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THE SERMONS OF JOHN BRINE

An Antidote Against a Spreading Antinomian Principle:

by John Brine

(London: John Ward, 1750)

*Thou hast given a standard to them that fear thee;
that it may be displayed because of the truth
— Psa. 60: 4*



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SERMON 12

AN ANTIDOTE AGAINST A SPREADING ANTINOMIAN PRINCIPLE

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ROM. 3:31.

Do we then make void the Law through Faith?

God forbid: yea, we establish the Law.

ALL, who acknowledge that Man is a lapsed Creature, confess, that it is not possible to obtain Life, if a sinless and unerring Obedience to the Will of our Maker is required of us to that End.

But *It is the Opinion of many, that Men are to acquire a Right to Life and Happiness, by yielding Obedience to a Law less rigorous in its Commands; than the Law of Innocency is, viz. the Gospel.*

That is not, in the Apprehension of Multitudes, a gracious Discovery of a Right to impunity, and a Title to Life, by the Blood and Righteousness of Christ; but is only a Proposal of lower Terms of Life, by a Compliance with which we are to obtain for ourselves a Right to both. And these Terms are Faith, Repentance, and sincere Obedience.

This is the Opinion of the *Socinians*.^{f1} This is also the Persuasion of the *Arminians*.^{f2} And the *Baxterians* assert the same.^{f3} It is not the inseparable Connection of Faith and Salvation, which they intend; but *They maintain, that it is a proper Condition of Pardon and Salvation; or that Faith, with its Fruits, is the Matter of our justifying Righteousness before God*, according to the Gospel; and that That is it, from which our Right to eternal Blessedness results; that, as *Adam's* Right to a continual Enjoyment of Happiness would have arose from his Obedience to the old

Law, so our Right to Life arises from our Obedience to this *new*, and (as it is called) *remedial* Law.

I am fully persuaded, that this Opinion is not true: And I would, First, offer some Arguments to prove the Negative; Secondly; answer the Arguments for the Affirmative.

First, *The Arguments against this Opinion are many.*

Arg. 1. If the Gospel is a Law by which Men are justified or condemned, it is very far from requiring a perfect Obedience in order to Acceptance. It must be allowed, that the Commission of the *most atrocious* Crimes is no Objection to a Person's Justification in the sight of God by his own Works, *viz. Murder, Adultery, Incest, Cursing, Swearing, and a Denial of Jesus Christ, etc.*

For those, who embrace this Opinion, must be obliged to grant, that some Persons, who were guilty of the Crimes mentioned, were, notwithstanding, justified in the sight of God by their own Works; and, consequently, this Law is far indeed from being a perfect one. If it is said, that God forbids all Evil, and requires all Good, in Practice, by this Law, then it will follow, that he justifies Men, or accounts them righteous, in relation to their own Actions, whose Conduct hath not been, such as his Law requires it should be; which looks very much like a Contradiction. If God reckons a Man righteous on the ground of his Behaviour, how can he esteem him a Sinner under that Consideration? Are there Things consistent? Who can imagine they are? Is one Sort of Righteousness commanded in point of Duty? And is another, very different from it, the Matter of our Justification? Then, surely we are justified, without yielding such Obedience as the Law requires of us. It seems to me, that no Action can be accounted criminal, which is not preventive of our Justification, by our own Works, according to that Law, whereby we are to be tried. And, therefore, this is such a Law as I heartily disapprove of, and cannot but reject with some degree of Indignation as inconsistent with the Holiness of God. It so falls out that some Persons, who clamor most against *Antinomianism*, slide (it may be insensibly) into *Antinomian* Principles. This is certainly such; for it *vacates* the Moral Law in its Sanction, and makes no Sin *dammable*, but final Unbelief.

Arg. 2. *God cannot be the Author of an imperfect Law.* His Nature is infinitely holy, and he necessarily, though freely, wills what is perfectly

pure and holy. His Law is the Expression of his Will, respecting the Conduct of his Creatures towards himself, and one another. Love to him, and Love to our Neighbour, is the Sum of our Duty. And it is absurd to think, that God requires of Men a less Affection to himself and to one another, than heretofore he did. Nor is it less absurd to suppose, that God justifies Men for a *partial* Obedience to a perfect Law; because then his Judgment concerning them cannot be according to Truth and Fact. If a Subject offends against the Law in any Point, he is a Transgressor in fact, and must be so accounted; and, consequently, he cannot be reckoned righteous on the score of his Behaviour.

Arg. 3. *Men cannot act any thing good and pleasing to God; and, therefore, they are not meet Subjects of a Law in order to Acceptance by the Observation of it.* In this Argument I do not insist on a perfect Performance of Duty. I only intend Faith, Repentance, and an holy Obedience. And I utterly deny, that Men, without the Grace of Regeneration, can believe, repent, turn to God, and yield an holy and acceptable Obedience to him. They are not attended with, *a Deliquium of Spirits*; but they are dead; and, therefore, no Influences, which convey not Life to them, will ever enable them to act. Their Hearts are Stone, and not susceptible of spiritual Impressions.

The unregenerate Mind is Enmity against God; and it is impossible to cause it to love God, and become subject to his Law. Every regenerate Person hath within himself sad and full Evidence of the Truth of this. That which constantly lusteth against the Spirit, by reason of the Contrariety of its Nature, by no Influence whatever can be brought to act as the Spirit does even in spiritual Persons; much less is this possible in Minds wholly carnal. Until, therefore, it is proved, that Grace, as a Principle, is not necessarily prerequisite to gracious, spiritual Acts, (which yet has not been done, and I am bold to say never will be) it must be concluded, that Men are not meet Subjects of a Law, requiring Faith; Repentance, and holy Obedience, as Conditions of Justification and everlasting Salvation, If this is the Fact, nothing is more certain than their eternal Ruin. The Reason is, no Helps and Influences: which, do not communicate a gracious Principle, will ever be effectual to the Production of spiritual Acts in Men, whether Elect, or Non-elect; and, consequently, the Salvation of no Man is possible, according to this Scheme. *Baxterians*, indeed, assert the Certainty of the Salvation of the Elect; but, as they allow not of the Infusion of gracious Habits, they leave even the Elect in a

State of certain Damnation. Men may talk, while they please, about Grace sufficient as afforded to all, and of Grace effectual being given to some; but, if Grace doth not really produce a new Principle of Action, it is sufficient for no Man, nor will ever be effectual in any Man. They who are in the Flesh, *i.e.* in an unregenerate State, cannot please God. No Assistance can enable them so to do. Nor can the natural Man be enabled to know the Things of the Spirit of God. He may by divine Grace be made a spiritual Man; but no Influence upon him, while he is a *natural* Man, will render him capable of understanding spiritual Things. A Man that is blind may have a visive Power given him; but he cannot be made to see without such a Power. And a Man who is dead may be inspired with a Principle of Life; but it is impossible by any Operation upon him to cause him to act while he is dead. Omnipotence can give Being to Intelligence where it is not; but infinite Power cannot produce reasonable Acts, without a rational Nature, for that implies a Contradiction. And God can, and of his sovereign Mercy he doth, produce a Principle of Love in Minds which are Enmity against him; but he cannot cause Enmity to love him, and delight in his Law.

Arg. 4. *God is the Author of all that is good and pleasing to him in Men; and, therefore, the Gospel cannot be a Law.*

Spiritual Life is from him, which capacitates for spiritual Action: *You hath he quickened, who were dead in Trespasses and Sins.* He is the Origin of heavenly Light, whereby we become capable of discerning the Nature of heavenly Things: *God, who commanded the Light to shine out of Darkness, hath shined in our Hearts to give the Light of the Knowledge of his Glory, in the Face, or Person (Προσωπω) of Christ.* And he creates us in Christ Jesus unto good Works. Faith and Repentance are his Gifts, not acquired with his Help. Faith, as a Habit or Principle, doth not arise from Acts of believing; but the Grace of Faith is given, and believing Acts follow upon it. A Man does not first act, and then live; but, on the contrary, he first lives, and then acts. A Person does not discern Objects, and upon that become the Subject of a visive Power; but he first hath that Power, and then sees the Objects that are before him. And a Man does not first repent and act holily, and then his Heart becomes Flesh, *i.e.* soft, and susceptible of good Impressions; but, on the contrary, God gives him an Heart of Flesh, whereupon he repents, and receives good Impressions, and acts in a holy and acceptable Manner.

From hence it is evident, that the Gospel cannot be a Law, wherein a Provision is made for the Salvation of all who hear it; because God doth not give Life to some, because he doth not communicate Light to some, because he doth not give Faith and Repentance to some, nor create them in Christ Jesus unto good Works, without which the Salvation of any Man is impossible; for all Men naturally are dead, blind, their Hearts are Stone, devoid of a holy Principle, and are averse to Good. To say, that the metaphorical Expressions used in Scripture, whereby the deplorable Condition of Men is represented, are not to be understood in a *strict*, but *qualified* Sense, and that it is not to be thought, that Men are in fact *dead* and *blind* in a spiritual Sense, is in effect to assert, that the holy Spirit expresses his Intention in a very *improper* Manner, in a Way which naturally tends to deceive us, and to lead us into false Conclusions, concerning a Subject, which to us is of the last Importance, of the Truth of which we shall never be persuaded: Especially, since our own Experience fully convinces us of the Justness of that Representation of our natural Condition. If good Men would but be determined in their Sentiments about the dreadful Corruption of our Nature, by what they find within themselves of Blindness, Hardness of Heart, Aversion from God and Holiness, and of a Propension to Evil, all Contention with them would cease concerning the Ability of Mankind with common Helps to act a Part holy and acceptable to God.

In short, if the Gospel is a Law, which enjoins on us Faith, Repentance, and holy Obedience, as Conditions of obtaining Life and Happiness, and our Nature is left to act, as it can, with Aids, Assistances, Excitations, and Impulses upon it, without a divine Influence effectual to the Production of spiritual Life and a Principle of Holiness in our Hearts, our eternal Ruin is inevitable; and, therefore, this is falsely called a *remedial* Law, for, according to it, our Misery is *certain* and *remediless*. This Scheme is only calculated to nourish Pride in the Flesh, and to lay the Spirit in Believers under the greater Discouragement, let Men flourish upon it as much as they will.

Arg. 5. *The Gospel cannot be a Law, because that would enervate the Satisfaction of Christ.* The Socinians know this perfectly well; but with them it is no Objection, for they wholly deny that Doctrine. The Arminians and Baxterians are in some measure affected by it, because they both grant the Truth of Christ's suffering in the Room and Stead of Sinners, though neither allow his Satisfaction to be full, proper, and

plenary. They insist upon it, that what Christ paid for our Redemption was not the same with what is in the Obligation; and that, therefore, his dolorous Sufferings were not a proper Payment of our Debt; and, consequently, a proper and full Satisfaction for our Sins could not arise from his Death to the Law and Justice of God: And from hence, they, conclude, that Right to Impunity is not obtained by the Sacrifice of Christ; but that, the Death of Christ notwithstanding, God may and doth enjoin Conditions on Men, and require the Performance of them, in order to Pardon and Justification, *viz.* Faith, Repentance, and holy Obedience. The *Baxterians* suppose, that effectual Grace is given to the Elect to enable them to perform those Conditions, (herein they differ from the *Arminians*) and that sufficient Grace is afforded to the Non-elect, and, therefore, they are put into a *salvable* State; but that their Salvation, though possible, is not certain, which they think the Salvation of the Elect is.

I would here first take notice of a great Mistake, which lies at the Bottom of this Manner of Rating the Doctrine of Satisfaction, *viz.* It is taken for granted, that it is just to require an innocent Person to suffer corporal Punishment for Delinquents, and their Impunity notwithstanding remain uncertain; and, if not secured by the Performance of some Conditions enjoined on them, then Punishment may be inflicted on them, though an innocent Person hath suffered in their Room and Stead. Such a Procedure may take place in pecuniary Punishments, but not in corporal; because the suffering Party in that Case would be really injured.

In pecuniary Punishments it is otherwise; because Money paid may be returned, (and in Right it ought to be) if the Delinquent is not actually released. In corporal Punishments this cannot be; and, therefore, the suffering Person sustains Injury, if the Delinquent, in whose Stead he endured bodily Pains and Penalties, is punished for those Crimes, on account of which he suffered. This is said on a Supposition of an innocent Person's suffering for a Criminal, though it is not lawful for Men to require it. Hence it is evident, that our Freedom from the Obligation is not an *uncertain* and *precarious* Matter, if only what *Civilians* call *Acceptilation* is found in this Transaction of the Death of Christ for Sinners: But clear it is, that his Sufferings were a *Solution*, or *proper Payment*, from whence *real* Satisfaction arises to the Law and Justice of God for our whole Guilt.

1. All our Sins were imputed to him on the Part of God, our righteous Judge; and Christ on his Part took them all upon himself. His Susception

of our Guilt was his Submission to the Will of the Father, that he should bear it for us. *He was made Sin for us, who knew no Sin. And the Lord laid on him the Iniquity for us all.*

2. He was made a Curse. That which we are freed from, in consequence of his Death, he was made, which is the Law's Curse; and, therefore, his Punishment was that which the Law threatened, and unto which we were obnoxious.
3. Christ endured a painful Sensation of God's Displeasure against Sin.
4. An infinite Value attended his Sufferings, arising from the infinite Dignity of his Person.

Mr. *Baxter* often observes in his Writings, that Christ did not suffer the *Idem*, *i.e.* the same that was due to us, because the Law requires the Transgressor to suffer; but this was no more than a Commutation of Persons, and not a Change of the Nature of the Punishment. This is also contended frequently for; because the Law threatened eternal Death, and the Sufferings of Christ were but short, and, therefore, not the same unto which we were liable. But this infers no Change in the Nature of the Punishment: It does not follow, that it was not the same in Kind, because it was short in Duration. His Sufferings were satisfactory, and, therefore, they ended; ours are not satisfactory, therefore they are continued. Again, it is urged, that Christ did not suffer Desperation; and, therefore, his Sufferings were not the same with ours.

Answ. Sufferings that are satisfactory can't be attended with Desperation; but Sufferings that are not satisfactory must be attended therewith, by reason of their Perpetuity, because not satisfactory. And it is not merely from the Nature of the Sufferings of Christ, that they became satisfactory; but from the Dignity of his Person: Nor is it from the Nature of our Sufferings, that they are not satisfactory; but from the Want of Value in them, through the Meanness of our Persons. To deny, that the Sufferings of Christ were in Kind, that Penalty which our Sins demerited, enervates his Satisfaction, obscures the Glory of divine Justice in our Remission, and it infinitely detracts from the Honour of the Grace of God; but this must be denied, in order to support the Opinion of a conditional Scheme of Salvation.

Three Things are observable in this Affair.

1. It became God to act thus in bringing many Sons to Glory. The wonderful Procedure was condecant and agreeable to his Perfections.
2. It is honorable to his Law. That is greatly magnified and exalted. Far greater Honour is done to the Law by our Savior's enduring the Curse, than could ever be, by our suffering what it threatens.
3. It is just to forgive Sin on the Foundation of Christ's Sufferings and Death. The Justice of our Remission springs not from our Faith, Repentance, and Obedience; but from the Merit of the Sacrifice of Christ. God could not but make Provision for the Satisfaction of his Law and Justice in the Business of our Salvation, by reason of the Righteousness of his Nature; and, since Satisfaction is given to both by the Death of his Son, he cannot but pardon and save all those for whose Sins Satisfaction is made; because contrary Acts cannot agree to Justice, *viz.* to pardon and punish. If it is just to forgive Sins for which Christ suffered, it cannot be just to punish for those Offenses.

The Opinion of the Gospel being a Law requiring Obedience as a Condition of Pardon, and for Want of it adjudging Men to endless Misery, overthrows the Satisfaction of Christ, and can never consist with the Righteousness of God, which is only displayed in pardoning of Sin on that Ground, and not in the Infliction of Punishment on Transgressors.

According to this Scheme, God punishes Sin *twice*, once in the Sinner's Surety, and also in the Sinner himself; which Justice can never direct unto.

Right to Impunity *immediately* takes Place upon Satisfaction being made; and, therefore, Conditions cannot be enjoined on Sinners for whom Christ died, which will render their Impunity *precarious*.

The Death of our Savior is, in itself, effectual to these great Ends, entirely without the Existence of any good Dispositions in us, *viz.*

1. The Expiation of Sin. His *Blood cleanseth from all Sin: He purged our Sins, and put away Sin, by the Sacrifice of himself: He finished Transgression, and made an end of Sin.* As he bore our Sins in his own Body on the Tree, he bore them away from us: So that no Charge can be brought against us, as we are interested in his Death. Hence is that Challenge of the Apostle: *Who shall lay any thing to the Charge of God's Elect? It is God that justifieth. Who shall condemn? It is Christ that died.*

2. Freedom from Condemnation. We are redeemed from the Curse of the Law: *And there is no Condemnation to them, who are in Christ Jesus.*

3. Security from penal Suffering. Reconciliation is made. *Peace is made by the Blood of the Cross of Christ* and Salvation from Wrath follows Pardon through his Blood. Faith is the Evidence of our Title to Pardon; but the Sacrifice of Christ gave Being to our Right to Impunity.

Arg. 6. *Grace, in its Principle, and Acts, is absolutely promised; and, therefore, it cannot come under the Notion of a proper Condition of Life.* That it is necessarily prerequisite, as a Meetness for Heaven, is a most certain Truth; for an unsanctified Mind is wholly indisposed to heavenly Communion, the Viewing of heavenly Objects, and unto heavenly Service; and, consequently, it is impossible, that an unregenerate Person should enjoy the heavenly State. This being affirmed, all just Occasion is entirely cut off for *Cavilling and Reproach*, which sometimes even good Men, through their *present Imperfection*, are *too forward* to load Principles with, which, they do not think meet to admit into their Creed. Grace, as a Principle, is Matter of absolute Promise. *I will take away, the stony Heart out of your Flesh, and I will give you an Heart of Flesh: I will put my Law in their inward Parts; I will write it in their Hearts.* And the Exercise of that gracious Principle in holy Obedience is also absolutely promised. *I will cause you to walk in my Statutes; and ye shall keep my Judgments, and do them.* Which precious Promises ascertain the Communication of Holiness, as a Principle, and the Exercise of that Principle in a holy, acceptable Obedience, to all those unto whom those Promises relate; and, therefore, Duties included, in that Obedience cannot be *proper* Conditions of Life and Happiness: Hence it undeniably follows, that the Gospel is not a Law.

Some say, that, *though* these Promises are absolutely expressed, yet a Condition is supposed, or implied; and that, therefore, the Duties included in those Promises, are Conditions of obtaining Blessedness. But what Reason have Men to imagine, that a Meaning so very different from the natural Import of the Language of Scripture is intended? None at all; only a false Apprehension of the Power of depraved Nature to do, what it has neither Ability nor Inclination to act, nor can possibly be influenced unto by any Aids and Assurances whatsoever; and a mistaken Notion concerning the Grace of God, which is wholly free, and is the efficient Cause of *all* in Men that is good and pleasing to him. Again, I desire to know what it is, that is required of Men as a Condition of receiving Grace

from God: If it be any Acts of Holiness, they can never arise from the corrupt Hearts of Men; for without the Grace of Faith it is impossible to please God. Until, therefore, that Grace is wrought in a Man, he is absolutely incapable of acting any thing that will find Acceptance with his Maker. In short, this Way of reasoning supposes, that, if Men will believe, repent, and turn to God, then he will make them Believers; which how absurd it is, I think, that it is not difficult for any Person to conceive.

Arg. 7. *To suppose, that the Gospel is a Law, destroys the Opposition, which the Scripture puts between the Law and Gospel, or between Works and Grace, in the Business of our Justification and Salvation.* The Holy Spirit, who foresaw the numerous Ways that Men would take to establish the Doctrine of Justification by Works, hath so expressed himself on this Subject, as to meet with all their subtle and surprising Arguments and Evasions, in what manner soever they express themselves. If they say, that Justification is not by perfect Works, true, it cannot, for Righteousness is imputed without Works. If they say, that it is not of Works meritorious, that is certain; because it is not of Works. If they say, that Justification is not by ritual Works, it is right; for it is not of Works. If they say, that it is not of Works Wrought before Faith, it is true; for Justification is not of Works. The *Apostle* does not exclude from Justification in the light of God this or that Kind of Works, in Distinction from others; but Works, by what Names soever Men shall like to call them, *viz. Dispositions, Qualifications, Conditions, sincere Obedience*, or whatever else you can imagine. And, therefore, to assert, that we are justified by the Performance of any Duties, is directly to contradict the *Apostle*, who affirms, that *Righteousness is imputed without Works*: For, if our Justification before God is by our personal Obedience to his Commands, a Righteousness without Works is not imputed to us for Justification in his sight. Besides, Grace excludes Works, as Causes and Conditions of Salvation. *By Grace are we saved*: And, *if it be of Grace, then it is no more of Works*, without all Distinction, as was before argued. Hence we conclude, that the Gospel is not a Law promising Life on condition of Obedience; for, if it is, we are to be saved by our own Works. The Righteousness and Blood of Christ have procured for us *only a conditional Grant* of Life and Salvation: Our Title to future Blessedness results not from what he hath done and suffered for us; but it is to arise from what we ourselves do. Than which nothing is more false.

Mr. *Baxter* often speaks of our Righteousness, as *subordinate* to the Righteousness of Christ; but how can that be deemed a subordinate Righteousness, which gives right to Life?

That is a greater Benefit than the conditional Grant of Life: The Righteousness of Christ obtained only the latter for us, our own Righteousness secures the former. And, therefore, according to him, greater Advantage accrues to us from our own Obedience, than springs from the Righteousness of Christ: That is, if an actual Right to Life is a greater Benefit than merely a conditional Grant of it is; whereof, I think, that no Man will ever doubt.

Arg. 8. *If the Gospel is a Law, Boasting is not excluded; and, therefore, it is not such.* That all Boasting, or Glorifying in ourselves, as we are the Subjects of Salvation, is entirely cut off by that Method, which God hath took to save us, is as clear in Scripture, as if it was written with a Sun-beam. It may not be improper to observe, that, when Boasting is said to be excluded, it is spoken of Men, as Creatures fallen, guilty and corrupt; and, therefore, it is necessarily supposed, that Remission takes Place in them: And, consequently, by Boasting is not intended any Pretence of a perfect Compliance with our Duty, so that according to strict Justice we are not liable to Misery, but, on the contrary, are entitled to the Reward promised on that Condition. Let us now consider, what Kind of Boasting may be supposed in Creatures, who cannot lay claim to Favour on the Foundation of strict Justice. And,

1. We may suppose, that Men have been so far obedient to some Law, as gives them a Right to Life.

2. That this Obedience, though it was facilitated by Helps afforded, yet it was not wholly owing to a divine Influence upon them; but was the Result of a wise Improvement of such Advantages, as in Kindness were granted unto them.

It is easy to see, that, if the Gospel is a Law, Foundation is laid for both these Things, *viz.* pleading a Right to Life by Works, and acting a wise and prudent Part: As thus, *Peter* and *Judas* are Subjects of the same Law; that is to say, the same *condescending* Terms of Life are proposed to each; and each hath such Helps afforded, as render the Performance of those Terms possible. *Judas* is so unwise as to neglect his own Interest, when, with the Advantages granted to him, he hath an Opportunity of *making himself for ever*: On the contrary, *Peter* is so prudent as to consult his own

Welfare, and wisely improves the Advantages which are granted to him, and so secures his Happiness. This is all that can be included in Boasting, when the Reward is not due upon the Foundation of strict and rigorous Justice. *And, such* Boasting there is Ground for in those who are saved, if the Gospel is a Law; especially, if it is denied, that the Infusion of a gracious Principle is prerequisite to Acts of acceptable Obedience; which Mr. *Baxter* did deny: And that Denial is necessary to support his Opinion of the Possibility of obtaining Life by this *new* and *remedial* Law; which the late *Dr. Watts* did not seem to be apprehensive of, and, therefore, granted it, to the utter Overthrow of what he endeavored to maintain concerning a conditional Provision of Salvation, for the Non-elect.

According to this Scheme, the subjects of Salvation may affirm two Things concerning themselves,

1. That their actual Right to Life is the proper Result of their own Obedience.
2. That this Obedience of theirs, though facilitated by the Grace of God, was not wholly owing unto that as the Cause thereof; but in part it was the Effect of their own Prudence, and Care, wisely to improve those Advantages afforded unto them; while some others have foolishly neglected so to do, and, therefore, failed of acquiring that Right to Blessedness, which they, by acting a wiser Part, have obtained for themselves.

Hence it is apparent, that Heaven is not the Gift of God's good Pleasure to those who enjoy it but a Prize won by their own Care and Industry, not indeed by Obedience to the Law of Innocence; but by the Observance of a Law of *milder* Terms, which God condescended to give, when he might have insisted on a sinless Obedience. The Constitution of this *milder* Law was an Act of Favour; but the Enjoyment of the Blessings it promises is Matter of *due Debt*, its Terms being fulfilled; because the Constitution of this Law gives no Title or Claim to the Reward, that results from the Subject's Obedience to it. And, therefore, as the Apostle asserts, *Boasting is not excluded by a Law of Works*. Again, it is evident, according to this Scheme, that Men may have it to say, that what they have done in Obedience to this Law was not entirely owing to the Efficiency of divine Grace; because their Obedience sprang not from a supernatural Principle communicated unto them of God, but was performed by their natural Powers, *as aided only* by the Grace of God. If we could once persuade Men to believe the absolute Necessity of the Infusion of a new Principle

in order to perform Acts of Duty in an acceptable manner, we should hear no more of this *conditional* Scheme of Salvation; that is, if they will not embrace Inconsistencies: For Salvation cannot be conditional, if what is required of Men in order to it, is the sole and entire Work of God upon them. The Reason of it is evident; that cannot be a *proper* Condition of enjoying a Benefit, which is absolutely given, and wrought in the Subject of it, by him who bestows that Benefit: If you assert this, you explain away the Nature of a *proper* Condition. This is certainly the Case with respect to Faith, Repentance, and holy Obedience; for *God worketh in us, both to will, and to do, of his good Pleasure*. If it is not thus, Boasting is not excluded in the Opinion of the *Apostle*, who infers that Exclusion from God's creating us in *Christ Jesus* unto good Works.

And, therefore, we conclude upon it, that this *new Law-Scheme* is of Men's devising, and that the Salvation of none is a possible thing according to that Scheme; because It is supposed, that Faith is not infused, but acquired with divine Help, which it can never be; for Acts of Grace cannot spring up in a Mind destitute of a gracious Principle. A dead Man cannot be assisted to act; he may be made alive, and then act; but no Influence upon him, which conveys not Life, will ever be productive of Actions in him. This Scheme, therefore, however plausible it may seem to some, leaves even all Mankind, Elect and Non-elect, in a State of *remediless* Woe and Misery; and the Reason why, none will have ground of boasting is, if this Scheme is true, no Man will be saved.

Arg. 9. *The Experience and Acting of Grace in the Souls of Believers, are inconsistent with the Notion of the Gospel being a Law, or Covenant of Works.*

It is supposed, that our own Obedience, according to this *new* and *remedial* Law, is the Matter of our justifying Righteousness before God. If in Fact it is so, then surely it might be expected, that the Saints would plead their Obedience for the Acceptation of their Persons with God, or as the Ground of their Hope of standing in Judgment. Let us, therefore, briefly consider, what some eminent Saints have expressed concerning themselves, and their Obedience; and, whether their Language will allow us to think, that they expected to be justified in the sight of God by virtue of what they had done. I begin with Job, who had not his *Equal* in Holiness at the time he liv'd. He says thus, when impressed deeply with a Sense of the Greatness and Majesty of God: *Whom, though I were righteous, yet would I not answer, but I would make Supplication to my*

Judge. If I justify myself, mine own Mouth shall condemn me: If I say I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse; If I wash myself with Snow-water, and make my Hands never so clean, yet shalt thou plunge me in the Ditch, and mine own Cloths shall abhor me. Elsewhere says he, *I have heard of thee by the Hearing of the Ear; but now mine Eye seeth thee: Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in Dust and Ashes.* This does not seem to be the Language of a Man who expected to be justified by his own Obedience.

David, a Man after God's own Heart, deserves well to be consulted on this Subject. And it is observable, that he was so far from esteeming his own Righteousness as a sufficient Plea for Justification at the divine Tribunal, that he prays he might not be tried at the Bar of God on that Foundation; and at the same time (if I mistake him not) asserts, that no Man will be justified in the sight of his own Works. *Enter not into Judgment with thy Servant: For in thy sight shall no Man living be justified.* He, therefore, had no Expectation of being accepted, with God by virtue of his own Obedience. And *Isaiah* humbly confessed, that he was a *Man of unclean Lips.* *Daniel* at large acknowledges his Iniquity, and disclaims all Title to divine Favour, on the ground of his own Works. The Church declares herself to be *as an unclean Thing, and that all her Righteousness were as filthy Rags.* The *Apostle Paul*, who had as much to say of his Piety, Zeal, Diligence, and Sufferings, for the sake of the Gospel, as any Man ever had, is far from letting us an Example of Dependence on our own Obedience; for his Part, he desired *not to have his own Righteousness.* Inherent Holiness, and the good Works springing from it, were his own; for what a Man is the Subject of, and acts, is his own: He, therefore, rejected all his Works of Piety in the Business of Justification before God. If any Man will show me, that one Saint in the Scripture ever looked for Acceptation with God, and the Enjoyment of future Blessedness, on the Foundation of his own Obedience, I promise to embrace immediately this *new Law-Scheme*, though I know it will be a *Renunciation of the Gospel in some of its fundamental Truths.* But there is not the least Danger of my being obliged unto this; for the gracious Experience of good Men, is *never counter to evangelical Truth.* And therefore, I declare, that I had much rather be determined in my Sentiments of the great Doctrine of a poor Sinner's Justification in the sight of God, by the Thoughts of the *plainest* Christian on this subject, than by what are esteemed *the most exact and accurate Disputations of the most learned Men on that Point.* And I am satisfied, that, if Men of Learning, who were also holy and gracious, had but attended to their own

spiritual Experience in writing on the Doctrine of Justification, they would never have given Disturbance to the Church of God by advancing anti-evangelical Notions relating to that Doctrine; which is what too many have done; or given too much Countenance unto, in the Manner of their treating upon it.

It is one Thing to have to do with Men, in a way of Dispute about Acceptance with God, and another to have our Minds impressed with a Sense of the Solemnity of an Appearance before the divine Tribunal: Without the latter we may be able to object and wrangle, and frame numerous Evasions to elude the Force of Truth, and to spin out of our own Brain many *Cobweb Arguments* to countenance Error: But, when we are in our Apprehensions placed at the Bar of God, and we have a Prospect of our Guilt, Impurity, Imperfection in all Graces and Duties; when we see the Majesty, Purity, and Omniscience of God, our righteous Judge; other Thoughts immediately arise in our Minds concerning the Consequence of our Trial at his Judgment-Seat on the Foundation of our own Actions, than our Minds entertain without this View, and Consideration of our Condition, in spite of all the *subtle* and *new-fangled Divinity*, where-with disputing Men may labor to furnish us, for our Encouragement and Support in so awful a Season. All *quaint Distinctions*, all *vain Objections* against divine Truth, all *plausible Arguments* in Defence of Error, on this solemn Subject, vanish, and leave us in a hopeless State. Nothing then, but the Blood and Righteousness of Christ, can ingenerate in our poor Souls the least Expectation of Pardon, Peace, and Acceptation with our tremendous Judge. We tremble at the Thought of appearing before God in our own Figleaf Righteousness; and the Language of our Hearts is: *May I be found in Christ, not having mine own Righteousness, which is of the Law, but the Righteousness of Christ, the Righteousness which is of God by Faith.*

Arg. 10. *If the Gospel is a Law, or conditional Scheme of Salvation, it cannot furnish any Believer with an Assurance of enjoying Happiness.*

That Assurance of Salvation is not essential to Faith, I have lately assigned some Reasons for: But to assert, that there is not proper and sufficient Foundation for it in the Souls of the Saints, is to *overthrow the whole Gospel*, as might with much Ease be abundantly manifested: And, that it is a Favour which many of them have enjoy'd, is as evident from Scripture, as it is, that there were in the World such Persons as Believers. And, consequently, that Scheme must be false, according to which

Assurance of Salvation cannot be enjoyed. Nothing is more clear, than that no Man can be assured of final Happiness, by the Gospel of Christ, if it is a *conditional* Scheme of Salvation; because that Assurance cannot exist, until the Condition on which Salvation depends is fulfilled: Now, that Condition is Perseverance in Faith and Holiness: And, therefore; a Person cannot know that he shall arrive to Heaven, until he finds himself in that happy State. *Baxterians*, indeed, say, that the Elect shall persevere and be saved: But, according to this Scheme, no Believer can possibly know from the Word of God, that he is elected; for it supposes, that the Non-elect may believe, repent, and turn unto God: And, of course, Holiness cannot evidence to any Man his Election of God. The Reason is plain: Sanctification is not *proper* to the Elect. How well soever, therefore, *Paul* is satisfied of the Truth of his Faith, and of the Reality of his Holiness, it is impossible that he should be able to collect from thence the Certainty of his eternal Salvation, because a non-elect Person may have true Holiness, but fail of Perseverance therein, and be eternally damned; of which Number notwithstanding all his Exultation and Triumph, he may be, for ought he can possibly learn from the Gospel of Christ. Hence it is most clear, that this *new Law-Scheme* is no proper Ground of that strong Consolation, which God is abundantly willing that the Heirs of Promise should enjoy: And, therefore, with some Degree of Boldness, I dare pronounce, that it is utterly false, and no Gospel of Christ. Blessed be God for that gracious and abundant Provision which he hath made for our *everlasting Consolation and good Hope, through Grace*, in the Gospel of his Son: Let us prize it, and never be so ungrateful to him, and so much wanting to ourselves, as to embrace a Scheme for Truth, which must: necessarily deprive us thereof, and leave us unavoidably at great Uncertainties in relation to the Salvation of our precious and immortal Souls, what Degrees of Holiness soever we may know ourselves to be the Subjects of now: For it seems, some true Believers may apostatize and perish for ever; and we have no possible Way of knowing that we are not of that Number.

Arg. 11. *Divine Love secures Salvation to all its Objects: And, therefore, those who perish were never interested in the Love of God; consequently, the Gospel cannot be a conditional Scheme of Salvation.*

That divine Love secures Salvation to all its Objects, fully appears from its Nature and Effects.

1. The Nature and Properties of the Love of God is a solid Foundation of the eternal Security of all those on whom it is fixed; for it is *immense*, *immutable*, and *inseparable*. And what Blessings may not be expected to flow from infinite Goodness and Favour? What greater Security can be desired, than springs from Love, which is not only capable of conferring *all* that is necessary to the Happiness of its Objects (which infinite Love must be), but is also absolutely above all Possibility of *Abatement*, *Change*, and *Separation* from the Persons interested therein? Love in God is not a *Passion*; but it is his holy, sovereign Will to do good to Men, or make them happy, and a Delight in their Felicity. This his Will can never alter, no more than his Nature can change. *I am the Lord; I change not; therefore, ye, Sons of Jacob, are not consumed*. Nothing which can come within the Compass of Imagination, shall ever make a Separation between divine Love and its Objects.

2. All saving Benefits spring from the Love of God, and are *certain* Effects of it: The Gift of his Son, the Gift of his Spirit, the Bestowment of Grace, which is effectual to Regeneration, Conversion, and Sanctification, yea, and eternal Glory also. Hence says the *Apostle*: *What shall we say to these Things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all; how shall he not with him also freely give us all Things* — (τὰ πάντα, with the Article) *all these Things*? Nothing can prevail against the Saints to their Ruin and Destruction, because God is for them. No Favour shall be wanting to them, that is necessary to their final Happiness; for, God having delivered up his Son for them, he will give them whatever is included in Vocation, Justification, and Glorification, for they are the Blessings, whereof the *Apostle* before speaks, and unto which he manifestly refers, and concludes with the greatest Certainty upon the Communication of, unto all those, for whom God delivered up his own Son. If this *conditional* Scheme of Salvation is true, then God loves some to whom he doth not give effectual Grace, in order to their Conversion: Then God loves some to whom he doth not communicate Grace to preserve them infallibly in a State of Holiness unto eternal Glory; through the Want of which they may finally and totally apostatize, become the Objects of his Hatred, and eternal Wrath and Vengeance.

But there Things are entirely inconsistent with the Nature of those, precious Promises, which God hath graciously condescended to express, for the Confirmation of the Faith, Peace, and strong Consolation of

Believers; whereby he intends to assure them of their Safety, under their Discouragements and Fears, while they are engaged in *sore and dreadful* Conflicts with Sin and Satan. If those Promises are not designed for the Confirmation of the Faith of all Believers, but only of those who are chosen to Salvation, let the Authors of this *conditional* Scheme show us, if they are able, what is the Difference between an elect Believer, and a non-elect Saint, if any distinguishing Difference there be, by which the one may be known from the other; that the elect Believer may conclude upon his everlasting Interest in the Love of God, and of his Title to that Grace, which Promises of Perseverance express; and that the non-elect Saint may not be guilty of such Presumption, as to imagine, that his Interest in divine Love will certainly be lasting, and that he hath Foundation to conclude upon a Title to that strong Consolation, which God is abundantly willing that the Heirs of Promise should enjoy. Is the elect Believer sanctified, and the non-elect Believer unsanctified? Is the elected Believer a Subject of true Faith in Christ and the non-elected Believer destitute of that Grace? Does the former truly love Christ, and the latter not? Does one really repent of Sin, choose Holiness, and the other not? Is the Delight of the former in spiritual Things, and hath the latter no Pleasure therein? Or are they the same as to these, and other Particulars, that might be mentioned? If they be, then there is no distinguishing Difference between an elected Believer and a non-elect Saint; they are both Subjects of the same Holiness, Knowledge, Love, Repentance, and every thing else that is of a spiritual Nature; and their Acts are the same about spiritual Things: And, therefore, there is no distinguishing Criterion between them. Hence it follows, that the elect Believer can no more conclude upon his eternal Security, than the non-elect Saint can. The Consequence of which is, God fails of his Intention, that those *who have fled for Refuge to lay hold on the Hope set before them, should enjoy strong Consolation*; for it seems, some, who have so done, may lose their Interest in divine Love, become Objects of God's Wrath and Curse, and perish for ever. Nor can any Believer whatever know, that this will not be his *dreadful* Case; and that Consolation cannot have any great Strength in it, which is not built upon the Immutability of God's Counsel concerning our Salvation, which to us, if this Scheme is true, must, through Life, be an *impenetrable Secret*, though the inspired Writer tells us, that God hath shown it *by two immutable Things, wherein it is impossible for him to lie*. But, blessed be God! this *conditional* Scheme of Salvation is as surely false, as his Gospel is certainly true.

Arg. 12. *All Believers are the Sons of God, and in Union with Christ. That Relation cannot cease, nor that Union ever be dissolved. And, therefore, this conditional Scheme of Salvation is false.*

The *Apostle* expressly affirms, that, *as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the Sons of God*. And is not every Believer led, taught, and guided by the Holy Spirit? Or do some believe without his Instruction and Guidance? If none act Faith, but such as are under the Conduct of the Blessed Spirit, then it is a just Conclusion, that all Believers have the Honour to stand in the near Relation of Sons to God. This may also be argued for from this Consideration, *viz.* Adoption precedes, and is the Cause of the Mission of the Spirit: *Because ye are Sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your Hearts*. I observe, that sometimes Regeneration is *confounded* with Adoption, by *good and wise Men*, for this Reason; they are not free to grant the Precedency of Adoption to Faith, it seems, through an Apprehension of an *ill Tendency* in this Opinion; though some, who embrace it, they allow, have their Minds preserved from the Influence of that Tendency. This is a favorable Judgment of Men; but it is casting *sad Reproach* on sacred Truth.

Whatever the Persons are, who believe, that Adoption is previous to, and is the Cause of Faith, the Sentiment *is a Doctrine according to Godliness*, and can give no Encouragement to *irreligious* Persons, because, as that is one Reason of our Sanctification, no unsanctified Man can have any Evidence of his Adoption, nor the least Ground to imagine from thence, that he may be happy hereafter without being holy here. And, therefore, all such Suggestions are *groundless*, and *mere Calumny* cast upon an evangelical Truth. If the Holy Spirit is sent into the Hearts of Men, because they are Sons to God, then it is most certain, that all those, in whom he operates, as a Comforter and Sanctifier, are the Objects of adopting Love. Now, this Relation to God can never cease, because it was by an *irrevocable* Act of the divine Will, that Men were constituted his Sons. This Relation gives a Right to Grace and Glory: *If Children, then Heirs, Heirs of God, and Joint-Heirs with Christ*. And this is the Privilege of every Believer; for all the Saints *are now the Sons of God*. They are as near to him in Relation, as they will be when in Heaven. This *conditional* Scheme supposes, that *true* Believers may become *Children of Wrath*, and not enjoy the heavenly Inheritance, *Woful Tidings* to spiritually humble Souls!

Again, The Saints are in Union with Christ. He is their Head, and they are his Members. Christ is the Husband of the Church, and she is his Bride. One Believer hath the same Reason to conclude upon his Union with Christ, as another; and, consequently, may infer from thence his Interest in the tender Love, Kindness, and Care of the Blessed Jesus, with as much Certainty, as any other Christian may; and hath the same Reason for a Persuasion of his eternal Security, arising from his Union with Christ, and Interest in his Favour, as any other Saint can have. But, according to this *conditional* Scheme, *real* Saints, who are not elected, have no ground to conclude upon their Safety, because they may become Apostates, lose their Faith and Holiness, their Union with Christ may cease, and they, who once were Objects of the intense Love of Christ, may become Objects of his terrible Anger and Vengeance. And what Saint in the World can know, that this will not be his *dreadful* Care? Not one amongst them all. For there is the same Faith, Hope, Love, Repentance, and every thing else of a spiritual Nature, in a non-elect Saint, as an elected Believer is the Subject of, or acts; and, consequently, the elect Believer can no more enjoy an Assurance of his lasting Union with Christ, and of future Happiness, as a Fruit thereof, than the non-elect Saint can be assured of both. This is *very melancholy Doctrine* for the Righteous, whom the Lord *would not have made sad!* But it is entirely contrary to the Gospel, which is a *joyful Sound*, and *glad Tidings of great Joy*, unto all the Saints. Spiritual Life is the Effect of a *federal* Union with Christ, our spiritual Head; as Condemnation and Death in Sin follow upon our *federal* Union with *Adam*, our natural Head, in consequence of his Apostacy, the Guilt of which devolves upon us, as Members of him, whom he represented. When we were not, a *real* Union subsisted between us and *Adam*, our first Head: And, when we had no Existence, a *real* Union subsisted between us and Christ, our second Head, who was constituted such to us in the Covenant of Grace. And we derive from him, in consequence of that Union, Life, Holiness, and Grace, in our Regeneration. This Union is not the Effect, but is the Cause of Faith; and this it is that secures, and will secure the Continuance of the Being of it in, our Hearts. It is as proper to say, that our Union with *Adam* *commences* upon our becoming sinful and depraved, as it is to affirm, that our Union to Christ *commences* upon believing: Tho' some, who assert the latter, I suppose, will not care to affirm the former. This Doctrine supposes not the Non-necessity of Holiness, but insures it; and, therefore, I am free to declare, that I am always unmoved, when I hear it vilified, as a *licentious* Principle, which I

sometimes do. I only wish, that good Men would leave reproaching divine Truth.

Arg. 13. *This conditional Scheme is inconsistent with Non-election, or Preterition; and, therefore, it is not true.*

Election is a Choice of Men to Holiness in this World, as a Meetness for the Enjoyment of Happiness in the next. *God hath from the Beginning chosen you to Salvation, through Sanctification of the Spirit.* Those, therefore, who are the Subjects of effectual Vocation, are said to be called according to a divine Purpose: *Hath called us with an holy Calling, — according to his own Purpose. Who are the called according to his Purpose.* Hence it is evident, that the Decree of Salvation is not of larger Extent, than the Decree of Sanctification is: Nor is the Decree of Sanctification of a wider Compass, than the Decree of Salvation is. And, consequently, those, who are not chosen to eternal Salvation, but were passed by in that Decree, God had no Design to communicate Holiness unto, as a Preparative for future Glory. Besides, if it is the Intention of God to call Men by his Grace, who are not included in the Decree of Election to everlasting Life, either all, or only some of the Non-elect, he intended to call: If some of them only, then this *conditional* Scheme destroys itself, for its Extent is universal. If God designed to make all the Non-elect holy in Time, as a Meetness for enjoying Happiness in Eternity, then I would ask, why Christ, and Salvation by him, is not revealed to them all? Again, if it was the *real* and *serious* Design of God to make the Non-elect holy, I desire to know, why they are not made so? Is it because God cannot sanctify their Hearts, and prepare them for Heaven? This is absurd and false to suppose. It is absurd, for it implies, that God purposes to do what he is not able. It is false, because, if it was his Will to sanctify them, he is able to do it. For, if he would but put forth the same Power upon the Non-elect, as he does upon the Elect, they also would become holy, and believe in his Son *Jesus Christ*, unto the Salvation of their Souls. Since he doth not, it is falsely sup-posed, that he ever had a Design of making them holy. If, therefore, any of them believe in Christ, repent, and perform holy Obedience, it will be without a divine Purpose of their Sanctification and Faith. But none of them never have, nor ever will believe: For, *the Election hath obtained it, and the rest, i.e. the Non-elect, were blinded.* This *new Law-Scheme*, therefore, is utterly false: It consists of Principles no way profitable to Men, in common, though it is pretended to be calculated for the Benefit of Mankind universally. — It is

destructive of the Comfort and Joy of the Saints. And is not conducive to the Glory of God; which will be shown in the next Argument.

Arg. 14. *Altho' it is supposed in this Scheme, that effectual Provision is made for the Security of the Elect, together with a conditional Provision for the Salvation of the Non-elect, yet it is not in such a way as exalts the Glory of God; and, therefore, it is not true.*

Gracious Persons, in proportion to that Sense they have of their Safety, in consequence of the Designs and Actings of divine Favour about and towards them, will admire and adore the sovereign Goodness and Mercy of God, therein displayed; and that is their indispensable Duty. But it is by no means to be thought, that a Regard to the Glory of God is lost in that solicitous Concern, which at any time they discover for their own Safety: With others it is, but with them it is not. Salvation they desire, but not upon Terms any way lessening to the Glory of God, and of his infinite Perfections. And, as they discern, that God would never save Sinners, but in a Method most honorable to himself, they acquiesce therein, as what is proper, wise, and fit. If, upon Enquiry, this conditional Scheme appears to be calculated to bring most Glory to God in the Salvation of Sinners, I heartily acknowledge, that it ought, without any Hesitation, to be embraced as a certain and sacred Truth; for sure I am, that the ultimate End of God in saving Men is his own Glory.

Let us, therefore, carefully view this Scheme, and embrace, or reject it, as we shall find, that it is, or it is not, glorifying to God and his Perfections. Is it then for the divine Honour to fix upon such a Method to save Sinners, as is not effectual to the Accomplishment of the End intended, with respect to the far greater Number of them, when it was in the Power of God to have secured that End, respecting them all? How is this to the Glory of his Grace? Would not that have been more magnified, if the End had been ascertained, when it was with God a very possible Thing? The Salvation of the Non-elect was as easy to God, as the Salvation of the Elect. A greater Expense of Grace and Power was not required, in order to it. Is it honorable to divine Wisdom to form a Scheme that is not brought into Execution, or to design an End which is not accomplished? What can this proceed from, except a Want of Foresight, or a Defect of Power, or a Resolution in God not to do what he knew to be necessary for him to do, if he would effectually bring to pass his own gracious Intentions? Is it to the Glory of the Justice of God to imagine, that its Rights are not secured, and its Demands answered, by the Sufferings and Death of Christ? And, if

they be, is it for the Honour of Justice eternally to punish those, for whose Sins Satisfaction was made? Nay, can it so much as comport with Justice to punish to the full the Sinner's Surety, and eternally to damn the Sinner himself for the same Offenses? surely it by no means can consist therewith.

Is it to the Glory of the Grace of God to conceive, that Holiness, or a Meetness for Heaven, is not produced in Men by a divine Influence upon them; but that, with some Assistances only, they act in a holy Manner, without the Communication of a holy Principle? Is this that sovereign and distinguishing Goodness of God, which the Scripture so much extols in the Regeneration and Conversion of a poor sinner? It is no more that, than the wan Light of the Moon is comparable to the dazzling Light of the Sun. Once more, I ask, is it to the Glory of God, and the Honour of Christ, to leave our Salvation to rest on Conditions impossible to be fulfilled? I suppose, all will conclude it is not, and that the Supposition of it is most absurd. But some will say, why is this strange Enquiry made? What Foundation is there for it? I answer, however surprising and causeless this Question may seem to many, there is sufficient Ground for my putting it. For it is supposed, first, that the Salvation of all depends on the Performance of certain Conditions, *viz.* Faith, Repentance, and persevering Obedience. Farther, it is supposed, that God does not give the Grace of Faith, *etc.* to any Man; but only affords to Men some Help, whereby they may acquire it, which it is impossible for any Man to do; because, without a Principle of Life and Action, which gracious Habits are to the Soul of a poor Sinner, no Acts of Faith, Hope, and Love, can possibly be produced in him. This must be granted, until it is proved, that Men are not dead in Sin; which yet has not been proved, nor ever will be.

Upon the whole, this conditional Scheme is not calculated to bring Glory to God, as it is far from securing Salvation to Men. On the contrary, an unconditional Scheme of Salvation. enhances the Glory of Father, Son, and Spirit. The Grace of the Father illustriously shines in the free and sovereign Election of Men to eternal Salvation. The Compassion of the Son is incomparably displayed, in the Redemption of their Persons by the invaluable Price of his own Blood. And the Kindness of the Spirit with an amazing Luster, discovers itself in the Regeneration, Conversion, Sanctification, and Preservation of Men. Farther, all the divine Perfections in their full Glory, flame forth with an amazing and delightful Refulgency in that Scheme. Infinite Wisdom hath eternal Honours accruing to it,

which contrived the happy Method, so becoming God, and so secure for Men. Justice sparkles in its brightest Rays, in our Remission through the Sacrifice of Christ. The Riches of divine Grace are opened to the transporting View of Angels and Men, in the Gift of Christ to us and for us, in the Donation of the holy Spirit, and in the Bestowment of Grace upon us here, and of eternal Glory hereafter. This pleasing View fills the Minds of the Saints with holy Wonder, Joy, and Adoration, now; and the clearer Prospects thereof, in Heaven, will eternally fill them with Raptures, unknown to us at present. What then can be objected to a Scheme so wise, so righteous, and so secure for miserable and helpless Sinners? Nothing at all, either respecting God, who saves, or Men, who are saved; but what springs from Ignorance, pride, Self-love, *etc.* Unhumbled Minds have much to object to it, because, if this Scheme is true, then nothing can be ours, but Shame, Confusion, and Self-abasement, on account of our Guilt, Misery, and Unworthiness; which are hard Things for our vile and proud Nature to submit unto and acquiesce in'. But true it is, let Men think of it as they please, either we must be willing to enjoy Heaven, merely on the ground of sovereign and distinguishing Mercy, wholly and alone through the Mediation of Christ, and by an effectual Work of the holy Spirit on our impure Hearts, or we shall unavoidably sink down into the bottomless Pit, from which there is no Redemption. And it is holy, wise, and fit, that so it should be, however severe this may seem to Men, who are destitute of the Grace of God.

Lastly, *This Opinion is absolutely contrary to many express Testimonies of Scripture.* My intended Brevity prevents my taking into Consideration a large Number of Texts, which most evidently refute this Doctrine. A few must suffice. I begin with those Words of the *Apostle: Whom he did foreknow, them he did predestinate to become conformed to the Image of his Son.* This Conformity to Christ is begun in effectual Vocation, and is completed in Glorification. And those, who are effectually called, shall be glorified. This is evident by what is subjoined: *Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.* Two Things are clearly expressed in these Words. First, the Subjects of effectual Calling are Objects of divine Predestination unto a Conformity to the Image of Christ. Secondly, Glorification, which is the Complement of that Conformity, will succeed Vocation. Hence we may conclude, that none are effectually called, but such as are predestinated to be conformed to the Image of Christ; and that those, who are so called, shall certainly be glorified. This

new Law-Scheme supposes the direct contrary of both these, viz. that some, who are not Objects of Predestination, may be effectually called; and that some, who are so called; may not be glorified: Both which are manifest Contradictions unto the precious Truths these Words with so much Perspicuity and Force express.

The same two Things are clearly deducible from what our Savior asserts. *Ye believe not, because ye are not of my Sheep. My Sheep hear my Voice; I know them; they follow me; I give to them eternal Life; they shall never perish etc.* Clear it is from what is there affirmed, that those, who hear the Voice of Christ, and follow him, which all Believers do, are his Sheep, shall enjoy eternal Life, shall never perish, shall not be plucked out of Christ's Hand, nor out of his Father's Hand; and that none, but such as are the Sheep of Christ, believe in him, hear his Voice, and follow him. The contrary of both is supposed in this Scheme: That some may hear the Voice of Christ, and follow him, who are not of his Sheep; and that some may so do, to whom Christ Will not give eternal Life, who may perish for ever. Our Lord elsewhere asserts, that *the living Water* he gives, *i.e.* Grace, *shall be a Well of Water springing up into everlasting Life*, in its Subjects. According this Scheme, in some it may entirely fail, and its Subjects may sink down into eternal Death.

Again, our Lord declares, without any Exception, that *he who heareth his Word, and believeth on him that sent him, hath everlasting Life, and shall not come into Condemnation; but is passed from Death unto Life.* This Scheme takes it for granted, that some, who hear the Word of Christ, and believe on him that sent him, *may come into Condemnation, and suffer the Vengeance of eternal Fire.* Our Blessed Savior acquaints us, that *this is the Will of him that sent him, that whosoever seeth the Son, and believeth on him, might not perish, but have everlasting Life.*

This Scheme supposes, that *some, who truly believe, may perish, and not have everlasting Life.* And, consequently, its Authors must either deny, that this is the Will of God concerning all such as believe, or affirm, that the divine Will is not accomplished in some. The former contradicts our Savior: The latter evidently supposes, that *either the Will of God is mutable, or that his Power is insufficient to bring his Purposes of Grace concerning Men into Execution.* Farther, all Believers are interested in the Intercession of Christ; and what he prays for in their Behalf shall certainly be communicated to them. That all, who believe are interested in the Intercession of Christ, appears undeniably from what he lays in relation

thereunto. *I pray not for these alone, but for them also that shall believe in me through their Word: And he prays for their being with him, that they may behold his Glory.* And, therefore, from the Prevalency of his Intercession, we must conclude upon the final Happiness of all Believers. But, according to this Scheme, some, who believe, may be *with Devils and damned Spirits, and never behold the Glory of Christ:* Let it also be observed, that the Apostle was *confident, that the good Work begun upon the Philippians would be performed until the Day of Christ.* But, according to this Scheme, his Confidence was without Foundation; for it is supposed, that Faith, Repentance, and Obedience, *specifically the same, and equal in Degrees,* may be in the Non-elect, as are found in the Elect; and, therefore, to no Man are they distinguishable. Hence it follows, that, though it is apprehended, that the Elect shall persevere, since none have a possible Way of knowing who they be, or of distinguishing them from the Non-elect, it must be *Rashness* in any Man to be confident of the carrying on of this good Work in any *particular* Believers. The Conclusion of course must be this: That the Apostle Was an entire Stranger to this Scheme, and that it is not that Gospel which he preached, but quite of another Nature, no Gospel of Christ. That Gospel, which he was commissioned to preach, furnished him with a solid Foundation of that Confidence he expressed; and, therefore, he cannot be charged with the least Degree of *Temerity, or undue Boldness,* in his Language relating to this Matter. And, as this is the Security of all Believers, it demands their Gratitude, and Adoration of divine Goodness, which hath so effectually provided for their eternal Welfare. The more I think of, and examine the Nature of this Scheme, the more dearly I discern, that it is calculated to bring humble Souls into great Perplexities and Discouragements; and that it can only serve to countenance unhumbled Minds, in a mistaken Opinion of the Capacity, and the Extent of their own depraved and corrupt Faculties, to the Dishonor of God, and their own everlasting Perdition, *if Grace of no other Kind* is given to them, to open their Eyes, and sanctify their Hearts, than what this *darling Scheme,* is an Exhibition of.

Before I consider the Arguments in favor of this Scheme, I would premise there Things, *viz.* It is the Gospel which reveals *Life and Immortality,* not the Law. Again, the Gospel informs us of our Title to that happy State, and not the Law, which is the Righteousness of Christ imputed to us. Besides, the Gospel acquaints us with our *Meetness* for that State, which is our Sanctification by the Spirit of God. This is a Doctrine not contained in the Law, though it requires Purity of Heart and Holiness in Life. Hence,

at Judgment, Christ will condemn the *Unsanctified*, and pronounce the *Sanctified*, blessed, according to that *wise* and *holy* Order, which God hath fixed in our Salvation, whereof the Gospel is a Discovery, and not the Law. Let but the Reader distinguish our Title to Glory, and our Meetness for it, and it will free him from Mistake on this important Subject. This Scheme confounds them, and makes them one and the same; whereas they are distinct Things. Our Title to Heaven is supposed, but not expressed, in that Invitation, which Christ will, at Judgment, give us to take Possession of eternal Glory, though our Meetness for it is therein expressed: And the Want of a Title to Life is implied in that Sentence, which Christ will pass upon the Wicked; but it is their Want of a Meetness for it, that is expressed therein, and not their Want of Title: And, therefore, it is the Doctrine of Justification, which our Blessed Savior discourses of, in *Matthew 25*. From thence is clearly proved, that unholy Persons shall not enjoy the heavenly State; but it is not to be learned from that Place, what is our justifying Righteousness, or our Title to eternal Life, because it is our Meetness for Heaven that is there treated of, and not our Title to it.

Secondly, *Let us consider the Arguments for this Scheme.*

Arg. 1. The Gospel is called a Law.

Answ. 1. That Term is sometimes used for Doctrine, or Instruction.

2. For a fixed and stated Order. Both which are true of the Gospel: And, therefore, it is called a Law. *Jam. 2:12. Isa. 42: 4. Rom. 3:27.*

Arg. 2. Obedience is proper to a Law; and we read of Obedience and Disobedience to the Gospel.

Answ. 1. Disobedience intends not attending to it, which Men ought to do, as a Revelation from God.

2. Despising it, as *foolish* and *absurd*.

3. Opposing the Gospel. Neither of which proves that it consists of Precepts.

Arg. 3. It will be the Rule of Judgment.

Answ. 1. According as Men are *sanctified*, or *unsanctified*, so they will be, at Judgment, glorified, or sentenced to Hell, agreeable to the Declaration in the Gospel. For,

2. That Declaration is *proper* to the Gospel; the Law knows

nothing of it. But,

3. This is not, as it is a Law, but as it a Discovery of the *wise* and *holy* Order of our Salvation.

Arg. 4. Justification is *judicial* Act. and, consequently, the Gospel, by which we are justified, is a Law.

Ans. 1. The Gospel supplies us with a perfect Righteousness, that is the Matter of our Justification. But,

2. It is the Law, by which we are absolved from all Sin through the Blood of Christ, and are justified by it in his Righteousness.

Arg. 5. The Gospel confers its Benefits on Conditions; and, therefore, it is a Law.

Ans. 1. This Argument takes for granted, what is not prov'd, but is the Point in Question.

2. Right to Gospel Benefits arises not from our Acts, but from Christ's Obedience and Death.

Arg. 6. The Saints will be tried, whether their Faith was sincere, which must be by the Gospel, and, consequently, it is a Law.

Ans. 1. Many Saints have long been in the Enjoyment of heavenly Glory, *viz. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Job, David, Isaiah*, yea, all the *Old-Testament* Saints, and blessed *Paul* and *Peter*, *etc.* It is strange, that they must pass under a formal Trial, whether they were *meet* for Glory, who have been so long in the Possession of it.

2. The living Saints at the Coming of Christ will be *changed in a Moment, in the Twinkling of an Eye, i.e.* their Bodies will be rendered *immortal, Spiritual*, and *glorious*, their Souls will be purged entirely from all Sin, and they will be *caught up to meet* their triumphant, descending Lord; they will undoubtedly salute him with the higher Praises, and he will receive them with Joy and Delight. It is surprising, that any should think, that they will after this be tried concerning the Sincerity of their Faith.

3. They will be separated from the Wicked, and placed at the right Hand of their dear Lord.

4. Christ will declare before Angels, Devils, and Men, that Love they had for him, and that Obedience they yielded unto him, which was a Meetness for eternal Glory. In all which not the least Countenance is given to this *new Law-Scheme*.

Arg. 7. Christ is a Lawgiver; and, therefore, the Gospel is a Law.

Answ. 1. Christ, as a divine Person, is a Lawgiver.

2. As Mediator, he revealed evangelical Truths, but gave no new Law.

3. He hath the Covenant of Works in his Hand, as a Judge; some he condemns by that, others he acquits on the ground of his Obedience and Sacrifice. I confess, that I have met with more Arguments in Number for this Opinion; but some of them are *illogical*, and others *coincide* with those above answered; and, therefore, I thought it unnecessary to mention them. If I might be allowed to express a *certain* Truth, I should say, that some *learned Men are very far from Accuracy* in Disputation, how much soever they are pleased to despise *illiterate* Persons.



FOOTNOTES

- ^{ft1} Sed per Legem Fidei: Id est, per Legem quae Fidem requirit, eique Justificationem ex Dei Grattia & Liberalitate promittit; quae Lex est Evangelii. Schlichting. in Rom. 3:27.
- ^{Ft2} Vid. Curcell. Inst. Christ. Lib. V. Cap. 16.
- ^{Ft3} See Mr. Baxter's Aphorisms and his Answers to Dr. Tully and Mr Cartwright.