already; however, I ſhall conſider this laſt Objection as briefly as I can. *1ſt*, As to your Similitude of the Sun's drawing up naſty Vapours from an impure Dunghil, it is quite beſide the Purpoſe, becauſe the Dunghil is ſuppoſed to be, before the ſhining of the Sun, and is ſure to ſtink, whether the Sun doth ſhine or not; whereas God's Impulſe is ſuppos'd to be, before the Sin, and decreed ſo to be from all Eternity. *2dly*, The ſhining of the Sun, is a Univerſal Cauſe; ſhining

ning as much on the Diamond and every Thing elſe within its Horizon, as upon the Dunghil; whereas your Doctrine teaches, that God's Impulſe to do Evil, is particular; more, in compelling *Shimei* to curſe *David*, and *Jeroboam* to rebel, than on any other Perſons who had none of that Impulſe, or at leaſt not ſo much. 3*dly*, The ſhining of the Sun, intends not the Corruption, ſo properly as the Heat of the Dunghil; whereas the Impulſe you ſpeak of, muſt ſignify and intend the Thing itſelf: And tho' we ſhould grant the Sun to be particular in its Cauſe, yet, in corrupting other Things, it would not be corrupted it ſelf, becauſe it doth act as an Involuntary Agent, doing all that it doth by a meer Neceſſity, which it receiveth from God's Abſolute Decree; whereas the Impulſe you ſpeak of, is aſcribed to God as a Free Agent, and by conſequence, to his Choice; unleſs you will ſay, that God is Neceſſitated, or doth of Neceſſity compel Men to do wickedly; which will make your Cauſe ſo much the worſe. 5*thly*, The Dunghil is meerly Paſſive, as to every Thing that is done unto it; and whatſoever ill Vapours proceed from it, it ſends them forth of Neceſſity, without Election or Voluntary Conſent; whereas, the Sinner doth chuſe to ſend forth Sin, and might have forborn, if he had not been wilful; for if he had not been a Free Agent, he could not have been a Sinning one: *Iſa.* 65. 12. *Therefore* (ſaith God) *will I number you to the Sword, and ye ſhall bow down to the Slaughter; becauſe when I called, ye did not anſwer; when I ſpake, ye did not hear, but did evil before mine Eyes, and did chuſe that wherein I delighted not.*

Eutychus. Sir, I have been told, that God wiſheth the Salvation of the Reprobate Seriouſly, but not Abſolutely.

Epenetus. It is true, God doth not Will the Salvation of all Abſolutely, or as a Thing which he

he reſolveth undoubtedly ſhall come to paſs, ev'n by uſing all his Power to accompliſh; for then all muſt be ſaved whether they would or no; but he wiſheth the Salvation of All, only upon Condition they will Repent and Believe.

Eutychus. Why, this is exactly my Belief; for wicked Men do certainly periſh, for not performing the Condition of the Covenant of Grace; God being *candid* and *ſincere* in his Offers of Salvation ev'n to the Reprobate, as well as the Elect.

Epenetus. If ſo, then I hope you'll allow, That the Condition muſt be poſſible to them to whom the Promiſe is made; and the Performance of the Condition muſt be a part of God's Will, as well as the Salvation promiſed; or elſe I'm ſure the Promiſe cannot be *candid* and *ſincere.* For a Condition is the Offer of a Power of Choice; now, where there is no Liberty of Choice afforded, there is no true Condition appointed. The Lawyers tell us, Contracts made under impoſſible Conditions, are no Bargains. And the Logicians Rule is, That a Conditional Propoſition which hath an Impoſſible Condition annexed to it, is equivalent to a bare Negation. It is all one, for me to offer a Piece of Money to one Blind, upon Condition he will open his Eyes, and tell me what Piece of Money it is, and whoſe Stamp it beareth, and to deny it flatly to another; for the one can have it no more than the other: Nay, it is in Circumſtance a great deal worſe; for it is a Denial under Colour of the contrary, a Denial joyned with a Scoff. Juſt as if the King ſhould make an Act, (not to be repealed,) That no *Frenchmen* ſhould be made Citizens of *London*, or Free Denizens of the Kingdom, and then make a Decree, to grant ſome noble Privileges to the Citizens of *London*, or to Subjects of the Kingdom only, and to none but them; and yet for all this, ſhould command it to be Proclaimed, that he will give them

to

to the *Frenchmen*, upon Condition, they will be made Freemen of *London*, or be Incorporated into the Kingdom: Would not any Man ſay, That the King, in this Caſe, did diſſemble, delude, and tantalize the poor *Frenchmen*? And if any one ſhould ſay, there would be no diſſembling in it; for if they would become Citizens, or Subjects, they ſhould have the promiſed Gratuities; any Man might truly anſwer, that the King doth indeed counterfeit and mock them, becauſe he maketh a Tender to them, upon a Condition not poſſible by his own Decree. In like manner, if God hath made a Decree, that ſuch and ſuch Men ſhall never believe, and yet offer them Heaven on Condition of believing; it may moſt truly be ſaid, that God doth not only deny them Heaven, but deny it with a bitter Deriſion; which is far from that Candor and Goodneſs that dwelleth in him; But I muſt confeſs, very agreeable to Men of your Principles; who tell the World, " That God muſt needs ſome " way, both Will and Work in the Sin of the Act; " becauſe, not only the Action it ſelf, but the very " Pravity and Deformity of it, makes way for " God's Glory: That as Sin makes for his Glory, " he hath a Hand in effecting it: And that Sin " by Accident makes much for his Glory: That " God did decree the Sin of *Adam*, and that his " Sin was therefore Neceſſary: That God intends " his Goſpel ſhould harden Mens Hearts, and cloſe " their Eyes, and ſhut their Ears, and that he ſends " it for this very Purpoſe: Yea, that all the Sins " which are committed by Men, God hath a ſe- " cret Working Hand, the chief Hand too." Which, if true, we need not wonder how *John Sheppard* broke out of *Newgate*.

Eutychus. Sir, I muſt confeſs, I have often ſtagger'd in this Point, but I am told, that God, who is Sovereign Lord of all his Creatures, who being

being his own, may without any Injuſtice, do with them, and diſpoſe of them, for what End and Purpoſe he pleaſes.

Epenetus. To this, I have ſaid ſomething already, yet I am willing to give you Satisfaction, if poſſible: Now the Queſtion is not, what an Almighty Sovereign Power *can do* with his poor Vaſſals, but, what a Power that is Good and Juſt *will do.* For tho' in reſpect to his Abſolute Power and Sovereignty, (if ſeparated from his Goodneſs and Juſtice,) he might deſtroy his Creatures, without any Reſpect to their good or bad Actions, yet it is incompatible with a God cloathed with Infinite Goodneſs and Mercy, to appoint Men to Hell, of his meer Will and Pleaſure. All Things are indeed poſſible with God; but yet God cannot do that which implies a Contradiction. He, who out of Nothing, created All Things, can (if he pleaſe) turn All Things into Nothing again: But he cannot ſo make Things out of Nothing, ſo as they ſhall be Nothing ſtill: He can draw Good out of Evil, by diſpoſing of Evil to Good Ends, but he cannot ſo make Evil Good, as that the Evil ſhall ſtill retain its own Nature. God can determine the Will of Man, to this, or that only, and ſo deprive the Will of that Part of its Nature; but not ſo, as that the Will ſhall continue undeprived, or retain its Nature, of which it is deprived, ev'n at the ſame Time it is deprived of it. When God determines a Man to one Thing, it is certain he cannot do another; for if he can, he can reſiſt, not God's Will only, but his Power too. Theſe are ſome of the Things which implies a Contradiction, and therefore not to be imputed to God, who if he could be guilty of them, would ceaſe to be God. The Scripture tells us, that God is good to All: How can he then, of himſelf, without any Motive in the reaſonable Creature, provide for it from Everla-

ſting,

ſting, the moſt inſuperable Torments; yea, ev'n before he thought of beſtowing any the leaſt Good upon it? Hear what St. *Auſtin* has ſaid on this Matter, who is thus quoted: (*a*) "God is Good, "and God is Juſt. He may, without any Deſert, "free Men from Puniſhment, becauſe he is Good; "but he cannot Condemn any Man without Evil "Deſerts, becauſe he is Juſt."

Eutychus. Sir, I believe God may with leſs Injuſtice damn his Creatures for nothing, than annihilate them for nothing; becauſe he that wants a Being, enjoyeth no Good; but he that is tormented in Hell, hath a Being, and by conſequence, ſomething that is Good: If therefore, God may take away a Man's Life that is Innocent, and turn him into Nothing for his Pleaſure, much more may he torment him in Hell.

Epenetus. This is contrary to our Bleſſed Saviour's Saying to *Judas*: *Wo unto that Man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed: it had been good for that Man, if he had not been born.* From whence it is plain, that firſt the Miſery of *Judas* is ſet forth in theſe Words, *Wo be unto*, &c. and then the greatneſs of his Miſery, *it had been good*, &c. As if our Lord had ſaid, *Judas* the Traytor ſhall be damned, and ſo deplorable ſhall his Condition be, that it had been good and happy for him, if he had never received a Being at all. Good, without a Figure, good in earneſt. For where ſhall we find a Man that would not chuſe to vaniſh into a Thouſand Nothings, rather than be caſt Soul and Body into Hell? Why, are Men ſo afraid of Hell when they lie upon the brink of Eternity,

(*a*) *Aug. l.* 3. *cont. Julian, c.* 31. *pag.* 164. Bonus eſt Deus, Juſtus eſt Deus, poteſt aliquem ſine bonis meritis liberare, quia bonus eſt: Non poteſt quenquam ſine malis meritis damnare, quia Juſtus eſt.

being touched with a Senſe of their Sins, and the fearful Expectation of Eternal Vengence? Why, I ſay, do they then, with *Job*, curſe the very Day of their Birth, and wiſh a thouſand times over they had never been Born, or might ceaſe to be, rather than come into the place of Torments: but becauſe they judge a being there, incomparably worſe, than not to be at all? Indeed, This Opinion would be an Encouragement to *Atheiſts* and *Epicures*; for if they ſooth themſelves up in their Riot and Exceſs, and practiſe the moſt impious and voluptuous Courſes, upon a Perſwaſion that their Souls ſhall die with their Bodies; how much more would they purſue their Carnal and Sinful Pleaſures, being once brought to believe, That after all their ſenſual Delights, they ſhall after Death, be in a better Caſe, than if they had no Being at all? But ev'n common Sence will expoſe this Opinion, which judgeth Pains when they are extreme, to be worſe than Death. Hence it is, that *Job* being tormented in his Body by the Devil, curſed his Birth-day, magnified the Condition of the Dead, and wiſhed himſelf in the Grave; plainly preferring the loſs of his Being, before that miſerable Being he then had. How many Men, if they were put to their Option, would chuſe rather to have no Bodies at all, than ſuch as are always tormented with the Stone, or the Gout, or any other ſharp or ſenſible Diſeaſe? It is a known Saying, grounded on this Judgment of Senſe, *Præſtat ſemel quàm ſemper mori*; Better it is to die once, than to be always dying. This the cruel Perſecutors of the Primitive Chriſtians knew very well, and therefore thoſe on whom they were willing to exerciſe their Cruelty, they put to *lingering Deaths*, accounting preſent Death too light a Puniſhment for them. And when one deſired his Tormentor quickly to diſpatch him, his Anſwer was, *I am not yet Friends with thee.*

Euty-

Eutychus. Sir, it is time to think of Parting; I return you a thouſand Thanks for the Satisfaction I have received from your Diſcourſe hitherto: Pray God ſend us another Meeting, that ſo I may have an Opportunity of laying before you, thoſe other Impediments which keep me ſtill at a Diſtance from uniting in your Principles.

Epenetus. Amen. *How pleaſant a thing is it for Brethren to dwell together in Unity?* Pſal. 133. And how ſweet is that Muſick, wherein there is not the leaſt Diſcord?

Eutychus. Shall I ſee you again at my Houſe to Morrow?

Epenetus. God willing, I ſhall wait on you.

Eutychus. Good Night.

The End of the Fourth Conference.

CONFERENCE V.

Epenetus.

SIR, I am glad to ſee you ſo well again; I underſtood by a Friend of mine, (as I came to ſee you,) that you was taken very Ill, after I left you laſt Night.

Eutychus. I thank you very kindly: I was ſomething out of Order laſt Night, being very much afflicted with the Vapours, but I bleſs God, I am pretty well come to my ſelf again to Day. Pray, Sir, why do you ſtand?

Epenetus. Seeing I am now ſate down; if your Head be not too much diſturb'd and out of order, by your Indiſpoſition laſt Night, we'll go on with our Conference touching our former Subject?

Eutychus. With all my Heart; a happy Opportunity.

Epenetus. Pray, Sir, relate what you have to ſay, againſt uniting with me in Principle.

Eutychus. Sir, May not God's Ways be very Juſt, and yet ſeem Unjuſt to Men's erring Underſtanding?

Epenetus. Nothing can be truly Juſt, which Human Underſtanding, purged from Prejudice, corrupt Affections, and Paſſions, judgeth to be Unjuſt; becauſe God hath, by the Light of Nature, made Man capable of diſcerning between Right and Wrong, Good and Evil, Juſt and Unjuſt. When a Thing is done, Reaſon, with thoſe general Impreſſions flowing from it, is able to ſay, this is Juſt, or this is Unjuſt, whether it be done by God, or Man: For Juſtice in God and Men are for Subſtance but one and the ſame Thing, tho' infinitely differing in Degree; Men's Virtues being but the Image of thoſe Perfections that dwell moſt eminently in God. Now Reaſon was given us, that we might make a Diſtinction between Right and Wrong, Good and Evil: And accordingly, God hath demanded in Scripture a right Application of our Reaſon, calling upon us to be Judges of the Equity of his Ways: Which he never would have done, had not Reaſon been able to have given a determinate Vote: *Iſa.* 5. 3. *Judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my Vineyard.* Ezek. 18. 25. *O Houſe of Iſrael, is not my Way equal? Are not your Ways unequal?*

Eutychus. But whatſoever is ſet down in Scripture for the Will of God, muſt needs be Juſt, and conſequently, this of his Abſolute Decree in reſpect

to

to the Elect and Reprobate; God's Will being the Rule of all Righteouſneſs: Beſides, God doth hereby fully manifeſt his *Juſtice*, and his *Mercy* too, his Juſtice toward Reprobates, his Mercy toward the Elect. And therefore it is neceſſary, the Decrees of God ſhould be ſo order'd, in reſpect to them both, as that his Juſtice and Mercy may be ſet forth to the Sons of Men.

Epenetus. I deny, that thoſe Abſolute Decrees of Mens inevitable Damnation, are any part of God's Revealed Will; for the Scriptures teach no ſuch Matter. For as One well obſerves, "God "cannot will any Thing that is Unjuſt." Now Abſolute Reprobation can be no Part of God's Revealed Will; becauſe I have already proved it an unjuſt Thing, and odious to right Reaſon, begetting many Abſurdities: For tho' the Scripture requires us to believe Things above Reaſon; yet it no-where requires us to believe Things contrary to Reaſon. It is ſaid, *Rom.* 12. 1. That the Worſhip which God requireth, is a *reaſonable Service:* Now, if this *Worſhip* and this *Service* are poſſible to the Elect only; the Reprobates being ſhut out by an Abſolute Decree, either from *worſhipping him in Spirit and in Truth*, or from performing any Obedience to his Commands; how reaſonable this is, let any Man judge! What Man in the World can diveſt himſelf ſo far of Nature and Humanity, as to reſolve with himſelf to marry, in order to have Children, that ſo after they are born, and have liv'd a-while with him, he may hang them up by their Tongues, tear their Fleſh with Scourges, pull it from their Bones with burning Pincers, or put them to any cruel Tortures; that by thus Torturing them, he may ſhew his Power and Authority over them? Much leſs, can we believe, without great Violence to Reaſon, that *the God of Mercy* can ſo far forget himſelf, as out of his

Abſolute Pleaſure, to ordain ſuch infinite Multitudes of his Children, made after his own Image, to Everlaſting Fire; and create them one after another, that after the End of a ſhort Life here, he may torment them without End hereafter, to ſhew his Power and Sovereignty over them. Who can believe, that the Righteous Judge of all the World, ſhould firſt will, that a harmleſs Perſon ſhould be made miſerable, and then to will, that he be made a Sinner, that ſo he may be miſerable? and this by way of Juſtice, and in order to manifeſt the Legality of his Proceedings with the Sons of Men? For my part, I ſhould think more favourably of thoſe Men, whom I ſhould hear deny the Being of a God, than of thoſe Men, who ſhould ſay, that God delighteth in the Deſtruction of his Creatures; that he is a Devourer of the Souls of Men; that the Damnation of ſo many Millions of Souls, were Abſolutely and Antecedently intended by Almighty God, long before they were born. What can we think of thoſe Men, who have told the World, "That Grace is not offered by God, ev'n "to thoſe who are called, with a Meaning to "give it, but to the Elect only? That tho' God "in Words proteſt he would have Reprobates be-"lieve; yet in Deed he will not have them?" Now what is this, but God's placing Men under the plentiful Means of Salvation, offering it to them ſo plainly, that Men would think that they might have it when they would; when, at the ſame time, he fully intendeth that they ſhall never have it; with-holding from them either the firſt Grace, that they cannot believe, or the ſecond Grace, that they cannot perſevere. Far be it from us to entertain ſuch unworthy Notions of God and his Attributes. God cannot ceaſe to be Omniſcient, no, not for a Moment; his Foreſight of All, is as neceſſary to him as his Perfection, and that

as

as his Being: It was therefore impoſſible, (as implying a Contradiction,) that he ſhould decree to Reject or to Reprobate his Creatures, without the leaſt Intuition or Foreſight of their Sins; and at the ſame Inſtant decree to Damn them, not without, but with a regard to their Sins.

Eutychus. I do believe, that the Reaſon why God doth not decree to damn any Man without Reſpect to his Sins, is, becauſe he could not otherwiſe have ſhewn his Juſtice.

Epenetus. And I believe the ſame Reaſon holds for the one, as well as the other: For if he would not decree to damn any without Reſpect unto their Sins, becauſe he would be Juſt; he would as little decree to reprobate any Irreſpectively, becauſe he wou'd be Juſt too. It being always his Intention to glorify his Juſtice in whatſoever he decreed; and how that can be done, by decreeing that Men ſhould ſin, in order to Puniſhment, I can't conceive. Sir, let me ask you one Queſtion, Whether you think really, that God's Decree of Damnation was made without the leaſt Reſpect to Sin in his Creatures?

Eutychus. Tho' Puniſhment is executed after Sin, yet Sin was not intended to be the Cauſe of Damnation. And I have been told, that Mr. *Perkins* has taught for Divinity, *That God's Decree of Damning, was before his Decree of Creating Man.* So that tho' Eternal Puniſhment is laſt in Execution after Sin, yet it was firſt in God's Intention, ev'n before Sin.

Epenetus. Compare this with your laſt Objection, and you will find you contradict your ſelf. Beſide, if this Maxim were always true, [what is firſt intended, is laſt executed,] then a thouſand Abſurdities would follow. For what Man will ſay, that the Creation of the World, which was the firſt Thing in Execution, was the laſt in God's

Intention? But to put the Matter ev'n beyond Diſpute: God foreſeeing that Man would Voluntarily ſin, if not forcibly hindred, and decreeing not to uſe any forcible Hindrance, (which would not ſuit with the Nature of a Free and Voluntary Agent,) he alſo ſaw that *Adam* would make a wrong Choice, and thereby fall from his State of Innocence. The State of *Adam* is to be looked on as a Diſeaſe, which ſtands in need of a ſovereign Remedy. Now the Death of Chriſt is that Remedy which God decreed. Therefore it cannot be imagined, that the Remedy ſhould be firſt in Intention before the Diſeaſe was foreſeen, or the very Permiſſion of it decreed; tho' ſtill, the Remedy is to be laſt in Execution, as it was alſo in the Intention. Therefore, this Axiom muſt be ſo limited, as to be applicable to thoſe Things only, whereby the latter is the Abſolute End, and the former decreed as a Means to attain it by. But the Permiſſion of Sin, is not deſigned by God as a Means of bringing in any former Decree of giving Chriſt; but as that which is ſuitable to *Adam*'s Nature, created with a Free Elective Faculty, namely, what we call the Will. Now God foreſeeing that Man will do what will be permitted to be done, doth alſo foreſee an Opportunity of magnifying his Mercy in giving Chriſt, and accordingly decrees to give him; and that before *Adam* falls, tho' not before he decrees to permit his Fall, and actually foreſees that Fall of *Adam*. In order therefore to detect this Maxim, [what is firſt intended, is laſt executed,] the following Compariſons will ſufficiently ſhew the Abſurdity of it. Suppoſe a Man determines to take a Servant into his Houſe, who, inſtead of proving Honeſt and Faithful, his Maſter finds him a Knave, and ſo reſolves to put him away; muſt he therefore put him away before he takes him, becauſe

his

his Intention to take him, was before his Intention to put him away? Again, Suppoſe a Man here in *England* finding his Life to be in Danger, intends to go out of the Kingdom for the preſerving himſelf from preſent Peril, not caring whether he goes; the firſt Thing that he intends, is to take Ship at *Dover*, then it being indifferent to him, whether he goes to *Flanders* or *Holland*, or any Place elſe, he at laſt determines to go to *Spain*: Now, this being laſt in his Intention, according to your Logic, muſt be firſt in Execution; that is, he muſt firſt ſail to *Spain*, and after that, come and take Ship at *Dover*. In like Manner, if a Man intending to build a Houſe, (not to let into Tenements, but to dwell in it himſelf,) and after that, deſigns to make it ſumptuous, in the Proſecution of which, he turns Bankrupt, he then determines to let it out; therefore this being laſt in Execution, the ſpecious furniſhing of it next to that, and the building of it before both; it muſt follow by your Axiom, that he lets it out before he furniſhes it, and that he furniſhes it before he builds. Now, from what has been ſaid, can any thing be more impoſſible?

Eutychus. Since I have received ſo much Satisfaction in this Point, let me further ask you, Whether Faith, Perſeverance, and Salvation conſequent thereupon, are not God's own? if ſo, whether God may not do what he will with his own; and ſo might not from all Eternity, abſolutely purpoſe in himſelf, on whom to beſtow them, from whom to withold them, without any Injury to any?

Epenetus. I do not think what you have objected relates to the Matter in hand; for I never deny'd that Faith and Perſeverance were God's own Free Graces. I grant they are not, cannot be ours, unleſs he gives them; but when he hath ſo gi-

ven

ven them, he calls them ours. But the Queſtion in Debate is, whether God decreed Eternal Torments upon his Creatures, without the Conſideration of their Tranſgreſſions on whom theſe Torments are ſuppoſed to be decreed: Which I can by no Means grant; becauſe, when Chriſt is given for all the fallen Sons of *Adam*, (as I have elſewhere proved,) it is impoſſible that God ſhould fruſtrate and make void the End of Chriſt's Death, by puniſhing any Eternally, under the ſecond Covenant of Grace, meerly for the Sin of *Adam*, without incurring that Puniſhment either by a Rejection of Chriſt, or by actually ſinning ſome other way. God doth diſclaim that wicked Proverb, *Ezek.* 18. 2. *The Fathers have eaten ſour Grapes, and the Childrens Teeth are ſet on edge.* Now, he that *is kind to the Unthankful, and to the Evil*, Luke 6. 35. and commandeth us *to be merciful, as he is merciful*, ver. 36. by *loving our Enemies*, as he did his, was more likely to ſhew Mercy to all that were *in Maſſâ*, (becauſe he is kind to his Creatures, and delighteth to forgive, who *in the midſt of Judgment, remembereth Mercy*, Jam. 2. 13.) than to leave them in *Adam*'s Loins, under a deſperate Impoſſibility of being Saved, or of having any Intereſt in the Saviour of the World; and all becauſe he is no Man's Debtor. The *Pſalmiſt* ſaith plainly, That the *tender Mercy of God is over all his Works*, Pſal. 145. 9. He doth not ſay *Juſtice*, but *Mercy*; which plainly intimateth ſomething more to us, than a bare abſtaining from Wrong: Nor doth he ſay, God's Mercy is over *ſome* of his Works, but over *all*, without Exception. Which, how could *David* affirm with Truth, if the far greateſt part of Mankind (the nobleſt of all his Works under the Canopy of Heaven,) had been decreed to infinite and endleſs Torments, without the leaſt

Reſpect

Reſpect or Conſideration of any the leaſt Sin committed actually by any one of them? If we ſhould allow it to be Juſtice, to damn a poor Infant of a Day old to all Eternity, meerly as deſcending from a ſinful *Adam*; yet, I pray you, where were the Mercy to that poor Infant? So that you muſt either contradict *David*, by denying that God's Mercy is over all his Works; or elſe allow, that it is a greater Mercy to that poor Infant, to allow him the Dignity of a Being, or an Immortality in Hell, *where there is weeping, and wailing, and gnaſhing of Teeth; where the Worm dieth not, and the Fire is not quenched*; than to annihilate him, or reduce him to his Primitive Nothing. And as to *God's doing what he will with his own*, I grant he may do ſo; he may give Irreſiſtible Grace, or Grace not Irreſiſtible, yea, it may be Infallible and Converting Grace, and that whenſoever he doth ſo, no Man hath reaſon to complain of his Superlative Mercy: Yet it muſt alſo be granted, that God *may* alſo, if he pleaſes, proceed no further with his Creatures, than to give them ſufficient Grace, *to every Man a Talent to trade with*, and to him more Talents, who uſeth that Talent which he hath, as he ought. And from him who uſeth it not, or caſts it away, or refuſeth to receive it, or moſt unprofitably *lays it up in a Napkin*, God may juſtly take away his Talent of Grace which he hath given, or with-hold what he had offer'd, and was refuſed. Thus far I believe, God may moſt juſtly do: But that God will interpoſe his Power and Work infallibly and irreſiſtibly in the Converſion of a Sinner, is a Doctrine unſafe to proclaim, and moſt unchriſtian to teach Men to depend upon. For we are not to reſt upon what God *may do*, but what he certainly *does and will do.* There are indeed ſeveral Courſes and OEconomies all poſ-

ſible

ſible to God; but our Saviour hath taught us, which of all thoſe Courſes God is pleaſed to chuſe, in his Proceedings and Dealings with us. God *may* give us the Ability to faſt as many Days and Nights as *Moſes* and *Elias* did: He *may* alſo, if he pleaſes, make our Food to encreaſe in the very eating, by ſuch a Power as he ſhewed in the Widow's *Cruſe of Oil, and Barrel of Meal*; 1 Kings 17. 14, 16. He may feed us, and cloath us as he does the Birds and the Lilies; and by the ſame Omnipotency, by which he ſaid, *Let there be Light, and there was Light*, he may convert us as he did St. *Paul*, with equal Power and Expedition; or, like the Thief upon the Croſs, when we have only time left to cry *Peccavi*, or *Lord have Mercy upon us*; (tho' that either of theſe two were Irreſiſtibly Converted, you wou'd find it hard to prove.) I ſay, he *may* do all this, yet we cannot prove from hence, that theſe are the Methods which God *doth* ordinarily uſe, or that he uſeth them once in a thouſand Years; or indeed, that he will ever uſe them at all. God *might* have made us all as he did *Adam*, out of the Earth, without the Methods of Generation and Birth; but it does not follow from hence, that he *did*.

Eutychus. But the Apoſtle hath told us, *Rom.* 11. 33. *That God's Judgments are unſearchable, and his Ways paſt finding out:* Which is enough to ſtop the Mouths of his Creatures, and make them ſtand amazed, and adore his Counſels, which are paſt finding out by the ſhallow Line of Human Reaſon. Hath not God the ſame Power to do with his Creatures, as the Potter hath with his Clay, of the ſame common and equal Lump, to chuſe one part unto *Honour*, and leave another unto *Diſhonour*; the one having nothing to boaſt of, becauſe the Grace that ſaves them, is Gods;

the

the other nothing to complain of, becauſe the Sin which ruins them is their own? For whatſoever God doth, he doth by the Counſel of his own Will; he did therefore, from Eternity, decree to permit Sin, in order to his own Glory, magnifying his Free Mercy in thoſe in whom he did permit it, and pardon it; and in others, ſhewing forth due and deſerved Juſtice. For otherwiſe, he could, by Confirming Grace, have hindred and prevented the committing Sin, ev'n in all, as well in *Adam*, as in his Poſterity, as well in all Angels, as in ſome, and that without any Violence offered to their Nature at all, *Gen.* 31. 7. 1 *Cor.* 10. 13.

Epenetus. As to what you have ſaid, concerning God's Counſel being ſecret and unfathomable, it doth no way relate either to the Electing particular Perſons Abſolutely, or Conditionally; but to the Depth of God's Goodneſs, in patiently bearing with the Contumacy both of *Jews* and *Gentiles*; to the Depth of his Wiſdom, in making the Fall of the *Jews*, a Means of bringing in the *Gentiles*. For had you not groſsly overlook'd the Words immediately going before [*God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all*;] you might have ſeen, that it was the Conſideration of that rich Mercy, which made the Apoſtle cry out, *Oh, the Depth*, &c. Quite different to your Principles; St. *Paul*, alledging that God may have Mercy upon All, you endeavouring to prove, that God may not have Mercy upon All. Beſide, if thoſe Words in the Apoſtle do belong to your Purpoſe for which you bring them, why do you ſearch into thoſe very Myſtries which the Apoſtle confeſſeth to be *unſearchable*? For if they are unſearchable to me, they are alſo unſearchable to you; and if revealed in Scripture, I hope you have not the Vanity to think they are revealed

to

to you only. Now, if the Scripture may be called *the revealed Will of God*, yea, *the good and perfect Will of God*, and if you will grant that God means as he ſpeaks; then he hath clearly reveal'd in his Word, that he will never deal meerly by the Rules of *Sovereignty and Power*, but of *Righteouſneſs and Juſtice*, ſuch as Man himſelf is permitted to judge of, and is appeal'd to by God himſelf, whether it be ſo or no. See *Iſaiah* 5. 3, 4. *Jer.* 2. 5, 9, 10, &c. *Iſaiah* 43. 26. *Micah* 6. 1, 2, 3. *Ezek.* 18. 23, 29, 30. *Gen.* 18. 23, 25. And as to God's paſſing by thoſe *In Maſſâ*, or the Loins of *Adam*, God hath plainly told us, *the Son ſhall not die for the iniquity of the Father*, Ezek. 18. And that with the precious Blood of Chriſt, he hath *bought* every one who was loſt in *Adam*. See 2 *Pet.* 2. 1. 2 *Cor.* 5. 14. And as touching God's Decreeing to permit Sin from all Eternity, from his Actually permitting it in time, ſo far I will go hand in hand with you; becauſe here you argue from the Execution to the Decree, when you ſay, [God doth permit Sin, and whatſoever he doth, he doth by the Counſel of his own Will, therefore he did from Eternity Decree to permit it.] Now, if this way of arguing is ſound and rational, as it certainly is, and may be demonſtrated to be; then we ſhall ceaſe to be Antagoniſts any longer; which I hope to evince, by the following Chain of Propoſitions, whereof the one will be firmly link'd within the other. For Example: *1ſt*, What God hath *willed ſhall come to paſs*, ſhall come to paſs as he hath will'd it, and no otherwiſe than as he hath willed it, (for his Will of the Circumſtance is as truly his, as his Will of the Subſtance.) From whence it follows, that *2dly*, What doth come to paſs *Abſolutely* (as the Creation of the World, the Mutability of Man, the tending of heavy Bodies downwards,

wards, and the like) he did Eternally will ſhould come to paſs *Abſolutely*; and what doth come to paſs *Conditionally*, he did Eternally will ſhould *Conditionally* come to paſs. But the Word of God tells us, and all Men confeſs, that Man's Eternal Reward, or Puniſhment, doth come to paſs upon Condition of his Obedience, or by reaſon of his Diſobedience or Rebellion. Therefore, 4*thly*, Man's Eternal Reward or Puniſhment, were Eternally decreed or will'd to come to paſs, in the very ſame manner in which they do come to paſs, namely, on Condition or in Reſpect of his Obedience, or Rebellion. Which Propoſitions muſt needs be true, becauſe God's Decrees are adequate to their Events; and the Effects of his Decrees are exactly anſwerable to his Decrees, (as Face anſwereth Face, when a Man looketh into a Glaſs;) for whatſoever and howſoever he decreed to do before Time, that Thing, and in that Manner he doth in Time. Again, whatſoever and and howſoever he doth in Time, that Thing and in that Manner he decreed to do before Time. But God in Time, doth caſt Men into Hell, in regard of all their Sins, as well Actual as Original: Therefore he did Decree before Time, to caſt Men into Hell, in regard of all their Sins, as well Actual as Original. The major is granted by you, and confirmed from *Eph.* 1. 11. The minor is granted by all ſides, and is confirmed from every page of Scripture, as *Rom.* 2. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. The Concluſion is granted in the Premiſes.

Eutychus. Since the Matter is thus, what muſt we think of thoſe Places in Scripture, where it is ſaid, *that God hardens Mens Hearts*; *that he delivers them up to a Reprobate Mind*; *that he ſends them ſtrong Deluſions, that they ſhould believe a Lie*, and the like? I'm ſure this ſavours of an Efficacious Impulſe in Almighty God on the Hearts of Men.

Epene-

Epenetus. By no Means; for God never hardens any Man's Heart as the Sun hardens Clay, by ſhining on it, but as the Sun hardens Wax by not ſhining on it, by not ſoftening it any longer, and ſo by leaving it to harden it ſelf. For all thoſe Verbs, *to harden, to deliver up, to deceive, to ſend Deluſions*, and the like, have been always taken *Figuratively*; *Permiſſive* in Signification, tho' *Active* in Sound. And in this Senſe, I am informed, all the Fathers both of the Eaſtern and Weſtern Churches have underſtood them. It being uſual in the Style of the Scripture, to ſpeak after this Manner: He who doth not reſtrain when he can, is ſaid to give up: He who doth not take away when he can, is ſaid to give: And he who doth not give, is ſaid in that Caſe to take away. God is ſaid to raiſe out of the Grave, when he only hinders from going thither; and to lead a Man thither, when he only ſuffers him to fall, or does not hinder him from falling. You know, in the Caſe of *Job*, *Job* 1. 11. and *chap.* 2. 5. that Satan intreated God, in the Imperative Mood, *Put forth thy Hand now, and touch all that he hath.* Who cannot, for all this, be thought to have *commanded* God Almighty, becauſe God cannot be thought to have *obeyed* him; God only ſaid, *Behold, he is in thine Hand*; from whence it is plain, he ſpake of a Permiſſion only; where, by the way, it is obſervable, (and I pray God it may be uſefully obſerved by them who take delight to do Miſchief) That tho' God ſhould grant our Petition, when we beg of him the Power of doing Evil, (as the Devil did,) yet when he ſhall grant our Petition, as he did Satan's, by permitting us to do, or not hindring us from doing all the Evil which we deſire; it is by no Means an Argument of his Kindneſs and Approbation, but only an Argument of his Wrath, as it was to Satan,

tan, *Job* 1. 11, 12. *Mat.* 8. 31, 32. Hear what an excellent Biſhop of our own Church has ſaid on this Matter, who was frighted out of your Principle, by thoſe Horrible Concluſions which ſome Men drew (and which, by you, muſt follow) from thoſe Words of our Saviour, in the Imperative Mood, *Deſtroy this Temple*, (meaning the *Temple of his Body*;) that Holy Man hath theſe Words: (*a*). "That it "ſhould enter into any Man's Heart to think, that "Chriſt would open his Mouth to command or "counſel his own Making-away, (that is, the "committing the moſt horrible foul Murder that "ever was;) God forbid! Give me any Religion, "rather than that, that draweth God into the "Society of Sin; makes him, and makes Chriſt, "either Author or Adviſer, Commander or Coun-"ſeller of ought that is Evil: Any, I ſay, rather "than that. — This *Solvite* was to them, as *Fac* "*citò* to *Judas* after; *Quod facis*, That which thou "art reſolved to do, and haſt taken Earneſt upon "it; *Fac*, Do it; *Fac citò*, Do it out of the way; "which, yet (it is well known) was nothing "but a Permiſſion, and not a Jot more. But "ſhould ſo foul an Evil as that be permitted "though? No, nor that neither, ſimply; it is not "a bare Permiſſion, but one qualified, and that "with two Limitations: Will ye mark them? For, "firſt, he would not ſuffer any Evil at all, (leaſt "of all that) but that out of the Evil he was able "(able and willing both) to draw a far greater "Good: Greater for Good, I ſay, than that was "for Evil." For God, every-where in Scripture, profeſſeth, that he *wills no Evil*; as when he forbids it by his Laws, *Exod.* 20. *Rom.* 6. 12.

(*a*) Biſhop *Andrews*'s Sermon X. of the *Reſurrection*, upon *John* 2. 19. pag. 486, 487.

When he provides againſt it by his Diſcipline, 1 *Tim.* 1. 20. When he ſhews us how to avoid it, *Deut.* 11. 18, 26. When he tells us, he cannot endure it, *Pſal.* 5. 4, 5. and 45. 7. *Iſa.* 61. 8. When he wins us from it by Promiſes, *Deut.* 5. 29. When he frights us from it by Threats, *Rom.* 1. 18. *Gen.* 2. 17. When he profeſſeth, that it is to him both a Trouble and a Diſhonour, *Iſa.* 7. 13. How doth he wiſh, that his People had walked in his Ways? *Pſal.* 81. 13. How doth he expoſtulate and make his Appeal, whether he had omitted any thing which might tend to the Converſion of a ſinful *Iſrael? Iſa.* 5. 3, 4. Is not the whole 18th Chapter of *Ezekiel* ſpent in taking away that unworthy Proverb, *The Fathers have eaten ſour Grapes, and the Childrens Teeth are ſet on edge. Are not my Ways equal?* (ſaith God,) *And are not your Ways unequal?* But ſure, *their Ways* had been *his*, if he had Abſolutely contrived them. *The Soul that ſinneth, it ſhall die*, ver. 4. And *why will ye die, O Houſe of Iſrael?* ver. 31. Which was virtually to ask them, Why they would Sin too? Which it is plain, they ought to have done, if he had willed it: For the poſitive Will of God muſt and ought to be done, (as we pray in our Daily Prayer which God hath taught us:) And can any Man be puniſhed for doing what he muſt do? Muſt any Man be puniſhed for doing that which he ought to do? No, ſo far is God from being the Author of any Man's Sin, that the Apoſtle, 1 *Cor.* 10. 13. ſaith, He *is faithful, and will not ſuffer us to be tempted above what we are able*, but will be ſure to *make a way*, either for *Conqueſt*, or for *Eſcape*. We dare not ſay then, when we have been great Sinners, *What if God hath ſo decreed it?* St. *James* hath told me, that Sin is both ingendred and *conceived* within me: *when my Luſt hath conceived, it bringeth forth Sin*, Jam. 1. 15.

And

And if my Luſt is the Mother of it, ſure the Father is my Will. It was *David*'s Remark on wicked *Iſrael*, that *they provoked God to Anger*, (not with his Will, but) *with their own Inventions*, Pſal. 106. 29. There are Contrivers of *Miſchief*, *Pſal* 58. 3. Deviſers of *Lies*, ſuch as *weary themſelves to commit Iniquity*, Jer. 9. 5. And ſhall we preſume to impute all theſe to an Abſolute Decree? God forbid! *O Lord, righteouſneſs belongeth unto thee, but unto us confuſion of face. For thou haſt made Man upright; but we have found out many inventions*, Dan. 9. 7. Eccleſ. 7. 29. We are thy Creatures O Lord, but Sin is of our own Creating. Thou ſaweſt *every thing that thou hadſt made, and behold it was very good.* We ſee the Things that are made by the *Fiat* of our Will, and behold they are very Evil; for *the Wages of Sin is Death.* Which plainly ſhews, that God did not ordain Puniſhment, but in reſpect to Sin. Becauſe if God had made a Hell by an Abſolute Purpoſe, meerly becauſe he would that ſome ſhould ſuffer it, Damnation had been a Miſery, but not a Puniſhment: Which would repreſent God to be juſt like One I have read of, who made it his Recreation, to cut up Animals alive. For what *Potter* makes a *Veſſel* on purpoſe that he may break it? Sure none but a Madman can be thought to act thus. God hath ſaid, *Rom.* 12. 19. *Vengeance is mine, and I will repay.* But how could this be, if God caſt Men into Hell, without regard to any one Sin committed by them? (as you have formerly ſaid.) This wou'd be an Act of Power, indeed, but not of Vengeance: Hell wou'd be a Torment, but not a Recompence. From whence we may learn, The Sinner is the Efficient Cauſe of his Eternal Puniſhment; tho' not of Hell, the Place of his Puniſhment; neither of the Devils, or the Fire, the Inſtruments of his Puniſhment: For they are Sub-

ſtances of God's creating, and in their Nature very good: Hell being made by God to keep Men from it, as well as to puniſh thoſe that wou'd needs go to it. It is not the *Witneſs*, the *Judge*, or the *Jury*; it is not the *Jaylor*, the *Sheriff*, or the *Gibbet*; it is not the *Carpenter* who made the Gibbet on which the *Felon* is to be hang'd, neither the *Hangman* by whom, nor the *Halter* with which the *Felon* is hang'd; it is not, I ſay, any, nor all of theſe, to which the Death of the *Malefactor* can be ſo much imputable, as to *himſelf*. He is therefore the moſt Effectual Cauſe, who by the Heinouſneſs of his Felony did *call Death to him, and pulled Deſtruction upon himſelf with the work of his own hands*, (as the Book of *Wiſdom* ſpeaks, *chap.* 1. 12, 16.) For to ſay, that God is a Slayer of Men from all Eternity, who is the *Lamb ſlain* (that is, a *Saviour*) *from the foundation of the World*, Rev. 13. 8. is to affirm that of Him, which He affirmed of the Devil, who is called by our Saviour, *a Murderer from the Beginning*, John 8. 44. Which the Devil cou'd not be, if God had abſolutely will'd the Death of any, without reſpect or relation to the Snares of the Devil; it being impoſſible to *murder* the *Dead*, or to *ſlay* thoſe that were *kill'd* long before they were born.

Eutychus. Sir, I have been told, That if Sin were the Cauſe that moved God to Reprobate Mankind, he would have Reprobated or Rejected *All*, becauſe *all Men are look'd upon as Sinners*: But ſince he did not Reprobate *All*, therefore for *Sin* he Reprobated *None*, but for his own *Pleaſure*; in which we muſt reſt, without ſeeking any other Cauſe.

Epenetus. Sir, the Evening begins to come on; therefore, with your Leave, I will conſider this Objection at our next Meeting; and ſo I commend you

you to the Divine Protection, and heartily wiſh you a Good-Night.

Eutychus. Shall I treſpaſs ſo far on your Good Nature, as to favour me with your Company again to Morrow; for I am very deſirous to know your Opinion in this laſt Particular.

Epenetus. Any thing that I can ſerve you in, you may freely command.

Eutychus. Sir, I humbly thank you, and moſt kindly wiſh you alſo a Good-Night.

The End of the Fifth Conference.

CONFERENCE VI.

Epenetus.

GOod Morrow to you, Sir.

Eutychus. Be pleaſed to walk in, my very good Friend: I thought every Minute long, 'till I ſaw you. I am extreamly affected with your laſt Diſcourſe, and it is an inexpreſſible Joy to me, to hear God ſo fully cleared from having any the leaſt hand in the Miſery of his Creatures; and that he has no hand in the *Effecting* any Evil, or ev'n in the Permiſſion of it, ſo far as Permiſſion denotes Connivance. All this is a mighty Encouragement to me, to go on with my *Objections*, in hopes to find the ſame Satisfaction. I ſhall therefore repeat over again my laſt Objection, which was this; If Sin were

the Cauſe that movcd God to Reprobate Mankind, he would have reprobated or rejected *All*, becauſe *all men are look'd upon as Sinners.* But ſince he did not Reprobate *All*, therefore for *Sin* he reprobated *none*, but for his own *pleaſure*; in which we muſt reſt, without ſeeking any other Cauſe.

Epenetus. Then it muſt follow from hence, that God did bring Men into a *Neceſſity* of Sinning, and left them under this *Neceſſity*; and ſo, conſequently, muſt be the *Author* of the Reprobate's Sins. For by this Doctrine, God muſt be the chief and ſole Cauſe of that, which is the Neceſſary and Immediate Cauſe of the Sins of Reprobates, namely, their Impotency and want of Supernatural Grace; therefore he is by the ſame Doctrine, the true and proper Cauſe of their Sins. Becauſe that which withdraweth or withholdeth a thing, which being preſent would hinder an Event, is the Cauſe of that Event. As for Example: He that cutteth a String in which a Stone hangs, is the Cauſe of the falling of that Stone; and he that withdraweth a Pillar, which being put to, would uphold a Houſe, is the true Cauſe, in Mens account, of the falling of that Houſe: Now, if God withholdeth from Reprobates that *Power*, which being granted them, would keep them from falling into Sin; by Conſequence he becometh a *true moral Cauſe* of their Sins.

Eutychus. Here you are under a Miſtake. God's withholding Grace from the Reprobates, may indeed be ſaid to be an *Accidental*, but not a Proper and Direct Cauſe of their Sins.

Epenetus. If I am under a Miſtake, you are quite beſide the Purpoſe: For a Cauſe is then only Accidental in relation to the Effect, when the Effect is beſide the Intention and Expectation of the Cauſe. For Example: Digging in a Field, is then an Accidental Cauſe of finding a Bag of Gold,

Gold, when the Event is neither expected, nor intended by the Husbandman, in digging: But when the Effect is look'd for, and aim'd at, then the Cauſe (tho' it be the Cauſe only of with-holding the Impediment) is not Accidental. For Inſtance: A Pilot with-holding his Care and Skill from a Ship in a Storm, when at the ſame time he ſees, by his Neglect, the Ship will be loſt; is not to be reputed an *Accidental*, but a *Proper* and *True Cauſe* of the Loſs of the Ship. From whence I argue, That God, by his Act and Decree of removing and denying Grace neceſſary to the avoiding Sin, from the Reprobates, (not as one ignorant and careleſs what will or ſhall follow, but knowing infallibly what Miſchief will follow, and determining preciſely that which doth follow, namely, their Impenitency and Damnation,) becometh the Proper and Direct Cauſe of their Sins. This is and will be always the Conſequence of your Doctrine, a *Doctrine* moſt cruel and deſtructive to the Souls of Men, and repugnant to the Scriptures in every Page of them. *How oft would I have gathered you?* ſaith *Chriſt* to *Jeruſalem*, Mat. 23. 37. *Theſe things I ſay, that ye might be ſaved:* but *ye will not come to me, that ye might have life*, John 5. 34, 40. intimating in thoſe words no leſs than this, That it was his full Intent, by his Preaching, to gather and to ſave thoſe very particular Men, that in the end were not gathered nor ſaved, through their Contempt and Neglect of *Chriſt*'s Miniſtry: *If I had not come, and ſpoken unto them, they had not had ſin*, ſaith our Saviour, *John* 15. 22. From whence it is evident, That *Chriſt*, in his Preaching, did adminiſter ſo much inward Grace, as was ſufficient to convince thoſe who rejected the Goſpel, of poſitive Unbelief, and render them obnoxious to juſt Puniſhment. God's principal Aim in the Husbandry he beſtowed on the *Jewiſh Church*,

was, that it ſhould *bring forth good Fruit*; tho' in the Event it did not. For when God *looked for Grapes*, ſaith the Text, *Iſa.* 5. 2. *it brought forth wild Grapes.* And tho' the *Fig-tree be barren* under the Goſpel Diſpenſation, yet he is not willing to *cut it down* immediately, 'till he hath *digged about it, and dunged it.* God's Intent in bearing with Mens Sins, is, the *leading them to Repentance*; and ſo on to Salvation. For *Repentance* is ordained by Him to *Salvation*, as a *Means* to the *End*; God intending Good by his Forbearance, ev'n to ſuch as deſpiſe the Goodneſs of his Forbearance; not *knowing* or conſidering *that the Goodneſs of God ſhould lead them to Repentance.* For St. *Peter* ſaith, 2 *Pet.* 3. 9. *The Lord is not ſlack, — as ſome men count ſlackneſs, —* but *is long-ſuffering to us-ward*; that is, us Men. And why is he patient towards us? but only becauſe he is *not willing that any ſhould periſh*; but the End of his Patience, is, *that All ſhould come to Repentance.* He is willing that we ſhould eſcape that terrible Sentence, *Mat.* 25. 41. *Depart from me, ye Curſed, into Everlaſting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels.* And therefore hath left it upon Record; to the Intent that we might ſo frame our Lives and Converſations, as not to come under it. And here I muſt remark, That tho' our Bleſſed Saviour bid them on the Left-hand *depart into everlaſting fire*; yet he did not ſay it was prepared for *them* but for *the Devil and his Angels.* For if *the Wages of Sin be Death and Hell*, Rom. 6. 23. ſurely the Paying of the *Wages*, implies the Doing of the *Work.* From whence I infer, That God did not prepare Hell for *Men* as Men, no, nor for *Angels* as Angels; but, that God in his primary Deſign, made Hell for *wicked Angels*, and *wicked Men*, inaſmuch as they were wicked; and ſo had prepared themſelves for Hell, (in order

of

of Nature) before that God had prepared Hell for them. For, in Order of Nature, Sin is firſt, and Puniſhment afterward; God never determining that *Cain* and *Judas* ſhould be caſt out of his Preſence, but for their Murder and Impenitency, and no otherwiſe. From whence I infer, That the leaſt degree of God's Mercy, hath ſome Comfort: But is it a Comfort to the Reprobates, that they were render'd Incapable of Heaven, by a Peremptory Decree, and ſure of Hell, without reſpect unto their Sins? yea, and lying under an Abſolute Neceſſity of being Sinful, without a Poſſibility of Repentance, that ſo they might not be Damn'd for nothing? How contrary are theſe Poſitions, to that God, who hath told us, *He hath no Pleaſure in the Death of the Wicked. He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the Children of Men. He is a God ready to Pardon, ſwift to ſhew Mercy, and ſlow to Wrath. His Mercy is over all his Works. His Commandments are not grievous. The Soul that ſinneth, it ſhall die. The Son ſhall not die for the Iniquity of the Father.* For God requireth *according to what Men have, and not according to what they have not.* He condemns not any Man for not Seeing, to whom he never gave Eyes, or who never had Light whereby to See. He condemns not the Deaf, for not Hearing the Goſpel; nor the tender Infant, for not Comprehending it: And how he will be pleaſed to deal with Others, who are under ſuch-like Impoſſibility, for want of having the Goſpel preached unto them, he hath no otherwiſe told us, than by Parity of Reaſon, That many are ſaved by Chriſt's Name, who never heard it; and by his Merits, who never heard of them.

Eutychus. But there are ſome Texts of Scripture that ſeem to ſay the contrary, namely, *Rom.* 1. 20. where God is ſaid to reveal himſelf to the *Gentiles*, by the Creatures, that they might be

without

without excuſe. And *Luke* 2. 34. *Simeon* ſaith of Chriſt, that he is appointed *for the fall, and riſing again of many in Iſrael.* And 1 Cor. 1 22. *But we preach Chriſt ſaith*, St. Paul, *unto the Jews a ſtumbling-block, and unto the Greeks fooliſhneſs*, &c. By theſe places it ſeemeth, that God giveth theſe things to ſome, to make them *ſtumble*, and that they might be left *without excuſe.*

Epenetus. In anſwer to this, I do believe, That it is with God's Ordinances and Gifts, (and that very often too) as it is ſometimes with Phyſic; which is given by the *Phyſician* for the Patient's good; but many times, thro' the Diſtemper of his Body, it doth him hurt. And as it is with the *Sun*, God intendeth by the Shining of it, the Enlightning and Cheriſhing of Men and other Creatures in this Lower World; but ſome Men are hurt by the Light of it, others are ſcorched by the Heat of it: not Intentionally, but Accidentally, and that by reaſon of the Climates wherein they live, or the Ill-affectedneſs of their Eyes and Bodies. God's Bleſſings being many times beſtowed upon Men, for their Eternal Welfare, out of his abundant Goodneſs and Clemency, which yet, thro' the ill frame and temper of Mens Hearts, do effect their Hurt: For whatſoever Gifts and Graces we receive from God, if they are not improved according to the Intent of the Donor, will certainly turn to our greater Condemnation hereafter; and as one expreſſes it, "They that have deſpiſed God's "Inviting Will, ſhall feel his Revenging Will." Our Saviour having told us, *where much is given, much ſhall be required.* And *he that knew his Maſters Will, and did it not, ſhall be beaten with many Stripes.* But Men of your Perſwaſion, have told the World, that God never intended the Means of Grace, for the Salvation of Reprobates, they being Abſolutely Rejected, both from Grace and

Salva-

Salvation too, by a peremptory Decree. Hear what *Calvin* ſaith, in his Book of *Inſtitutions*, Book 3. Chap 24. (which I find quoted by an excellent Divine of our own;) " God ſendeth his Word to " Reprobates, that they may be made more deaf; " he ſetteth up a Light before them, to make " them the blinder; he giveth them a Remedy " that they might not be healed. " To the ſame purpoſe ſpeaks (*a*) *Beza*; " It ſhould not ſeem " abſurd unto us, (ſaith he) that God ſhould offer " his Grace, in the Word and Sacraments, to ſome " Reprobates in the Church, not to this End, " that they might be ſaved by it, but that they " might be leſs excuſable than others, and obnox- " ious to the ſorer Puniſhment. " If this be the Caſe, I can't ſee why any ſhould be afraid of any Sin which is Pleaſant or Profitable, ſeeing they muſt needs Sin by an Abſolute Neceſſity; or what reaſon any have to *Weep* or *Mourn*, when they have Sinned; ſeeing they have not Sinned *truly*, becauſe they Sinned *neceſſarily*. For if Men Sin by a Decree, that cauſeth them to Sin, it muſt either be the fault of that Decree, or no fault at all; and be it which way it will, it is not the fault of the Man; and by conſequence Sorrow, Fear, or any other Act of Repentance, may be as well ſpared as ſpent. For if all our Doings are God's Ordinances, all our Imaginations Branches of his Predeſtination, and all Events in Kingdoms and Commonwealths the neceſſary Iſſue of the Divine Decree, then all Things that Miniſters and States, Courts and Kingdoms do or act, comes juſt to nothing at all: The beſt Laws cannot reſtrain one Offender, nor the greateſt Reward promote one Virtue; the moſt powerful Sermon can-

(*a*) *Beza Prælud. in cap. 9. ad Rom.* pag. 434.

not

not convert one Sinner, nor the humbleſt Devotions divert one Calamity. The ſtrongeſt Endeavours (by this Opinion) in Things of any Nature whatſoever, can affect no more, than would be done without them; becauſe the Neceſſitating Over-ruling Decree of God doth all. And if Laws do nothing, wherefore are they made? If Rules of Religion do nothing, why are they preſcribed? If the Wills of Men do nothing, why are Men encouraged to one thing, and ſcared from another? If therefore good Endeavours and Deſigns do nothing, being controlled and every way governed by an Abſolute Decree, to what Purpoſe are they uſed? So that this Doctrine tends to ſubvert Religion and Piety, Government and Society, out of the World.

Eutychus. I am pretty well ſatisfied with what you have ſaid in this laſt Particular; but yet there is one Text of Scripture, namely, St. *Jude*, ver. 4. which ſeems to interfere with your Diſcourſe: *There are certain Men* (ſaith he) *crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation:* implying, that notwithſtanding all the Zeal and Vigilance of the *Church* to keep ſuch out, yet they muſt come in, becauſe the Apoſtle ſaith, they *were ordained to this Condemnation.* How are they ſaid to be *Ordained* to it?

Epenetus. Not by an Abſolute Reprobation: For Divines ſay, the Original Word implies no ſuch thing. But ſuch ungodly Men as are there mentioned, who *turn the Grace of God into laſciviouſneſs, and deny the only Lord God, and our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, may be ſaid to be *ordained to this condemnation* in a three-fold ſenſe. 1*ſt*, By God's general Decree, or the Sentence of the Law, which is the Revelation of that Decree, *That the wicked ſhall die.* For God being Eſſentially Holy, cannot take *pleaſure in wickedneſs*, Pſal. 5. 4. nor will

will he *clear the guilty*, *Exod.* 34. 7. He hath therefore from all Eternity made a general Decree, to *render to every Man according to his Works*, Rom. 2. 6. *Heaven* is a Reward for ſuch as continue *to the End* in Well-doing, but *Death* and *Hell* are the *Wages of Sinners*, and the *Workers of Iniquity*. Now by Reaſon of ſuch an Eternal Law or Decree, immutably eſtabliſhed in Heaven, every ſuch wicked Wretch may be ſaid to be *fore-ordained* to Condemnation. Not that this Decree being an Immanent Act in God, doth produce any real Effect, anſwerable to it ſelf, either *for* the Creature, before he was made, or *in* the Creature after he was made, until he hath of himſelf, freely made up that meaſure of Sin, unto which *Hell-fire* was annexed by the ſaid Decree. You know, we ſay, The Malefactor is a *Dead Man*, before either the *Judge* hath given Sentence, or the *Jury* brought in their Verdict; that is, he is *Dead in Law*; Dead by a Decree made concerning ſuch Crimes many hundred Years (perhaps) before this Malefactor was Born. Now as the Laws of Men on Earth, do not Neceſſitate any Man to commit thoſe Crimes, againſt which they are made, ſo neither doth the Eternal Decree of God in Heaven, which was promulged into a wholſom Law againſt Sin, neceſſitate or force any Man to commit thoſe Crimes, againſt which it is eſtabliſhed. The Law made and provided againſt Felony, is ſo far from neceſſitating any Man to commit it, that it ſerves every Man for a Preſervative againſt it. Neither is any Man liable to the Condemnation of the Law, 'till he be found Guilty, and Convicted of the Voluntary Breach of it. And ſhall we think, that God Acts upon a principle of Juſtice below that of Man! Far be it from us to think ſo wickedly. *The Soul that ſinneth it ſhall die*, and he that hath filled up the meaſure of his Iniquity, may,

in

in reſpect of God's General Decree againſt Sin, be ſaid to be *fore-ordained* to Condemnation; and in this ſenſe it is, the Finally Unbelieving, are ſaid by our Saviour, to be *condemned already*, John 3. 18, 36. *2dly*, They may be ſaid to be *ordained*, by way of *Prediction*, it being ſo fore-told or left upon public Record. And this is more agreeable to the Word in St. *Jude*, than that by which it is rendred [*Ordained*] for it ſeems the Original Word may ſignify any thing expoſed to public View, being paſted on a Door to be taken notice of. agreeable to that Paſſage in *Gal.* 3. 1. where Chriſt is ſaid to be *ſet forth* before the Eyes of the *Galatians*, being ſet forth and expoſed to public View, in the Holy Ordinances of his *Church*. So were thoſe Seducers St. *Jude* ſpeaks of, and all ſuch as follow their pernicious Ways, poſted up, ſet forth to Condemnation, in thoſe Predictions of our Saviour and his Apoſtles, to which St. *Jude* alludes, as appears, *ver.* 17. 18. *Remember ye the Words which were ſpoken before of the Apoſtles of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, how that they told you, there ſhould be Mockers*, &c. *Luke* 21. 8, 21. 2. *Theſſ.* 2. 8, *&c.* That St. *Jude* ſpeaks of ſuch a Prediction of them, appears by the 14 verſe; *And Enoch alſo the ſeventh from Adam*, (as *Moſes* and others had done) *propheſied of theſe, ſaying, Behold, the Lord cometh*, &c. In this reſpect alſo the Ungodly may be ſaid to be *fore-ordained* unto *condemnation*. *3dly*, They may be ſaid to be *ordained to Condemnation*, by ſome notable *Type* or *Example*: Thus St. *Jude* ſaith, *ver.* 7. that the *Sodomites* were *ſet forth for an Example, ſuffering the Vengence of Eternal Fire*. St. *Peter* ſaith, they were made *an Example unto thoſe that after ſhould live ungodly*, 2 Pet. 2. 6. For our Saviour's Rule is, that they that are parallel in the Sin, ſhall be alſo in the Judgment, *Luke* 13. 3. And accordingly the Apoſtle having declared

declared that the *Iſraelites* had a Promiſe of Inheriting the Land of *Canaan*, yet by their repeated Provocations they were cut off by God's Oath, (ſee *Numb.* 14. 21, 22, 34, 35.) from all Hope or Poſſibility of Enjoying it. The Apoſtle, I ſay, gives us Chriſtians Caution, to avoid the like Sins, leſt we fall under the like irrecoverable Sentence of Reprobation, *Heb.* 3. 18. & *chap.* 4. 1, 11. and again he tells us, 1 *Cor.* 10. 6, 11. the Judgments of God upon that People were our *Types*, *Figures*, or *Examples*, and that they were *written for our admonition.* If you remember, there is a Paſſage in St. *Jude*, *ver.* 11. where it is ſaid, that the Covetous, Seditious, and Bloody Sect of the *Gnoſticks* in his time, went *in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the Error of Balaam for reward, and periſhed in the gainſaying of Core.* Now you know, this could be no otherwiſe than in their *Types*, *Patterns*, or *Repreſentatives*; becauſe the Rebellion of *Corah* was in *Moſes*'s time, and theſe Men lived in St. *Jude*'s time, which was about 1500 Years after. Thus you may ſee in what ſenſe Men may be ſaid to be *fore-ordained* to *Condemnation*, though their Perſons be under no ſuch Decree of Abſolute Reprobation.

Eutychus. But, Sir, if the Reprobates were not *ordained to Condemnation* by an Abſolute Decree, how comes it to paſs that our Saviour did not Pray for their Converſion? For in that moſt pathetic Prayer of his, recorded by the Evangeliſts, (nay, underſtood by ſome Men as a Copy of his Interceſſion now in Heaven,) he there prayeth only for the Elect: *John* 17. 9. *I pray for them: I pray not for the World, but for them which thou haſt given me, for they are thine.*

Epenetus. This Text, tho' often brought by Men of your Principles, as a main Prop and Support to their Cauſe, yet it has nothing of Strength

or

or Weight in it. For if we did but rightly obſerve the ſeveral and diſtinct *Parts* of our Saviour's Prayer, it would give us a right underſtanding of the *Whole*. For the firſt and greateſt Part thereof, is ſpent in the behalf of his *Apoſtles*, for whom he prays, That his Father wou'd preſerve them in Truth and Unity, *ver.* 11. 17. That he would give them Patience and Courage to endure and undergo the Malice of a wicked World, and to ſupport their Souls under the Perſecutions of it, *ver.* 14, 15. That he would Bleſs their Miniſtry, by making it Succeſsful to the Converſion of the World. For our Saviour deſigning this Prayer, in *an eſpecial manner for his Apoſtles*, whom he had now inveſted with the Office of the Miniſtry, he emphatically Prays for the Proſperity of their Office, and the Perſeverance of their Perſons in the Faith, in theſe Words, *I pray for them, I pray not for the World:* but having in particular prayed for them, he then Prays more extenſively, ev'n for *All that ſhould believe, thro' their Miniſtry*, ver. 20. and becauſe Unity in Faith, Charity and Affection in Doctrine, are ſo amiable, that they are a great Motive to enduce Strangers to embrace that Religion, which is calculated to preſerve ſuch Unity among the Profeſſors of it; therefore he prays for this Unity amongſt Believers, that it may gain Credit to the Goſpel they profeſs, and procure the Miniſtry thereof to be the more effectual to the Unbelieving World, *ver.* 21. The whole Prayer, in reſpect to what has been ſaid, runs thus, *Neither pray I for theſe* [Apoſtles] *alone, but for them alſo which ſhall believe on me, through their Word; that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they may be one in us.* Obſerve in particular theſe Words following, *That the World*, (that is of Unbelievers) *may know that thou haſt ſent me.* From whence it is manifeſt, that our Saviour prayed,

prayed, that the grace of *Faith* might immediately thro' the Preaching of the Apoſtles, be beſtowed on the whole World; and *he that believeth* in Chriſt, *hath Everlaſting Life. God ſo loved the World,* (ſaith St. John, chap. 3. 16.) *that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth in him ſhould not periſh,* &c. God loved the *World,* ſaith the Text, that is, the whole Race of Mankind; *He willeth not the death of a Sinner.* And leſt ſome Men ſhould ſay, It is true, he willeth not the Death of a Repenting Sinner, he hath told us, *Ezek.* 18. 32. he extendeth the Propoſition to them alſo that periſh; *I have no pleaſure in the death of him that dieth.* "God would fain have us believe Him, ſaith "*Tertullian,* (as quoted by an eminent Divine of "our own Church) when he ſaith, *I will not* "*the death of him that dieth*: and therefore he "bindeth his ſpeech with an Oath. *(a)* Happy "are we, for whoſe ſake the Lord vouchſafeth "to ſwear; but moſt unhappy if we believe him "not when he ſweareth." But further, *God,* ſaith St *Paul.* Rom. 11. 32. *hath concluded all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.* In which Words, there are two (*Alls*) of equal Extent, the one ſtanding againſt the other; namely, an *All* of Unbelievers, and an *All* of Objects of Mercy; ſo that as many *Unbelievers* as there are, on ſo many hath God a Will of ſhewing Mercy: And therefore, if there be Unbelievers among Men of all Sorts and Conditions, and every Man in every Sort may be Unbelievers, then is every Man of every Condition under Mercy; and if every Man be under Mercy, then there is no preciſe antecedent Will of God, of ſhutting up ſome (and thoſe the greateſt part too) from all poſſibility of obtaining Mercy. Now, if God *hath no*

(*a*) *Tertul. lib. de Pœn.* c. 4. O beatos nos, quorum causâ Deus jurat! O miſerimos, ſi nec juranti domino credimus!

pleaſure in wicked Mens death, not ev'n of theirs who have *deſpiſed* and *rejected* his Offers of Grace, much leſs can he *take pleaſure in the damnation* of ſo many Millions of Souls, who are either altogether Innocent, or tainted only with *Original Sin*. How contrary to all this, do Men of your Principle teach, who tell Mankind, "That all "Things (and by conſequence all Sins) do happen, "not only by God's Fore-knowledge, but by his "poſitive Decree: That Men do Sin by God's "Impulſe; and execute, as well as contrive all "Miſchief, not by God's Permiſſion only, but by "his Command too: That God makes Angels and "Men Tranſgreſſors: That God's Decree is no leſs "Efficacious in the Permiſſion of Evil, than in "the Production of Good: That God made Man "on purpoſe that he might Sin, and that he might "have ſomething to damn him for juſtly: That "God hath more hand in Men's Sinfulneſs than "they themſelves: That God doth neceſſitate "Men to Sin; incite, ſeduce, compel, pull, draw, "and command Men to Sin; injects Deceivings, "and tempts Men to Sin." Theſe, with a numberleſs the like Blaſphemous Expreſſions, are carefully collected by a worthy *Doctor* of our Church, who was once tainted with theſe Principles, but at laſt confeſſed, that their Horrible Concluſions frighted him into his Wits. "For (ſaith he) Is it not "a Blaſphemy to ſpeak againſt God? Is it not "the very blackeſt and moſt unſufferable Blaſphe-"my to ſpeak againſt the very Purity and Holineſs "of God? Is not his Purity himſelf? and there-"fore is it not worſe to aſperſe his Purity, than "to deny his Being? and have not theſe Men "aſperſed the Purity of God, with all the fouleſt "Affirmations that can be thought on? Let any "Man living ſet down and ſtudy with what "variety of Words and Phraſes it is poſſible to

"expreſs

" expreſs the *Author* of Sin by, and I will pub-
" lickly demonſtrate, that all that variety of *Words*
" and *Phraſes* hath been uſed, ev'n in *Print*, by
" Men of that Way, in direct Affirmations of God
" himſelf." Theſe are Principles proceeding from Men who have confounded God's Preſcience with his Decree, who ſay, God muſt needs will Sin, becauſe he did foreſee it; not allowing that God could *otherwiſe foreſee it*, than *by decreeing it ſhould come to paſs:* A Blaſphemy which contradicts the Word of God, which ſaith, he *wills not the wickedneſs of a Sinner*, Pſal. 5. 4. Again: It is a Blaſphemy which contradicts the Oath of God, which *ſwears, he wills not the death of a Sinner*, Ezek. 33. 11. Further: It is Blaſphemy in this Particular, by inferring, that the ſhallow Knowledge of Man, is more extenſive than the Knowledge of God: for Man doth *know many things which he doth not will or determine*; whereas God (ſay Men of your Way) *never knew any thing in the World, but what he will'd and determined*; nay (which is yet a greater Madneſs) *that he never knew, or could know any thing, but becauſe he will'd and determin'd its future Being.*

Eutychus. Sir, tho' we ſhould allow that God's *Foreknowledge* be not Productive of Sin; yet, do not the Scriptures conſtantly hold forth God's Manner of working Sin by way of *Action?* They do not ſay, God *ſuffered Joſeph*'s Brethren to *ſell* him into *Egypt*, but that God *ſent* him, *Gen.* 45. 8. It is not ſaid, that God *ſuffered Pharaoh* to harden his own Heart, but, that *God harden'd it*, Exod. 9. 12.

Epenetus. How you make the Scriptures conſtantly to hold forth God's working in Sin, I can't ſee. Indeed, there are ſome Paſſages, which, if taken literally, do ſeem to make God a Moral Cauſe of Sin as Sin. But all theſe Places are figuratively ſpoken; or elſe, the Scripture com-

mands us to continue in Sin: *Rev.* 22. 11. *Let him which is filthy, be filthy ſtill.* Again: Can you think, that our Saviour was Acceſſory to that Murder, which the *Jews* committed upon his Perſon, becauſe he bid them *deſtroy this Temple*, meaning the *Temple of his Body?* I am ſure, to have commanded, it in the Senſe you put upon ſuch Places of Scripture, had been a kind of laying violent Hands upon himſelf. For tho' the Letter of the Text ſeem to ſound that Way; yet what he ſaid, was only by way of *Permiſſion*, or bidding them *do* what he knew they *would do*, if not forcibly hindred, (as I have elſewhere obſerved.) As to the Inſtance of *Joſeph*, it is moſt remarkably impertinent, and quite beſide the Purpoſe: You ſay indeed, that God *ſent Joſeph* into *Egypt*; ſo doing, you ſay well: but had you ſaid, that God *ſold Joſeph* into *Egypt*, (in which *Sale* of *Joſeph*, his Brethren ſinned,) it would have been more to your Purpoſe, tho' quite contrary to the Meaning of that Place. However, you have betrayed your Inconſiderateneſs, in this Particular: For, I pray obſerve, *Joſeph*'s Speech runs thus, *God ſent me before you, to preſerve you a Poſterity in the Earth, and to ſave your Lives by a great Deliverance: So now, it was not you that ſent me hither, but God; and he hath made me a Father to Pharaoh, and Lord of all his Houſe*, &c. *Gen.* 45. 7, 8. Now, I pray obſerve, he ſpeaks of nothing but the *Good* which God had done for him, upon occaſion of that *Evil* which they that ſold him, had done againſt him. God is indeed, affirmed here by *Joſeph*, to be the Author of much *Good*, which his Guilty Brethren never thought of; but not at all of the *Evil* which they thought againſt him. Well might *Joſeph* tell his Brethren, *it was not they that ſent him thither*; for they ſent him no-where, but ſold him to utter

Stran-

Strangers, purely for Money, and ſweet Revenge, neither knowing, nor caring, nor yet conſidering what the Buyers would do with him: Nay, they had kill'd him outright, but that *Judah* put them in Mind, that there was no Profit in his Blood, but the Pleaſure of Revenge only; whereas, if they ſold him, there was Revenge and Profit too; from which it is plain, *they did not ſend him into Egypt:* But it was God that wrought ſuch Compaſſion in the Hearts of them that bought him; who brought *Joſeph* into *Egypt*, not only to that Place, but to that Height and Pitch of Dignity. What his Brethren did, was entirely *Evil*; but what God acted, was tranſcendently *Good*; Good and Wiſe to Admiration. Your Inſtance of *Pharaoh* is not ſo bad as the former, tho' ridiculous enough too: For tho', God is ſaid to *harden Pharaoh's Heart, by doing ſomewhat*; yet it was not by *working in Sin*, but by ſparing him, when he might have deſtroyed him; ſee *Rom.* 9. 17. and by removing thoſe Puniſhments, and all other Means of his Recovery, which God had ſo long afforded to him, and all to no Purpoſe, and ſuffering him to live longer, and ſo harden his own Heart. For it is ſaid, *Pharaoh's Heart was hardened*, Exod. 7. 22. which only implies the *Permiſſion*, not the *Efficiency* of God: Nay, it is ſaid, *Pharaoh harden'd his own Heart*, Exod. 8. 15. Again, after that, it is ſaid, that *Pharaoh ſinned yet more, and harden'd his Heart, he and his Servants*, Exod. 9. 34. (whom God is ſaid to have *endured with much long-ſuffering*, Rom. 9. 22.) as it were on Purpoſe to deliver us from the very Poſſibility of erring groſsly in this Point, when we ſhould afterwards read, God *harden'd his Heart.* And how did God do it? ſure, not in the Way either that *Pharaoh* or *Satan* did it; for Satan harden'd *Pharaoh's* Heart, as well as *Pharaoh* himſelf; both being

Active and *Effective* in its Obduration. But *God's hardening his Heart*, was by a Total and Final withdrawing his Grace, leaving him in a State of Irrecoverable Wickedneſs; by ſuch a kind of forſaking, by which the Damned are left in Hell. Nay, ev'n this very Dereliction and Leaving *Pharaoh* to himſelf, (the certain Conſequence of which, was his Final Obduration,) was conferred on him as a Puniſhment for his having *harden'd his Heart ſo often*, when God by his Meſſengers, and their Miracles and Wonders, had often call'd him to Repentance. See *Pſal.* 95. 8.

Eutychus. But it is ſaid, *Joſhua* 11. 20. That *it was of the Lord to harden the Hearts of the Canaanites, that they ſhould come againſt Iſrael in Battle that he might deſtroy them utterly.*

Epenetus. The *hardening of their Hearts*, here aſcribed to God, is, their coming to fight againſt *Iſrael*; if ſo, then they had harden'd their own Hearts, *ver.* 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. Which becauſe they could not have done, if God had not ſuffer'd them, it is therefore ſaid, *it was of the Lord.* For had he endued them with Irreſiſtible Grace, or deſtroyed their Human Nature, their hardening their Hearts would have been an impoſſible Thing. And for God not to hinder, or not to ſoften their Hearts, which the Text ſaith, they had harden'd againſt *Iſrael*, was no more than to *permit*, what they committed by their *Option* and *Choice*; and this to ſerve the Ends of his Providence, that his People *Iſrael* might deſtroy thoſe wicked *Canaanites* for their Sins, *the meaſure whereof they had filled up.* But this Objection will appear the more impertinent, if we conſider, that for the *Canaanites* thus to harden their Hearts againſt *Iſrael*, that is, to *oppoſe* and *reſiſt them*, when they were coming to take away their Country, could not be cenſured as a Sin in them, unleſs they had had a perfect Revelation,

that

that God had given their Land to his People *Iſrael*: Which does not appear in any Hiſtory I could ever hear of; but ſuppoſing it had, then God's Revealing it to them, was far from having any hand in the hardening of their Hearts; all he did, was not ſoftening what he found obdurate; and *not to ſoften*, is far from having any the leaſt hand in the Obduration.

Eutychus. Pray, Sir, had God no hand in *Pharaoh*'s Oppreſſion of the Children of *Iſrael*, when he had determined it, and foretold it many Years before?

Epenetus. God *hates* all Sin, and therefore he can have no hand in either Willing or Effecting of it. Sir, will you, or any Man have any hand in doing what you hate? Now, if you mean, that God determined *Pharaoh*'s Will to his Oppreſſion, it is Blaſphemy; if to the Permiſſion of the Oppreſſion, then it is nothing but Impertinence, becauſe all muſt agree in that. Then as to *foretelling*, that is far from having *any hand* in the Event. The Phyſician foretels when his Patient ſhall have a Paroxyſm in a Chronical Diſeaſe, ev'n whilſt he is preſcribing the uſual Means of Prevention. Beſide, is there no difference between the *End* of an Intention, the *Event* of a Prophecy, and the *Effect* of a Cauſe? Or had *Iſaiah* any hand in the Birth of *Cyrus*, becauſe he foretold it an hundred Years before *Cyrus* was born?

Eutychus. What do you think then, of that Place in 2 *Sam.* 12. 11, 12. in which God told *David*, that *He would take his Wives, and give them to his Neighbour*, &c. Nay, further, It is not ſaid, God *ſuffer'd Abſalom* to defile his Father's Concubines; but he tells *David*, what *thou haſt done ſecretly, I will do in the ſight of this Sun*; which ſeems to infer, that God had a *hand* in thoſe Tranſactions, or an *Efficiency* in the Work.

Epenetus. Here I am more ſurpriſed, than at all thoſe Texts you have hitherto urg'd in Behalf of your Cauſe: For if it be *literally* meant, (as you contend for,) that God did the ſame in Public, which *David* did in Private, the Blaſphemy is ſuch as cannot with Modeſty be named; for what was that which *David* did in Secret, but his Adultery with *Bathſheba?* And can it be poſſibly imagined, that God could do the ſame Thing Openly? Yet ſo run the Words, *What thou haſt done, I will do*; which Words, tho' *Active* in Sound, are *Permiſſive* in Senſe only, and therefore ſpoken *Figuratively.* For God could not do Actively in the Sight of the Sun, what *David* had done in Secret; and had you but read to the end of the Story, 2 *Sam.* 16. 22. you wou'd have ſeen the Completion of God's Prophecy, and have found it was *Abſalom* who did what you apply to God. *A Tent was ſpread* (ſaith the Text) *upon the top of the Houſe, and Abſalom went in unto his Father's Concubines in the ſight of all Iſrael.* This is the Sin which you urge as an Inſtance, to ſhew how the Manner of God's Working is held forth to us by way of Action. But to paſs by the Impiety, I muſt take Notice of the Fooliſhneſs of your Objection, *I will do this Thing* (ſaith God to *David:*) And what was this Thing? Why, it is expreſs'd, *ver.* 11. *I will raiſe up Evil againſt thee*, that is, the Evil of Puniſhment; *I will take thy Wives and give them*, that is, permit *Abſalom* to enjoy them. And indeed, there was not the leaſt occaſion of any more from God, becauſe *Abſalom* was ready enough of himſelf to do it, his own Fleſh was ſufficient to draw him on, *Jam.* 1. 14. And beſides his own Fleſh, he had *Ahithophel* to promt him forward, *chap.* 16. *ver.* 21. Nay, both himſelf, and *Ahithophel* had the *Devil* at their Elbow, to urge and tempt them. Now, was not all

this

this enough to bring the Wickedneſs about, but *God himſelf* muſt be affirmed to have a *Hand in it*, to be *Efficient* in it, to *Act*, to *Work*, to *Operate*, and that as a Neceſſitating Cauſe?

Eutychus. Since you have given me ſo much Satisfaction in this Particular, pray give me your Opinion of that Place, 2 *Sam.* 16. 10. where God is ſaid, to have *bid Shimei curſe David:* From whence, I have been told, that the Devil and Wicked Men cannot conceive, nor contrive, nor execute any Miſchief, no, nor ſo much as endeavour its execution, any further than God himſelf doth *command* them; and that they are *compelled* to perform Obedience to ſuch Commands.

Epenetus. A fine Doctrine indeed! How contrary is this to the Word of God? which ſaith, that God *hath no pleaſure in wickedneſs*, Pſal. 5. 4. that *he is of purer Eyes than to behold Evil, and cannot look on Iniquity*, Hab. 1. 13. that he *hateth all abomination, and hath not cauſed any Man to Err*, that *he hath commanded no Man to do wickedly, neither hath he given any Man licenſe to Sin.* And as to *Shimei's curſing David*, I take the Words to be only *Permiſſive* in Signification, tho' *Active* in Sound; becauſe, if they muſt be taken in the literal Senſe, one of theſe two things muſt follow; either *Shimei* did not Sin in Curſing *David* who was *God's Anointed*, but rather diſcharged his Duty, in doing juſt as God had bid him, or elſe that he Sinned by God's expreſs Precept and Command. If you aſſert the firſt, then you will incur theſe two Evils, the one, by contradicting thoſe Texts of Scripture wherein the Curſing of *Shimei* is affirmed to be a Sin, confeſſed *by himſelf*, 2 Sam. 19. 18, 19, 20. and puniſhed by *Solomon* with Death it ſelf, 1 *King.* 2. 44, 46. The other, by opening a Door, to the ſecure Commiſſion of ſuch a Damning Sin as Curſing is, and that, the moſt Treaſonable Curſing

ſing of *God's Anointed*, Eccleſ. 10. 20. *Curſe not the King, no, not in thy thought*, &c. teaching People, that it is no Sin, but rather the yielding Obedience to the Will of God. But if to avoid theſe Miſchiefs of the Firſt Propoſition, you ſhall preſume to aſſert the latter, namely, that he Sinned by God's expreſs Precept and Command, (becauſe the Words in their literal meaning ſeem to imply as much,) then you become Guilty of the moſt impious Abſurdities that can be thought on: Firſt, by contradicting thoſe expreſs Texts of Scripture juſt now mention'd, which expreſs God's *hatred* of Sin, and ſhew that *he cannot endure it*; and in the next place, inferring, that a Man may Sin, by doing what God would have him do, nay, what he hath ſaid he ſhall do; and ſo by conſequence allowing that a Man may do his *Duty* by Diſobeying God's Commands, or that God hath a two-fold Precept, directly contrary the one to the other; the one conſiſting of Things which *ought to be done*, but yet *impoſſible*, becauſe it is *decreed they ſhall not*; the other of Things which *ought not to be done*, yet muſt be done of Neceſſity, becauſe it is *decreed they ſhall*.

Eutychus. But is it not ſaid expreſsly, 1 *King*. 22. 22. that *the Lord did put a lying ſpirit in the mouth of all his Prophets?* And in *Job* 1. we find *Satan* could do nothing that was Evil to *Job*, 'till he had obtained Power from God to do ſo. And it is ſaid, *Pſal*. 105. 25. that *God turned the hearts* of the Egyptians *to hate his People*.

Epenetus. In anſwer to theſe Paſſages of Holy Scripture, I think what I have ſaid in the Anſwers immediately preceding this Objection, are more than ſufficient; yet becauſe in this laſt Text *Pſal*. 105. 25. concerning *God's turning the hearts* of the Egyptians *to hate his People*, a blind Man may ſtumble; I anſwer, God did nothing to the *Egyptians*,

tians, but that which provoked them to *Jealouſy* and *Fear*: which was the firſt thing wrought in them, and from that they naturally turned to *hatred*. But what was that which God did, which provoked them to that *Jealouſy*, *Fear* and *Hatred*? Ev'n that which was very good, *ver.* 24. for, *He increaſed his People greatly, and made them ſtronger than their Enemies.* He *bleſſed* and *multiplied* his People *Iſrael*, for which the Envious *Egyptians* did *Fear* and *Hate*, and Conſpire againſt them, *Exod.* 1. 9, 10.

Eutychus Sir, There is one Text, *Ezek.* 14. 9. which I think can't well be evaded, as to the Point in hand; the Words are theſe, *If the Prophet be deceived when he hath ſpoken a thing, I the Lord have deceived that Prophet.*

Epenetus. Theſe words muſt needs be figuratively ſpoken; becauſe it is downright Blaſphemy, to ſay, that God is a *Deceiver*. For as he who *Loves*, *Teaches*, *Reads*, or *Hears* in a Literal Senſe, without a Figure, muſt needs be a *Lover*, *Teacher*, *Reader*, or *Hearer*; ſo he who doth *Deceive* with a Figure, muſt without a Figure be a *Deceiver*. And in the Judgment of the moſt learned Expoſitors, and by the allowed Interpretation of other Places of Scripture, the Meaning of this Place muſt undeniably be one of theſe two: Either *Deceiving* is nothing elſe, but God's *permitting* the Falſe-Prophet, for his Wickedneſs, to be Deceived by the *Deceiver*, that is, the *Devil*: Or elſe it muſt mean, the delivering him up to his own corrupt Heart, which is willing of it ſelf to be deceived; and accordingly it follows in the very next words, *I will ſtretch out my hand upon him, and will deſtroy him.* Or it may be more fitly render'd, according to the Interpretation of *Grotius*, (who is ſtyl'd *the Prodigy of Learning*,) not, *I have deceived*, but,

I will

I will deceive him, viz. *By giving him ſuch an End as he expects not.*

Eutychus. I have found ſo much Satisfaction, from the Senſe you have given of thoſe Scriptures, at which I formerly ſtumbled, that I will take the liberty to mention two or three more; hoping, in ſo doing, your Patience will bear with my Importunity.

Epenetus. Sir, I ſhall think my Time well ſpent, be it never ſo much, if I can but ſet you right in this Particular.

Eutychus. It is ſaid, *Rom.* 11. 8, 9. that *God gave the Jews the Spirit of ſlumber; Eyes that they ſhould not ſee, and Ears that they ſhould not hear, unto this day. And David ſaith, Let their Table be made a Snare, and a Trap, and a Stumbling-block, and a Recompence unto them.*

Epenetus. I have enquired into this particular Place of Scripture, and I do not find it ſo meant by St. *Paul*'s own words; tho' our *Engliſh* Bibles read, *God gave them Eyes that they ſhould not ſee:* yet it is allow'd to be in the Original, *Eyes of not ſeeing, not to ſee*, or *Eyes which ſee not.* So that the Senſe is evidently this, That the major part of the People, who made not uſe of that Grace which God had offered, but reſiſted Chriſt when he was preached in their Streets, did grow ſo obſtinately Blind, (God withdrawing the Means ſo long Reſiſted, and ſo much Abuſed) as to fulfil the Prediction of the Prophet *Iſaiah*, chap. 29. 10. or at leaſt a Parallel to the Caſe of which the Prophet there ſpeaks. And this doth further appear, from St. *Paul*'s Citation of the *Pſalmiſt*, Pſal. 69. 23. *Let their Eyes be darkened that they may not ſee*, &c. *Rom.* 11. 10. Words ſpoken by *David*, not as a Curſe, but a Prophecy, that the Things intended for their *Welfare, ver.* 22. would become their *Trap.* Their very *Table*, whoſe proper End was to Refreſh and

Feed

Feed them, would, by their Wickedneſs, be made their *Snare.* And ev'n the preaching of the Goſpel Reſiſted by them, would *accidentally advance* their Obduration.

Eutychus. There is one Text more which I ſhall mention at this time, it is in 2 *Theſſ.* 2. 10, 11. where it is ſaid, that the *Man of Sin* ſhould come, *with all deceivableneſs of unrighteouſneſs, in them that periſh. And for this cauſe God ſhall ſend them ſtrong Deluſion, that they ſhould believe a Lie.*

Epenetus. In this Text, you have exactly ſet forth the Method of thoſe Perſons, who if they can but find one Place of Scripture, which they think for their Purpoſe, immediately repeat it, without looking into the Context, either to obſerve the Words before or after. For, had you done ſo, you wou'd have found the Senſe to have been this, That *becauſe they received not the love of the Truth,* that Truth which the Text ſaith, was offer'd, *that they might be ſaved,* ver. 10. *For this Cauſe,* (or to puniſh this Wickedneſs,) God will ſuffer *the Man of Sin to be revealed,* ver. 3. *whoſe coming is after the working of Satan, with all Power, and Signs, and lying Wonders,* ver. 9. to come upon them with ſuch Advantages of Strength and Subtilty, as would gain Credit with them, if not wonderfully reſtrained. For, pray take Notice, God is ſaid in Scripture, to *ſend* what he *can* (but *doth not*) hinder from being *ſent.* You know, we are taught to pray, *Lead us not into Temptation:* But I hope, you will not infer from hence, *that God doth lead any Man into Temptation*; our Meaning is, *Suffer us not to be led,* or, *Leave us not helpleſs in our Temptations*; *Permit us not to be tempted above our Strength*; *Let thy Grace be ſufficient for us:* And from thence it follows, *But deliver us from Evil.* Thus, our Saviour may be ſaid to have *ſent* the Devils into

to the *Herd of Swine*, becauſe, when they beſought him, he gave Way to their Prayer, when they ſaid, *Suffer us to Go*; he anſwer'd, *Go*, which muſt mean no more than this, *I ſuffer you to Go*; for he granted what they asked for, and they asked for *Permiſſion* or Sufferance.

Eutychus. What you have ſaid, is very juſt, and what, I think, may be fairly deduced from thoſe Texts of Scripture: But then, this raiſes another Objection in my Mind, which is this, If thoſe Places, which are ſo often *Active* in Sound, muſt be interpreted, as only *Permiſſive* in Signification; why may we not interpret other Scriptures in like Manner, where the like Expreſſions are uſed? as when the Lord ſaith, *I form the Light, I create Darkneſs*, Iſa. 45. 7. *I have made the Earth, and created Man upon it.* —— *My Hands have ſtretched out the Heavens*, Iſa. 45. 12. Why may we not, I ſay, (according to your way of arguing,) interpret *theſe Verbs* which are *Active* in Sound, to be *Permiſſive* only in Signification; and ſay, that God only *permitted* Light and Darkneſs to be created, and *ſuffered* the Earth to be made, and Man to be created? *&c.* the Conſequence of which, I tremble to name.

Epenetus. Truly, the Conſequence of this Objection tends to downright *Popery*, yea, to *Atheiſm* it ſelf. For if no Texts muſt be *Figuratively* taken, then the *Papiſts* have a good Argument for *Tranſubſtantiation*, Luke 22. 19. —— *This is my Body:* Nay, the *Atheiſt* may jeer us, by telling us that which is really a *Tree*, cannot be really a *Man*, much leſs really a *God:* But Chriſt is really a Tree; and thus I prove it; that which is a *true Vine* (not a fictitious one) is really a Tree; but the Scripture ſaith plainly, that Chriſt is a *Vine*, John 15. 5. nay, a *true Vine*, ver. 1. therefore, Chriſt is really a Tree. Nay, is it not much

better

better to ſay, That Chriſt is a *true Vine*, without a Figure, than to ſay, that God, without a Figure, did *harden Pharaoh's Heart?* and did *will that Abſalom ſhould do filthily againſt his Father?* and *bid Shimei curſe David?* and *actually deceive the Prophet*, and the like? For certainly, there is a vaſt difference between theſe Texts, and thoſe in your Objection; and therefore, muſt be interpreted Figuratively, or elſe they tend to make God guilty of Impious Facts, and aſperſe God with being the Cauſe of Sin as Sin. But when it is ſaid, God *formed the Light, and created Darkneſs*, it cannot be pretended, that the Literal Acceptation of the Words, doth ſo much as *ſeem* to make God the *Author* of Sin. Dare you affirm, That God had as really a *Hand in Shimei's Curſing his King*, in *Abſalom's polluting his Fathers Concubines*; in *the Egyptians hatred of his People Iſrael*; in *ſending ſtrong Deluſions*; and as really *a Hand* in *Pharaoh's Obduration*, as in *creating Light and Darkneſs*; in *making the Earth*, and in *ſpreading out the Heavens like a Curtain?* I am perſwaded you dare not. Then to what Purpoſe is this laſt Objection? I may ſay, to none, but to expoſe your Folly and Inconſiderateneſs.

Eutychus. My good Friend, you are very Earneſt, and ſeem much Moved; but I cannot blame you: For, I muſt confeſs, there is but little Weight in this Objection, ſince I have heard your Sentiments on it: But I have other Reaſons yet, which make me unwilling to part with this Doctrine; yet, I muſt defer the Mention of them 'till ſome other Opportunity, having, I fear, treſpaſſed too far on your Good-Nature already.

Epenetus. The Experience I have had of your Friendſhip and *teachable* Diſpoſition, has emboldened me to be ſo Peremptory in my Replies to your Objections; yet, I am zealouſly proud to ſerve you,

you, in any Thing within the compaſs of my Power: Neither wou'd I have you think I am tired with your Diſcourſe.

Eutychus. But, Sir, with your Approbation, we will wave our Diſcourſe for this Time, and refer what I have ſtill to relate to you, on this Point, to another Seaſon.

Epenetus. Since you deſire it, I ſubmit.

The End of the Sixth Conference.

CONFERENCE VII.

Epenetus.

WELL Overtaken, Sir: I little thought of ſeeing you to Day.

Eutychus. Nor I you; but ſince it is our Fortune to meet together, let us make much of this happy Opportunity; and if you think it not improper, we will enter into ſome diverting and edifying Subject, that ſo our Journey may not ſeem tedious.

Epenetus. I like your Motion very well.

Eutychus. Then (with Submiſſion) I think nothing can conduce more to the Ends juſt mentioned, than to begin with what I was going to ſay to you, in our laſt Debate; which was, That I cannot tell how to part with the Doctrine of Abſolute Election and Reprobation, becauſe I have experienc'd ſo much Comfort by it: "Here I ſee

"the

" the Streamings of Chriſt's Blood, ſhed forth " freely to Sinners: Here I am preſented with Sips " of Sweetneſs: Here I am taught the Power of " Godlineſs; not to be Puffed up with any good " Works I can do, but to *Lean* upon Chriſt, to " *Roll* upon Chriſt, and to *Rely* on Him for Salva- " tion:" Which I think a moſt comfortable Doctrine, deſtroying all Pride in reſpect to our own Righteouſneſs, and conducing to make us Meek and Lowly in our own Eyes.

Epenetus. I can't ſee what Comfort you can receive from a *Murdering Principle*, or, what Pleaſure it can be to reflect, *that the greateſt part of the World, are Damned, by an Abſolute Decree.* Beſide, I am ſure this Doctrine doth not tend either to the Mortification of our carnal Affections, or the ſubduing of our Paſſions, which are the only Comforts in this Life. For I am told, by Men of your Way, (*a*) " He that hath " oftentimes been Drunk, may yet have true Grace, " and be in the Number of the Godly. Nay, there " are worſe Things than theſe, which a Man may " commit, and yet be Godly," (ſaith Mr. *Baxter:*) (*b*) " How many Profeſſors will raſhly Rail, " and Lie, in their Paſſions? How few will take " well a Reproof, but rather defend their Sin? " How many in theſe times, that we doubt not to be " *Godly*, have been guilty of Diſobedience to their " Guides, and of Schiſm, and doing much hurt to " the Church? A very great Sin. *Peter*, *Lot*, and " it's likely *David*, did oft commit greater Sins. And " yet, (*c*) A Man muſt be guilty of more Sin than " *Peter* was, in Denying and Forſwearing Chriſt, " that is notoriouſly Ungodly; yea, than *Lot* was,

(*a*) Mr. *Baxt.* Diſput. 3. p. 329, *&c.* (*b*) *Id. ib.* p. 330.
(*c*) *Id. ib.* p. 326, 327.

" who was Drunk two Nights together, and com-
" mitted Inceſt twice with his own Daughters, and
" that, after the miraculous Deſtruction of *Sodom*,
" of his own *Wife*, and his own miraculous Deli-
" verance. Nay, a Man that is notoriouſly Un-
" godly (in the ſenſe in hand) or unſanctified,
" muſt be a greater Sinner than *Solomon* was with
" his *ſeven hundred Wives*, and his *three hundred*
" *Concubines*; and groſs Idolatries, when *his heart*
" *was turn'd away from the Lord God of Iſrael,*
" *which appeared unto him twice, and commanded*
" *him not to go after other gods; but he kept not*
" *that which the Lord commanded.*" Thus far Mr. *Baxter*; from whom I think every Chriſtian is bound in Conſcience to diſſent, and not to believe one Word of it. What is here to make us Holy? And if we are not ſo, to make us fear *the Terror of the Lord?* Nay, Men of your Principle have told the World, that a Profeſſor ought not to give way to ſuch Temptations as to fear *the Terror of the Lord.* This is the Judgment of Mr. *Caryl*, Mr. *Burroughs*, Mr. *Strong*, Mr. *Sprig*, moſt powerful Men in their Time, who have recommended a Book wherein is this Soul-ſaving Doctrine, namely, (*a*) " In caſe you be at any time,
" by reaſon of the Weakneſs of your Faith, and
" Strength of your Temptations, drawn aſide, and
" prevail'd with to tranſgreſs any of Chriſt's
" Commandments, beware you do not thereupon
" call Chriſt's Love to you in queſtion, but believe
" as firmly that Chriſt loves you as dearly as he did
" before you thus tranſgreſſed; for this is a cer-
" tain Truth, *As no Good in you, or done by you,*
" *did, or can move Chriſt to love you the more;*
" *ſo no Evil in you, or done by you, can move him*

(*a*) *The Marrow of Modern Divinity*, pag. 201. Edit. 3.

" *to*

" *to love you the leſs.*" Abominable Principles! Could worſe come from the Bottomleſs-Pit? May not every notorious Sinner infer from hence, That ſince God, he was ſure, did chuſe him to Salvation, when he was *yet in his Sins*, and *Natural State*, and that as no Sin could provoke God's Diſpleaſure againſt his Perſon *then*, ev'n when he was without Chriſt, much leſs can it do ſo *now*, when he hath *made me accepted in the Beloved*, Eph. 1. 6. For Mr. *Perkins* ſaith, *Sin doth not take away Grace, but illuſtrate and make it brighter.* And others have taught, *That thoſe Sins which in the Wicked have the Nature of Puniſhment, have in the Faithful the Nature of Fatherly Correction.* (a) " That the very Elect, after their Effectual Cal-
" ling, have cauſe ſometimes to expoſtulate with
" God, for hardening their Hearts againſt his
" Fear, *&c.*" And now I ſhall explain the Comfort ariſing from ſuch Principles: " I take Com-
" fort (ſaith the Doctor, juſt mentioned) when
" I find my Sins do not make a Final or To-
" tal Separation between my Soul and God; this
" may well tend to the ſtrengthening of my Faith,
" and perſwade my Soul, *That nothing ſhall be*
" *able to ſeparate me from the Love of God, in*
" *Chriſt Jeſus our Lord.*" So that every Sinner may comfort himſelf in his Wickedneſs: For, if he do but carry a Hatred towards Sin in the *Spirit*, or *Inward Man*, tho' he ſhould find ſome Pleaſure in the Act of Sin, as to the *Fleſh* and *Outward Man*; yet, they need not fear the Dominion of Sin, or State of Damnation; becauſe they are told by your Party, that this is exactly the Caſe of the *Regenerate:* And therefore, the Apoſtle ſpeaketh to their Comfort, what he found (ſay they)

(a) Dr. *Twiſs.*

by Experience in his own Perſon, *Rom.* 7. 14. &c. *I am Carnal*, (ſaith the Apoſtle,) *ſold under Sin. For that which I do, I allow not: for what I would, that I do not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I conſent unto the Law, that it is Good. Now then, it is no more I that do it, but Sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my Fleſh) dwelleth no good Thing: for to will is preſent with me, but how to perform that which is good, I find not. For the Good that I would, I do not: but the Evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but Sin that dwelleth in me.* From all which, it is inferred, That this Conflict with Sin, is a *Sign* and *Mark* of *Sanctification*; and that ſuch Combatants, tho' they do ſin, yet, if they bewail this their Imperfection, diſallow of it, and condemn it, (as the Apoſtle did,) it ſhall never be imputed unto *them*, but to the *Corruption of their Nature*, and to that Habitual Sin that dwells in them. So that to be Regenerate, is ſtill to be *Carnal*, and *a Captive to Sin*. Nay, you have heard already, that Mr. *Baxter* ſaith, (*a*) "It is exceeding hard to determine "how great, many, or long the Sins of a true Be-"liever may be." From all which, it is evident, that this Doctrine is far from bringing the Sinner to Repentance, but tends rather to confirm them in their Evil Courſes; and therefore it is an Uncomfortable Doctrine, and not according to Holineſs.

Eutychus. Here you run too faſt; for many that believe and defend this Doctrine, are Holy and Good Men; and therefore, of it ſelf, it openeth no way to looſe Living, or wicked Practices,

(*a*) Mr. *Baxter's* Diſput. of *Rights to Sacrament*, Diſput. 3. pag. 337.

but

but thro' the Wickedneſs of Men, who are wont to pervert the ſweeteſt and ſureſt Truths in Holy Scripture, to their own Damnation.

Epenetus. Suppoſe there be many of this Opinion good Men, yet it is no thanks to their Opinion that they are ſo, (the true and natural Genius of which, is to beget Sloth, to drown Men in Security, to countenance Men in carnal Liberty and Profaneneſs.) For if we do but meaſure this Opinion, not by the Lives of ſome few Men that hold it, but by the Sequels of that *Logic*, which Men of ſhallow Brains and ordinary Capacities may naturally draw from it; then I am ſure, that no Man that hath truly ſuck'd it in, and underſtandeth the Force of it, but muſt either quite relinquiſh it, or live according to the natural Appointment of it, that is, licentiouſly. Neither can the Honeſty of Men, poſſeſſed with theſe Principles, be any Proof of their being Orthodox. For the Epicures of old, and the Hereticks, Libertines, and Enthuſiaſts in our Age, urge, *that many among them, are honeſt and good Men.* Now altho' we grant this to be true, which was granted to the Epicures of old, whoſe ſwiniſh Doctrine, placed Man's Happineſs in Pleaſures of Senſe; yet this Holineſs of Converſation proceeded, not from the *Principles of their Opinion*, but from their own *virtuous Inclination.* And the Force of *Honeſty* in ſo doing, appear'd to be more prevailing in them, than the Force of *Pleaſure*, which they pleaded for: And as one ſaid of them, ſo we may ſay of theſe; "As other Mens Doctrines are eſteemed "to be better than their Deeds; ſo theſe Mens "Deeds ſeem to me, to be better than their Doctrines." And from hence, I believe, that it is either owing to God's Providence, that there is One Good and Holy, who is poſſeſs'd with this Principle; to God's Providence I ſay, who will

not ſuffer this Doctrine, for his own Glory's ſake, and the good of Mens Souls, to have any Influence on their Lives and Converſations: or elſe it is owing to Mens reſting in a *naked Speculation* of it; as Men are wont to do in many other Matters; never drawing any *Concluſions* from it, or having any thoughts of reducing it to Practice. Or laſtly, It is owing to ſome good practical Inferences, which they have drawn from the Word of God, and ſo apply them to their Lives and Actions. Which Inferences cannot be drawn from the former Deductions. Such are theſe, for Example, 1 Pet. 1. 16. *Be ye holy, for I am holy.* Heb. 12. 14. *Without holineſs no Man ſhall ſee God.* Matt. 7. 21. *Not every one that ſaith unto me, Lord, Lord, ſhall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that doth the will of my Father which is in Heaven.* Gal. 6. 7. *Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatſoever a Man ſoweth, that ſhall he alſo reap.* Luke 6. 46. *Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I ſay?* Rom. 2. 13. *Not the hearers of the Law are juſt before God, but the doers of the Law ſhall be juſtified.* Jam. 2 26. *For as the Body without the Spirit is dead, ſo Faith without Works is dead alſo.*

Eutychus. All this is taught in the Doctrine of Abſolute Election and Reprobation, for that does not tell any Man in *particular*, who are Elected, or who Rejected; but teacheth, that Men muſt get the Knowledge of their Election by *good Works*; and ſo by conſequence, doth rather encourage, than ſtifle Holy and Honeſt Endeavours.

Epenetus. Not at all: For the Ignorance of a Man's particular State, (I humbly conceive) doth not alter the Caſe one jot: Becauſe he that believeth in *general*, that many, nay, the greateſt part of Mankind, without any regard to their good or evil Actions, are inevitably *ordained* to Damnation,

tion, and a few others to Salvation, is able out of theſe two general Propoſitions, to make the following Concluſions, and to reaſon thus with himſelf; Either I am abſolutely *ordained* and *choſen* to Grace and Glory, or abſolutely *caſt off* from both: If I be *choſen*, I muſt of neceſſity Believe, and be Saved; becauſe I am told, nay, and my Reaſon alſo tells me, that if the *End* be abſolutely fixed, the *Means*, let them be what they will which conduce to the obtaining that *End*, muſt be fixed and determined too: But if I be caſt off, I muſt as neceſſarily *not believe*, and be Damned. What need I therefore take Thought either way, about *Means*, or *End*? my *End* is pitch'd in Heaven, and the *Means* too; my final Perſeverance in Faith, and ſo conſequently, my Salvation; or my Continuance in Unbelief, and my Damnation. If I lie under this Neceſſity of Believing and being Saved, or of dying in Unbelief and being Damned; in vain do I trouble my ſelf about *Means*, or *End*; I have my *Superſedeas*, my *Bounds*, *beyond which I cannot paſs:* I may take mine Eaſe, *eat*, *drink*, *and be merry*, and ſo I will; it is enough for me to *ſit down and wait* what God will do with me. Thus (it is probable) did *Tiberius* reaſon with himſelf; for it is reported of him, that he was the more negligent in Religion, becauſe he was fully perſwaded, that all things came to paſs by *Deſtiny*. And in this manner (it is to be feared) do too many reaſon in their Hearts, ſome I have known my ſelf to have done ſo; and by this very Concluſion, have encouraged themſelves in looſe and profane Living: yet there are many, who will hide the Grounds and Motives upon which they act, either through Modeſty, or to avoid ſome further Ignominy: Becauſe it is expreſs'd, *The fool hath ſaid in his heart, There is no God*, Pſal. 14. 1. So that I do from hence conclude, It matters not what

theſe Men *teach*, but what they *ſhould teach*, if they will ſpeak conſequently to their own Concluſions; which are ſuch as theſe; I was created by God, to what End, God knows, (may the Sinner ſay:) If he predeſtin'd me to Deſtruction, by an immutable Decree, why do I *kick againſt the pricks*, and defraud my ſelf of my Voluptuouſneſs and Senſual Pleaſure? But if I was predeſtin'd to Life Eternal, how much ſoever I Sin, I ſhall be Saved in the Concluſion; for God's Foreknowledge concerning me, cannot be fruſtrated or deceived. For what wonder is it, if after having ſwallow'd it down as an unqueſtionable Truth, That they are Veſſels of a moſt Abſolute Unconditional Election, and that they cannot *totally*, much leſs *finally fall from Grace*, to conclude, that tho' they commit *Murder*, or *Adultery*, or any other grievous Sins, (yea, and live Indulgently in them, for no ſhort time, without Repentance, as *David* did) yet they have not loſt the Holy Ghoſt, nor can poſſibly be in a State of Damnation; ſo that their Sins can do them no great Prejudice; they may make them *ſorrowful*, but there is a Bleſſing annexed to that, *Mat.* 5. 4. yet they cannot make them *worſe*; ſomewhat leſs *chearful*, but not leſs *ſafe*: They can fall no otherwiſe than *David* did; "not from "a State of Salvation, (as one ſaid) but only "from the *Joy* of it." To which I may add, If they can but Sin merrily, by ſtifling the Voice of God and Conſcience, they ſhall not fall (if theſe Tenets be true) ev'n ſo much as from the *Joy* of Salvation. So, on the other hand, To what Purpoſe, I pray, do Men labour to obtain Everlaſting Life, and avoid Eternal Death, if there be no Power and Liberty in their Hands to *chuſe Life* or *Death*, but muſt of *neceſſity* take that which is aſſigned for them, be it *Life* or *Death*? Is it not plain, that by all their Labour, they effect juſt nothing

thing at all? They may *Hear*, *Read*, and *Pray*, but all this will not procure God's Grace; ſo that all their Piety can do them no good; it may make them *Religious*, Iſa. 48. 1, 2. Mic. 3. 11. but it cannot make them *Better*, for Damned they muſt be notwithſtanding: But if they be *abſolutely ordained to Salvation*, their Neglect of holy Duties, their Ignorance, their Love of Pleaſures, and Continuance in a Courſe of Ungodlineſs, cannot bring them to Damnation, for they muſt be Saved. If ſo many Souls in a Pariſh be in this manner decreed to Heaven or Hell, the Miniſter Preacheth in vain, and the People Hear in vain: For ~~their~~ there cannot one Soul be Saved, by all his or their Pains, which is *ordained* to Hell; nor one Soul be Caſt away, by his or their Negligence, which is *appointed* to Heaven.

Eutychus. You ſeem, from what you have ſaid, to infer, That the Saints or Godly may fall into ſuch a State, wherein they cannot be Saved; whereas God's Counſel is *immutable* to preſerve his Elect in the true Faith, ev'n *unto the end*; and through that *Faith*, to bring them to Salvation, and that *infallibly* and *neceſſarily*; becauſe the Counſel of God cannot be made void by any Creature; nor can it be revoked (in regard of his Immutability) ev'n by God himſelf; *Having loved his own, he loveth them unto the end*, John 13. 1.

Epenetus. I grant, that God's Counſel is *immutable*; but God never decreed by his Counſel, that wicked Men who die in their Sins, ſhall be Saved, or that good Men who die in a State of Grace, ſhall be Damned. Now, if good Men are liable to fall into damning Sins, then the Saints and the Godly may fall into ſuch a State, in which, if they ſhould die without Repentance, they cannot be Saved: And this was the Caſe of *David* and *Solomon*, who fell from Grace, by reſiſting

it;

it, in both Acceptations of the word *Grace*, as it is taken for Gracious and Holy Living, and as it is taken for the Favour God. For *David* committed two ſuch Sins; of which the *Apoſtle* ſaith, 1 *Cor.* 6. 9, 10. that they that do ſuch Things, *ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of God.*

Eutychus. Tho' *David* did reſiſt God's Grace, yet he could not ſo reſiſt, as to fall *finally:* For God had decreed the Repentance and Return of *David*; and therefore he could not die, until he had repented.

Epenetus. Then you allow (with me) that had *David* dy'd without Repentance, he had periſhed irrecoverably?

Eutychus. Yes, I do allow it.

Epenetus. Then you muſt unavoidably grant, that he fell from a State of Grace, into a State of a damnable and killing Nature, tho' he was a *Veſſel* of Election, from which he could not have fell, had he continued in that State of Grace from which, you ſay, there is no falling away. But there is a *final* as well as *total* reſiſting of ſuch Grace, as is ſufficient for the Attainment of Glory. There are thoſe that *grieve the holy Spirit of God*, Eph. 4. 30. There are that *quench Him*, 1 Theſſ. 5. 19. There are that reſiſt the Holy-Ghoſt; *Ye ſtiff-necked and uncircumciſed in Heart and Ears; ye do always reſiſt the Holy-Ghoſt: as your Fathers did, ſo do ye*, Act. 7. 51. And ſure the Comforter cannot be *grieved*, before he comes to *comfort.* The Spirit is not *reſiſted* before he *ſtrives.* The Fire is not *quenched*, before it is *kindled.* And how can *the Candle of the Wicked* be ſaid to be *put out*, Job 21. 17. if it was never lighted? And where lies the miſchievous Qualifications, in ſaying, Grace may be *reſiſted*, the Holy-Ghoſt *grieved*, the Spirit *quenched?* Sure, not in the Inſufficiency of God's Grace, nor in God,

God, the Donor thereof, but in the Wills of the Wicked, who *love Darkneſs rather than Light*, John 3. 19. We find, that *Silver* may *become Droſs*, becauſe it did, *Iſa.* 1. 22. And the *Faithful City* may *turn Harlot*, ver. 21. Murder may, and hath dwelt, where *Righteouſneſs and Judgment were wont to lodge.* The *Droſs* and the *Harlot* were none of God's Creatures. God made *Jeruſalem* a *faithful City*, and that by the Gift of his ſpecial Grace; but it was her own wicked Will that made her a *Harlot*; which it could not have done, if that ſpecial Grace had been irreſiſtible. *Saul* had once the Spirit of God, and with Humility, refuſed a Kingdom, 1 *Sam.* 10. 22. but after his Preferment, grew Covetous, Envious, Cruel, and Profane, and in a deſperate Manner procured his own Death, 1 *Sam.* 18. 9. and Chapters 23. 14. 22. 18. 28. 7. and 31. 4. Pray, my Friend, conſider what God ſaid to *Moſes*, Exod. 32. 33. *Whoſoever hath ſinned againſt me, him will I blot out of my Book.* Now, whoſoever is *blotted out*, muſt be implied to have been *written therein*, and that implies a ſpecial Grace. Do we not read, *Iſa.* 5. 4. of Men who reſiſted and ſinned againſt all the Means that could be uſed for their Amendment? and of others, who *would not be gathered*, after all the Eſſays and Motives that could be uſed? *Mat.* 23. 37. How many Chriſtian Profeſſors are now in Hell, who when they were Infants were fit and ſuitable for Heaven? *Mat.* 19. 14. For, if God's Bowels did yearn within him, and that upon the Impendence of but a Temporal Puniſhment only, which he was about to bring on a Heathen *Nineveh*, Jonah 4. 11. when he ſaid, *Shall not I ſpare Nineveh that great City, wherein are more than ſixſcore thouſand Perſons, that cannot diſcern between their right Hand and their left?* How much more will he

ex-

extend his Compaſſion toward Infants born and baptized in the Chriſtian Church, and made Members of his Myſtical Body? Yet how many are there of ſuch, who in their harmleſs Non-age were Babes of Grace, and yet have out-liv'd their Innocence, ſo as at laſt to be transform'd into *Veſſels of Wrath?* I ſhall give you the Words of *Tertullian*, quoted by a Judicious Divine of our own, upon this Occaſion; (*a*) *Saulum tam Dei Spiritus vertit in Prophetam, quam & malus Spiritus poſtea in Apoſtatam. Judam aliquandiu cum Electis deputatum poſtea Diabolus intravit:* That is, "*Saul* was turned into a Prophet by the Spi- "rit of Holineſs, as well as into an Apoſtate by "the Spirit of Uncleanneſs. And the Devil en- "ter'd into *Judas*, who for ſome time together "had been deputed with the Elect." And the Words of St. *Auguſtin*, (*b*) *Si Regeneratus & Juſtificatus in malam Vitam ſua Voluntate relabitur, certo is non poteſt dicere, non accepi, quia acceptam Gratiam Dei ſuo in malum arbitrio libero amiſit:* That is, "If the Regenerate and Juſtified "ſhall fall away into a wicked Courſe of Li- "ving by his own Will and Pleaſure, he cannot "ſay, I have not received, becauſe he hath wil- "fully loſt that Grace of God which he had "received, by that Will of his which was at li- "berty to ſin." But the Poſſibility of falling from Grace, after the receiving of the Holy-Ghoſt, nay, falling into Damning Sins, or a State of Damnation, is fully aſſerted in the 16th *Article* of the Church of *England*, and in the *Homilies* of our Church, concerning the Danger of falling away from God, and in her *Office of Adminiſtration of Baptiſm.* The contrary Opinion having been re-

(*a*) *Tertul.* de Anim. cap. 1.
(*b*) *Aug.* de Grat. & Corr. cap. 6. & cap. 9.

jected

jected by all Antiquity, and too much confuted by the Experience of all Times; and (as a Learned Divine obſerves) brought of late into the Church, by the late Diſſentions in *Calvin*'s Time.

Eutychus. Sir you ſeem to advance very uncomfortable Doctrine, and to deny that there is any ſuch thing, as the Grace of final Perſeverance; which takes away all that moſt Comfortable *Aſſurance*, which the *Saints* are wont to find in themſelves.

Epenetus. I wiſh there are not many, which have Sinned themſelves into Hell, upon a Belief of the Impoſſibility of their coming thither: Neither dare I preſume upon any other Aſſurance of my Salvation, than that which the Goſpel affords me, and there I am told, That if I am *faithful unto Death, I ſhall receive a Crown of Life*, Rev. 2. 10. That *he that endureth unto the End, the ſame ſhall be ſaved*, Matt. 24. 13. And as to the Signs and Marks of my Election, it is ſaid, *He that doth Righteouſneſs, is of God*; but, *He that committeth Sin, is of the Devil*, 1 Joh. 3. 7, 8. And what can be a greater Comfort, than this, to know, that *our labour ſhall not be in vain in the Lord?* 1 Cor. 15. 58. But then, we muſt not be puft up, *Be not high-minded, but fear*, Rom. 11. 20. *Let him that thinketh he ſtandeth, take heed leſt he fall*, 1 Cor. 10. 12. *Watch and Pray*, ſaith our Saviour, *leſt ye enter into Temptation*, Matt. 26. 41. But if no Man can fall, then there is no need of Prayer for Perſeverance. I am ſure the Apoſtle, *Hebr.* 6. 4, 5, 6. ſaith, That *it is impoſſible for thoſe who were once enlightened, and have taſted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy-Ghoſt, and have taſted the good Word of God, and the Powers of the World to come; if they fall away, to renew them again unto Repentance.* Now the Graces which the Apoſtle here ſpeaketh

of,

of, are not ordinary and common, but ſpecial and excellent Graces; ſuch as Illumination, Faith, a Reliſh of God's Word, and a Taſt of Heaven. And the Perſons ſpoken of, are Apoſtates, ſuch as are under a poſſibility of falling away for ever, and conſequently Reprobates: Whereas if it were impoſſible that good Men ſhould fall from Grace, it would be abſurd and ridiculous in the *Apoſtle* to warn againſt it; becauſe no ſolid Exhortation can be built on a Danger not poſſible to come to paſs. The like Expreſſion we have, *Heb.* 10. 26. *For if we ſin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more Sacrifice for Sins*, &c. From whence we may collect, that Men who Sin willingly and unpardonably, may receive the Knowledge of the Truth, yea, and be *ſanctified* by the Blood of the Covenant, and *the Spirit of Grace*, ver. 29. They may, ſaith St. Peter, *eſcape the pollutions of the World*, 2 Pet. 2. 20. that is, be waſhed from their former Sins, by Repentance; they may *receive the Word with joy*, Matt. 13. 20. and the *unclean ſpirit may go out of them*, Matt. 12. 43. and many more excellent Graces they may have beſide, and yet notwithſtanding, may *turn from the holy Commandment delivered unto them*; may return *with the Sow that was waſhed, to her wallowing in the mire.* And ſure, God never *waſhed*, but to make *clean.* We read, 1 *Tim.* 1. 19. that ſome in the Apoſtles time made *Shipwrack of Faith and a good Conſcience:* which could not be an Hiſtorical Faith only; for it is only true Faith that is productive of a *good Conſcience.* Neither dare I think, that all thoſe Gifts and Graces conferred on the Sons of Men, were given them by Almighty God, to the End they might abuſe them, and ſo purchaſe to themſelves the greater Damnation: Or, that they might do good to o-

thers

thers only, and none to themſelves. No, I believe the Moſt High God, who is the Lover of Souls, as he gave us the Gifts of *Nature*, ſo did he thoſe of *Grace*, that we might obtain Salvation. For if God left the Heathen *without Excuſe*, in thoſe Gifts which are only Natural to them, as Reaſonable Creatures; how much more are we *without Excuſe*, who partake in thoſe Gifts, which make the Poſſeſſors of them (like the Young Man in the Goſpel) not far from the Kingdom of Heaven? So that the End that God aimeth at, in thoſe excellent Talents and Graces he beſtows on the Sons of Men, is, that they may be Converted, and Eternally Saved. But to return, why did St. *Paul* endeavour ſo earneſtly to keep God's Commandments? Why did he fight with the Temptations of the Devil, the Allurements of the World, and his own Corruptions? Why did he keep his Body ſo low, by Watchings and Faſtings, and other ſevere Exerciſes of Holy Diſcipline? Can we think he did all this at Random, uncertain whether he ſhould obtain any Good, or prevent any Miſchief thereby? No, certainly, he tells us himſelf, it was all done, to prevent his being *a Caſt-away*, 1 Cor. 9. 26, 27. Now certainly, if nothing that he could have done, would have availed any thing towards his Salvation; if all was to be done for him by *Chriſt*; if his Salvation was Abſolutely *determined* in Heaven, not only before he was born, but before the World it ſelf was made; and all this, not on account of any Good that could be done by him, but meerly of God's good Pleaſure; It follows from hence, that St. *Paul* was but poorly read in Divinity, or that his Faith, like St. *Peter*'s, was very weak, to fear where no Fear was; he might have ſate down, and have ſpared himſelf all that Labour, and have been ſure, that nothing that he could have done,

or

or left undone here on Earth, was able to revoke or make void what was ratified and confirmed by the God of Heaven.

Eutychus. But I am taught ——

Epenetus. I hope you will pardon my Rudeneſs, in interrupting you; my Way lying Croſs heſe Fields, I am obliged to break off our Diſcourſe: But I will hear what you have further to urge (God willing) the next Opportunity. I am, Your's, with all Reſpect.

Eutychus. Sir, ſince we muſt part, I thank you kindly for your Company, and am, Your very humble Servant.

The End of the Seventh Conference.

CONFERENCE VIII.

Eutychus.

MY Good *Epenetus*, how do you do? How pleaſant is it to ſee a diſcreet and virtuous Friend? and ſuch I have found you to be.

Epenetus. I am at a loſs to return your Complement.

Eutychus. I was never a Friend to Ceremonies and Complements: I ſpeak from real Experience, you are a Friend, that have in a great meaſure eaſed and unloaded my Mind, clear'd and improved

improved my Underſtanding, rectified thoſe Miſtakes I lay under, and almoſt wholly removed (and I pray God, that you may not almoſt, but quite take away) all thoſe *Doubts* and *Scruples* which formerly diſturbed me.

Epenetus. I will endeavour to give you that Satisfaction my ordinary Abilities will afford: And how Happy ſhall I think my ſelf, in being an Inſtrument of turning any one Perſon from thoſe Errors, or falſe Notions of God and Religion, they had at any time imbib'd!

Eutychus. To proceed then, with what I was going to offer, when we were laſt together; I am taught, that tho' a godly Man loſe not his Juſtification by groſs Sinning, yet he contracts ſuch an Incapacity of coming to Heaven, in that State, which muſt be removed by Repentance, or elſe he cannot be ſaved. But however, in theſe Steps, God preſerveth in *them*, that his *immortal Seed* (by which they were once *born again*) that it *die not*, nor is *loſt* by them; but afterward by his Word and Spirit, he *effectually and certainly reneweth them again unto Repentance.*

Epenetus. This is exactly agreeable to that Paſſage of Mr. *Baxter*, cited before, namely, *It is exceeding hard to determine how great, many, or long the Sins of a true Believer may be.* And indeed, if God preſerves that Immortal Seed in them, and doth *effectually* and *certainly* renew them again unto Repentance, then they may caſt away all Care; for they are in no Danger of Miſcarrying, though they ſhould fall into grievous Sins, whereby they impair their Graces, and harden their Hearts, and wound their Conſciences, hurt and ſcandalize others, and bring Temporal Judgments upon themſelves; yet they are, and ſhall be kept *by the Power of God through Faith unto Salvation.* This

is the Faith of ſome. Which if true, in vain did *David* addreſs himſelf in that needleſs *Petition*, to have a *new Heart created, and a right Spirit renewed within him*, Pſal. 51. if that Seed of God, and Life of Faith, and Sincerity of Heart, were ſtill in him, as before. I am ſure it appears plain, from what our Saviour ſaid to his Diſciples, *Mat.* 24. 13. that Men may periſh, who have received ſufficient Grace to bring them to Salvation, if they would but have perſevered in it. *He that ſhall endure unto the End, the ſame ſhall be ſaved.* And *Rom.* 11. 22. If ye *continue in his Goodneſs*, ye ſhall not *be cut off*. Now, can a Man *arrive* at a Place, when he is not in the direct *Way* that leads thither? Our Saviour might then indeed, inſtruct us to turn *into* our Way, if we were *out*, but he would never exhort us to *continue* in a wrong Path. Beſides, can that be *cut off*, that was never in the *Vine? I am the Vine*, ſaith Chriſt, *ye are the Branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the ſame bringeth forth much Fruit; for without me, ye can do nothing. If a Man abide not in me, he is caſt forth as a Branch, and is withered*, John 15. 5, 6. Sure, our Saviour's Words, in *ver.* 4. would be a very unneceſſary Command for Perſeverance when he ſaith, *abide in me, and I in you*, if it were impoſſible for thoſe who were *true Branches*, ever to be broken off. And how could St. *Paul* ſay of ſome, (as I intimated formerly,) that they made *Shipwrack of Faith and a good Conſcience?* 1 Tim. 1. 19. Can that be ſhipwrack'd, that was never in the Veſſel? And can we call that a *Shipwrack*, which whether it had happened or no, we muſt notwithſtanding, have undoubtedly periſhed?

Eutychus. Then I perceive you are of Opinion, that God doth give *ſufficient Grace* to every Man

Man under the Goſpel, to enable them to *work out their Salvation*; and that they may periſh, through the Abuſe and Neglect of it.

Epenetus. That's my Belief; for God gives, or is ready to give (if we make no new Obſtructions) that Grace which is *ſufficient* to the obtaining of *Faith*; perhaps, not immediately, but Grace ſufficient to *uſe the Means*; Grace to do *more* than we do, in order to the obtaining of it. It is God that giveth us every *Talent* that we have; and he hath told us, he that maketh a *good Uſe* of what is given, ſhall receive more, *Mat.* 25. 29. But then he has alſo told us, That he that maketh not a *good Uſe* of what he has given him, it ſhall be alſo *taken away.* If Men *ſhew not the ſame Diligence* to improve that Grace; if they ſhould make a fair Beginning, and yet hold not *to the full Aſſurance of Hope unto the End*, Hebr. 6. 11. if they *leave their firſt Love*, as the Angel of the Church of *Epheſus* did, *Rev.* 2. 4. if they ſhould *run well*, as St. *Paul* ſaid the *Galatians* did, *Gal.* 5. 7. and if it is undeniable, that all this may, yea, and has come to paſs; then it is exceeding plain, that a *Believer* may fall from that Grace which would have been *ſufficient* to his Salvation, had he not abuſed and reſiſted it?

Eutychus. I ſhould not know how to withſtand your Argument, if I could diſcern that *Comfort* in this Doctrine, which methinks, there is in the other.

Epenetus. The Doctrine of *Unconditional Election and Reprobation*, does indeed afford wilful and obſtinate Sinners a great deal of Comfort or Encouragement to continue in their Sins; becauſe it maketh Sin, to be no Sin, but only in Opinion. We are wont to ſay, *Neceſſity has no Law*; and if ſo, then Actions which in themſelves are Evil,

if under the dominion of *Abſolute Neceſſity*, are Tranſgreſſions of *no Law*, and conſequently no Sins. *For Sin is the tranſgreſſion of the Law*, 1 John 3. 4. That Sin is nothing but a meer Opinion, by this Doctrine, will appear from the Words of thoſe Men that have maintained it; for they make that to be no Sin in the *Elect*, which they eſteem grievous and unpardonable Sins in the *Reprobate*. "There is no Sin, (ſay they) whether "againſt the firſt or ſecond Table, except that "one Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, but the *Elect* "may, and oftentimes do fall into it: But there "is this great difference between the Regenerate "and Unregenerate; for tho' they commit the "ſame Sins, yet the Reaſon, Mode, and Exit here-"of is far different." To this Purpoſe ſpeaks Mr. Baxter, in his Preface to his *Grotian Religion*, *ſec.* 18. "That the Sin of *Peter*, *David*, &c. "was exceedingly (in regard of Manner, Ends, "Concomitants, *&c.*) different from the like Fact "in a graceleſs Man." Now to what Purpoſe was the Son of God made Man; and being Man, made *a Sacrifice for Sin?* Why was the Miniſtry of the Word and Sacraments ordained? To what End was Heaven and Hell propounded? Why are Exhortations, Perſwaſions, or any other Means uſed to hinder Men from complying with Sin, if it be nothing but a meer Opinion only? Thus far of the *Comfortableneſs* of this Doctrine. I ſhall now, (by your Leave) ſhew the *Uncomfortableneſs* of it, and prove it to be full of Deſperation, both to them which ſtand, and to thoſe that are fallen; to Men out of Temptation, and to Men in Temptation: And this I ſhall do two manner of ways; Firſt, ſhew that it leadeth Men into Deſpair. And Secondly, ſhew that it leaveth them in it. *1ſt*, This Doctrine leadeth Men into Temptation,

even

ev'n the moſt inſuperable, ſharpeſt, and moſt dangerous the Tempter hath, and that is (as I ſaid) Deſpair of God's Mercy. For how eaſy is it for the Devil to perſwade any Man that maketh Abſolute Reprobation a part of his Creed, *That he is one of thoſe Abſolute Reprobates?* Becauſe there are far more Abſolute Reprobates, ev'n an hundred to one, than Abſolute Choſen Ones. And indeed, a Man hath a great deal more Reaſon, by this Principle, to think he is one of the huge Multitude of inevitable *Caſt-aways*, than one of that *little Flock* for whom Chriſt hath prepared a *Kingdom*. In Nature, Excellent things are few; there are but *few* Diamonds, to Pebbles and other Stones; *few* Lilies and Violets, to Briars and Brambles. And as our Saviour ſaith, *Wide is the Gate, and broad is the Way that leadeth to Deſtruction, and many there be which go in thereat*; ſo hath he told us, *ſtrait is the Gate, and narrow is the Way which leadeth unto Life, and few there be that find it.* From whence it is very eaſy for a Sinner to infer, (that is poſſeſs'd with the Principles of Abſolute Reprobation, yea, and to conclude too,) That he is one of thoſe *many*, than to think, that he may, by Repentance, become one of the *few*. *2dly*, It leaveth Men in Deſpair. Suppoſe you ſhould hear a poor Soul groaning under the Burden of his Sins, and tormented with the frightful Apprehenſions of his being rejected by Almighty God from all Eternity, crying out, in the Bitterneſs of his Soul, "Wo is me; I am a Caſt-"away; I am Abſolutely rejected from Grace and "Glory." What Comfort could you adminiſter to him, from your Principles? Should you tell him, that God had not caſt him off, *that he hateth nothing that he hath made*, but beareth a Love to all Men, and to him among the reſt: Might

he not reply, That tho' God *hateth* no Man, as he is his *Creature*, yet he *hateth* a great many as they are *Sinners in Adam?* For God hath a two-fold Love; a *general Love*, which extendeth to Outward and Temporal Bleſſings only; and in this Manner, he loveth all Men; and a *ſpecial Love*, by which he provideth Everlaſting Life for Men; and with this he loveth only a very few; which out of his alone Will and Pleaſure, he hath ſingled out from the reſt. But I (may he reply) am under God's *general Love*, and not under his *ſpecial*. If we ſhould further tell him, That God ſo far loveth all Men, and deſireth their Eternal Good; that he *would have All to be Saved*, and no Man to Periſh, nor *him* in particular. Why, he is taught by your Doctrine, That the word *All*, is taken two Ways; one, for all Sorts and Conditions of Men, High and Low, Rich and Poor, Bond and Free, *&c.* The other, for all particular Men in the ſeveral Sorts and Ranks. God *would have all Men to be ſaved* in this firſt Senſe, that is, *all Sorts*; but he would not have All to be ſaved in this ſecond Senſe, that is, *all particular Men of thoſe Sorts:* Some (may he ſay) of my Country, my Calling, my Condition of Life, may be Saved; but not *All*, and every One, not me in particular. Nay, he may further object, that tho' it be really true, that God *would have all particular Men to be ſaved* (as the Scripture ſaith,) 1 *Tim.* 2. 4. yet he willeth it only with a *revealed* Will, not with a *ſecret*; for with that, he will have Millions to be Damned. Under this *revealed* Will am I, not under the *ſecret*. If we ſhould tell him, That God *would have all Men to be Saved, and come to the Knowledge of the Truth*; and as he would have no Man to *periſh*, ſo he would have *all Men to repent:* and therefore he calleth

to

to *All*, in the Preaching of the Word, to one as well as the other. He may anſwer, by your Principles, that God hath a double Call, an *Outward*, by the Preaching the Word in Mens Ears, an *Inward*, by the Irreſiſtible Work of Grace in their Hearts. The *Outward Call*, is a part of God's Outward Will; with that he calleth every Man to Believe: The *Inward* and *Effectual* Call, is a part of his Secret Will; and with that he calleth not every Man to Believe, but a very few only, whom he hath inevitably *ordained to Eternal Life*: And therefore by the *Outward Call*, which I enjoy in Common with Others, I cannot be aſſured of God's Good-will and Meaning, that I ſhould *Believe*, *Repent*, and be *Saved*. But if you ſhould endeavour to remove this Objection, by telling him, that *Chriſt came into the World to ſave Sinners, and to ſeek and to ſave that which was loſt*; and *is the Propitiation, not for our Sins only*, (that is, the Sins of a few particular Men, or the Sins of all ſorts of Men) *but alſo for the Sins of the* [*Whole*] *World*; therefore he came to ſave thee, and to be a Propitiation for thy Sins; for thou art one of them that were *loſt*, and thou art *one* of the *whole World*: yet ev'n here he may anſwer, (if your Doctrine be true) that the [*World*] is taken two ways in Scripture; *largely*, for all Mankind; *ſtrictly* and in a *limited* ſenſe, for the Elect or Believers only: In this ſenſe, Chriſt died for the World, namely, for the World of the *Elect*, for the World of *Believers*. Or if it be true, that he died for all Mankind, yet he died for them but after a ſort; his Death was *Sufficienter*; he did enough to Redeem all, if God would have had it ſo; his Blood (ev'n the leaſt Drop of it) was ſufficient to have ranſomed Ten Thouſand Worlds: but his Death was not *Intentionalitèr*; God never intended

that he ſhould ſhed his Blood for all and every Man, but for a *few Selected Ones* only, with whom it is not my Lot to be numbred. — Thus we may ſee, that no ſolid Comfort can be faſtned upon a poor Soul rooted in this Opinion, when he lieth under this horrible Temptation of Deſpair, and therefore I conclude it to be a Doctrine contrary to the Word of God, and the Goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt; which Goſpel bringeth *glad Tydings*, and is an inexhauſtible Fountain of ſweet Conſolation to the Sons of Men, in all the *Changes and Chances of this mortal Life. Theſe things were written* (ſaith the Apoſtle) that by *Patience and Comfort of the Scriptures we might have Hope.* But what *Hope*, what *Comfort* can thoſe Men have, who think there are many, whom God hath utterly rejected long before they were born, nay, before the World it ſelf was made, from Grace here, and Glory hereafter? And if I may treſpaſs upon your Patience a little longer, both the *Comfort* and the *Hope* that is in this Doctrine, will plainly appear by the two following Examples. The firſt is, of one *Petrus Iloſſuanus* a School-Maſter in *Hungary*, of whom it is credibly reported, that going to *hang himſelf*, he ſignify'd, by a Writing which he left in his Study, for the Satisfaction of his Friends and Countrymen, the true Cauſe of that his unnatural Fact: In that Writing, he delivered theſe three Things: *1ſt*, That he was of *Calvin*'s Opinion, That Men are not dealt withal according to their Works, Good or Evil; but there are more hidden Cauſes of Mens Eternal Conditions. *2dly*, That he was one of that woful Company of Abſolute Reprobates, *a Veſſel prepared to Diſhonour*; and that therefore, (tho' his Life had been none of the worſt) yet he could not poſſibly be Saved. *3dly*, That being unable to bear thoſe dreadful

Appre-

Apprehenſions of Wrath with which he was Affrighted, he Hang'd himſelf. For theſe are ſome of his laſt Words, there recorded; (*a*) "I go "to thoſe Infernal Lakes, an Eternal Reproach to "my Country: I commend you to God, whoſe "Mercy is denied to me." The Second Example is of *Francis Spira*, an *Italian* Lawyer: This *Spira*, about the Year 1548, being a Lawyer, and exceſſively Covetous of Money, he gave himſelf over to an inordinate Love of the Things of this World: "Good Cauſes (ſays he) "I either defended deceitfully, or ſold them to "the Adverſaries perfidiouſly. Ill Cauſes I main-"tained with all my might. I willingly oppoſed "what I knew to be true, and either betrayed, "or perverted the Truſt committed to me." This Man, againſt his Knowledge and Conſcience, did afterwards openly *abjure* his Religion, and ſubſcribe to *Popery*; that thereby he might Preſerve his Life, Goods and Liberty. Not long after this, he fell into a deep Deſpair, and ſeemed as it were hung up alive in Chains, by Juſtice from Heaven; being wounded with ſuch Diſtreſs of Conſcience, that he could never find any Redreſs, but ended his Days in a woful Deſpair of God's Mercy, crying, "That he was Undone for ever; "That there never was ſuch a Monſter as he was; "That never Mortal Man had ſuch Experience "of God's Anger and Hatred as he had," *&c.* To Comfort him came many Divines of Note: But againſt all the Arguments they uſed to Comfort him, he oppoſed two things in particular; firſt, the greatneſs of his Sin: "It was a

(*a*) *Diſcedo igitur ad lacum infernalem æternum dedecus patriæ meæ: Deo vos commendo, cujus miſericordia mihi negata eſt.*

"Sin

" Sin (ſaith he) of a deep die, committed with " many urging and aggravating Circumſtances; " and therefore could not be forgiven." This Argument they quickly took from him, and convinced him, by the Example of St. *Peter*, that there was nothing in his Sin that could make it Unpardonable: *Peter* that committed the ſame Sin of denying his Maſter, and with ſome more odious Circumſtances, Repented, and was Pardoned, and ſo (no doubt) might he. *2dly*, he oppoſed his Abſolute *Reprobation*, and with that, put off all their Comforts. " *Peter* (ſaith he) repented in- " deed, and was Pardoned, becauſe he was *Elected*: " As for me, I was utterly *Rejected* before I was " born; and therefore I cannot poſſibly Repent, " or be Saved." If any Man be Elected, he ſhall be Saved, tho' he have committed Sins for number many, and Hatred in degree: but if he be one of the *Caſtaways*; he ſhall be inevitably Condemned, tho' his Sins be ſmall and few. (*a*) " A " Reprobate muſt be Damned, be his Sins many " or few, great or little; becauſe God's Mercy and " Chriſt's Merits belong not to him." Where now, I pray you, is the Comfort you ſo much talk of, in this Doctrine? Much, I muſt confeſs, to the *perſevering* Sinner, but none to the *wounded* and *afflicted* one; it leaveth them, without any *Balm* to heal their *Wounds*, and *Bruiſes, and putrified Sores*: For it rendreth every Miniſter of the Goſpel unable to comfort them, or apply the Merits of Chriſt's Death unto them. If he tell them, that God *would have all Men to be Saved*; that Chriſt *died for all*; it is what they do not

(*a*) *Nihil intereſt an multa, an pauca, an magna, an parva ſint, quando nec Dei miſericordia, nec Chriſti ſanguis, quicquam ad eos pertinet.*

believe.

believe. For God will have a great many to be Damned, and to have no part in Chriſt, (ſay they.) If he tell them they are *Believers*, and truly *repenting Sinners*, and therefore no Reprobates; for *Faith* and *Repentance* are infallible Fruits of Election, and Arguments of a State contrary to what they fear; they will anſwer, *they are not Believers*, &c. Now how muſt he convince them that they are?

Eutychus. By the outward Acts of *Faith* and *Repentance* which he ſeeth viſible and apparent in them: *Bleſſed are they that mourn*, (ſaith our Saviour, *Mat.* 5.) *for they ſhall be comforted.*

Epenetus. The Elect being in this Condition, may indeed be *comforted*; but theſe Proofs are only probable, ev'n to the Beſt; but no Proofs at all to a Man in Temptation or Deſpair. Grace is offer'd to ſome, with a Mind of communicating it unto them; therefore it [may be] that I am one of them to whom it is ſo offer'd; but this is no demonſtrative Proof that it is ſo; becauſe Effectual and Saving Grace, are, by an Abſolute Decree, deny'd to all Reprobates. And may not thoſe in Deſpair (who are poſſeſs'd with theſe Principles) reply, If this be all the Evidence you can give, for my not being a *Reprobate*, you are a *miſerable Comforter*, a *Phyſician of no Value.* For the External Acts of *Faith* and *Repentance* may be counterfeited: The Devil may ſeem to be *an Angel of Light: Wolves* may go *in Sheeps Cloathing: Judas* may make the World believe, by his preaching and following of Chriſt, that he is a true Apoſtle: And *Simon Magus*, tho' he be *in the Gall of Bitterneſs, and Bond of Iniquity*, may be thought, by his receiving of *Baptiſm*, to be a true Believer: And ſo may any Hypocrite, by ſome outward Acts of Faith and Repentance, delude the beſt

beſt Diſcerner of Spirits among the Sons of Men, and gain the Opinion and Eſteem of a true Penitent and Believer. But it is a Maxim, *Bonum non oritur niſi ex integris.* For Actions externally Good, or Good in Appearance, may be Evil indeed for want of a good *Rule*, *Manner*, *End*, or ſome other Good Circumſtances, with which an Action that is Good muſt be cloathed. Which being ſo, you are ſtill deceived in us, (may they ſay) for you cannot ſee more in us, than hath been ſeen in many Reprobates; and therefore we may be, nay, we are Reprobates ſtill. Thus you may ſee no *Comfort* can be poſſibly inſtilled into the afflicted Souls of thoſe Men, who are firmly rooted and grounded in this Doctrine of Abſolute and Unconditional Election and Reprobation. From whence it follows, that neither the *Goſpel*, nor the *Miniſters* thereof, are able to afford any Solid Comfort to one Man of a hundred, who ſhall fall into this Temptation and Trouble, but they muſt bear the Burden of this Diſtemper as well as they can.

Eutychus. I muſt confeſs, there is but cold Comfort in all this; neither could I have thought, that this Doctrine was attended with ſuch Conſequences.

Epenetus. My Dear Friend, if you had but impartially weighed the Matter, and let *Scripture* and *Reaſon* have ſate on the Judgment-ſeat, you would long ago have found it inconſiſtent with God's Sincerity, Equity and Juſtice, to *Call*, *Command*, *Exhort*, *and Intreat* thoſe Men to *Faith and Repentance*, and to Promiſe them *Pardon and Salvation*, when at the ſame time, by his Immutable and Everlaſting Decree, he had put thoſe very Perſons under an inevitable Neceſſity of Unbelief and Impenitency, that ſo he might have an Opportunity

portunity of Glorifying his Juſtice in their Eternal Damnation. Can a dejected Soul caſt Anchor upon ſuch deluding Offers and Invitations? To be told in Scripture, *that he that believeth not, ſhall be damned*, Mark. 16. 16. and that, *without holineſs, no Man ſhall ſee the Lord*, Hebr. 12. 14. And yet to be taught alſo by ſome Men, that Common Grace is inſufficient to work in us that ſaving Faith, and that ſpecial Grace ſhall be conferr'd upon a few ſelected Perſons only, called the *Elect*; that this Work of Regeneration ſhall be accompliſhed in *them* only, and that in an Irreſiſtible manner: That theſe Perſons were deſigned and cull'd out for Salvation, without Reſpect or Fore-knowledge, either of Faith or Repentance, or any good Quality whatſoever in them, as antecedent to their Election; and that therefore no Performance of ours can procure us to be Elected. That the Sins of the Elect, proceed from the common Infirmity and Corruption of Nature which hath infected All; and that tho' they ſhould at any time tranſgreſs *Any* of Chriſt's Commands, yet Chriſt's Love to them is not to be called in queſtion, but they are as firmly to believe Chriſt loves them as dearly, as he did before they thus tranſgreſſed. And leſt they ſhould ſtop in the Career of Sin, they are told, that it is exceeding difficult, to determine how Many, Great, and Long the Sins of a true Believer may be. But on the contrary, that the ſame Sins, which in the Elect are venial and pardonable, are, in the Reprobate, of a damning Nature; nay, that all their Duties and good Actions are the Effects of common Grace only, and inſufficient to work a real Converſion in them; becauſe they were left out, or paſſed by *in Maſſâ*, before the Foundation of the World; and ſo never had a true Intereſt in the Merits

and

and Interceſſion of Chriſt; and therefore Saving Grace was never procur'd for them: And tho' Common Grace could not advance them *higher*, yet the Abuſe of it ſhall thruſt them down *lower* in Everlaſting Torments. So that it is impoſſible, nay, it is impertinent and fruitleſs, for one of theſe poor Wretches to be ſolicitous about their Salvation; all the Induſtry they can uſe, will never be able to turn *Common Grace* into *Saving Grace:* God having by his Immutable and Eternal Decree, ev'n debarr'd *himſelf* of a Power to give, as well as deny'd to *them* a Power to receive that Grace that doth accompany Salvation.

Eutychus. This does indeed, ſeem very Cruel and Unnatural in Almighty God, to offer Salvation to thoſe whom he hath reſolved ſhall never enjoy it, and yet caſt them into Hell, after he had determined to ſhut them out of Heaven; and this before they were born, or had done either Good or Evil. But then I have been taught, That if Chriſt had *ſeriouſly* deſired the Salvation of all Men, he would undoubtedly have removed thoſe Impediments, which he knew would hinder their Salvation.

Epenetus. Our Saviour might be ſaid, not to deſire *ſeriouſly* the Salvation of all Men, had he not given them *ſufficient Means:* Then indeed, God's Offers would have been *ſerious* only to thoſe *few* to whom he had vouchſafed the *Means.* But Chriſt is wanting to none, in what is requiſite to their Safety, if they are not wanting to themſelves; and therefore his Deſire is *Serious*, tho' not *Paſſionate* or *Unreaſonable*, ſo as to ſave Men by *Force*, either againſt, or without their Wills. He doth not violently remove thoſe Impediments that hinder their Salvation by any Acts of *meer Power*, but deals with Men as *free Agents*, who could

not

not otherwiſe be fit for Rewards or Puniſhments. Chriſt does indeed take away the *Heart* of *Stone*, where it is really taken away, and none but *He* can do that Work; but then *He* does it not *Irreſiſtibly*, and therefore in many the Stone remains *not taken away*; where yet he mercifully attempts the doing of it, by ſuch kind of Means as are wiſe and congruous, and in themſelves *ſufficient*, if Mens perverſe and obſtinate Wills did not render them *ineffectual*, *which refuſe to hear the Voice of the Charmer, charm he never ſo wiſely. Ye will not come to me, that ye might have Life*, ſaith Chriſt to the obſtinate *Jews*, John 5. 40. For when God *Commands*, he is ſincerely willing to be *Obeyed:* If He requireth any thing from us, he is ſure firſt to give it to us, and then mercifully accepts our Compliance with his Demands: But then, as I ſaid before, he *compelleth* no Man, he *forceth* no Man, either to be Happy or Miſerable, do what he can to the contrary. Can that God, who is ſaid to be *ſlow to Anger*, Pſal. 103. 8. but *abundant in Goodneſs and Truth*, Exod. 34. 6. who is ſaid to be *delighted with Mercy*, Micah 7. 18. but Juſtice is call'd *his ſtrange Work*, Iſa. 28. 21. Can he, I ſay, take Delight in the Miſery of his Creatures? No, certainly, *He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the Children of Men*, Lam. 3. 33. He beſtows *Mercies* upon us every Day, but his *Judgments* we rarely feel; them he inflicts but now and then ſparingly, and after a long time of Forbearance, and when there is *no Remedy*, 2 Chr. 36. 15, 16. *All the Day long have I ſtretched forth my Hands unto a Diſobedient and Gainſaying People*, Iſa. 65. 2. As if he had ſaid, I have been patient a long time, and in all that time I have not been idle, but been employed in Exhorting, Promiſing, and ſhewing Mercy, that ſo I might do you Good.

He

He is a *God* (as our *Liturgy* ſtyles him) *whoſe Nature and Property is always to have Mercy, and to Forgive.* He waits for the Converſion of Sinners, as Husband-men do after their Tillage and Labour, for the Fruits of the Ground; and at laſt of all, it is with much ado that he is moved to puniſh, *Gen.* 6. 5, 6, 7, 12, 13. *The wickedneſs of Man was great upon the Earth*, and *all fleſh had corrupted his way*, and then it was that God thinketh of a *Flood.* He would not deſtroy the *Amorites*, till their *wickedneſs* was *full.* He found the *Sins* of *Sodom* to be anſwerable to their *cry*, yet ev'n then, *he would have ſpared all the place*, if he could have found but *ten righteous* Perſons within it. Nay, he would have ſpared *Jeruſalem*, if the *Prophet*, by his ſearching, could have found but *one Man, who did execute Judgment, and ſeek the Truth*, Jer. 5. 1. What a ſlender Humiliation made him ſpare wicked *Ahab* and his Houſe a long time? 1 *King* 21. 29. And how willingly did God pardon *Nineveh, that great City*, upon their Repentance, whoſe *Wickedneſs* cried to the Lord for Vengence? *Jonah* 1. 2. Yea, he expreſſes himſelf, and his Kindneſs towards us, in the moſt endearing Affection, and tendereſt Compaſſion we are able to conceive, ev'n that of a *Father* to his *Son*, a tender *Mother* to her *Child*, and of the moſt Affectionate Brutes to their Young Ones. Nay, his Mercy ſurmounts all theſe Compariſons: *If ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your Children; how much more ſhall your Father which is in Heaven give good things to them that ask him?* Matt. 7. 11. From whence it is plain, that thoſe Words [*how much more*] doth imply, that God's Love outſtrips that of a *Father*'s. And ſo it doth that of a *Mother*'s too. Women are moſt Compaſſionate and Indulgent towards their

Chil-

Children which ſuck their Breaſts, becauſe they are the Fruit of their Wombs, and a part of themſelves: And yet Mothers may forget ev'n their ſucking Children. *Can a Woman forget her ſucking Child, that ſhe ſhould not have compaſſion on the Son of her Womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee,* ſaith God, *Iſai.* 49. 15. He bears too great a Love to Mankind, either to *leave* or *forſake* them, 'till they firſt *forſake him. O Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem, — how often would I have gathered thy Children together even as a Hen gathereth her Chickens under her wings, and ye would not!* Matt. 23. 37. As if he had ſaid, O *Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem,* I would have ſhelter'd thee from evil, I came on purpoſe to gather you together under my Protection; but ye rejected me from reigning over you; inſtead of coming to me, ye run from me; yet ev'n then I went mourning after you, calling you back with melting Expreſſions and endearing Invitations, 'till you run quite out of my ſight. O *Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem,* I have not taken Advantage againſt thee, neither caſt thee off, upon the *firſt, ſecond,* or *third Unkindneſs*; they were no *ſmall Matters* moved me to deſtroy thee. Thus we ſee the Greatneſs of God's Love to ſinful Man, a Love without Height or Depth, Length or Breadth, or any Dimenſions; a Love *paſſing Knowledge,* Eph. 3. 19. *Mercy* which is called *Rich,* Eph. 2. 4. Mercy and Love ſo great towards Mankind, that God hath declared himſelf to have done far greater Matters for them, than for the Angels; the Wiſdom of God delighting it ſelf with the Children of Men before the World was, *Prov.* 8. 31. and humbling himſelf ſo far for them, as in time to *take upon him their Nature, and became obedient* for

them *unto Death*, to Redeem their Souls by the *Price* of *his own Blood*, Hebr. 2 16. 1 Pet. 1. 2, *&c.* Now can ſuch Mercy as this is, be conſiſtent with a Decree of Abſolute Reprobation, or Rejecting the greateſt part of Mankind from having any Intereſt in his Mercy; but determining them, without the leaſt regard to any Evil done by them, to be tormented eternally in Hell with the *Devil and his Angels, where ſhall be weeping and wailing, and gnaſhing of Teeth?* Certainly, to grant this, would be, to make God a Father of *Cruelties*, and not of *Mercies*, and of *Hatred* rather than *Love*; and the Devil's Name, *Satan*, an *Adverſary*, a *Deſtroyer*, may be fitter for him than a *Saviour*; which I tremble to think. Can we ſay God is *pleaſed with Mercy*, and yet aſcribe, to him ſuch a Decree, which ſheweth much more Severity to poor Mortals, than Mercy? Can we ſay God is *ſlow to Anger*; and yet ſay at the ſame time, he is ſo ready to puniſh the greateſt part of Men for ever, and that for one Sin once committed, and that, not by themſelves in their own Perſons, but by another, and imputed to them only? Can we ſay he his *abundant in Mercy*; and yet ſay alſo, it is tied up, and limited to a very few ſelected Ones; and that if we take in all Parts of the World, there is not above one in a hundred, but what are unavoidably caſt away, out of his only Will and Pleaſure? Or can we ſay his *Love paſſeth Knowledge*, when we ſee greater Love than this, in Men, and other Creatures? What Father or Mother who hath not quite caſt off all Paternal Affection and Humanity, would determine their Children to ſuffer the moſt cruel Deaths, nay, intolerable Torments worſe than Death, for one Offence only, allow-

allowing that Offence to be done by the Children themſelves, much leſs to be done by another and imputed to them?

Eutychus. My deareſt Friend, I do now moſt heartily thank you; but above all, I praiſe my Gracious God, for giving me this happy Opportunity of receiving Satisfaction of all my Doubts and Scruples, whereby I am now reſtored to my Peace and Comfort, and enabled to *rejoyce with Joy unſpeakable, and full of Glory*, 1 Pet. 1. 8. *And bleſſed and for ever bleſſed be the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, which according to his abundant Mercy, hath begotten me again unto a lively Hope, through the Univerſal Redemption that is in Chriſt Jeſus*, 1 Pet. 1. 3. Rom. 3. 22, 23, 24.

Epenetus. And *bleſſed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Father of Mercies, and the God of all Comfort, who comforteth us in all our Tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any Trouble, by the Comfort wherewith we ourſelves are comforted of God*, 2 Cor. 1. 3, 4. And now, before we part, give me Leave to add this Exhortation: *See that you walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleaſing, and as becomes the Goſpel of Chriſt, and the Prize of your high Calling: building up your ſelf on your moſt Holy Faith, praying in the Holy Ghoſt, keep your ſelf in the Love of God, looking for the Mercy of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt unto Eternal Life. And be not weary in well-doing, for in due Seaſon you ſhall reap, if you faint not.* Therefore, my beloved *Eutychus*, I heartily bid you Farewel: *Be ſtedfaſt, unmoveable, always abounding in the Work of the Lord, foraſmuch as ye know that your Labour ſhall not be in vain in the Lord. And the*

very God of Peace ſanctify you wholly: and I pray God, your whole Spirit, and Soul, and Body be preſerved blameleſs unto the Coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Faithful is he that calleth you, who alſo will do it. Now unto him that is able to keep you from Falling, and to preſent you Faultleſs before the Preſence of his Glory with exceeding Joy, To the only Wiſe God our Saviour, be Glory and Majeſty, Dominion and Power, both now, and ever. Amen.

The End of the Eighth and Laſt Conference.

FINIS.

The greatest part of this Work is borrowed (whole Passages often in the very same Words) from a Book published in 1673 entitled, — Gods Love to Mankind manifested by disproving his absolute Decree for their Damnation.

ERRATA.

PAge 12. line 12. dele *that*; p. 19. l. 15. dele [; p. 20. l. 22. read *to think*; p. 31. l. 27. dele *it*; p. 63. l. 37. read *what*; p. 67. l. 12. read *called*; p. 69. l. 1. put a Period after *Obliquities*; p. 70. l. 36. read *Strength againſt*; p. 30. l. 33. read *naught*; p. 92. l. 3. read *that ſo*; ibid. dele *to*; p. 127. l. 30. for *Evangeliſts*, read *Evangeliſt*; p. 160. l. 7. read *theſe Fields*; ibid. dele ?, put !; p. 174. l. 5. read *into*; p. 175. l. 32. read *ſtretched*.

BOOKS Printed for C. Rivington.

Juſt Publiſh'd, beautifully Printed on a fine Paper, the Fourth Edition of,

THE True Church of *England* Man's Companion in the Cloſet: Or, a Complete Manual of private Devotions: Collected from the Writings of Arch-Biſhop *Laud*, Biſhop *Andrews*, Biſhop *Kenn*, Dr. *Hickes*, Mr. *Kettlewell*, Mr. *Spinckes*, and other eminent Divines of the Church of *England*. With a Preface by the Reverend Mr. *Spinckes*. Price 3 *s*.

A *Rationale*, or Practical Expoſition of the Book of Common-Prayer, by the Right Reverend Father in God, *Anthony Sparrow*, D. D. late Lord Biſhop of *Norwich*. With his Caution to his Dioceſe againſt Falſe Doctrines, and his famous Sermon of Confeſſion, and the Power of Abſolution. The Seventh Edition. To which are prefix'd, the Lives of the Compilers of the Liturgy; and an Hiſtorical Account of its ſeveral Reviews, by the Reverend Mr. *Samuel Downes*, late of St. *John*'s College, *Oxon*. The Second Edit. Price 5 *s*. 6 *d*.

Practical Diſcourſes upon the moſt important Subjects; *viz*. Of Covetouſneſs, Of Confeſſion, Of Watching and Praying, Of Chriſtian Liberty, On Chriſt's Nativity, Of Purifying the Temple, On the Reſurrection, Of the Poſſibility of Keeping God's Law, Of Feaſting, Of Moderation, Of Superſtition, On the Martyrdom of King *Charles* the I. All Preach'd on particular Occaſions before the State, in the Cathedral of St. *Patrick*'s, and *Chriſt* Church, *Dublin*. By the Right Reverend Father in God, *William Sheridan*, D. D. Lord Biſhop of *Kilmore* and *Ardah*, [Depriv'd.] In Three Volumes. The Second Edition. Price 13 *s*. 6 *d*.

The Sacred Claſſics Defended and Illuſtrated: Or, An Eſſay humbly offer'd towards proving the Purity, Propriety, and true Eloquence of the Writers of the New Teſtament. In Two Parts. In the Firſt of which, thoſe Divine Writers are vindicated againſt the Charge of barbarous Language, falſe Greek, and Soleciſms. In the Second is ſhewn, that all the Excellencies of Style, and ſublime Beauties of Language and genuine Eloquence do abound in the Sacred Writers of the New Teſtament. With an Account of their Style and Character, and a Repreſentation of their Superiority, in ſeveral Inſtances, to the beſt Claſſics of *Greece* and *Rome*. To which are ſubjoyn'd proper Indexes. By *A. Blackwall*, M. A. Price 10 *s*.

The

BOOKS Printed for C. Rivington.

The Chriſtian Pilgrimage: Or, A Companion for the Holy Seaſon of *Lent:* Being Meditations upon the Paſſion, Death, Reſurrection, and Aſcenſion of our Bleſſed Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt. Divided into Eighteen Stations, with Prayers ſuited to each. Written originally in *French*, and recommended to the Uſe of all true Lovers of Devotion, by the late Pious and Learned Monſ. *De Fenelon*, Arch-Biſhop of *Cambray*. Made *Engliſh* by Mrs. *Jane Barker*, of *Wilſthorp*, near *Stamford* in *Lincolnſhire*. Price 2 *s*.

A Preſervative againſt Schiſm and Rebellion in the moſt Trying Times: Or, A Reſolution of the moſt Important Caſes of Conſcience, relating to Government both in Church and State; in a Courſe of Lectures read in the Divinity-School at *Oxford*, at the Time of the great Rebellion. By *Robert Sanderſon*, D. D. *Regius Profeſſor*, and afterwards Lord Biſhop of *Lincoln*. In Three Volumes. The Firſt Volume concerning the Obligation of Promiſſary *Oaths*. Tranſlated by the Special Command of His moſt Sacred Majeſty King *Charles* the Firſt; and afterwards Revis'd and Approv'd under His Majeſty's own Hand. To which is added, The Judgment of the Univerſity, concerning the *Solemn League and Covenant*. The Second and Third Volumes explaining the moſt Difficult *Caſes of Conſcience*, relating to Government Eccleſiaſtical and Civil. Tranſlated by Mr. *Lewis*. With the Life of the Author.

A Companion for the Grand Feſtival of the Chriſtian Church, or the Lord's-Day. With Forms of Prayer and Praiſe for the Aſſiſtance of Private Devotion: And Directions for the more Devout Attendance on the Publick Worſhip of God, according to the Liturgy of the Church of *England*. Being a Supplement to Mr. *Nelſon*'s Companion for the Faſts and Feſtivals, *&c.*

The Chriſtian's Exerciſe: Or, Rules to live above the World while we are in it; with Meditations, Hymns, and Soliloquies, ſuited to the ſeveral Stages of Chriſtian Life. In Four Parts. By *Thomas à Kempis*. To which is annex'd, an Appendix of Letters, Dialogues, *&c.* Addreſs'd to all the true Lovers of Devotion, by *Robert Nelſon*, Eſq; The Second Edition Reviſed. To which is added, a Prayer which Mr. *Nelſon* made for his own Private Uſe. And a Letter wrote by Arch-Biſhop *Tillotſon*, to his Sick Friend.

Eccleſiæ Primitivæ Notitia: Or, a Summary of Chriſtian Antiquities: Giving an Account, I. Of Chriſtians in general, their Names, *&c.* II. Of the Clergy in particular, their Orders, Offices, Privileges, *&c.* III. Of the Aſceticks, and the Original of Monks. IV. Of the Ancient Churches, their Original. V. Of the Diſtricts of Anicent Churches

VI. Of

VI. Of the firſt Uſe of Creeds in the Church. VII. Of Baptiſm, Confirmation, their Rites, *&c.* VIII. Of the Primitive Liturgies, and ſet-Forms of Prayer. IX. Of the *Miſſa Catechumenorum*, and its ſeveral Parts. X. Of the *Miſſa Fidelium*, or the Communion Service, with the Preparation requir'd to the Communion. XI. Of the Unity and Diſcipline of the Ancient Church, *&c.* To which is prefix'd, an *Index Hereticus*, containing a ſhort Account of all the Principal Hereſies, ſince the Riſe of Chriſtianity. There is alſo added, a brief Account of the Eight firſt General Councils. In Two Volumes.

An Expoſition on the Thirty Nine Articles of the Church of *England:* Collected out of the Writings of the moſt celebrated Divines of the ſaid Church, both Ancient and Modern; but chiefly out of Mr. *Welchman*'s *Latin* Expoſition, and the Authors therein referr'd to; and abounding with Scripture-Proofs at Length, and Quotations from the Fathers of the Three firſt Centuries. By *John Veneer*, a Presbyter of the Church of *England.*

Juſt Publiſh'd,

THE Complete Engliſh Tradeſman, in Familiar Letters; Directing him in all the ſeveral Parts and Progreſſions of Trade. *viz.* I. His acquainting himſelf with Buſineſs during his Apprenticeſhip. II. His writing to his Correſpondents, and obtaining a general Knowledge of Trade; as well what he is not, as what he is employ'd in. III. Of Diligence and Application, as the Life of all Buſineſs. IV. Cautions againſt Over-Trading. V. Of the ordinary Occaſions of a Tradeſman's Ruin; ſuch as Expenſive Living; — Too early Marrying; — Innocent Diverſions; — Giving and taking too much Credit; — Leaving Buſineſs to Servants; — Being above Buſineſs; — Entering into dangerous Partnerſhips, *&c.* VI. Directions in the ſeveral Diſtreſſes of a Tradeſman, when he comes to fail. VII. Of Tradeſmen Compounding with their Debtors, and why they are ſo particularly ſevere. VIII. Of Tradeſmen ruining one another, by Rumour and Scandal. IX. Of the cuſtomary Frauds of Trade, which ev'n honeſt Men allow themſelves to practiſe. X. Of Credit, and how it is only ſupported by Honeſty. XI. Directions for Book-keeping, punctual paying-Bills, and thereby maintaining Credit. XII. Of the Dignity and Honour of Trade in *England*, more than in other Countries; and how the Trading Families in *England* are mingled with the Nobility and Gentry, ſo as not to be ſeparated or diſtinguiſhed. Calculated for the Inſtruction of our Inland Tradeſmen, and eſpecially of Young Beginners. Price 5 *s.*