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A VINDICATION OF
SOME PASSAGES IN
A DISCOURSE CONCERNING
ON COMMUNION WITH GOD

by John Owen

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*A Vindication of some Passages in a Discourse concerning Communion with God,
from the Exceptions of William Sherlock, rector of St. George, Botolph Lane*

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PREFATORY NOTE

William Sherlock, father of Dr. Thomas Sherlock, an eminent bishop of London, was himself distinguished as an author, and mingled deeply in the controversies of his day. His strictures on Owen's work on Communion with God appeared in 1674, after that work had been seventeen years before the public. It seems to have been Sherlock's first appearance in authorship; and some of his subsequent treatises such as those on Providence and on Death afford a better specimen of his abilities. They are destitute of evangelical principle and feeling, and imbued throughout with a freezing rationalism of tone; but, nevertheless, contain some views of the Divine administration, acutely conceived and ably stated. He became rector of St. George, Botolph Lane, received a prebend in St. Paul's, and was appointed Master of the Temple about 1684. His conduct at the Revolution was not straightforward, and laid him open to the reproaches of the Jacobites, who blamed him for deserting their party. There was a controversy of some importance between him and Dr. South. The latter, on the ground of some expressions in the work by the former on the Trinity (1690), accused him of Tritheism. Sherlock retorted by accusing his critic of Sabellianism. He died in 1707, at the age of sixty-six.

Sherlock's work against Owen was entitled, "A Discourse concerning the Knowledge of Jesus Christ, and on Union and Communion with Him," etc. Owen confines himself, in his reply, to an exposure of the misrepresentations in which Sherlock had indulged. The latter, for example, sought to fix on the Puritan divine the doctrine, that the knowledge of divine things was to be obtained from the person of Christ, apart from the truth as revealed in the Scriptures. Our author successfully vindicates himself from this charge, and repudiates other sentiments equally mystical, and ascribed to him with equal injustice. The views of Sherlock, on the points at issue, have been termed, "a confused mass of Socinianized Arminianism." Owen evinces a strength of feeling, in some parts of his "Vindication," which may be accounted for on the ground that he resented the attack as part of a systematic effort made at this time to

destroy his standing and reputation as an author. In the main, there is a dignity in his statements which contrasts well with the wayward petulance of his antagonist; and occasionally the reader will find a vein of quiet and skillful irony, in the way in which he disposes of the crude views of Sherlock.

Such was the beginning of the Communion Controversy, which soon embraced a wider range of topics, and points of more importance, than the merits of Owen's book. Besides the original disputants, others entered the field. Robert Ferguson in 1675, wrote against Sherlock a volume entitled, "The Interest of Reason in Religion," etc. Edward Polhill followed, in "An Answer to the Discourse of Mr. William Sherlock," etc. Vincent Alsop first displayed in this controversy his powers of wit and acumen as an author, in his "Antisozzo, or Sherlocismus Enervatus." Henry Hickman, a man of considerable gifts, and pastor of an English congregation at Leadon, wrote the "Speculum Sherlockianum," etc. Samuel Rolle, a nonconformist, wrote the "Prodromus, or the Character of Mr. Sherlock's Books" and also, in the same controversy, "Justification Justified." Thomas Danson, who had been ejected from Sibton, and author of several works against the Quakers, wrote "The Friendly Debate between Satan and Sherlock" and afterwards he published again in defense of it. Sherlock, in 1675, replied to Owen and Ferguson in his "Defense and Continuation of the Discourse concerning the Knowledge of Jesus Christ." He was supported by Thomas Hotchkis, Rector of Staunton, in a "Discourse concerning the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness," etc. The singular diligence of Mr. Orme has compiled this full list of the works published in this controversy; but he is not quite correct in affirming that it was closed by the replies of Sherlock and Hotchkis in 1675. A second part of the work by Hotchkis appeared in 1678, and Sherlock was the author of two other works, "An Answer to Thomas Danson's scandalous pamphlet, entitled 'A Friendly Conference,'" etc., which appeared in 1677, and was followed by a "Vindication of Mr. Sherlock against the Cavils of Mr. Danson." — ED.

A VINDICATION OF SOME PASSAGES

in a

DISCOURSE CONCERNING COMMUNION WITH GOD

It is now near twenty years since I wrote and published a Discourse concerning Communion with God. Of what use and advantage it has been to any, as to their furtherance in the design aimed at therein, is left unto them to judge by whom it has been perused with any candid diligence; and I do know that multitudes of persons fearing God, and desiring to walk before him in sincerity, are ready, if occasion require, to give testimony unto the benefit which they have received thereby; — as I can also at any time produce the testimonies of [as] learned and holy persons, it may be, as any I know living, both in England and out of it, who, owning the truth contained in it, have highly avowed its usefulness, and are ready yet so to do. With all other persons, so far as ever I heard, it passed at the rate of a tolerable acceptation with discourses of the same kind and nature. And however any thing or passage in it might not, possibly, suit the apprehensions of some, yet, being wholly practical, designed for popular edification, without any direct engagement into things controversial, I looked for no opposition unto it or exception against it; but that it would at least be suffered to pass at that rate of allowance which is universally granted unto that sort of writings, both of ancient and modern authors. Accordingly it so fell out, and continued for many years; until some persons began to judge it their interest, and to make it their business, to cavil at my writings, and to load my person with reproaches. With what little success, as to their avowed designs, they have labored therein, — how openly their endeavors are sunk into contempt with all sorts of persons pretending unto the least sobriety or modesty, — I suppose they are not themselves altogether insensible. Among the things which this sort of men sought to make an advantage of against me, I found that two or three of them began to reflect on that discourse; though it appeared they

had not satisfied themselves what as yet to fix upon, their nibbling cavils being exceedingly ridiculous.

But yet, from those intimations of some men's goodwill towards it, — sufficient to provoke the industry of such as either needed their assistance or valued their favor, — I was in expectation that one or other would possess that province, and attempt the whole discourse or some parts of it. Nor was I dissatisfied in my apprehensions of that design; for, being earnestly solicited to suffer it to be reprinted, I was very willing to see what either could or would be objected against it before it received another impression. For whereas it was written now near twenty years ago, when there was the deepest peace in the minds of all men about the things treated of therein, and when I had no apprehension of any dissent from the principal design, scope, and parts of it by any called Christians in the world, the Socinians only excepted (whom I had therein no regard unto), I thought it highly probable that some things might have been so expressed as to render a review and amendment to them more than ordinarily necessary. And I reckoned it not improbable, but that from one malevolent adversary I might receive a more instructive information of such escapes of diligence than I could do in so long a time from all the more impartial readers of it; for as unto the substance of the doctrine declared in it, I was sufficiently secure, not only of its truth, but that it would immovably endure the rudest assaults of such oppositions as I did expect. I was therefore very well satisfied when I heard of the publishing of this treatise of Mr. Sherlock's, — which, as I was informed, and since have found true, was principally intended against myself, and that discourse (that is, that book), because I was the author of it, which will at last prove it to be its only guilt and crime; — for I thought I should be at once now satisfied, both what it was which was so long contriving against it (whereof I could give no conjecture), as also be directed unto any such mistakes as might have befallen me in matter or manner of expression, which I would or might rectify before the book received another edition. But, upon a view and perusal of this discourse, I found myself under a double surprisal. For, first, in reference to my own, I could not find any thing, any doctrine, any expressions, any words reflected on, which the exceptions of this man do give me the least occasion to alter, or to desire that they had been otherwise either expressed or delivered; — not any thing which now, after

near twenty years, I do not still equally approve of, and which I am not yet ready to justify. The other part of my surprisal was somewhat particular, though, in truth, it ought to have been none at all; and this was with respect unto those doctrinal principles which he manageth his oppositions upon. A surprisal they were unto me, because wild, uncouth, extravagant, and contrary to the common faith of Christians, — being all of them traduced, and some of them transcribed, from the writings of the Socinians; [while] yet [they] ought not to have been so, because I was assured that an opposition unto that discourse could be managed on no other [ground]. But, however, the doctrine maintained by this man, and those opposed or scorned by him, are not my special concernment; for what is it to me what the Rector of etc., preacheth or publisheth, beyond my common interest in the truths of the gospel, with other men as great strangers unto him as myself, who to my knowledge never saw him, nor heard of his name till infamed by his book? Only, I shall take leave to say, that the doctrine here published, and licensed so to be, is either the doctrine of the present church of England, or it is not. If it be so, I shall be forced to declare that I neither have, nor will have, any communion therein; and that, as for other reasons, so in particular, because I will not renounce or depart from that which I know to be the true, ancient, and catholic doctrine of this church. If it be not so, — as I am assured, with respect unto many bishops and other learned men, that it is not, — it is certainly the concernment of them who preside therein to take care that such kind of discourses be not countenanced with the stamp of their public authority, lest they and the church be represented unto a great disadvantage with many.

It was some months after the publishing of this discourse, before I entertained any thoughts of taking the least notice of it, — yea, I was resolved to the contrary, and declared those resolutions as I had occasion; neither was it until very lately that my second thoughts came to a compliance with the desires of some others, to consider my own peculiar concernment therein. And this is all which I now design; for the examination of the opinions which this author has vented under the countenance of public license, whatever they may think, I know to be more the concernment of other men than mine. Nor yet do I enter into the consideration of what is written by this author with the least respect unto

myself, or my own reputation, which I have the satisfaction to conceive not to be prejudiced by such pitiful attempts; nor have I the least desire to preserve it in the minds of such persons as wherein it can suffer on this occasion. But the vindication of some sacred truths, petulantly traduced by this author, seems to be cast on me in an especial manner; because he has opposed them, and endeavored to expose them to scorn, as declared in my book; whence others, more meet for this work, might think themselves discharged from taking notice of them. Setting aside this consideration, I can freely give this sort of men leave to go on with their revilings and scoffings until they are weary or ashamed; which, as far as I can discern, upon consideration of their ability for such a work, and their confidence therein, is not like to be in haste; — at least, they can change their course, and when they are out of breath in pursuit of one sort of calumnies, retake themselves unto another. Witness the late malicious, and yet withal ridiculous, reports that they have divulged concerning me, even with respect unto civil affairs, and their industry therein; for although they were such as had not any thing of the least probability or likelihood to give them countenance, yet were they so impetuously divulged, and so readily entertained by many, as made me think there was more than the common artifices of calumny employed in their raising and improvement, especially considering what persons I can justly charge those reports upon. But in this course they may proceed whilst they please and think convenient: I find myself no more concerned in what they write or say of this nature than if it were no more but, —

epei ete kakoi out' afroni foti eoikas.
Oule te, kai mega chaire, Theoi de toi oltia doien.

It is the doctrine traduced only that I am concerned about, and that as it has been the doctrine of the church of England.

It may be it will be said (for there is no security against confidence and immodesty, backed with secular advantages), that the doctrinal principles asserted in this book are agreeable with the doctrine of the church in former times; and therefore those opposed in it, such as are condemned thereby. Hereabout I shall make no long contest with them who once discover that their minds are by any means emboldened to undertake the defense of such shameless untruths; nor shall I multiply testimonies to

prove the contrary, which others are more concerned to do, if they intend not to betray the religion of that church with whose preservation and defense they are intrusted. Only, because there are ancient divines of this church, who, I am persuaded, will be allowed with the most to have known as well the doctrine of it, and as firmly to have adhered thereunto, as this author, who have particularly spoken unto most of the things which he has opposed, or rather reproached, I shall transcribe the words of one of them, whereby he, and those who employ him, may be minded with whom they have to do in those things. For, as to the writers of the ancient church, there is herein no regard had unto them. He whom I shall name is Mr. Hooker, and that in his famous book of “Ecclesiastical Polity;” who, in the fifth book thereof, and 56th paragraph, thus discourseth: —

“We have hitherto spoken of the person and of the presence of Christ. Participation is that mutual inward hold which Christ has of us, and we of him, in such sort that each possesses other by way of special interest, property, and inherent copulation.” And after the interposition of some things conceding the mutual in-being and love of the Father and the Son, he thus proceedeth: — “We are by nature the sons of Adam. When God created Adam, he created us; and as many as are descended from Adam have in themselves the root out of which they spring. The sons of God we neither are all nor any one of us, otherwise than only by grace and favor. The sons of God have God’s own natural Son as a second Adam from heaven; whose race and progeny they are by spiritual and heavenly birth. God therefore loving eternally his Son, he must needs eternally in him have loved, and preferred before all others, them which are spiritually since descended and sprung out of him. These were in God as in their Savior, and not as in their Creator only. It was the purpose of his saving goodness, his saving wisdom, and his saving power, which inclined itself towards them. They which thus were in God eternally by their intended admission to life, have, by vocation or adoption, God actually now in them, as the artifices is in the work which his hand does presently frame. Life, as all other gifts and benefits, grows originally from the Father, and comes not to us but by the Son, nor by the Son to any of us in particular, but through the Spirit. For this cause the apostle wisheth to the church of Corinth, ‘the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the

fellowship of the holy Ghost;’ which three St. Peter comprehendeth in one, — the participation of the divine nature. We are, therefore, in God through Christ eternally, according to that intent and purpose whereby we are chosen to be made his in this present world before the world itself was made. We are in God through the knowledge which is had of us, and the love which is born towards us from everlasting; but in God we actually are no longer than only from the time of our actual adoption into the body of his true church, into the fellowship of his children. For his church he knoweth and loveth; so that they which are in the church are thereby known to be in him. Our being in Christ by eternal foreknowledge saveth us not, without our actual and real adoption into the fellowship of his saints in this present world. For in him we actually are by our actual incorporation into that society which has him for their head, and does make together with him one body (he and they in that respect having one name); for which cause, by virtue of this mystical conjunction, we are of him, and in him, even as though our very flesh and bones should be made continue with his. We are in Christ, because he knoweth and loveth us, even as parts of himself. No man is actually in him but they in whom he actually is; for he which has not the Son of God has not life. ‘I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit;’ but the branch severed from the vine withereth. We are, therefore, adopted sons of God to eternal life by participation of the only begotten Son of God, whose life is the well-spring and cause of ours. It is too cold an interpretation, whereby some men expound our being in Christ to import nothing else but only that the self-same nature which maketh us to be men is in him, and maketh him man as we are. For what man in the world is there which has not so far forth communion with Jesus Christ? It is not this that can sustain the weight of such sentences as speak of the mystery of our coherence with Jesus Christ. The church is in Christ, as Eve was in Adam. Yea, by grace we are every [one] of us in Christ and in his church, as by nature we were in those, our first parents. God made Eve of the rib of Adam; and his church he frameth out of the very flesh, the very wounded and bleeding side, of the Son of man. His body crucified, and his blood shed for the life of the world, are the true elements of that heavenly being which maketh us such as himself is of whom we come. For which cause the words of Adam may be fitly the words of Christ concerning his church, ‘Flesh of my flesh, and bone of my

bones;’ — ‘A true nature, extract out of mine own body.’ So that in him, even according to his manhood, we, according to our heavenly being, are as branches in that root out of which they grow. To all things he is life, and to men light, as the Son of God; to the church, both life and light eternal, by being made the Son of man for us, and by being in us a Savior, whether we respect him as God or as man. Adam is in us as an original cause of our nature, and of that corruption of nature which causeth death; Christ as the cause original of restoration to life. The person of Adam is not in us, but his nature, and the corruption of his nature, derived into all men by propagation. Christ having Adam’s nature, as we have, but incorrupt, deriveth not nature but incorruption, and that immediately from his own person, into all that belong unto him. As, therefore, we are really partakers of the body of sin and death received from Adam; so, except we be truly partakers of Christ, and as really possessed of his Spirit, all we speak of eternal life is but a dream. That which quickeneth us is the Spirit of the second Adam, and his flesh that wherewith he quickeneth. That which in him made our nature incorrupt was the union of his Deity with our nature. And in that respect the sentence of death and condemnation, which only taketh hold upon sinful flesh, could no way possibly extend unto him. This caused his voluntary death for others to prevail with God, and to have the force of an expiatory sacrifice. The blood of Christ, as the apostle witnesseth, does, therefore, take away sin; because, ‘Through the eternal Spirit he offered himself unto God without spot.’ That which sanctified our nature in Christ, — that which made it a sacrifice available to take away sin, is the same which quickened it, raised it out of the grave after death, and exalted it unto glory. Seeing, therefore, that Christ is in us a quickening Spirit, the first degree of communion with Christ must needs consist in the participation of his Spirit, which Cyprian in that respect terms ‘germanissimam societatem,’ — the highest and truest society that can be between man and him, which is both God and man in one. These things St. Cyril duly considering, reproveth their speeches which taught that only the Deity of Christ is the vine whereupon we by faith do depend as branches, and that neither his flesh nor our bodies are comprised in this resemblance. For does any man doubt but that even from the flesh of Christ our very bodies do receive that life which shall make them glorious at the latter day; and for which they are already accounted parts of his blessed body? Our corruptible bodies could never live the life they shall

live, were it not that here they are joined with his body, which is incorruptible; and that his is in ours as a cause of immortality, — a cause, by removing, through the death and merit of his own flesh, that which hindered the life of ours. Christ is, therefore, both as God and as man, that true vine whereof we both spiritually and corporally are branches. The mixture of his bodily substance with ours is a thing which the ancient fathers disclaim. Yet the mixture of his flesh with ours they speak of, to signify what our very bodies, through mystical conjunction, receive from that vital efficacy which we know to be in his; and from bodily mixtures they borrow divers similitudes, rather to declare the truth than the manner of coherence between his sacred [body] and the sanctified bodies of saints. Thus much no Christian man will deny, that when Christ sanctified his own flesh, giving as God, and taking as man, the Holy Ghost, he did not this for himself only, but for our sakes, that the grace of sanctification and life, which was first received in him, might pass from him to his whole race, as malediction came from Adam into all mankind. Howbeit, because the work of his Spirit to those effects is in us prevented by sin and death possessing us before, it is of necessity that as well our present sanctification into newness of life, as the future restoration of our bodies, should presuppose a participation of the grace, efficacy, merit, or virtue of his body and blood; — without which foundation first laid, there is no place for those other operations of the Spirit of Christ to ensue. So that Christ imparteth plainly himself by degrees. It pleaseth him, in mercy, to account himself incomplete and maimed without us. But most assured we are, that we all receive of his fullness, because he is in us as a moving and working cause; from which many blessed effects are really found to ensue, and that in sundry both kinds and degrees, all tending to eternal happiness. It must be confessed, that of Christ working as a creator and a governor of the world, by providence all are partakers; — not all partakers of that grace whereby he inhabiteth whom he saveth. Again: as he dwelleth not by grace in all, so neither does he equally work in all them in whom he dwelleth. ‘Whence is it,’ saith St. Augustine, ‘that some be holier than others are, but because God does dwell in some more plentifully than in others?’ And because the divine substance of Christ is equally in all, his human substance equally distant from all, it appeareth that the participation of Christ, wherein there are many degrees and differences, must needs consist in such effects as, being derived from both natures of

Christ really into us, are made our own: and we, by having them in us, are truly said to have him from whom they come; Christ also, more or less, to inhabit and impart himself, as the graces are fewer or more, greater or smaller, which really flow into us from Christ. Christ is whole with the whole church, and whole with every part of the church, as touching his person, which can no way divide itself, or be possessed by degrees and portions. But the participation of Christ importeth, besides the presence of Christ's person, and besides the mystical copulation thereof with the parts and members of his whole church, a true actual influence of grace, whereby the life which we live according to godliness is his; and from him we receive those perfections wherein our eternal happiness consisteth. Thus we participate Christ: — partly by imputation; as when those things which he did and suffered for us are imputed unto us for righteousness; partly by habitual and real infusion; as when grace is inwardly bestowed while we are on earth; — and afterward more fully, both our souls and bodies made like unto his in glory. The first thing of his so infused into our hearts in this life is the Spirit of Christ; whereupon, because the rest, of what kind soever, do all both necessarily depend and infallibly also ensue, therefore the apostles term it sometimes the seed of God, sometimes the pledge of our heavenly inheritance, sometimes the hanel or earnest of that which is to come. From whence it is that they which belong to the mystical body of our Savior Christ, and be in number as the stars of heaven, — divided successively, by reason of their mortal condition, into many generations, — are, notwithstanding, coupled every one to Christ their head, and all unto every particular person amongst themselves; inasmuch as the same Spirit which anointed the blessed soul of our Savior Christ does so formalise, unite, and actuate his whole race, as if both he and they were so many limbs compacted into one body, by being quickened all with one and the same soul. That wherein we are partakers of Jesus Christ by imputation, agreeth equally unto all what have it; for it consisteth in such acts and deeds of his as could not have longer continuance than while they were in doings nor at that very time belong unto any other but to him from whom they come: and therefore, how men, either then, or before, or since, should be made partakers of them, there can be no way imagined but only by imputation. Again: a deed must either not be imputed to any, but rest altogether in him whose it is; or, if at all it be imputed, they which have it by imputation must have it such as it is,

— whole. So that degrees being neither in the personal presence of Christ, nor in the participation of those effects which are ours by imputation only, it resteth that we wholly apply them to the participation of Christ's infused grace; although, even in this kind also, the first beginning of life, the seed of God, the first-fruits of Christ's Spirit, be without latitude. For we have hereby only the being of the sons of God: in which number, how far soever one may seem to excel another, yet touching this, that all are sons, they are all equals; some, happily, better sons than the rest are, but none any more a son than another. Thus, therefore, we see how the Father is in the Son, and the Son in the Father; how they both are in all things, and all things in them: what communion Christ has with his church; how his church, and every member thereof, is in him by original derivation, and he personal]y in them, by way of mystical association, wrought through the gift of the holy Ghost; which they that are his receive from him, and, together with the same, what benefit soever the vital force of his body and blood may yield; — yea, by steps and degrees they receive the complete measure of all such divine grace as does sanctify and save throughout, till the day of their final exaltation to a state of fellowship in glory with him, whose partakers they are now in those things that tend to glory.”

This one testimony ought to be enough unto this sort of men, whilst they are at any consistency with their own reputation: for it is evident that there is nothing concerning personal election, effectual vocation, justification by the imputation of the righteousness of Christ, participation of him, union of believers unto and with his person, derivation of grace from him, etc., which are so reproached by our present author, but they are asserted by this great champion of the church of England, who undoubtedly knew the doctrine which it owned, and in his days approved, and that in such words and expressions, as remote from the sentiments, or at least as unsavory to the palates, of these men, as any they except against in others.

And what themselves so severely charge on us in point of discipline, that nothing be spoken about it until all is answered that is written by Mr. Hooker in its defense, may, I hope, not immodestly be so far returned, as to desire them that in point of doctrine they will grant us truce, until they have moved out of the way what is written to the same purpose by Mr. Hooker. Why do not they speak to him to leave fooling, and to speak

sense, as they do to others? But let these things be as they are; I have no especial concernment in them, nor shall take any farther notice of them, but only as they influence the exceptions which this author makes unto some passages in that book of mine. And in what I shall do herein, I shall take as little notice as may be of those scurrilous and reproachful expressions, which either his inclination or his circumstances induced him to make use of. If he be pleased with such a course of procedure, I can only assure him, that as to my concernment, I am not displeased; and so he is left unto his full liberty for the future.

The first thing he quarrels about, is my asserting the necessity of acquaintance with the person of Christ; which expression he frequently makes use of afterward in a way of reproach. The use of the word “acquaintance,” in this matter, is warranted by our translation of the Scripture, and that properly, where it is required of us to acquaint ourselves with God. And that I intended nothing thereby but the knowledge of Jesus Christ, is evident beyond any pretense to the contrary to be suggested by the most subtle or inventive malice. The crime, therefore, wherewith I am here charged, is my assertion that it is necessary that Christians should know Jesus Christ; which I have afterward increased, by affirming also that they ought to love him: for by Jesus Christ all the world of Christians intend the person of Christ; and the most of them, all of them, — the Socinians only excepted, — by his person, “the Word made flesh,” or the Son of God incarnate, the mediator between God and man. For because the name Christ is sometimes used metonymically, to conclude thence that Jesus Christ is not Jesus Christ, or that it is not the person of Christ that is firstly and properly intended by that name in the gospel, is a lewd and impious imagination; and we may as well make Christ to be only a light within us, as to be the doctrine of the gospel without us. This knowledge of Jesus Christ I aver to be the only fountain of all saving knowledge: which is farther reflected on by this author; and he adds (no doubt out of respect unto me), “that he will not envy the glory of this discovery unto its author;” and therefore honestly confesseth that he met with it in my book. But what does he intend? Whither will prejudice and corrupt designs carry and transport the minds of men? Is it possible that he should be ignorant that it is the duty of all Christians to know Jesus Christ, to be acquainted with the person of

Christ, and that this is the fountain of all saving knowledge, until he met with it in my book about communion with God; which I dare say he looked not into, but only to find what he might except against? It is the Holy Ghost himself that is the author of this discovery; and it is the great fundamental principle of the gospel. Wherefore, surely, this cannot be the man's intention; and therefore we must look a little farther, to see what it is that he aimeth at. After, then, the repetition of some words of mine, he adds, as his sense upon them, p. 39, "So that it seems the gospel of Christ makes a very imperfect and obscure discovery of the nature, attributes, and the will of God, and the methods of our recovery. We may thoroughly understand whatever is revealed in the gospel, and yet not have a clear and saving knowledge of these things, until we get a more intimate acquaintance with the person of Christ." And again, p. 40: "I shall show you what additions these men make to the gospel of Christ by an acquaintance with his person; and I confess I am very much beholden to this author, for acknowledging whence they fetch all their orthodox and gospel mysteries, for I had almost pored my eyes out with seeking for them in the gospel, but could never find them; but I learn now, that indeed they are not to be found there, unless we be first acquainted with the person of Christ." So far as I can gather up the sense of these loose expressions, it is, that I assert a knowledge of the person of Jesus Christ which is not revealed in the gospel, which is not taught us in the writings of Moses, the prophets, or apostles, but must be had some other way. He tells me afterward, p. 41, that I put in a word fallaciously, which expresseth the contrary; as though I intended another knowledge of Christ than what is declared in the gospel. Now, he either thought that this was not my design or intention, but would make use of a pretense of it for his advantage unto an end aimed at (which what it was I know well enough); or he thought, indeed, that I did assert and maintain such a knowledge of the person of Christ as was not received by Scripture revelation. If it was the first, we have an instance of that new morality which these new doctrines are accompanied withal; if the latter, he discovers how meet a person he is to treat of things of this nature. Wherefore, to prevent such scandalous miscarriages, or futilous imaginations for the future, I here tell him, that if he can find in that book, or any other of my writings, any expression, or word, or syllable, intimating any knowledge of Christ, or any acquaintance with the person of Christ, but what is revealed and

declared in the gospel, in the writings of Moses, the prophets, and apostles, and as it is so revealed and declared, and learned from thence, I will publicly burn that book with my own hands, to give him and all the world satisfaction. Nay, I say more: if an angel from heaven pretend to give any other knowledge of the person of Christ, but what is revealed in the gospel, let him be accursed. And here I leave this author to consider with himself, what was the true occasion why he should first thus represent himself unto the world in print, by the avowing of so unworthy and notorious a calumny.

Whereas, therefore, by an acquaintance with the person of Christ, it is undeniably evident that I intended nothing but that knowledge of Christ which it is the duty of every Christian to labor after, — no other but what is revealed, declared, and delivered in the Scripture, as almost every page of my book does manifest where I treat of these things; I do here again, with the good leave of this author, assert, that this knowledge of Christ is very necessary unto Christians, and the fountain of all saving knowledge whatever. And as he may, if he please, review the honesty and truth of that passage, p. 38, “So that our acquaintance with Christ’s person, in this man’s divinity, signifies such a knowledge of what Christ is, has done, and suffered for us, from whence we may learn those greater, deeper, and more saving mysteries of the gospel, which Christ has not expressly revealed to us;” so I will not so far suspect the Christianity of them with whom we have to do, as to think it necessary to confirm by texts of Scripture either of these assertions; which whoever denies is an open apostate from the gospel.

Having laid this foundation in an equal mixture of that truth and sobriety wherewith sundry late writings of this nature and to the same purpose have been stuffed, he proceeds to declare what desperate consequences ensue upon the necessity of that knowledge of Jesus Christ which I have asserted, addressing himself thereunto, p. 40.

Many instances of such dealings will make me apt to think that some men, whatever they pretend to the contrary, have but little knowledge of Jesus Christ indeed. But whatever this man thinks of him, an account must one day be given before and unto him of such false calumnies as his lines are stuffed withal. Those who will believe him, that he has almost “pored out

his eyes” in reading the gospel, with a design to find out mysteries that are not in it, are left by me to their liberty; only I cannot but say, that his way of expressing the study of the Scripture, is [not?] such as becometh a man of his wisdom, gravity, and principles. He will, I hope, one day be better acquainted with what belongs unto the due investigation of sacred truth in the Scripture, than to suppose it represented by such childish expressions. What he has learned from me I know not; but that I have anywhere taught that there are mysteries of religion that are not to be found in the gospel, unless we are first acquainted with the person of Christ, is a frontless and impudent falsehood. I own no other, never taught other knowledge of Christ, or acquaintance with his person, but what is revealed and declared in the gospel; and therefore, no mysteries of religion can be thence known and received, before we are acquainted with the gospel itself. Yet I will mind this author of that, whereof if he be ignorant, he is unfit to be a teacher of others, and which if he deny, he is unworthy the name of a Christian, — namely, that by the knowledge of the person of Christ, the great mystery of God manifest in the flesh, as revealed and declared in the gospel, we are led into a clear and full understanding of many other mysteries of grace and truth; which are all centered in his person, and without which we can have no true nor sound understanding of them. I shall speak it yet again, that this author, if it be possible, may understand it; or, however, that he and his co-partners in design may know that I neither am nor ever will be ashamed of it: — that without the knowledge of the person of Christ, which is our acquaintance with him (as we are commanded to acquaint ourselves with God) as he is the eternal Son of God incarnate, the mediator between God and man, with the mystery of the love, grace, and truth of God therein, as revealed and declared in the Scripture, there is no true, useful, saving knowledge of any other mysteries or truths of the gospel to be attained. This being the substance of what is asserted in my discourse, I challenge this man, or any to whose pleasure and favor his endeavors in this kind are sacrificed, to assert and maintain the contrary, if so be they are indeed armed with such a confidence as to impugn the foundations of Christianity.

But to evince his intention, he transcribeth the ensuing passages out of my discourse: — “The sum of all true wisdom and knowledge may be reduced to these three heads: —

1. The knowledge of God; his nature and properties.
2. The knowledge of ourselves with reference to the will of God concerning us.
3. Skill to walk in communion with God. In these three is summed up all true wisdom and knowledge, and not any of them is to any purpose to be obtained, or is manifested, but only in and by the Lord Christ.”

This whole passage I am far from disliking, upon this representation of it, or any expression in it. Those who are not pleased with this distribution of spiritual wisdom, may make use of any such of their own wherewith they are better satisfied. This of mine was sufficient unto my purpose. Hereon this censure is passed by him: — “Where by is fallaciously added to include the revelations Christ has made; whereas his first undertaking was, to show how impossible it is to understand these things savingly and clearly, notwithstanding all those revelations God has made of himself and his will by Moses and the prophets, and by Christ himself, without an acquaintance with his person.” The fallacy pretended is merely of his own coining; my words are plain, and suited unto my own purpose, and to declare my mind in what I intend; which he openly corrupting, or not at all understanding, frames an end never thought of by me, and then feigns fallacious means of attaining it. The knowledge I mean is to be learned by Christ; neither is any thing to be learned in him but what is learned by him. I do say, indeed, now, whatever I have said before, that it is impossible to understand any sacred truth savingly and clearly, without the knowledge of the person of Christ; and shall say so still, let this man and his companions say what they will to the contrary: but that in my so saying I exclude the consideration of the revelations which Christ has made, or that God has made of himself by Moses and the prophets, and Christ himself, the principal whereof concern his person, and whence alone we come to know him, is an assertion becoming the modesty and ingenuity of this author. But hereon he proceeds, and says, that as to the first head he will take notice of those peculiar discoveries of the nature of God of which the world was ignorant before, and of which revelation is wholly silent, but are now clearly and savingly learned from an acquaintance with Christ’s person. But what, in the meantime, is become of modesty, truth, and honesty? Do men reckon that there is no account to be given of such falsifications? Is there any one word or little in my discourse of any such

knowledge of the nature or properties of God as whereof revelation is wholly silent? What does this man intend? Does he either not at all understand what I say; or does he not care what he says himself? What have I done to him? wherein have I injured him? how have I provoked him, that he should sacrifice his conscience and reputation unto such a revenge? Must he yet hear it again? I never thought, I never owned, I never wrote, that there was any acquaintance to be obtained with any property of the nature of God by the knowledge of the person of Christ, but what is taught and revealed in the gospel; from whence alone all knowledge of Christ, his person, and his doctrine, is to be learned. And yet I will say again, if we learn not thence to know the Lord Christ, — that is, his person, — we shall never know any thing of God, ourselves, or our duty, clearly and savingly (I use the words again, notwithstanding the reflections on them, as more proper in this matter than any used by our author in his eloquent discourse), and as we ought to do. From hence he proceeds unto weak and confused discourses about the knowledge of God and his properties without any knowledge of Christ; for he not only tells us “what reason we had to believe such and such things of God, if Christ had never appeared in the world,” (take care, I pray, that we be thought as little beholden to him as may be), “but that God’s readiness to pardon, and the like, are plainly revealed in the Scripture, without any farther acquaintance with the person of Christ,” p. 43. What this farther acquaintance with the person of Christ should mean, I do not well understand: it may be, any more acquaintance with respect unto some that is necessary; — it may be, without any more ado as to an acquaintance with him. And if this be his intention, — as it must be, if there be sense in his words, — that God’s readiness to pardon sinners is revealed in the Scripture without respect unto the person of Jesus Christ, it is a piece of dull Socinianism; which, because I have sufficiently confuted else where, I shall not here farther discover the folly of. [As] for a knowledge of God’s essential properties by the light of nature, it was never denied by me; yea, I have written and contended for it in another way than can be impeached by such trifling declamations. But yet, with his good leave, I do believe that there is no saving knowledge of, or acquaintance with God or his properties, to be attained, but in and through Jesus Christ, as revealed unto us in the gospel. And this I can confirm with testimonies of the Scripture, fathers, schoolmen, and divines of all sorts, with reasons and

arguments, such as I know this author cannot answer. And whatever great apprehensions he may have of his skill and abilities to know God and his properties by the light of nature, now that he neither knows nor is able to distinguish what he learns from thence, and what he has imbibed in his education from an emanation of divine revelation; yet I believe there were as wise men as himself amongst those ancient philosophers, concerning whom and their inquiries into the nature of God our apostle pronounces those censures, Romans 1; 1 Corinthians 1.

But on this goodly foundation he proceeds unto a particular inference, p. 44, saying, “And is not this a confident man, to tell us that the love of God to sinners, and his pardoning mercy, could never have entered into the heart of man but by Christ, when the experience of the whole world confutes him? For, whatever becomes of his new theories, both Jews and heathens, who understood nothing at all of what Christ was to do in order to our recovery, did believe God to be gracious and merciful to sinners, and had reason to do so; because God himself had assured the Jews that he was a gracious and merciful God, pardoning iniquity, transgressions, and sins. And those natural notions heathens had of God, and all those discoveries God had made of himself in the works of creation and providence, did assure them that God is very good: and it is not possible to understand what goodness is, without pardoning grace.”

I beg his excuse: truth and good company will give a modest man a little confidence sometimes; and against his experience of the whole world, falsely pretended, I can oppose the testimonies of the Scripture, and all the ancient writers of the church, very few excepted. We can know of God only what he has, one way or other, revealed of himself, and nothing else; and I say again, that God has not revealed his love unto sinners, and his pardoning mercy, any other way but in and by Jesus Christ. For what he adds as to the knowledge which the Jews had of these things by God’s revelation in the Scripture, when he can prove that all those revelations, or any of them, had not respect unto the promised seed, — the Son of God, — to be exhibited in the flesh to destroy the works of the devil, he will speak somewhat unto his purpose. In the meantime, this insertion of the consideration of them who enjoyed that revelation of Christ which God was pleased to build his church upon under the Old Testament, is weak and impertinent. Their apprehensions, I acknowledge, concerning the

person of Christ, and the speciality of the work of his mediation, were dark and obscure; but so, also, proportionally was their knowledge of all other sacred truths, which yet with all diligence they inquired into. That which I intended is expressed by the apostle, 1 Corinthians 2:9, 10, "It is written, Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love him. But God has revealed them unto us by his Spirit." What a confident man was this apostle, as to affirm that the things of the grace and mercy of God did never enter into the heart of man to conceive, nor would so have done, had they not been revealed by the Spirit of God in the gospel through Jesus Christ!

But this is only a transient charge. There ensues that which is much more severe, p. 45; as, for instance, "He tells us, 'that in Christ' (that is, in his death and sufferings for our sins) 'God has manifested the naturalness of this righteousness' (that is, vindictive justice in punishing sin), 'that it was impossible that it should be diverted from sinners without the interposing of a propitiation; that is, that God is so just and righteous, that he cannot pardon sin without satisfaction to his justice.' Now, this indeed is such a notion of justice as is perfectly new, which neither Scripture nor nature acquaints us with; for all mankind have accounted it an act of goodness, without the least suspicion of injustice in it, to remit injuries and offenses without exacting any punishment, — that he is so far from being just, that he is cruel and savage, who will remit no offense till he has satisfied his revenge." The reader who is in any measure or degree acquainted with these things, knows full well what is intended by that which I have asserted. It is no more but this, — that such is the essential holiness and righteousness of the nature of God, that, considering him as the supreme governor and ruler of all mankind, it was inconsistent with the holiness and rectitude of his rule, and the glory of his government, to pass by sin absolutely, or to pardon it without satisfaction, propitiation, or atonement. This, I said, was made evident in the death and sufferings of Christ, wherein God made all our iniquities to meet upon him, and spared him not, that we might obtain mercy and grace. This is here now called out by our author as a very dangerous or foolish passage in my discourse, which he thought he might highly advantage his reputation by reflecting upon. But as the orator said to his adversary, "Equidem vehementer laetor

sum esse me, in quem tu cum cuperes, nullam contumeliam jacere potueris, quae non ad maximam partem civium convenerit,” — so it is here fallen out. If this man knows not that this is the judgement of the generality of the most learned divines of Europe upon the matter, of all who have engaged with any success against the Socinians, one or two only excepted, I can pity him, but not relieve him in his unhappiness, unless he will be pleased to take more pains in reading good books than as yet he appeareth to have done. But for the thing itself, and his reflections upon it, I shall observe yet some few things, and so pass on; — as first, the opposition that he makes unto my position is nothing but a crude assertion of one of the meanest and most absurd sophisms which the Socinians use in this cause, — namely, that everyone may remit injuries and offenses as he pleaseth, without exacting any punishment: which, as it is true in most cases of injuries and offenses against private persons, wherein no others are concerned but themselves, nor are they obliged by any law of the community to pursue their own right; so, with respect unto public rulers of the community, and unto such injuries and offenses as are done against supreme rule, tending directly unto the dissolution of the society centering in it, to suppose that such rulers are not obliged to inflict those punishments which justice and the preservation of the community does require, is a fond and ridiculous imagination, — destructive, if pursued, unto all human society, and rendering government a useless thing in the world. Therefore, what this author (who seems to understand very little of these things) adds, “that governors may spare or punish as they see reason for it;” if the rule of that reason and judgement be not that justice which respects the good and benefit of the society or community, they do amiss, and sin, in sparing and punishing: which I suppose he will not ascribe unto the government of God. But I have fully debated these things in sundry writings against the Socinians; so that I will not again enlarge upon them without a more important occasion. It is not improbable but he knows where to find those discourses; and he may, when he please, exercise his skill upon them. Again: I cannot but remark upon the consequences that he chargeth this position withal; and yet I cannot do it without begging pardon for repeating such horrid and desperate blasphemies. P. 46, “The account,” saith he, “of this is very plain; because the justice of God has glutted itself with revenge on sin in the death of Christ, and so hence forward we may be sure he will be very kind, as a revengeful man is when

his passion is over.” P. 47, “The sum of which is, that God is all love and patience when he has taken his fill of revenge; as others use to say that the devil is very good when he is pleased.” P. 59, “The justice and vengeance of God, having their acting assigned them to the full, being glutted and satiated with the blood of Christ, God may,” etc. I desire the reader to remember that the supposition whereon all these inferences are built, is only that of the necessity of the satisfaction of Christ with respect unto the holiness and righteousness of God as the author of the law, and the supreme governor of mankind. And is this language becoming a son of the church of England? Might it not be more justly expected from a Jew or a Mohammedan, — from Servetus or Socinus, from whom it is borrowed, — than from a son of this church, in a book published by license and authority? But it is to no purpose to complain: those who are pleased with these things, let them be so. But what if, after all, these impious, blasphemous consequences do follow as much upon this author’s opinion as upon mine, and that with a greater show of probability? and what if, forgetting himself, within a few leaves he says the very same thing that I do, and casts himself under his own severest condemnation?

For the first: I presume he owns the satisfaction of Christ, and I will suppose it until he directly denies it; therefore, also, he owns and grants that God would not pardon any sin, but upon a supposition of a previous satisfaction made by Jesus Christ. Here, then, lies all the difference between us; — that I say God could not, with respect unto his holiness and justice, as the author of the law and governor of the world, pardon sin absolutely without satisfaction: he says, that although he might have done so without the least diminution of his glory, yet he would not, but would have his Son by his death and suffering to make satisfaction for sin. I leave it now, not only to every learned and impartial reader, but to every man in his wits who understands common sense, whether the blasphemous consequences, which I will not again defile ink and paper with the expression of, do not seem to follow more directly upon his opinion than mine. For whereas I say not that God requireth any thing unto the exercise of grace and mercy, but what he grants that he does so also; — only I say he does it because requisite unto his justice; he, because he chose it by a free act of his will and wisdom, when he might have done otherwise, without the least disadvantage unto his righteousness or rule, or the least

impeachment to the glory of his holiness. The odious blasphemies mentioned do apparently seem to make a nearer approach unto his assertion than unto mine. I cannot proceed unto a farther declaration of it, because I abhor the rehearsal of such horrid profaneness. The truth is, they follow not in the least (if there be any thing in them but odious satanical exprobrations of the truth of the satisfaction of Christ) on either opinion; though I say this author knows not well how to discharge himself of them.

But what if he be all this while only roving in his discourse about the things that he has no due comprehension of, merely out of a transporting desire to gratify himself and others, in traducing and making exceptions against my writings? What if, when he comes a little to himself, and expresseth the notions that have been instilled into him, be saith expressly as much as I do, or have done in any place of my writings? It is plain he does so, p. 49, in these words: — “As for sin, the gospel assures us that God is an irreconcilable enemy to all wickedness, it being so contrary to his own most holy nature, that if he have any love for himself, and any esteem for his own perfections and works, he must hate sin, which is so unlike himself, and which destroys the beauty and perfection of his workmanship. For this end he sent his Son into the world to destroy the works of the devil,” etc. Here is the substance of what at any time on this subject I have pleaded for: — “God is an irreconcilable enemy to all wickedness,” that it “is contrary to his holy nature, so that he must hate it; and therefore sends his Son,” etc. If sin be contrary to God’s holy nature, — if he must hate it, unless he will not love himself, nor value his own perfections, and therefore sent his Son to make satisfaction, we are absolutely agreed in this matter, and our author has lost “operam et oleum” in his attempt. But for the matter itself, if he be able to come unto any consistency in his thoughts, or to know what is his own mind therein, I do hereby acquaint him that I have written one entire discourse on that subject, and have lately reinforced the same argument in my Exercitations on the Epistle to the Hebrews, wherein my judgement on this point is declared and maintained. Let him attempt an answer, if he please, unto them, or do it if he can. What he farther discourseth on this subject, pp. 46, 47, consisteth only in odious representations and vile reflections on the principal doctrines of the gospel, not to be mentioned without offense and horror. But as to me, he proceeds to except, after his scoffing manner,

against another passage, pp. 47, 48, — “But, however, sinners have great reasons to rejoice in it, when they consider the nature and end of God’s patience and forbearance towards them, — viz., That it is God’s taking a course, in his infinite wisdom and goodness, that we should not be destroyed notwithstanding our sins; that as before, the least sin could not escape without punishment, justice being so natural to God that he cannot forgive without punishing; so the justice of God being now satisfied by the death of Christ, the greatest sins can do us no hurt, but we shall escape with a ‘notwithstanding our sins.’ This, it seems, we learn from an acquaintance with Christ’s person, though his gospel instructs us otherwise, that ‘without holiness no man shall see God.’” “But he is here again at a loss, and understands not what he is about. That whereof he was discoursing is the necessity of the satisfaction of Christ, and that must be it which he maketh his inference from, but the passage he insists on, he lays down as expressive of the end of God’s patience and forbearance towards sinners, which here is of no place nor consideration. But so it falls out, that he is seldom at any agreement with himself in any parts of his discourse; the reason whereof I do somewhat more than guess at. However, for the passage which he cites out of my discourse, I like it so well, as that I shall not trouble myself to inquire whether it be there or no, or on what occasion it is introduced. The words are, — “That God has, in his justice, wisdom, and goodness, taken a course that we should not be destroyed, notwithstanding our sins” (that is, to save sinners); “for he that believeth, although he be a sinner, shall be saved; and he that believeth not shall be damned,” as one has assured us, whom I desire to believe and trust unto. If this be not so, what will become of this man and myself, with all our writings? for I know that we are both sinners; and if God will not save us, or deliver us from destruction, notwithstanding our sins, — that is, pardon them through the bloodshedding of Jesus Christ, wherein we have redemption, even the forgiveness of sins, — it had been better for us that we had never been born. And I do yet again say, that God does not, that he will not, pardon the least sin, without respect unto the satisfaction of Christ, according as the apostle declares, 2 Corinthians 5:18-21; and the expression which must be set on the other side, on the supposition whereof the greatest sin can do us no harm, is this man’s addition, which his usual respect unto truth has produced. But, withal, I never said, I never

wrote, that the only supposition of the satisfaction of Christ is sufficient of itself to free us from destruction by sin.

There is, moreover, required on our part, faith and repentance; without which we can have no advantage by it, or interest in it. But he seems to understand by that expression, “notwithstanding our sins,” though we should live and die in our sins without faith, repentance, or new obedience; for he supposeth it sufficient to manifest the folly of this assertion, to mention that declaration of the mind of Christ in the gospel, that “without holiness no man shall see God.” I wonder whether he thinks that those who believe the satisfaction of Christ, and the necessity thereof, wherein God “made him to be sin who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him,” do believe that the personal holiness of men is [not] indispensably necessary unto the pleasing and enjoyment of God. If he suppose that the satisfaction of Christ and the necessity of our personal holiness are really inconsistent, he must be treated in another manner: if he suppose that although they are consistent, yet those whom he opposeth do so trust to the satisfaction of Christ, as to judge that faith, repentance, and holiness, are not indispensably necessary to salvation, he manifests how well skilled he is in their principles and practices. I have always looked on it as a piece of the highest disingenuity among the Quakers, that when any one pleads for the satisfaction of Christ or the imputation of his righteousness, they will clamorously cry out, and hear nothing to the contrary, “Yea, you are for the saving of polluted, defiled sinners; let men live in their sins and be all foul within, it is no matter, so long as they have a righteousness and a Christ without them.” I have, I say, always looked upon it as a most disingenuous procedure in them, seeing no one is catechized amongst us, who knoweth not that we press a necessity of sanctification and holiness, equal with that of justification and righteousness. And yet this very course is here steered by this author, contrary to the constant declaration of the judgements of them with whom he has to do, — contrary to the common evidence of their writings, preaching, praying, disputing unto another purpose; and that without relieving or countenancing himself by any one word or expression used or uttered by them. He chargeth [them] as though they made holiness a very indifferent thing, and such as it does not much concern any man whether he have an interest in or no; and I know not whether is more marvelous

unto me, that some men can so far concoct all principles of conscience and modesty as to publish such slanderous untruths, or that others can take contentment and satisfaction therein, who cannot but understand their disingenuity and falsehood.

His proceed in the same page is to except against that revelation of the wisdom of God which I affirm to have been made in the person and sufferings of Christ, which I thought I might have asserted without offense. But this man will have it, that “there is no wisdom therein, if justice be so natural to God, that nothing could satisfy him but the death of his own Son.” That any thing else could satisfy divine justice but the sufferings and death of the Son of God, so far as I know, he is the first that found out or discovered, if he has yet found it out. Some have imagined that God will pardon sin, and does so, without any satisfaction at all; and some have thought that other ways of the reparation of lost mankind were possible, without this satisfaction of divine justice, which yet God in his wisdom determined on; but that satisfaction could be any otherwise made to divine justice, but by the death of the Son of God incarnate, none have used to say who know what they say in these things. “But wisdom,” he saith, “consists in the choice of the best and fittest means to attain an end, when there were more ways than one of doing it; but it requires no great wisdom to choose when there is but one possible way.” Yea, this it is to measure God, — things infinite and divine, by ourselves. Does this man think that God’s ends, as ours, have an existence in themselves out of him, antecedent unto any acts of his divine wisdom? Does he imagine that he balanceth probable means for the attaining of an end, choosing some and rejecting others? Does he surmise that the acts of divine wisdom with respect unto the end and means are so really distinct, as the one to have a priority in time before the others? Alas, that men should have the confidence to publish such slight and crude imaginations! Again: the Scripture, which so often expresseth the incarnation of the Son of God, and the whole work of his mediation thereon, as the effect of the infinite wisdom of God, — as that wherein the stores, riches, and treasures of it are laid forth, — does nowhere so speak of it in comparison with other means not so suited unto the same end, but absolutely, and as it is in its own nature; unless it be when it is compared with those typical institutions which, being appointed to resemble it, some did rest in. And

lastly, whereas there was but this one way for the redemption of mankind, and the restoration of the honor of God's justice and holiness, as he is the supreme lawgiver and governor of the universe; and whereas this one way was not in the least pervious unto any created understanding, angelical or human, nor could the least of its concerns have ever entered into the hearts of any (nor, it may be, shall they ever know or be able to find it out unto perfection, but it will be left the object of their admiration unto eternity); — if this author can see no wisdom, or no great wisdom, in the finding out and appointing of this way, who can help it? I wish he would more diligently attend unto their teachings who are able to instruct him better; and from whom, as having no prejudice against them, he may be willing to learn.

But this is the least part of what this worthy censurer of theological discourses rebukes and corrects. For whereas I had said, that we “might learn our disability to answer the mind and will of God in all or any part of the obedience he requireth,” that is, without Christ or out of him; he adds, “That is, that it is impossible for us to do any thing that is good, but we must be acted, like machines, by an external force, — by the irresistible power of the grace and Spirit of God. This, I am sure, is a new discovery; we learn no such thing from the gospel, and I do not see how he proves it from an acquaintance with Christ.” But if he intends what he speaks, “we can do no good, but must be acted, like machines, by an external force,” and chargeth this on me, it is a false accusation, proceeding from malice or ignorance, or a mixture of both. If he intend, that we can of ourselves do any thing that is spiritually good and acceptable before God, without the efficacious work of the Spirit and grace of God in us, which I only deny, he is a Pelagian, and stands anathematised by many councils of the ancient church. And [as] for what is my judgement about the impotency that is in us by nature unto any spiritual good, — the necessity of the effectual operation of the Spirit of God in and to our conversion, with his aids and assistance of actual grace in our whole course of obedience, which is no other but that of the ancient church, the most learned fathers, and the church of England itself in former days, — I have now sufficiently declared and confirmed it in another discourse; whither this author is remitted, either to learn to speak honestly of what he opposeth, or to understand it better, or answer it if he can.

He adds, “But still there is a more glorious discovery than this behind; and that is, the glorious end whereunto sin is appointed and ordained (I suppose he means by God) is discovered in Christ, — namely, for the demonstration of God’s vindictive justice, in measuring out to it a meet recompense of reward, and for the praise of God’s glorious grace in the pardon and forgiveness of it; — that is, that it could not be known how just and severe God is, but by punishing sin, nor how good and gracious God is, but by pardoning of it; and, therefore, lest his justice and mercy should never be known to the world, he appoints and ordains sin to this end, — that is, decrees that men shall sin that he may make some of them the vessels of his wrath, and the examples of his fierce vengeance and displeasure, and others the vessels of his mercy, to the praise and glory of his free grace in Christ. This, indeed, is such a discovery as nature and revelation could not make,” p. 51; which, in the next page, he calls God’s “trickling and bartering with sin and the devil for his glory.”

Although there is nothing in the words here reported as mine which is not capable of a fair defense, seeing it is expressly affirmed that “God set forth his Son to be a propitiation to declare his righteousness,” yet I know not how it came to pass that I had a mind to turn unto the passage itself in my discourse, which I had not done before on any occasion, as not supposing that he would falsify my words, with whom it was so easy to pervert my meaning at any time, and to reproach what he could not confute. But, that I may give a specimen of this man’s honesty and ingenuity, I shall transcribe the passage which he excepts against, because I confess it gave me some surprisal upon its first perusal. My words are these: “There is a glorious end whereunto sin is appointed and ordained discovered in Christ, that others are unacquainted withal. Sin, in its own nature, tends merely to the dishonor of God, the debasement of his majesty, and the ruin of the creature in whom it is. Hell itself is but the filling of wretched creatures with the fruit of their own devices. The combinations and threats of God in the law do manifest one other end of it, — even the demonstration of the vindicative justice of God in measuring out unto it a meet recompense of reward. But here the law stays, and with it all other light, and discovers no other use or end of it at all. In the Lord Jesus Christ there is the manifestation of another and more glorious end, to wit, the praise of God’s glorious grace in the pardon and forgiveness of it; — God having taken

order in Christ, that that thing which tended merely to his dishonor should be managed to his infinite glory, and that which of all things he desired to exalt, — even that he may be known and believed to be a God pardoning iniquity, transgressions, and sin.” Such was my ignorance, that I did not think that any Christian, unless he were a professed Socinian, would ever have made exceptions against any thing in this discourse; the whole of it being openly proclaimed in the gospel, and confirmed in the particulars by sundry texts of Scripture, quoted in the margin of my book, which this man took no notice of. For the advantage he would make from the expression about the end whereunto sin is appointed and ordained, it is childish and ridiculous; for every one who is not willfully blind must see, that, by “ordained,” I intended, not any ordination as to the futuration of sin, but to the disposal of sin to its proper end being committed, or to ordain it unto its end upon a supposition of its being; which quite spoils this author’s ensuing harangue. But my judgement in this matter is better expressed by another than I am able to do it myself, and, therefore, in his words I shall represent it. It is Augustine: saith he, “*Saluberrime confitemur quod rectissime credimus, Deum Dominumque rerum omnium qui creavit omnia bona valde, et mala ex bonis exortura esse praescivit, et scivit magis ad suam omnipotentissimam bonitatem pertinere, etiam de malis benefacere, quam mala esse non sinere; sic ordinasse angelorum et hominum vitam, ut in ea prius ostenderet quid posset eorum liberum arbitrium, deinde quid posset quae gratiae beneficium, justitiaeque judicium.*”

This, our author would have to be God’s “bartering with sin and the devil for his glory;” the bold impiety of which expression, among many others, for whose necessary repetition I crave pardon, manifests with what frame of spirit, with what reverence of God himself and all holy things, this discourse is managed.

But it seems I add, that “the demonstration of God’s justice in measuring out unto sin a meet recompense of reward is discovered in Christ, as this author says.” Let him read again, “The combinations and threatening of God in the law,” etc. If this man were acquainted with Christ, he could not but learn somewhat more of truth and modesty, unless he be willfully stupid. But what is the crime of this paragraph? That which it teacheth is, that sin, in its own nature, has no end but the dishonor of God and the

eternal ruin of the sinner; that, by the sentence and curse of the law, God has manifested that he will glorify his justice in the punishing of it; as also, that, in and through Jesus Christ, he will glorify grace and mercy in its pardon, on the terms of the gospel. What would he be at? If he have a mind to quarrel with the Bible, and to conflict the fundamental principles of Christianity, to what purpose does he cavil at my obscure discourses, when the proper object of his displeasure lies plainly before him?

Let us proceed yet a little farther with our author, although I confess myself to be already utterly wearied with the perusal of such vain and frivolous imaginations. Yet thus he goes on, p. 53, "Thus much for the knowledge of ourselves with respect to sin, which is hid only in the Lord Christ. But then we learn what our righteousness is, wherewith we must appear before God, from an acquaintance with Christ. We have already learned how unable we are to make atonement for our sins, without which they can never be forgiven, and how unable we are to do any thing that is good; — and yet nothing can deliver us from the justice and wrath of God, but a full satisfaction for our sins; and nothing can give us a title to a reward, but a perfect and unsinning righteousness. What should we do in this case? How shall we escape hell, or get to heaven, when we can neither expiate for our past sins, nor do any good for the time to come? Why, here we are relieved again by an acquaintance with Christ. His death expiates former iniquities, and removes the whole guilt of sin. But this is not enough, that we are not guilty, we must also be actually righteous; not only all sin is to be answered for, but all righteousness is to be fulfilled. Now, this righteousness we find only in Christ; we are reconciled to God by his death, and saved by his life. That actual obedience he yielded to the whole law of God, is that righteousness whereby we are saved; we are innocent by virtue of his sacrifice and expiation, and righteous with his righteousness."

What is here interposed, — that we cannot do any good for the time to come, — must be interpreted of ourselves, without the aid or assistance of the grace of God. And the things here reported by this author, are so expressed and represented, to expose them to reproach and scorn, to have them esteemed not only false, but ridiculous. But whether he be in his wits or no, or what he intends, so to traduce and scoff at the fundamental doctrines of the gospel, I profess I know not. What is it he would deny?

what is it he would assert? Are we able to make an atonement for our sins? Can we be forgiven without an atonement? Can we of ourselves do any good without the aid and assistance of grace? Can any thing we do be a full satisfaction for our sins, or deliver us from the wrath of God; that is, the punishment due to our sins? Does not the death of Christ expiate former iniquities, and remove the whole guilt of sin? Is the contrary to these things the doctrine of the church of England? Is this the religion which is authorized to be preached? and are these the opinions that are licensed to be published unto all the world? But, as I observed before, these things are other men's concernment more than mine, and with them I leave them. But I have said, as he quotes the place, "that we are reconciled to God by the death of Christ, and saved by his life, that actual obedience which he yielded to the whole law of God." As the former part of these words are expressly the apostle's, Romans 5:10, and so produced by me; so the next words I add are these of the same apostle, "If so be we are found in him, not having on our own righteousness which is of the law, but the righteousness which is of God by faith;" which he may do well to consider, and answer when he can.

Once more, and I shall be beholden to this author for a little respite of severity, whilst he diverts to the magisterial reproof of some other persons. Thus, then, he proceeds, p. 55:— "The third part of our wisdom is, to walk with God: and to that is required agreement, acquaintance, a way, strength, boldness, and aiming at the same end; and all these, with the wisdom of them, are hid in Jesus Christ." So far are my words, to which he adds: "The sum of which, in short, is this: — that Christ having expiated our sins, and fulfilled all righteousness for us, though we have no personal righteousness of our own, but are as contrary unto God as darkness is to light, and death to life, and a universal pollution and defilement to a universal and glorious holiness, and hatred to love; yet the righteousness of Christ is a sufficient, nay, the only foundation of our agreement, and, upon that, of our walking with God: though St. John tells us, 'If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth; but if we walk in the light, as God is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin,' 1 John 1:6, 7. And our only acquaintance with God and knowledge of him is hid in Christ, which his word and

works could not discover, as you heard above. And he is the only way wherein we must walk with God; and we receive all our strength from him; and he makes us bold and confident too, having removed the guilt of sin, so that now we may look justice in the face, and whet our knife at the counter door, all our debts being discharged by Christ, as these bold acquaintances and familiars of Christ use to speak. And in Christ we design the same end that God does, which is the advancement of his own glory; that is, I suppose, by trusting unto the expiation and righteousness of Christ for salvation, without doing any thing ourselves, we take care that God shall not be wronged of the glory of his free grace, by a competition of any merits and deserts of our own.”

What the author affirms to be the sum of my discourse in that place, which, indeed, he does not transcribe, is, as to his affirmation of it, as contrary to God as darkness is to light, or death to life, or falsehood to the truth; that is, it is flagitiously false. That there is any agreement with God, or walking with God, for any men who have no personal righteousness of their own, but are contrary to God, etc., I never thought, I never wrote, nor any thing that should give the least countenance unto a suspicion to that purpose. The necessity of an habitual and actual personal, inherent righteousness, of sanctification and holiness, of gospel obedience, of fruitfulness in good works, unto all who intend to walk with God, or come to the enjoyment of him, I have asserted and proved, with other manner of arguments than this author is acquainted withal. The remainder of his discourse in this place is composed of immorality and profaneness. To the first I must refer his charge, that “our only acquaintance with God and knowledge of him is hid in Christ, which his word could not discover,” as he again expresseth it, pp. 98, 99, “But that the reverend doctor confessed the plain truth, that their religion is wholly owing to an acquaintance with the person of Christ, and could never have been clearly and savingly learned from his gospel had they not first grown acquainted with his person;” which is plainly false. I own no knowledge of God, nor of Christ, but what is revealed in the word, as was before declared. And unto the other head belongs the most of what ensues; for what is the intendment of those reproaches which are cast on my supposed assertions? Christ is the only way wherein or whereby we must walk with God. Yes, so he says, “I am the way;” “There is no coming to God but by me;” he having

consecrated for us in himself “a new and living way” of drawing nigh to God. We receive all our strength from him; yes, for he says, “Without me ye can do nothing.” He makes us bold and confident also, having removed the guilt of sin. So the apostle tells us, Hebrews 10:19-22. What then what follows upon these plain, positive, divine assertions of the Scriptures. Why, then “we may look justice in the face, and whet our knife at the counter door.” Goodly son of the church of England! Not that I impute these profane scoffings unto the church itself, — which I shall never do until it be discovered that the rulers of it do give approbation to such abominations; but I would mind the man of his relation to that church, which, to my knowledge, teacheth better learning and manners.

From p. 57 to the end of his second section, p. 75, he giveth us a scheme of religion, which, in his scoffing language, he says, “men learn from an acquaintance with the person of Christ; and affirms, “that there needs no more to expose it to scorn with considering men than his proposal of it;” which therein he owns to be his design. I know not any peculiar concernment of mine therein, until he comes towards the close of it; which I shall particularly consider. But the substance of the religion which he thus avowedly attempts to expose to scorn, is the doctrine of God’s eternal election; — of his infinite wisdom in sending his Son to declare his righteousness for the forgiveness of sins, or in satisfying his justice, that sin might be pardoned, to the praise of the glory of his grace; — of the imputation of the righteousness of Christ unto them that do believe; — of a sense of sin, humiliation for it, looking unto Christ for life and salvation, as the Israelites looked up to the brazen serpent in the wilderness; — of going to Christ by faith for healing our natures and cleansing our sins; with some other doctrines of the same importance. These are the principles which, according to his ability, he sarcastically traduceth and endeavoreth to reflect scorn upon, by the false representation of some of them, and debasing others with an intermixture of vile and profane expressions. It is not impossible but that some or other may judge it their duty to rebuke this horrible (and yet were it not for the ignorance and profaneness of some men’s minds, every way contemptible) petulancy. For my part I have other things to do, and shall only add, that I know no other Christian state in the world wherein such discourses would be allowed to pass under the signature of public authority. Only I wish the author more modesty

and sobriety than to attempt, or suppose he shall succeed, in exposing to scorn the avowed doctrine in general of the church wherein he lives; and which has in the parts of it been asserted and defended by the greatest and most learned prelates thereof in the foregoing ages, such as Jewell, Whitgift, Abbot, Morton, Usher, Hall, Davenant, Prideaux, etc., with the most learned persons of its communion, as Reynolds, Whitaker, Hooker, Sutcliffe, etc., and others innumerable; testified unto in the name of this church by the divines, sent by public authority to the synod of Dort; — taught by the principal practical divines of this nation; and maintained by the most learned at the dignified clergy at this day. He is no doubt at liberty to dissent from the doctrine of the church, and of all the learned men thereof; but for a young man to suppose that, with a few loose, idle words, he shall expose to scorn that doctrine which the persons mentioned, and others innumerable, have not only explained, confirmed, and defended, with pains indefatigable, all kind of learning and skill, ecclesiastical, philosophical, and theological, in books and volumes, which the Christian world as yet knoweth, peruseth, and priseth, but also lived long in fervent prayers to God for the revelation of his mind and truth unto them, and in the holy practice of obedience suited unto the doctrines they professed, — is somewhat remote from that Christian humility which he ought not only to exercise in himself, but to give an example of unto others. But if this be the fruit of despising the knowledge of the person of Christ, — of the necessity of his satisfaction, of the imputation of his righteousness, of union unto his person as our head, — of a sense of the displeasure of God due to sin, — of the spirit of bondage and adoption, — of the corruption of nature, and one disability to do any thing that is spiritually good without the effectual aids of grace; — if these, I say, and the like issues of appearing pride and elation of mind, be the fruit and consequent of rejecting these principles of the doctrine of the gospel, it manifests that there is, and will be, a proportion between the errors of men's minds and the depravation of their affections. It were a most easy task to go over all the particulars mentioned by him, and to manifest how foully he has prevaricated in their representation, — how he has cast contempt on some duties of religion indispensably necessary unto salvation; and brought in the very words of the Scripture, — and that in the true proper sense and intendment of them, according to the judgement of all Christians, ancient and modern (as that of looking to Christ, as the

Israelites looked to the brazen serpent in the wilderness), — to bear a share and part in his scorn and contempt: as also, to defend and vindicate, not his odious, disingenuous expressions, but what he invidiously designeth to expose, beyond his ability to gainsay, or with any pretense of sober learning to reply unto. But I give it up into the hands of those who are more concerned in the chastisement of such imaginations. Only, I cannot but tell this author what I have learned by long observation, — namely, that those who, in opposing others, make it their design to [publish] and place their confidence in false representations, and invidious expressions of their judgements and opinions, waiving a true stating of the things in difference, and weighing of the arguments wherewith they are confirmed, — whatever pretense they may make of confidence, and contempt of them with whom they have to do, yet this way of writing proceeds from a secret sense of their disability to maintain their own opinions, or to reply to the seasonings of their adversaries in a fair and lawful disputation; or from such depraved affections as are sufficient to deter any sober person from the least communication in those principles which are so pleaded for. And the same I must say of that kind of writing (which in some late authors fills up almost every page in their books which, beyond a design to load the persons of men with reproaches and calumnies, consists only in the collecting of passages here and there, up and down, out of the writings of others; which, as cut off from the body of their discourses, and design of the places which they belong unto, may, with a little artifice, either of addition or detraction, with some false glosses, whereof we shall have an immediate instance, be represented weak, or untrue, or improper, or some way or other obnoxious to censure. When diligence, modesty, love of truth, sobriety, true use of learning, shall again visit the world in a more plentiful manner; though differences should continue amongst us, yet men will be enabled to manage them honestly, without contracting so much guilt on themselves, or giving such fearful offense and scandal unto others. But I return.

That wherein I am particularly concerned, is the close wherewith he winds up this candid, ingenious discourse, p. 74. He quotes my words, “That ‘the soul consents to take Christ on his own terms, to save him in his own way; and saith, Lord, I would have had thee and salvation in my way, that it might have been partly of mine endeavors, and as it were by the works

of the law' (that is, by obeying the laws of the gospel); 'but I am now willing to receive thee, and to be saved in thy way, merely by grace' (that is, without doing any thing, without obeying thee). The most contented spouse, certainly, that ever was in the world, to submit to such hard conditions as to be saved for nothing. But what a pretty compliment does the soul make to Christ after all this, when she adds, 'And though I would have walked according to my own mind, yet now I wholly give up myself to be ruled by thy Spirit.'"

If the reader will be at the pains to look on the discourse whence these passages are taken, I shall desire no more of his favor but that he profess himself to be a Christian, and then let him freely pronounce whether he find any thing in it obnoxious to censure. Or, I desire that any man, who has not forfeited all reason and ingenuity unto faction and party, if he differ from me, truly to state wherein, and oppose what I have said with an answer unto the testimonies wherewith it is confirmed, referred unto in the margin of my discourse. But the way of this author's proceeding, if there be no plea to be made for it from his ignorance and unacquaintedness not only with the person of Christ, but with most of the other things he undertakes to write about, is altogether inexcusable. The way whereby I have expressed the consent of the soul in the receiving of Jesus Christ, to be justified, sanctified, saved by him, I still avow, as suited unto the mind of the Holy Ghost, and the experience of them that really believe. And whereas I added, that before believing, the soul did seek for salvation by the works of the law, as it is natural unto all, and as the Holy Ghost affirms of some (whose words alone I used, and expressly quoted that place from whence I took them, — namely, Romans 9:31, this man adds, as an exposition of that expression, "That is, by obeying the laws of the gospel." But he knew that these were the words of the apostle, or he did not; if he did not, nor would take notice of them so to be, although directed to the place from whence they are taken, it is evident how meet he is to debate matters of this nature and concernment, and how far he is yet from being in danger to "pore out his eyes" in reading the Scripture, as he pretends. If he did know them to be his words, why does he put such a sense upon them as, in his own apprehension, is derogatory to gospel obedience? Whatever he thought of beforehand, it is likely he will now say that it is my sense, and not the apostle's, which he intends. But how will

he prove that I intended any other sense than that of the apostle? how should this appear? Let him, if he can, produce any word in my whole discourse intimating any other sense. Nay, it is evident that I had no other intention but only to refer unto that place of the apostle, and the proper sense of it; which is to express the mind and acting of those who, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, go about to establish their own righteousness; as he farther explains himself, Romans 10:3, 4. That I could not intend obedience unto the laws of the gospel is so evident, that nothing but abominable prejudice or ignorance could hinder any man from discerning it. For that faith which I expressed by the soul's consent to take Christ as a savior and a ruler, is the very first act of obedience unto the gospel: so that therein or thereon to exclude obedience unto the gospel, is to deny what I assert; which, under the favor of this author, I understand myself better than to do. And as to all other acts of obedience unto the laws of the gospel, following and proceeding from sincere believing, it is openly evident that I could not understand them when I spake only of what was antecedent unto them. And if this man knows not what transactions are in the minds of many before they do come unto the acceptance of Christ on his own terms, or believe in him according to the tenor of the gospel, there is reason to pity the people that are committed unto his care and instruction, what regard soever ought to be had unto himself. And his pitiful trifling in the exposition he adds of this passage, "To be saved without doing any thing, without obeying thee, and the law," does but increase the guilt of his prevarications; for the words immediately added in my discourse are, — "And although I have walked according unto mine own mind, yet now I wholly give up myself to be ruled by thy Spirit;" which, unto the understanding of all men who understand any thing in these matters, signify no less than an engagement unto the universal relinquishment of sin, and entire obedience unto Jesus Christ in all things. "But this," saith he, "is a pretty compliment that the soul makes to Christ after all." But why is this to be esteemed only a "pretty compliment?" It is spoken at the same time, and, as it were, with the same breath, there being in the discourse no period between this passage and that before; and why must it be esteemed quite of another nature, so that herein the soul should only compliment, and be real in what is before expressed? What if one should say, it was real only in this latter expression and engagement, that the former was only a "pretty

compliment?" May it not, with respect unto my sense and intention (from any thing in my words, or that can be gathered from them, or any circumstances of the place), be spoken with as much regard unto truth and honesty? What religion these men are of I know not. If it be such as teacheth them these practices, and countenanceth them in them, I openly declare that I am not of it, nor would be so for all that this world can afford. I shall have done, when I have desired him to take notice, that I not only believe and maintain the necessity of obedience unto all the laws, precepts, commands, and institutions of the gospel, — of universal holiness, the mortification of all sin, fruitfulness in good works, in all that intend or design salvation by Jesus Christ; but also have proved and confirmed my persuasion and assertions by better and more cogent arguments than any which, by his writings, he seems as yet to be acquainted withal. And unless he can prove that I have spoken or written any thing to the contrary, or he can disprove the arguments whereby I have confirmed it, I do here declare him a person altogether unfit to be dealt withal about things of this nature, his ignorance or malice being invincible; nor shall I, on any provocation, ever hereafter take notice of him until he has mended his manners.

His third section, p. 76, consists of three parts: — First, "That some" (wherein it is apparent that I am chiefly, if not only, intended) "do found a religion upon a pretended acquaintance with Christ's person, without and besides the gospel;" whereunto he opposeth his running title of "No acquaintance with Christ but by revelation." Secondly, A supposition of a scheme of religion drawn from the knowledge of Christ's person; whereunto he opposeth another, which he judgeth better. Thirdly, An essay to draw up the whole plot and design of Christianity, with the method of the recovery of sinners unto God. In the first of these, I suppose that I am, if not solely, yet principally, intended; especially considering what he affirms, pp. 98, 99, namely, that "I plainly confess our religion is wholly owing unto acquaintance with the person of Christ, and could never have been clearly and savingly learned from the gospel, had we not first grown acquainted with his person." Now, herein there is an especial instance of that truth and honesty wherewith my writings are entertained by this sort of men. It is true, I have asserted that it is necessary for Christians to know Jesus Christ, — to be acquainted with

his person that is (as I have fully and largely declared it in the discourse excepted against), the glory of his divine nature, the purity of his human, the infinite condescension of his person in the assumption of our nature, his love and grace, etc., as is at large there declared: and now I add, that he by whom this is denied is no Christian. Secondly, I have taught, that by this knowledge of the person of Christ, or an understanding of the great mystery of godliness, God manifested in the flesh, which we ought to pray for and labor after, we come more fully and clearly to understand sundry other important mysteries of heavenly truth; which without the knowledge of Christ we cannot attain unto. And how impertinent this man's exceptions are against this assertion, we have seen already. But, thirdly, that this knowledge of Christ, or acquaintance with him, is to be attained before we come to know the gospel, or by any other means than the gospel, or is any other but the declaration that is made thereof in and by the gospel, was never thought, spoken, or written by me, and is here falsely supposed by this author, as elsewhere falsely charged on me. And I again challenge him to produce any one letter or tittle out of any of my writings to give countenance unto this frostless calumny. And therefore, although I do not like his expression, p. 77, "Whoever would understand the religion of our Savior, must learn it from his doctrine, and not from his person," for many reasons I could give; yet I believe no less than he, that the efficacy of Christ's mediation depending on God's appointment can be known only by revelation, and that no man can draw any one conclusion from the person of Christ which the gospel has not expressly taught; because we can know no more of its excellency, worth, and works, than what is there revealed: whereby he may see how miserably ill-will, malice, or ignorance has betrayed him into the futilous pains of writing this section upon a contrary supposition falsely imputed unto me. And as for his drawing schemes of religion, I must tell him, and let him disprove it if he be able, I own no religion, no article of faith, but what is taught expressly in the Scripture, mostly confirmed by the ancient general councils of the primitive church, and the writings of the most learned fathers, against all sorts of heretics, especially the Gnostics, Photinians, and Pelagians, consonant to the articles of the church of England, and the doctrine of all the reformed churches of Europe. And if in the exposition of any place of Scripture I dissent from any that, for the substance of it, own the religion I do, I do it not without cogent reasons from the Scripture

itself; and where, in any opinions which learned men have (and, it may be, always had) different apprehensions about, which has not been thought to prejudice the unity of faith amongst them, I hope I do endeavor to manage that dissent with that modesty and sobriety which becometh me. And as for the schemes, plots, or designs of religion or Christianity, given us by this author and owned by him (it being taken pretendedly from the person of Christ, when it is hoped that he may have a better to give us from the gospel, seeing he has told us we must learn our religion from his doctrine and not from his person); besides that it is liable unto innumerable exceptions in particular, which may easily be given in against it by such as have nothing else to do, whereas it makes no mention of the effectual grace of Christ and the gospel for the conversion and sanctification of sinners, and the necessity thereof unto all acts of holy obedience, — it is merely Pelagianism, and stands anathematised by sundry councils of the ancient church. I shall not, therefore, concern myself farther in any passages of this section, most of them wherein it reflects on others standing in competition for truth and ingenuity with the foundation and design of the whole; only I shall say, that the passage of pp. 88, 89, — “This made the divine goodness so restlessly zealous and concerned for the recovery of mankind; various ways he attempted in former ages, but with little success, as I observed before; but at last God sent his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, into the world,” without a very cautious explanation and charitable construction, is false, scandalous, and blasphemous. For allow this author, who contends so severely for propriety of expressions, against allusions and metaphors, to say that the divine goodness was “restlessly zealous and concerned” (for, indeed, such is our weakness, that, whether we will or no, we must sometimes learn and teach divine things in such words as are suited to convey an apprehension of them unto our minds, though, in their application unto the divine nature, they are incapable of being understood in the propriety of their signification, though this be as untowardly expressed as any thing I have of late met withal); yet what color can be put upon, what excuse can be made for, this doctrine, that “God in former ages, by various ways, attempted the recovery of mankind, but with little success,” I know not. Various attempts in God for any end without success, do not lead the mind into right notions of his infinite wisdom and omnipotence; and that God, by any way, at any time, attempted the

recovery of mankind distinctly and separately from the sending of his Son, is lowly false.

In the greatest part of his fourth section, entitled, “How men pervert the Scripture to make it comply with their fancy,” I am not much concerned; save that the foundation of the whole, and that which animates his discourse from first to last, is laid in an impudent calumny, — namely, that I declare that “our religion is wholly owing to an acquaintance with the person of Christ, and could never have been clearly and savingly learned from his gospel, had we not first grown acquainted with his person.” This shameless falsehood is that alone whence he takes occasion and confidence, to reproach myself and others, to condemn the doctrine of all the reformed churches and openly to traduce and vilify the Scripture itself. I shall only briefly touch on some of the impotent dictates of this great corrector of divinity and religion. His discourse of accommodating Scripture expressions to men’s own dreams, pp. 99-101, being such as any man may use concerning any other men on the like occasion, if they have a mind unto it, and intend to have no more regard to their consciences than some others seem to have, may be passed by. P. 102, he falls upon the ways of expounding Scripture among those whom he sets himself against, and positively affirms, “that there are two ways of it in great vogue among them: — First, By the sound and clink of the words and phrases; which, as he says, is all some men understand by keeping a form of sound words. Secondly, When this will not do, they reason about the sense of them from their own preconceived notions and opinions, and prove that this must be the meaning of Scripture, because otherwise it is not reconcilable to their dreams; which is called expounding Scripture by the analogy of faith.”

Thus far he; and yet we shall have the same man not long hence pleading for the necessity of holiness. But I wish, for my part, he would take notice that I despise that holiness, and the principles of it, which will allow men to coin, invent, and publish such notorious untruths against any sort of men whatever. And whereas, by what immediately follows, I seem to be principally intended in this charge, as I know the untruth of it, so I have published some expositions on some parts of the Scripture to the judgement of the Christian world; to which I appeal from the censures of this man and his companions, as also for those which, if I live and God will, I shall yet publish; and do declare, that, for reasons very satisfactory

to my mind, I will not come to him nor them to learn how to expound the Scripture.

But he will justify his charge by particular instances, telling us, p. 102, “Thus when men are possessed with a fancy of an acquaintance with Christ’s person, then to know Christ can signify nothing else but to know his person and all his personal excellencies, and beauties, fullness, and preciousness, etc. And when Christ is said to be made wisdom to us, this is a plain proof that we must learn all our spiritual wisdom from an acquaintance with his person; though some duller men can understand no more by it than the wisdom of those revelations Christ has made of God’s will to the world.” I would beg of this man, that if he has any regard unto the honor of Christian religion, or care of his own soul, he would be tender in this matter, and not reflect with his usual disdain upon the knowledge of the person of Christ. I must tell him again, what all Christians believe, — Jesus Christ is Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God incarnate. The person of Christ is Christ himself, and nothing else; his personal excellencies are the properties of his person, as his two natures are united therein, and as he was thereby made meet to be the mediator between God and man. To know Christ in the language of the Scripture, [of] the whole church of God ancient and present, in common sense and understanding, is to know the person of Christ as revealed and declared in the gospel, with respect unto the ends for which he is proposed and made known therein. And this knowledge of him, as it is accompanied with, and cannot be without, the knowledge of his mind and will, declared in his precepts, promises, and institutions, is effectual to work and produce, in the souls of them who so know him, that faith in him, and obedience unto him, which he does require. And what would this man have? He who is otherwise minded has renounced his Christianity, if ever he had any; and if he be thus persuaded, to what purpose is it to set up and combat the mormos and chimeras of his own imagination? Well, then, I do maintain, that to know Christ according to the gospel, is to know the person of Christ; for Christ and his person are the same. Would he now have me to prove this by testimonies or arguments, or the consent of the ancient church? I must beg his excuse at present; and so for the future, unless I have occasion to deal with Gnostics, Familists, or Quakers. And as for the latter clause, wherein Christ is said to be made wisdom unto us, he says, “Some duller men can

understand no more by it than the wisdom of those revelations Christ has made of God's will to the world," — who are dull men indeed, and so let them pass.

His ensuing discourses, in pp. 103-105, contain the boldest reflections on, and openest derisions of, the expressions and way of teaching spiritual things warranted in and by the Scripture, that to my knowledge I ever read in a book licensed to be printed by public authority: as, in particular, the expressions of faith in Christ, by "coming unto him," and "receiving of him," — which are the words of the Holy Ghost, and used by him in his wisdom to instruct us in the nature of this duty, — are, amongst others, the subjects of his scorn. The first part of it, though I remember not to have given any occasion to be particularly concerned in it, I shall briefly consider. P. 103, "Thus when men have first learned, from an acquaintance with Christ, to place all their hopes of salvation in a personal union with Christ, from whom they receive the free communications of pardon and grace, righteousness and salvation, what more plain proof can any man who is resolved to believe this, desire of it, than 1 John 5:12, 'He that has the Son has life, and he that has not the Son has not life?' And what can having the Son signify, but having an interest in him, being made one with him? though some will be so perverse as to understand it of believing, and having his gospel. But the phrase of 'having the Son,' confutes that dull and moral interpretation, especially when we remember it is called, 'being in Christ, and abiding in him;' which must signify a very near union between Christ's person and us."

I suppose that expression of "personal union" sprung out of design, and not out of ignorance; for, if I mistake not, he does somewhere in his book take notice that it is disclaimed, and only a union of believers with or unto the person of Christ asserted; or, if it be his mistake, all comes to the same issue. Personal, or hypostatical union, is that of different natures in the same person, giving them the same singular subsistence. This none pretend unto with Jesus Christ. But it is the union of believers unto the person of Christ which is spiritual and mystical, whereby they are in him and he in them, and so are one with him, their head, as members of his mystical body, which is pleaded for herein, with the free communications of grace, righteousness, and salvation, in the several and distinct ways whereby we are capable to receive them from him, or be made partakers of them; [in

this] we place all hopes of salvation. And we do judge, moreover, that he who is otherwise minded must retake himself unto another gospel; for he completely renounceth that in our Bibles. Is this our crime, — that which we are thus charged with, and traduced for? Is the contrary hereunto the doctrine that the present church of England approveth and instructs her children in? Or does any man think that we will be scared from our faith and hope by such weak and frivolous attempts against them? Yea, but it may be it is not so much the thing itself, as the miserable proof which we produce from the Scripture in the confirmation of it; for we do it from that of the apostle, 1 John 5:12. If he think that we prove these things only by this testimony, he is mistaken at his wonted rate. Our faith herein is built upon innumerable express testimonies of the Scripture, — indeed the whole revelation of the will of God and the way of salvation by Jesus Christ in the gospel. Those who prove it, also, from this text, have sufficient ground and reason for what they plead. And, notwithstanding the pleasant scoffing humor of this author, we yet say that it is perverse folly for any one to say that the having of the Son or Christ expressed in the text, does intend either the having an interest in him and union with him, or the obeying of his gospel, exclusively to the other, — these being inseparable, and included in the same expression. And as to what he adds about being in Christ, and abiding in him, — which are the greatest privileges of believers, and that as expressed in words taught by the Holy Ghost, — it is of the same strain of profaneness with much of what ensues; which I shall not farther inquire into.

I find not myself concerned in his ensuing talk, but only in one reflection on the words of the Scripture, and the repetition of his old, putid, and shameless calumny, p. 108, until we come to p. 126, where he arraigns an occasional discourse of mine about the necessity of holiness and good works; wherein he has only filched out of the whole what he thought he could wrest unto his end, and scoffingly descant upon. I shall, therefore, for once, transcribe the whole passage as it lies in my book, and refer it to the judgement of the reader, p, 206:—

“2. The second objection is, “That if the righteousness and obedience of Christ to the law be imputed unto us, then what need we yield obedience ourselves?” To this, also, I shall return answer as briefly as I can in the ensuing observations: —

“(1.) The placing of our gospel obedience on the right foot of account (that it may neither be exalted into a state, condition, use, or end, not given it of God; nor any reason, cause, motive, end, necessity of it, on the other hand, taken away, weakened, or impaired), is a matter of great importance. Some make our obedience, the works of faith, our works, the matter or cause of our justification; some, the condition of the imputation of the righteousness of Christ; some, the qualification of the person justified, on the one hand; some exclude all the necessity of them, and turn the grace of God into lasciviousness, on the other. To debate these differences is not my present business; only, I say, on this and other accounts, the right stating of our obedience is of great importance as to our walking with God.

“(2.) We do by no means assign the same place, condition, state, and use to the obedience of Christ imputed to us, and our obedience performed to God. If we did, they were really inconsistent. And therefore those who affirm that our obedience is the condition or cause of our justification, do all of them deny the imputation of the obedience of Christ unto us. The righteousness of Christ is imputed to us, as that on the account whereof we are accepted and esteemed righteous before God, and are really so, though not inherently. We are as truly righteous with the obedience of Christ imputed to us as Adam was, or could have been, by a complete righteousness of his own performance. So Romans 5:18, by his obedience we are made righteous, — made so truly, and so accepted; as by the disobedience of Adam we are truly made trespassers, and so accounted. And this is that which the apostle desires to be found in, in opposition to his own righteousness, Phil 3:9. But our own obedience is not the righteousness whereupon we are accepted and justified before God; although it be acceptable to God that we should abound therein. And this distinction the apostle does evidently deliver and confirm, so as nothing can be more clearly revealed: Ephesians 2:8-10, “For by grace are ye saved through faith: and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has prepared that we should walk in them.” We are saved, or justified (for that it is whereof the apostle treats), “by grace through faith,” which receives Jesus Christ and his obedience; “not of works, lest any man should boast.” “But what works are they that the apostle intends?” The works of believers, as in the very

beginning of the next words is manifest: “‘For we are,’ we believers, with our obedience and our works, of whom I speak.” “Yea; but what need, then, of works?” Need still there is: “We are his workmanship,” etc.

“Two things the apostle intimates in these words: —

“ [1.] A reason why we cannot be saved by works, — namely, because we do them not in or by our own strength; which is necessary we should do, if we will be saved by them, or justified by them. “But this is not so,” saith the apostle; “for we are the workmanship of God,” etc.; — all our works are wrought in us, by full and effectual undeserved grace.

“ [2.] An assertion of the necessity of good works, notwithstanding that we are not saved by them; and that is, that God has ordained that we shall walk in them: which is a sufficient ground of our obedience, whatever be the use of it.

“If you will say then, “What are the true and proper gospel grounds, reasons, uses, and motives of our obedience; whence the necessity thereof may be demonstrated, and our souls be stirred up to abound and be fruitful therein?” I say, they are so many, and lie so deep in the mystery of the gospel and dispensation of grace, spread themselves so throughout the whole revelation of the will of God unto us, that to handle them fully and distinctly, and to give them their due weight, is a thing that I cannot engage in, lest I should be turned aside from what I principally intend. I shall only give you some brief heads of what might at large be insisted on: —

“1st. Our universal obedience and good works are indispensably necessary, from the sovereign appointment and will of God; Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

“In general “This is the will of God, even your sanctification,” or holiness, 1 Thessalonians 4:3. This is that which God wills, which he requires of us, — that we be holy, that we be obedient, that we do his will as the angels do in heaven. The equity, necessity, profit, and advantage of this ground of our obedience might at large be insisted on; and, were there no more, this might suffice alone, — if it be the will of God, it is our duty: —

“(1st.) The Father has ordained or appointed it. It is the will of the Father, Eph 2:10. The Father is spoken of personally, Christ being mentioned as mediator.

“(2dly.) The Son has ordained and appointed it as mediator. John 15:16, “I have ordained you, that ye should bring forth fruit’ of obedience, and that it should remain.” And, —

“(3dly.) The holy Ghost appoints and ordains believers to works of obedience and holiness, and to work holiness in others. So, in particular, Acts 13:2, he appoints and designs men to the great work of obedience in preaching the gospel. And in sinning, men sin against him.

“2dly. Our holiness, our obedience, work of righteousness, is one eminent and especial end of the peculiar dispensation of Father, Son, and Spirit, in the business of exalting the glory of God in our salvation, — of the electing love of the Father, the purchasing love of the Son, and the operative love of the Spirit: —

“(1st.) It is a peculiar end of the electing love of the Father, Eph 1:4, “He has chosen us, that we should be holy and without blame.” So Isaiah 4:3, 4. His aim and design in choosing of us was, that we should be holy and unblamable before him in love. This he is to accomplish, and will bring about in them that are his. “He chooses us to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth,” 2 Thessalonians 2:13. This the Father designed as the first and immediate end of electing love; and proposes the consideration of that love as a motive to holiness, 1 John 4:8-10.

“(2dly.) It is so also of the exceeding love of the Son; whereof the testimonies are innumerable. I shall give but one or two: — Titus 2:14, “Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” This was his aim, his design, in giving himself for us; as Ephesians 5:25-27, “Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word; that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy, and without blemish” 2 Corinthians 5:15; Romans 6:11.

“(3dly.) It is the very work of the love of the Holy Ghost. His whole work upon us, in us, for us, consists in preparing of us for obedience; enabling of us thereunto, and bringing forth the fruits of it in us. And this he does in opposition to a righteousness of our own, either before it or to be made up by it, Titus 3:5. I need not insist on this. The fruits of the Spirit in us are known, Galatians 5:22, 23.

“And thus have we a twofold bottom of the necessity of our obedience and personal holiness: — God has appointed it, he requires it; and it is an eminent immediate end of the distinct dispensation of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in the work of our salvation. If God’s sovereignty over us is to be owned, if his love towards us be to be regarded, if the whole work of the ever-blessed Trinity, for us, in us, be of any moment, our obedience is necessary.

“3dly. It is necessary in respect of the end thereof; and that whether you consider God, ourselves, or the world: —

“(1st.) The end of our obedience, in respect of God, is, his glory and honor, Malachi 1:6. This is God’s honor, — all that we give him. It is true, he will take his honor from the stoutest and proudest rebel in the world; but all we give him is in our obedience. The glorifying of God by our obedience is all that we are or can be. Particularly, —

“ [1st.] It is the glory of the Father. Matthew 5:16, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” By our walking in the light of faith does glory arise to the Father. The fruits of his love, of his grace, of his kindness, are seen upon us; and God is glorified in our behalf. And, —

“ [2dly.] The Son is gloried thereby. It is the will of God that as all men honor the Father, so should they honor the Son, John 5:23. And how is this done? By believing in him, John 14:1; obeying of him. Hence, John 17:10, he says he is glorified in believers; and prays for an increase of grace and union for them, that he may yet be more glorified, and all might know that, as mediator, he was sent of God.

“ [3dly.] The Spirit is gloried also by it. He is grieved by our disobedience, Ephesians 4:30; and therefore his glory is in our bringing forth fruit. He

dwells in us, as in his temple; which is not to be defiled. Holiness becometh his habitation for ever.

“Now, if this that has been said be not sufficient to evince a necessity of our obedience, we must suppose ourselves to speak with a sort of men who regard neither the sovereignty, nor love, nor glory of God, Father, Son, or Holy Ghost. Let men say what they please, though our obedience should be all lost, and never regarded (which is impossible, for God is not unjust, to forget our labor of love), yet here is a sufficient bottom, ground, and reason of yielding more obedience unto God than ever we shall do whilst we live in this world. I speak also only of gospel grounds of obedience, and not of those that are natural and legal, which are indispensable to all mankind.

“(2dly.) The end in respect of ourselves immediately is threefold: — [1st.] Honor. [2dly.] Peace. [3dly.] Usefulness.

“ [1st.] Honor. It is by holiness that we are made like unto God, and his image is renewed again in us. This was our honor at our creation, this exalted us above all our fellow-creatures here below, — we were made in the image of God. This we lost by sin, and became like the beasts that perish. To this honor, of conformity to God, of bearing his image, are we exalted again by holiness alone. “Be ye holy,” says God, “for I am holy,” 1 Peter 1:16; and, “Be ye perfect” (that is, in doing good), “even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect,” Matthew 5:48, — in a likeness and conformity to him. And herein is the image of God renewed; Ephesians 4:23, 24, therein we “put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and holiness of truth.” This was that which originally was attended with power and dominion; — is still all that is beautiful or comely in the world. How it makes men honorable and precious in the sight of God, of angels, of men; how alone it is that which is not despised, which is of price before the Lord; what contempt and scorn he has of them in whom it is not, — in what abomination he has them and all their ways, — might easily be evinced.

“ [2dly.] Peace. By it we have communion with God, wherein peace alone is to be enjoyed. “The wicked are like the troubled sea, that cannot rest;” and, “There is no peace” to them, “saith my God,” Isaiah 57:20; 2]. There is no peace, rest, or quietness, in a distance, separation, or alienation from

God. He is the rest of our souls. In the light of his countenance is life and peace. Now, “if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another,” 1 John 1:7; “and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ,” verse 3. He that walks in the light of new obedience, he has communion with God, and in his presence is fullness of joy for ever; without it, there is nothing but darkness, and wandering, and confusion.

“ [3dly.] Usefulness. A man without holiness is good for nothing. “Ephraim,” says the prophet, “is an empty vine, that brings forth fruit to itself” And what is such a vine good for? Nothing. Saith another prophet, “A man cannot make so much as a pin of it, to hang a vessel on.” A barren tree is good for nothing, but to be cut down for the fire. Notwithstanding the seeming usefulness of men who serve the providence of God in their generations, I could easily manifest that the world and the church might want them, and that, indeed, in themselves they are good for nothing. Only the holy man is commune bonum.

“(3dly.) The end of it in respect of others in the world is manifold: —

“ [1st.] It serves to the conviction and stopping the mouths of some of the enemies of God, both here and hereafter: — 1. Here. 1 Peter 3:16, “Having a good conscience; that, wherein they speak evil of you, as of evil-doers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.” By our keeping of a good conscience men will be made ashamed of their false accusations; that whereas their malice and hatred of the ways of God has provoked them to speak all manner of evil of the profession of them, by the holiness and righteousness of the saints, they are convinced and made ashamed, as a thief is when he is taken, and be driven to acknowledge that God is amongst them, and that they are wicked themselves, John 17:23. 2. Hereafter. It is said that the saints shall judge the world. It is on this, as well as upon other considerations: their good works, their righteousness, their holiness, shall be brought forth, and manifested to all the world; and the righteousness of God’s judgements against wicked men be thence evinced. “See,” says Christ, “these are they that I own, whom you so despised and abhorred; and see their works following them: this and that they have done, when you wallowed in your abominations,” Matthew 25:42, 43.

“ [2dly.] The conversion of others. 1 Peter 2:12, “Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles; that, wherein they speak against you as evil-doers, they may, by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation,” Matthew 5:16. Even revilers, persecutors, evil-speakers, have been overcome by the constant holy walking of professors; and when their day of visitation has come, have glorified God on that account, 1 Peter 3:1, 2.

“ [3dly.] The benefit of all; partly in keeping off judgements from the residue of men, as ten good men would have preserved Sodom: partly by their real communication of good to them with whom they have to do in their generation. Holiness makes a man a good man, useful to all; and others eat of the fruits of the Spirit that he brings forth continually.

“ [4thly.] It is necessary in respect of the state and condition of justified persons; and that whether you consider their relative state of acceptance, or their state of sanctification: —

“First. They are accepted and received into friendship with a holy God, — a God of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, — who hates every unclean thing. And is it not necessary that they should be holy who are admitted into his presence, walk in his sight, — yea, lie in his bosom? Should they not with all diligence cleanse themselves from all pollution of flesh and spirit, and perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord?

“Secondly. In respect of sanctification. We have in us a new creature, 2 Corinthians 5:17. This new creature is fed, cherished, nourished, kept alive, by the fruits of holiness. To what end has God given us new hearts, and new natures? Is it that we should kill them? stifle the creature that is found in us in the womb? that we should give him to the old man to be devoured?

“ [5thly.] It is necessary in respect of the proper place of holiness in the new covenant; and that is twofold: —

“First. Of the means unto the end. God has appointed that holiness shall be the means, the way to that eternal life, which, as in itself and originally [it] is his gift by Jesus Christ, so, with regard to his constitution of our obedience, as the means of attaining it, [it] is a reward, and God in bestowing of it a rewarder. Though it be neither the cause, matter, nor

condition of our justification, yet it is the way appointed of God for us to walk in for the obtaining of salvation. And therefore, he that has hope of eternal life purifies himself, as he is pure: and none shall ever come to that end who walketh not in that way; for without holiness it is impossible to see God.

“Secondly. It is a testimony and pledge of adoption, — a sign and evidence of grace; that is, of acceptation with God. And, —

“Thirdly. The whole expression of our thankfulness.

“Now, there is not one of all these causes and reasons of the necessity, the indispensable necessity of our obedience, good works, and personal righteousness, but would require a more large discourse to unfold and explain than I have allotted to the proposal of them all; and innumerable others there are of the same import, that I cannot name. He that upon these accounts does not think universal holiness and obedience to be of indispensable necessity, unless also it be exalted into the room of the obedience and righteousness of Christ, let him be filthy still.”

I confess this whole discourse proceedeth on the supposition of the imputation of the righteousness of Christ unto us for our justification. And herein I have as good company as the prelacy and whole church of England can afford; sundry from among them having written large discourses in its confirmation, and the rest having, till of late, approved of it in others. I wish this man, or any of his companions in design, would undertake the answering of Bishop Downham on this subject. No man ever carried this matter higher than Luther; nor did he, in all his writings, more positively and plainly contend for it than in his comment on the Epistle to the Galatians; — yet was that book translated into English by the approbation of the then bishop of London, who also prefixed himself a commendatory epistle unto it. The judgement of Hooker we have heard before. But what need I mention in particular any of the rest of those great and learned names who have made famous the profession of the church of England by their writings throughout the world? Had this man, in their days, treated this doctrine with his present scoffing petulancy, he had scarce been rector of St. George, Botolph Lane, much less filled with such hopes and expectations of future advancements, as it is not impossible that he is now possessed with, upon his memorable achievements. But, on

this supposition, I do, first, appeal to the judgement of the church of England itself as to the truth of the doctrine delivered in my discourse, and the principles which this man proceedeth on in his exceptions against it. 2. Though it be but a part of a popular discourse, and never intended for scholastic accuracy, yet, as to the assertions contained in it, I challenge this author to take and allow the ordinary, usual sense of the words, with the open design of them, and to answer them when he can. And, 3. In the meantime I appeal unto every indifferent reader whether the mere perusal of this whole passage do not cast this man's futilous cavils out of all consideration? So that I shall only content myself with very few remarks upon them: —

1. Upon my asserting the necessity of good works, he adds, "A very suspicious word; which, methinks, these men should be afraid to name." And why so? We do acknowledge that we do not seek for righteousness by the works of the law; we design not our personal justification by them, nor to merit life or salvation; but retake ourselves unto what even Bellarmine himself came to at last as the safest retreat, — namely, the merits and righteousness of Christ: but for attendance unto them, performance of them, and fruitfulness in them, we are not afraid nor ashamed at any time to enter into judgement with them by whom we are traduced. And as I have nothing to say unto this author, who is known unto me only by that portraiture and character which he has given of himself in this book; which I could have wished, for his own sake, had been drawn with a mixture of more lines of truth and modesty: so I know there are not a few who, in the course of a vain, worldly conversation, whilst there is scarce a back or belly of a disciple of Christ that blesseth God upon the account of their bounty or charity (the footsteps of levity, vanity, scurrility, and profaneness, being, moreover, left upon all the paths of their haunt), are wont to declaim about holiness, good works, and justification by them; which is a ready way to instruct men to atheism, or the scorn of every thing that is professed in religion. But yet, 2. He shows how impotent and impertinent our arguments are for the proof of the necessity of holiness. And as to the first of them, from the commands of God, he saith, "That if, after all these commands, God has left it indifferent whether we obey him or no, I hope such commands cannot make obedience necessary." Wonderful divinity! A man must needs be

well acquainted with God and himself who can suppose that any of his commands shall leave it indifferent, whether we will obey them or no. Yea, “But will he damn men if they do not obey his commands for holiness?” Yes, yes; no doubt he will do so. Yea, “But we may be, notwithstanding this command, justified and saved without this holiness.” False and impertinent: we are neither justified nor saved without them, though we are not justified by them, nor saved for them.

Unto my enforcement of the necessity of holiness from the ends of God in election and redemption, he replies, p. 127, “The Father has elected us to be holy, and the Son redeemed us to be holy; but will the Father elect and the Son redeem none but those who are holy, and reject and reprobate all others? Does this election and redemption suppose holiness in us, or is it without any regard to it? For if we be elected and redeemed without any regard unto our own being holy, our election and redemption is secure, whether we be holy or not.” Wonderful divinity again! Election and redemption suppose holiness in us! We are elected and redeemed with regard unto our own holiness that is, antecedently unto our election and redemption; for holiness being the effect and fruit of them, is that which he opposeth. Not many pages after this, he falls into a great admiration of the catechism of the church of England, which none blamed that I know of, as to what is contained in it. But it were to be wished that he had been well instructed in some others, that he might not have divulged and obtruded on the world such crude and palpable mistakes. For this respect of redemption, at least, unto an antecedent holiness in us (that is, antecedent unto it), is such a piece of foppery in religion, as a man would wonder how any one could be guilty of, who has almost “pored out his eyes” in reading the Scripture. All the remaining cavils of this chapter are but the effects of the like fulsome ignorance; for out of some passages, scraped together from several parts of my discourse (and those not only cut off from their proper scope and end, which is not mentioned by him at all, but also mangled in their representation), he would frame the appearance of a contradiction between what I say on the one hand, that there is no peace with God to be obtained by and for sinners but by the atonement that is made for them in the blood of Jesus Christ, with the remission of sin and justification by faith which ensue thereon (which I hope I shall not live to hear denied by the church of England), and the necessity of holiness and

fruitfulness in obedience, to maintain in our own souls a sense of that peace with God which we have, being justified by faith. And he who understands not the consistency of those things, has little reason to despise good catechisms, whatever thoughts he has had of his own sufficiency.

The whole design of what remains of this section, is to insinuate that there can be no necessity of holiness or obedience unto God, unless we are justified and saved thereby; which I knew not before to have been, nor indeed do yet know it to be, the doctrine of the church of England. But be it whose it will, I am sure it is not that of the Scripture, and I have so disproved it in other discourses, which this man may now see if he please, as that I shall not here again reassume the same argument; and although I am weary of consulting this woeful mixture of disingenuity and ignorance, yet I shall remark somewhat on one or two passages more, and leave him, if he please, unto a due apprehension, that what remains is unanswerable scoffing.

The first is that of p. 131. "But, however, holiness is necessary with respect to sanctification: 'We have in us a new creature, 2 Corinthians 5:17. This new creature is fed, cherished, nourished, and kept alive, by the fruits of holiness. To what end has God given us new hearts, and new natures? Is it that we should kill them, stifle the creature that is found in us in the womb? that we should give him to the old man to be devoured?' The phrase of this is admirable, and the reasoning unanswerable; for if men be new creatures, they will certainly live new lives, and this makes holiness absolutely necessary, by the same reason that every thing necessarily is what it is: but still we inquire after a necessary obligation to the practice of holiness, and that we cannot yet discover."

The reader will see easily how this is picked out of the whole discourse, as that which he imagined would yield some advantage to reflect upon; for, let him pretend what he please to the contrary, he has laid this end too open to be denied; and I am no way solicitous what will be his success therein. Had he aimed at the discovery of truth, he ought to have examined the whole of the discourse, and not thus have rent one piece of it from the other. As to the phrase of speech which I use, it is, I acknowledge, metaphorical; but yet, being used only in a popular way of instruction, is

sufficiently warranted from the Scripture, which administers occasion and gives countenance unto every expression in it, the whole being full well understood by those who are exercised in the life of God. And for the reasoning of it, it is such as I know this man cannot answer: for the new creature, however he may fancy, is not a new conversation, nor a living homily; but it is the principle, and spiritual ability, produced in believers by the power and grace of the Holy Ghost, enabling them to walk in newness of life and holiness of conversation. And this principle being bestowed on us, wrought in us, for that very end, it is necessary for us, unless we will neglect and despise the grace which we have received, that we walk in holiness, and abound in the fruits of righteousness, whereunto it leads and tends. Let him answer this if he can, and when he has done so, answer the apostle in like manner; or scoff not only at me, but at him also.

The last passage I shall remark upon in this section is what he gives us as the sum of the whole. P. 135, "The sum of all is, that to know Christ is not to be thus acquainted with his person, but to understand his gospel in its full latitude and extent; it is not the person, but the gospel of Christ which is the way, the truth, and the life, which directs us in the way to life and happiness. And again, this acquaintance with Christ's person, which these men pretend to, is only a work of fancy, and teaches men the arts of hypocrisy," etc.

I do not know that ever I met with any thing thus crudely asserted among the Quakers, in contempt of the person of Christ; for whereas he says of himself expressly, "I am the way, the truth, and the life," to say he is not so (for Jesus Christ is his person, and nothing else), carries in it a bold contradiction, both parts of which cannot be true. When the subject of a proposition is owned, there may be great controversy about the sense of the predicate; as when Christ says he is the vine: there may be so also about the subject of a proposition, when the expression is of a third thing, and dubious; as where Christ says, "This is my body:" but when the person speaking is the subject, and speaks of himself, to deny what he says, is to give him the lie. "I am the way, the truth, and the life," saith Christ; — "He is not," saith our author, "but the gospel is so." If he had allowed our Lord Jesus Christ to have spoken the truth, but only to have added, "Though he was so, yet he was so no otherwise but by the gospel," there had been somewhat of modesty in the expression; but this saying,

that the “person of Christ is not, — the gospel is so,” is intolerable. It is so, however, that this young man, without consulting or despising the exposition of all divines, ancient or modern, and the common sense of all Christians, should dare to obtrude his crude and undigested conceptions upon so great a word of Christ himself, countenanced only by the corrupt and false glosses of some obscure Socinians: which some or other may possibly in due time mind him of; I have other work to do.

But according to his exposition of this heavenly oracle, what shall any one imagine to be the sense of the context, where “I,” and “me,” spoken of Christ, do so often occur? Suppose that the words of that whole verse, “I am the way, the truth, and the life, no man comes to the Father but by me,” have this sense, — not Christ himself is the way, the truth, and the life, but the gospel; “No man comes to the Father but by me;” that is, not by me, but by “the gospel,” must not all the expressions of the same nature in the context have the same exposition? as namely, verse 1, “Ye believe in God, believe also in me;” that is, not in me but in “the gospel;” — “I go to prepare a place for you;” that is, not I do so, but “the gospel;” verse 3, “I will come again and receive you to myself;” that is, not I, but “the gospel” will do so; and so of all other things which Christ in that place seems to speak of himself. If this be his way of interpreting Scripture, I wonder not that he blames others for their defect and miscarriages therein.

When I first considered these two last sections, I did not suspect but that he had at least truly represented my words, which he thought meet to reflect upon and scoff at; as knowing how easy it was for any one whose conscience would give him a dispensation for such an undertaking, to pick out sayings and expressions from the most innocent discourse, and odiously to propose them, as cut off from their proper coherence, and under a concealment of the end and the principal sense designed in them. Wherefore I did not so much as read over the discourse excepted against; only, once or twice observing my words, as quoted by him, not directly to comply with what I knew to be my sense and intention, I turned unto the particular places to discover his prevarication. But having gone through this ungrateful task, I took the pains to read over the whole digression in my book, which his exceptions are leveled against; and, upon my review of it, my admiration of his dealing was not a little increased. I cannot,

therefore, but desire of the most partial adherers unto this censurer of other men's labors, judgements, and expressions, but once to read over that discourse, and if they own themselves to be Christians, I shall submit the whole of it, with the consideration of his reflections upon it, unto their judgements. If they refuse so to do, I let them know I despise their censures, and do look on the satisfaction they take in this man's scoffing reflections as the laughter of fools, or the crackling of thorns under a pot. For those who will be at so much pains to undeceive themselves, they will find that that expression of the "person of Christ" is but once or twice used in all that long discourse, and that occasionally; which, by the outcries here made against it, any one would suppose to have filled up almost all the pages of it. He will find, also, that I have owned and declared the revelation that God has made of himself, the properties of his nature, and his will, in his works of creation and providence, in its full extent and efficacy; and that by the knowledge of God in Christ, which I so much insist upon, I openly, plainly, and declaredly, intend nothing but the declaration that God has made of himself in Jesus Christ by the gospel: whereof the knowledge of his person, the great mystery of godliness, God manifested in the flesh, with what he did and suffered as the mediator between God and man, is the chiefest instance; in which knowledge consisteth all our wisdom of living unto God. Hereon I have no more to add, but that he by whom these things are denied or derided, does openly renounce his Christianity. And that I do not lay this unto the charge of this doughty writer, is because I am satisfied that he has not done it out of any such design, but partly out of ignorance of the things which he undertakes to write about, and partly to satisfy the malevolence of himself and some others against my person: which sort of depraved affections, where men give up themselves unto their prevalance, will blind the eyes and pervert the judgements of persons as wise as he.

In the first section of his fourth chapter I am not particularly concerned; and whilst he only vents his own conceits, be they never so idle or atheological, I shall never trouble myself, either with their examination or confutation. So many as he can persuade to be of his mind, — that we have no union with Christ but by virtue of union with the church (the contrary whereof is absolutely true); that Christ is so a head of rule and government unto the church, as that he is not a head of influence and

supplies of spiritual life (contrary to the faith of the catholic church in all ages); that these assertions of his have any countenance from antiquity, or the least from the passages quoted out of Chrysostom by himself; that his glosses upon many texts of Scripture (which have an admirable coincidence with those of two other persons whom I shall name when occasion requires it) are sufficient to affix upon them the sense which he pleads for, will many other things of an equal falsehood and impertinency wherewith this section is stuffed, — shall, without any farther trouble from me, be left to follow their own inclinations. But yet, notwithstanding all the great pains he has taken to instruct us in the nature of the union between Christ and believers, I shall take leave to prefer that given by Mr. Hooker before it, not only as more true and agreeable unto the Scripture, but also as better expressing the doctrine of the church of England in this matter. And if these things please the present rulers of the church, — wherein upon the matter Christ is shuffled off, and the whole of our spiritual union is resolved into the doctrine of the gospel, and the rule of the church by bishops and pastors, let it imply what contradiction it will, as it does the highest, seeing it is by the doctrine of the gospel that we are taught our union will Christ, and his rule of the church by his laws and Spirit, — I have only the advantage to know somewhat more than I did formerly, though not much to my satisfaction.

But he that shall consider what reflections are cast in this discourse on the necessity of satisfaction to be made unto divine justice, and from whom they are borrowed; the miserable, weak attempt that is made therein to reduce all Christ's mediatory acting unto his kingly office, and, in particular, his intercession; the faint mention that is made of the satisfaction of Christ, clogged with the addition of ignorance of the philosophy of it, as it is called, well enough complying with them who grant that the Lord Christ did what God was satisfied withal, with sundry other things of the like nature; will not be to seek whence these things come, nor whither they are going, nor to whom our author is beholden for most of his rare notions; which it is an easy thing at any time to acquaint him withal.

The second section of this chapter is filled principally with exceptions against my discourse about the personal excellencies of Christ as mediator; if I may not rather say, with the reflections on the glory of Christ himself.

[As] for my own discourse upon it, I acknowledge it to be weak, and not only inconceivably beneath the dignity and merit of the subject, but also far short of what is taught and delivered by many ancient writers of the church unto that purpose; and [as] for his exceptions, they are such a composition of ignorance and spite as is hardly to be paralleled. His entrance upon his work is (p. 200) as followeth: — “Secondly, Let us inquire what they mean by the person of Christ, to which believers must be united. And here they have outdone all the metaphysical subtleties of Suarez, and have found out a person for Christ distinct from his Godhead and manhood; for there can be no other sense made of what Dr. Owen tells us, — that by the ‘graces of his person’ he does not mean the ‘glorious excellencies of his Deity considered in itself, abstracting from the office which for us, as God and man, he undertook; nor the outward appearance of his human nature, when he conversed here on earth, nor yet as now exalted in glory: but the graces of the person of Christ, as he is vested with the office of mediation, — his spiritual eminency, comeliness, beauty, as appointed and anointed by the Father unto that great work of bringing home all his elect into his bosom.’ Now, unless the person of Christ as mediator be distinct from his person as God-man, all this is idle talk; for what personal graces are there in Christ as mediator which do not belong to him either as God or man? There are some things, indeed, which our Savior did and suffered, which he was not obliged to, either as God or man, but as mediator; but surely he will not call the peculiar duties and actions of an office personal graces.”

I have now learned not to trust unto the honesty and ingenuity of our author, as to his quotations out of my book; which I find that he has here mangled and altered, as in other places, and shall therefore transcribe the whole passage in my own words, p. 51: “It is Christ as mediator of whom we speak; and therefore, by the ‘grace of his person,’ I understand not, first, The glorious excellencies of his Deity considered in itself, abstracting from the office which for us, as God and man, he undertook; nor, secondly, The outward appearance of his human nature, neither when he conversed here on earth, bearing our infirmities (whereof, by reason of the charge that was laid upon him, the prophet gives quite another character, Isaiah 52:14), concerning which some of the ancients are very poetical in their expressions; nor yet as now exalted in glory; — a vain imagination

whereof makes many bear a false, a corrupted respect unto Christ, even upon carnal apprehensions of the mighty exaltation of the human nature; which is but to ‘know Christ after the flesh,’ — a mischief much improved by the abomination of foolish imagery. But this is that which I intend, — the graces of the person of Christ as he is vested with the office of mediation, his spiritual eminency, comeliness, and beauty, etc. Now, in this respect the Scripture describes him as exceeding excellent, comely, and desirable, — far above comparison with the chiefest, choicest created good, or any endearment imaginable;” which I prove at large from Psalm 45:2; Isaiah 4:2; Cant. 5:9, adding an explanation of the whole.

In the digression, some passages whereof he carps at in this section, my design was to declare, as was said, somewhat of the glory of the person of Christ. To this end I considered both the glory of his divine and the many excellencies of his human nature; but that which I principally insisted on was the excellency of his person as God and man in one, whereby he was meet and able to be the mediator between God and man, and to effect all the great and blessed ends of his mediation. That our Lord Jesus Christ was God, and that there were, on that account, in his person the essential excellencies and properties of the divine nature, I suppose he will not deny; nor will he do so that he was truly man, and that his human nature was endowed with many glorious graces and excellencies which are peculiar thereunto. That there is a distinct consideration of his person as both these natures are united therein, is that which he seems to have a mind to except against. And is it meet that any one who has aught else to do should spend any moments of that time which he knows how better to improve, in the pursuit of a man’s impertinencies, who is so bewildered in his own ignorance and confidence, that he knows neither where he is nor what he says? Did not the Son of God, by assuming our human nature, continuing what he was, become what he was not? Was not the person of Christ, by the communication of the properties of each nature in it and to it, a principle of such operations as he could not have wrought either as God or mere, separately considered? How else did God “redeem his church with his own blood?” or how is that true which he says, John 3:13, “And no man has ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man, which is in heaven?” Was not the union of the two natures in the same person (which was a property neither of the

divine nor human nature, but a distinct ineffable effect of divine condescension, wisdom, and grace, which the ancients unanimously call the “grace of union,” whose subject is the person of Christ) that whereby he was fit, meet, and able, for all the works of his mediation? Does not the Scripture, moreover, propose unto our faith and consolation the glory, power, and grace of the person of Christ as he is “God over all, blessed for ever;” and his love, sympathy, care and compassion as man; yet all acting themselves in the one and self same person of the Son of God? Let him read the first chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and see what account he can give thereof. And are not these such principles of Christian religion as no man ought to be ignorant of, or can deny, without the guilt of the heresies condemned in the first general councils? And they are no other principles which my whole discourse excepted against does proceed upon. But saith our author, “Unless the person of Christ as mediator be distinct from his person as God-man, all this is idle talk.” Very good! and why so? Why, “What personal graces are there in Christ as mediator, which do not belong unto him either as God or man?” But is he not ashamed of this ignorance? Is it not a personal grace and excellency that he is God and man in one person? which belongs not to him either as God or man. And are there not personal operations innumerable depending hereon, which could not have been wrought by him either as God or man; as raising himself from the dead by his own power, and redeeming the church with his blood? Are not most of the descriptions that are given us of Christ in the Scripture, most of the operations which are assigned unto him, such as neither belong unto nor proceed from the divine or human nature, separately considered, but from the person of Christ, as both these natures are united in it? That which seems to have led him into the maze wherein he is bewildered in his ensuing discourse, is, that considering there are but two natures in Christ, the divine and the human, — and nature is the principle of all operations, — he supposed that nothing could be said of Christ, nothing ascribed to his person, but what was directly, formally predicated of one of his natures, distinctly considered. But he might have easily inquired of himself, — that seeing all the properties and acts of the divine nature are absolutely divine, and all those of the human nature absolutely human, whence it came to pass that all the operations and works of Christ, as mediator, are theandrical? Although there be nothing in the person of Christ but his divine and human nature, yet the person of

Christ is neither his divine nature nor his human; for the human nature is, and ever was, of itself, “anupostatos”; and the divine, to the complete constitution of the person of the Mediator, in and unto its own hypostasis assumed the human: so that, although every energy or operation be “drastike tes fuseos kinesis”, and so the distinct natures are distinct principles of Christ’s operations, yet his person is the principal or only agent; which being God-man, all the actions thereof, by virtue of the communication of the properties of both natures therein, are theandrical. And the excellency of this person of Christ, wherein he was every way fitted for the work of mediation, I call sometimes his personal grace, and will not go to him to learn to speak and express myself in these things. And it is most false which he affirms, p. 203, “That I distinguish the graces of Christ’s person as mediator from the graces of his person as God and man.” Neither could any man have run into such an imagination who had competently understood the things which he speaks about; and the bare proposal of these things is enough to defeat the design of all his ensuing cavils and exceptions.

And as to what he closets withal, that “Surely I will not call the peculiar duties and actions of an office personal graces;” I suppose that he knoweth not well what he intends thereby. Whatever he has fancied about Christ being the name of an office, Jesus Christ, of whom we speak, is a person, and not an office; and there are no such things in rerum natura as the actions of an office. And if by them he intends the actions of a person in the discharge of an office, whatever he calls them, I will call the habits in Christ, from whence all his actions in the performance of his office do proceed, “personal graces,” and that whether he will or no. So he is a “merciful, faithful, and compassionate high priest,” Hebrews 2:17, 4:15, 5:2. And all his actions, in the discharge of his office of priesthood, being principled and regulated by those qualifications, I do call them his personal graces, and do hope that, for the future, I may obtain his leave so to do. The like may be said of his other offices.

The discourse which he thus raves against is didactical, and accommodated unto a popular way of instruction; and it has been hitherto the common ingenuity of all learned men to give an allowance unto such discourses, so as not to exact from them an accuracy and propriety in expressions, such as is required in those that are scholastical or polemical. It is that which,

by common consent, is allowed to the tractates of the ancients of that nature, — especially where nothing is taught but what, for the substance of it, is consonant unto the truth. But this man attempts not only a severity in nibbling at all expressions which he fancieth liable unto his censures, but, with a disingenuous artifice, waiving the tenor and process of the discourse, which I presume he found not himself able to oppose, he takes out, sometimes here, sometimes there, up and down, backward and forward, at his pleasure, what he will, to put, if it be possible, an ill sense upon the whole. And, if he have not hereby given a sufficient discovery of his goodwill towards the doing of somewhat to my disadvantage, he has failed in his whole endeavor; for there is no expression which he has fixed on as the subject of his reflections, which is truly mine, but that as it is used by me, and with respect unto its end, I will defend it against him and all his co-partners, whilst the Scripture may be allowed to be the rule and measure of our conceptions and expressions about sacred things. And although at present I am utterly wearied with the consideration of such sad trifling, I shall accept from him the kindness of an obligation to so much patience as is necessary unto the perusal of the ensuing leaves, wherein I am concerned.

First, p. 202, he would pick something, if he knew what, out of my quotations of Cant. 5:9, to express or illustrate the excellency of Christ; which first he calls an “excellent proof,” by way of scorn. But as it is far from being the only proof produced in the confirmation of the same truth, and is applied rather to illustrate what was spoken, than to prove it, yet, by his favor, I shall make bold to continue my apprehensions of the occasional exposition of the words which I have given in that place, until he is pleased to acquaint me with a better; which, I suppose, will be long enough. For what he adds, — “But, however, white and ruddy belong to his divine and human nature, and that without regard to his mediatory office; for he had been white in the glory of his Deity, and ruddy with the red earth of his humanity, whether he had been considered as mediator or not,” — it comes from the same spring of skill and benevolence with those store. For what wise talk is it, of Christ’s being God and man, without the consideration of his being mediator! as though he were ever, or ever should have been, God and man, but with respect unto his mediation? His scoff at the red earth of Christ’s humanity, represented as my words, is grounded

upon a palpable falsification; for my words are, “He was also ruddy in the beauty of his humanity. Man was called Adam, from the red earth whereof he was made. The word here used points him out as the second Adam, partaker of flesh and blood, because the children also partook of the same.” And if he be displeased with these expressions, let him take his own time to be pleased again; it is that wherein I am not concerned. But my fault, which so highly deserved his correction, is, that I apply that to the person of Christ which belongs unto his natures. But what if I say no such thing, or had no such design in that place? For although I do maintain a distinct consideration of the excellency of Christ’s person, as comprising both his natures united, — though every real thing in his person belongs formally and radically unto one [or other] of the natures (those other excellencies being the exurgency of their union), whereby his person was fitted and suited unto his mediatory operations, which in neither nature, singly considered, he could have performed, — and shall continue to maintain it against whosoever dares directly to oppose it; yet in this place I intended it not, which this man knew well enough, — the very next words unto what he pretends to prove it [by], being, “The beauty and comeliness of the Lord Jesus Christ, in the union of both these in one person, shall afterward be declared.” And so we have an equality in judgement and ingenuity throughout this censure.

Hence he leaps to p. 64 of my book, thence backwards to p. 53, and then up and down, I know not how nor whither. He begins with p. 64 — “And in his first digression concerning the excellency of Christ Jesus, to invite us to communion with him in a conjugal relation, he tells us that Christ is exceeding excellent and desirable in his Deity, and the glory thereof; he is desirable and worthy our acceptance as considered in his humanity, in his freedom from sin, fullness of grace, etc. Now, though this looks very like a contradiction, that by the graces of his person, he meant neither the excellencies of his divine nor human nature; yet he has a salvo which will deliver him both from contradiction and from nonsense, — that he does not consider these excellencies of his Deity or humanity as abstracted from his office of mediator, though he might if he pleased: for he considers those excellencies which are not peculiar to the office of mediation, but which would have belonged unto him as God and man, whether he had been mediator or not. But what becomes of his distinction of the graces of

Christ's person as mediator from the graces of his person as God and man, when there are no personal graces in Christ but what belong to his Deity or his humanity?"

I am sufficiently satisfied that he neither knows where he is nor what he does, or has no due comprehension of the things he treats about. That which he opposeth, if he intend to oppose any thing by me asserted, is, that whereas Christ is God, the essential properties of his divine nature are to be considered as the formal motive unto, and object of, faith, love, and obedience; and whereas he is man also, his excellencies, in the glorious endowment of his human nature, with his alliance unto us therein, and his furniture of grace for the discharge of his office, are proposed unto our faith and love in the Scripture. And of these things we ought to take a distinct consideration; our faith concerning them being not only taught in the Scripture, but fully confirmed in the confessions and determinations of the primitive church. But the person of Christ, wherein these two natures are united, is of another distinct consideration; and such things are spoken thereof as cannot, under any single enunciation, be ascribed unto either nature, though nothing be so but what formally belongs unto one of them, or is the necessary consequent and exurgency of their union. See Isaiah 9:6; 1 Timothy 3:16; John 1:14. It is of the "glory of the Word of God made flesh" that I discourse. But this man talks of what would have belonged to Christ as God-man, whether he had been mediator or not; as though the Son of God either was, or was ever designed to be, or can be, considered as God-man, and not as mediator. And thence he would relieve himself by the calumny of assigning a distinction unto me between the graces of Christ's person as mediator, and the graces of his person as God and man (that is, one person); which is a mere figment of his own misunderstanding. Upon the whole, he comes to that accurate thesis of his own, — that there are no personal graces in Christ but what belong to his Deity or humanity. Personal graces belonging unto the humanity, or human nature of Christ, — that nature being "anupostatos", or such as has no personal subsistence of its own, — is a notion that those may thank him for who have a mind to do it. And he may do well to consider what his thoughts are of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, mentioned Philippians 2:6-11.

But he will now discover the design of all these things, and afterward make it good by quotations out of my book. The first he does, p. 203, and

onwards: “But whatever becomes of the sense of the distinction, there is a very deep fetch in it, the observing of which will discover the whole mystery of the person of Christ and our union to him. For these men consider that Christ saves us as he is our mediator, and not merely considered as God or man; and they imagine that we receive grace and salvation from Christ’s person just as we do water out of a conduit, or a gift and largess from a prince, — that it flows to us from our union to his person; and therefore they dress up the person of the Mediator with all those personal excellencies and graces which may make him a fit Savior, that those who are thus united to his person (of which more in the next section) need not fear missing of salvation. Hence they ransack all the boundless perfections of the Deity, and whatever they can find or fancy speaks any comfort to sinners, this is presently a personal grace of the Mediator; — they consider all the glorious effects of his mediation; and whatever great things are spoken of his gospel, or religion, or intercession for us, these serve as personal graces: so that all our hopes may be built, not on the gospel covenant, but on the person of Christ. So that the dispute now lies between the person of Christ and his gospel, — which must be the foundation of our hope, — which is the way to life and happiness”

First, We do consider and believe that Christ saves as a mediator; that is, as God and man in one person, exercising the office of a mediator, and not merely as God or man. This we believe with all the catholic church of Christ, and can with boldness say, He that does not so, let him be anathema maran-atha. Secondly, We do not imagine, but believe from the Scripture, and with the whole church of God, that we receive grace and salvation from the person of Christ in those distinct ways wherein they are capable of being received; and let him be anathema who believes otherwise. Only, whether his putting of grace and salvation into the same way of reception belong unto his accuracy in expressing his own sentiments, or his ingenuity in the representation of other men’s words, I leave undetermined. The similitudes he useth to express our faith in these things, show his goodwill towards scoffing and profaneness. We say, there is real communication of grace from the person of Christ, as the head of the church, unto all the members of his mystical body by his Spirit, whereby they are quickened, sanctified, and enabled unto all holy

obedience: and, if it be denied by him, he stands anathematised by sundry councils of the ancient church. We say not, that we receive it as “water out of a conduit,” which is of a limited, determined capacity; whereas we say, the person of Christ, by reason of his Deity, is an immense, eternal, living spring or fountain of all grace. And when God calls himself a “fountain of living water;” and the Lord Christ calls his Spirit communicated to believers “living water” (under which appellation he was frequently promised in the Old Testament); as also the grace and mercy of the gospel, the “water of life,” inviting us to receive them, and to drink of them, this author may be advised to take heed of profane scoffing at these things. Whether any have said, that we receive grace and salvation from Christ, as “a gift or largess from a prince,” I know not; if they have, the sole defect therein is, that the allusion does no way sufficiently set forth the freedom and bounty of Christ in the communication of them unto sinners; and wherein else it offends, let him soberly declare, if he can. This is the charge upon us in point of faith and judgement; which, in one word, amounts to no more but this, — that we are Christians: and so, by the grace of God, we intend to continue, let this man deride us whilst he pleaseth. Thirdly, His next charge concerns our practice in the pursuit of these dreadful principles, which, by their repetition, he has exposed to scorn: “And therefore they dress up,” etc. What does this poor man intend? what is the design of all this profaneness? The declaration of the natures and person of Christ, — of his grace and work, — the ascribing unto him what is directly and expressly in terms ascribed unto him in the Scripture, or relating, as we are able, the description it gives of him, — is here called, “Dressing up the person of the Mediator with all those personal graces that may make him a fit Savior.” The preparation of the person of Christ to be a fit and meet Savior for sinners, which he profanely compares to the dressing up of -, is the greatest, most glorious, and admirable effect that ever infinite wisdom, goodness, power, and love wrought and produced, or will do so unto eternity. And those on whom he reflects design nothing, do nothing in this matter, but only endeavor, according to the measure of the gift of Christ which they have received, to declare and explain what is revealed and taught in the Scripture thereof; and those who exceed the bounds of Scripture revelation herein (if any do so) we do abhor. And as for those who are united unto Christ, although we say not that they need not fear missing of salvation, seeing they are to be brought unto it, not only

through the exercise of all graces, whereof fear is one, but also through such trials and temptations as will always give them a fear of heed and diligence, and sometimes such a fear of the event of things as shall combat their faith, and shake its firmest resolves; yet we fear not to say, that those who are really united unto Jesus Christ shall be assuredly saved; which I have proved elsewhere beyond the fear of any opposition from this author, or others like minded. Fourthly, He adds “Hence they ransack,” etc. But what is the meaning of these expressions? Does not the Scripture declare that Christ is God as well as man? Does it not build all our faith, obedience, and salvation on that consideration? Are not the properties of the divine nature everywhere in the Scripture declared and proposed unto us for the in generating and establishing faith in us, and to be the object of, and exercise of, all grace and obedience? And is it now become a crime that any should seek to declare and instruct others in these things from the Scripture, and to the same end for which they are therein revealed? Is this, with any evidence of sobriety, to be traduced as a “ransacking the boundless perfections of the divine nature, to dress up the person of the Mediator”? Is he a Christian, or does he deserve that name, who condemns or despiseth the consideration of the properties of the divine nature in the person of Christ (see Isaiah 6:1-4; John 12:41; Isaiah 9:6; John 1:14; Philippians 2:6, etc.), or shall think that the grace or excellencies of his person do not principally consist in them, as the human nature is united thereunto? Fifthly, “They consider all the glorious effects of his mediation.” All the effects of Christ’s mediation, — all the things that are spoken of the gospel, etc., do all of them declare the excellency of the person of Christ, as effects declare their cause, and may and ought to be considered unto that end, as occasion does require; and no otherwise are they considered by those whom he does oppose. Sixthly, But the end of these strange principles and practices, he tells us, is, “That all our hopes may be built, not on the gospel covenant, but on the person of Christ.” But I say again, What is it that this man intends? What is become of a common regard to God and man? Who do so build their hopes on Christ as to reject or despise the gospel covenant, as he calls it? — though I am afraid, should he come to explain himself, he will be at a loss about the true nature of the gospel covenant, as I find him to be about the person and grace of Christ. He telleth us, indeed, that “Not the person of Christ, but the gospel, is the way.” Did we ever say, “Not the covenant of grace, but

the person of Christ is all we regard?" But whence comes this causeless fear and jealousy, — or rather, this evil surmise, that if any endeavor to exalt the person of Christ, immediately the covenant of the gospel (that is, in truth, the covenant which is declared in the gospel) must be discarded? Is there an inconsistency between Christ and the covenant? I never met with any who was so fearful and jealous lest too much should be ascribed in the matter of our salvation to Jesus Christ; and when there is no more so, but what the Scripture does expressly and in words assign unto him and affirm of him, instantly we have an outcry that the gospel and the covenant are rejected, and that a "dispute lies between the person of Christ and his gospel." But let him not trouble himself; for as he cannot, and as he knows he cannot, produce any one word or one syllable out of any writings of mine, that should derogate any thing from the excellency, nature, necessity, or use of the new covenant; so, though it may be he do not, and does therefore fancy and dream of disputes between Christ and the gospel, we do know how to respect both the person of Christ and the covenant, — both Jesus Christ and the gospel, in their proper places. And in particular, we do know, that as it is the person of Christ who is the author of the gospel, and who as mediator in his work of mediation gives life, and efficacy, and establishment unto the covenant of grace; so both the gospel and that covenant do declare the glory and design the exaltation of Jesus Christ himself. Speaking, therefore, comparatively, all our hopes are built on Jesus Christ, who alone fills all things; yet also we have our hopes in God, through the covenant declared in the gospel, as the way designing the rule of our obedience, securing our acceptance and reward. And to deal as gently as I can warrant myself to do with this writer, the dispute he mentions between the person of Christ and the gospel, which shall be the foundation of our hope, is only in his own fond imagination, distempered by disingenuity and malevolence. For, if I should charge what the appearance of his expressions will well bear, what he says seems to be out of a design, influenced by ignorance or heresy, to exclude Jesus Christ, God and man, from being the principal foundation of the church, and which all its hopes are built upon. This being the sum of his charge, I hope he will fully prove it in the quotations from my discourse, which he now sets himself to produce; assuring him that if he do not, but come short therein, setting aside his odious and foppish profane deductions, I do aver them all in plain terms, that he may, on his next occasion of writing, save

his labor in searching after what he may oppose. Thus, therefore, he proceeds, p. 205:—

“To make this appear, I shall consider that account which Dr. Owen gives us of the personal graces and excellencies of Christ, which in general consist in three things: — First, His fitness to save, from the grace of union, and the proper and necessary effects thereof. Secondly, His fullness to save, from the grace of communion, or the free consequences of the grace of union. And, thirdly, His excellency to endear, from his complete suitableness to all the wants of the souls of men. First, That he is fit to be a Savior, from the grace of union. And if you will understand what this strange grace of union is, it is the uniting the nature of God and man in one person, which makes him fit to be a Savior to the uttermost. He lays his hand upon God, by partaking of his nature; and he lays his hand on us, by partaking of our nature: and so becomes a days-man or umpire between both. Now, though this be a great truth, that the union of the divine and human nature in Christ did excellently qualify him for the office of a mediator, yet this is the unhappiest man in expressing and proving it that I have met with. For what an untoward representation is this of Christ’s mediation, that he came to make peace by laying his hands on God and men, as if he came to part a fray or scuffle: and he might as well have named Genesis 1:1, or Matthew 1:1, or any other place of Scripture, for the proof of it, as those he mentions.”

To what end it is that he cites these passages out of my discourse is somewhat difficult to divine. Himself confesseth that what is asserted (at least in one of them) is a great truth, only, I am “the unhappiest man in expressing and proving it that ever he met with.” It is evident enough to me, that he has not met with many who have treated of this subject, or has little understood those he has met withal; so that there may be yet some behind as unhappy as myself. And seeing he has so good a leisure from other occasions, as to spend his time in telling the world how unhappy I am in my proving and expressing of what himself acknowledgeth to be true, he may be pleased to take notice, that I am now sensible of my own unhappiness also, in having fallen under a diversion from better employments by such sad and woeful impertinencies. But being at once charged with both these misadventures, — untowardness in expression, and weakness in the proof of a plain truth, I shall willingly admit of

information, to mend my way of writing for the future. And the first reflection he casts on my expressions, is my calling the union of the two natures in Christ in the same person, the “grace of union;” for so he says, “If you would understand what this strange grace of union is.” But I crave his pardon in not complying with his directions, for my company’s sake. No man, who has once consulted the writings of the ancients on this subject, can be a stranger unto “charis henoseos”, and “gratia unionis,” they so continually occur in the writings of all sorts of divines, both ancient and modern. Yea but there is yet worse behind; for, “What an untoward representation is this of Christ’s mediation, that he came to make peace by laying his hands on God and men, as if he came to part a fray or scuffle.” My words are, “The uniting of the natures of God and man in one person, made him fit to be a Savior to the uttermost. He laid his hand upon God, by partaking of his nature, Zechariah 13:7; and he lays his hand upon us, by partaking of our nature, Hebrews 2:14, 16: and so becomes a days-man or umpire between both.” See what it is to be adventurous. I doubt not but that he thought that I had invented that expression, or at least, that I was the first who ever applied it unto this interposition of Christ between God and man; but as I took the words, and so my warranty for the expression from the Scripture, Job 9:33, so it has commonly been applied by divines in the same manner, particularly by Bishop Usher (in his “Emmanuel,” pp. 8, 9, as I remember); whose unhappiness in expressing himself in divinity this man needs not much to bewail. But let my expressions be what they will, I shall not escape the unhappiness and weakness of my proofs; for “I might,” he says, “as well have quoted Genesis 1:1, and Matthew 1:1, for the proof of the unity of the divine and human nature in the person of Christ, and his fitness thence to be a Savior, as those I named,” namely, Zechariah 13:7; Hebrews 2:14, 16. Say you so? Why, then, I do here undertake to maintain the personal union, and the fitness of Christ from thence to be a Savior, from these two texts, against this man and all his fraternity in design. And at present I cannot but wonder at his confidence, seeing I am sure he cannot be ignorant that one of these places, at least, — namely, that of Hebrews 2:16, — is as much, as frequently, as vehemently pleaded by all sorts of divines, ancient and modern, to prove the assumption of our human nature into personal subsistence with the Son of God, that so he might be “hikanos” (fit and able to save us), as any one testimony in the whole

Scripture. And the same truth is as evidently contained and expressed in the former, seeing no man could be the “fellow of the LORD of hosts” but he that was partaker of the same nature with him; and no one could have the sword of God upon him to smite him, which was needful unto our salvation, but he that was partaker of our nature, or man also. And the mere recital of these testimonies was sufficient unto my purpose in that place, where I designed only to declare, and not dispute the truth. If he yet think that I cannot prove what I assert from these testimonies, let him consult my “*Vindicae Evangelicae*,” where, according as that work required, I have directly pleaded these scriptures to the same purpose, insisting at large on the vindication of one of them; and let him answer what I have there pleaded, if he be able. And I shall allow him to make his advantage unto that purpose, if he please, of whatever evasions the Socinians have found out to escape the force of that testimony. For there is none of them of any note but have attempted by various artifices to shield their opinion, in denying the assumption of our human nature into personal union with the Son of God, and wherewithal his pre-existence unto his nativity of the blessed Virgin, from the divine evidence given against it in that place of Hebrews 2:16; which yet, if this author may be believed, does make no more against them than Genesis 1:1. Wherefore, this severe censure, together with the modesty of the expression, wherein Christ making peace between God and man is compared to the parting of a fray or scuffle, may pass at the same rate and value with those which are gone before.

His ensuing pages are taken up, for the most part, with the transcription of passages out of my discourse, raked together from several places at his pleasure. I shall not impose the needless labor on the reader of a third perusal of them: nor shall I take the pains to restore the several passages to their proper place and coherence, which he has rent them from, to try his skill and strength upon them separately and apart; for I see not that they stand in need of using the least of their own circumstantial evidence in their vindication. I shall therefore only take notice of his exceptions against them. And, p. 207, whereas I had said on some occasion, that on such a supposition we could have supplies of grace only in a moral way, it falls under his derision in his parenthesis; and that is a very pitiful way indeed. But I must yet tell him, by the way, that if he allow of no supplies

of grace but in a moral way, he is a Pelagian, and as such, stands condemned by the catholic church. And when his occasions will permit it, I desire he would answer what is written by myself in another discourse, in the refutation of this sole moral operation of grace, and the assertion of another way of the communication of it unto us. Leave fooling, and “the unhappiest man in expressing himself that ever I met with” will not do it; he must retake himself to another course, if he intend to engage into the handling of things of this nature. He adds, whereas I had said, “‘The grace of the promises’ (of the person of Christ you mean):” I know well enough what I mean; but the truth is, I know not well what he means; nor whether it be out of ignorance that he does indeed fancy an opposition between Christ and the promises, that what is ascribed unto the one must needs be derogated from the other, when the promise is but the means and instrument of conveying the grace of Christ unto us; or whether it proceeds from a real dislike that the person of Christ — that is, Jesus Christ himself — should be esteemed of any use or consideration in religion, that he talks at this rate. But from whence ever it proceeds, this caviling humor is unworthy of any man of ingenuity or learning. By his following parenthesis (“a world of sin is something”) I suppose I have somewhere used that expression, whence it is reflected on; but he quotes not the place, and I cannot find it. I shall therefore only at present tell him, as (if I remember alight) I have done already, that I will not come to him nor any of his companions to learn to express myself in these things; and, moreover, that I despise their censures. The discourses he is carping at in particular in this place are neither doctrinal nor argumentative, but consist in the application of truths before proved unto the minds and affections of men. And, as I said, I will not come to him nor his fraternity to learn how to manage such a subject, much less a logical and argumentative way of reasoning; nor have I any inducement whereunto from any thing that as yet I have seen in their writings. It also troubles him, p. 208, that whereas I know how unsuited the best and most accurate of our expressions are unto the true nature and being of divine things, as they are in themselves, and what need we have to make use of allusions, and sometimes less proper expressions, to convey a sense of them unto the minds and affections of men, I had once or twice used that “epanortosis”, “if I may so say;” which yet if he had not known used in other good authors, treating of things of the same nature, he knew I could take protection

against his severity under the example of the apostle, using words to the same purpose upon an alike occasion, Hebrews 7. But at length he intends to be serious, and from those words of mine, “Here is mercy enough for the greatest, the oldest, the stubbornst transgressor;” he adds, “Enough, in all reason, this: what a comfort is it to sinners to have such a God for their Savior, whose grace is boundless and bottomless, and exceeds the largest dimensions of their sins, though there be a world of sin in them. But what, now, if the divine nature itself have not such an endless, boundless, bottomless grace and compassion as the doctor now talks of? For at other times, when it serves his turn better, we can hear nothing from him but the ‘naturalness of God’s vindictive justice.’ Though God be rich in mercy, he never told us that his mercy was so boundless and bottomless; he had given a great many demonstrations of the severity of his anger against sinners, who could not be much worse than the ‘greatest, the oldest, and the stubbornst transgressors.’”

Let the reader take notice, that I propose no grace in Christ unto or for such sinners, but only that which may invite all sorts of them, though under the most discouraging qualifications, to come unto him for grace and mercy by faith and repentance. And on supposition that this was my sense, as he cannot deny it to be, I add only, in answer, that this his profane scoffing at it, is that which reflects on Christ and his gospel, and God himself and his word; which must be accounted for. See Isaiah 55:7. Secondly, For the opposition which he childishly frames between God’s vindictive justice and his mercy and grace, it is answered already. Thirdly, It is false that God has not told us that his grace is boundless and bottomless, in the sense wherein I use those words, sufficient to pardon the greatest, the oldest, the stubbornst of sinners, — namely, that turn unto him by faith and repentance; and he who knows not how this consists with severity and anger against impenitent sinners, is yet to learn his catechism. But yet he adds farther, pp. 208, 209, “Supposing the divine nature were such a bottomless fountain of grace, how comes this to be a personal grace of the Mediator? For a mediator, as mediator, ought not to be considered as the fountain, but as the minister of grace. God the Father certainly ought to come in for a share, at least, in being the fountain of grace, though the doctor is pleased to take no notice of him. But how excellent is the grace of Christ’s person above the grace of the gospel; for

that is a bounded and limited thing, a strait gate and narrow way, that leadeth unto life. There is no such boundless mercy as all the sins in the world cannot equal its dimensions, as will save the greatest, the oldest, and the stubbornst transgressors.”

I beg the reader to believe that I am now so utterly weary with the repetition of these impertinencies, that I can hardly prevail with myself to fill my pen once more with ink about them; and I see no reason now to go on, but only that I have begun; and, on all accounts, I shall be as brief as possible. I say, then, first, I did not consider this boundless grace in Christ as mediator, but considered it as in him who is mediator; and so the divine nature, with all its properties, are greatly to be considered in him, if the gospel be true. But, secondly, It is untrue that Christ, as mediator, is only the minister of grace, and not the fountain of it; for he is mediator as God and man in one person. Thirdly, To suppose an exemption of the person of the Father from being the fountain of grace absolutely, in the order of the divine subsistence of the persons in the Trinity, and of their operations suited thereunto, upon the ascription of it unto the Son, is a fond imagination, which could befall no man who understands any thing of things of this nature. It does as well follow, that if the Son created the world, the Father did not; if the Son uphold all things by the word of his power, the Father does not; — that is, that the Son is not in the Father, nor the Father in the Son. The acts, indeed, of Christ’s mediation respect the ministration of grace, being the procuring and communicating causes thereof; but the person of Christ the mediator is the fountain of grace. So they thought who beheld his glory, — “The glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth”. But the especial relation of grace unto the Father, as sending the Son; unto the Son, as sent by him and incarnate; and unto the Holy Spirit, as proceeding from and sent by them both, I have elsewhere fully declared, and shall not in this place (which, indeed, will scarce give admittance unto any thing of so serious a nature) again insist thereon. Fourthly, The opposition which he would again set between Christ and the gospel is impious in itself; and, if he thinks to charge it on me, openly false. I challenge him and all his accomplices to produce any one word out of any writing of mine that, from a plea or pretense of grace in Christ, should give countenance unto any in the neglect of the least precept given or duty required in the gospel. And

notwithstanding all that I have said or taught concerning the boundless, bottomless grace and mercy of Christ towards believing, humble, penitent sinners, I do believe the way of gospel obedience, indispensably required to be walked in by all that will come to the enjoyment of God, to be so narrow, that no revilers, nor false accusers, nor scoffers, nor despisers of gospel mysteries, continuing so to be, can walk therein; — but that there is not grace and mercy declared and tendered in the gospel also unto all sorts of sinners, under any qualifications whatever, who upon its invitation, will come to God through Jesus Christ by faith and repentance, is an impious imagination.

A discourse much of the same nature follows, concerning the love of Christ, after he has treated his person and grace at his pleasure. And this he takes occasion for from some passages in my book (as formerly), scraped together from several places, so as he thought fit and convenient unto his purpose. P. 209, “Thus the love of Christ is an eternal love, because his divine nature is eternal; and it is an unchangeable love, because his divine nature is unchangeable; and his love is fruitful, for it being the love of God, it must be effectual and fruitful in producing all the things which he willeth unto his beloved. He loves life, grace, holiness into us, loves us into covenant, loves us into heaven. This is an excellent love, indeed, which does all for us, and leaves nothing for us to do. We owe this discovery to an acquaintance with Christ’s person, or rather with his divine nature; for the gospel is very silent in this matter. All that the gospel tells us is, that Christ loveth sinners, so as to die for them; that he loves good men, who believe and obey his gospel, so as to save them; that he continues to love them while they continue to be good, but hates them when they return to their old vices: and therefore, I say, there is great reason for sinners to fetch their comforts not from the gospel, but from the person of Christ, which as far excels the gospel as the gospel excels the law.”

I do suppose the expressions mentioned are, for the substance of them, in my book; and shall, therefore, only inquire what it is in them which he excepteth against, and for which I am reproached, as one that has an acquaintance with Christ’s person; which is now grown so common and trite an expression, that were it not condited unto some men’s palates by its profaneness, it would argue a great barrenness in this author’s

invention, that can vary no more in the topic of reviling. It had been well if his licenser had accommodated him with some part of his talent herein. But what is it that is excepted against? Is it that the love of Christ, as he is God, is eternal? or is it that it is unchangeable? or is it that it is fruitful or effective of good things unto the persons beloved? The philosopher tells us, that to [have] love for any one, is, “Boulestai tini ha oietai agata, kai to kata dunamin praktikon einai touton”. It is this efficacy of the love of Christ which must bear all the present charge. The meaning of my words, therefore, is, that the love of Christ is unto us the cause of life, grace, holiness, and the reward of heaven. And because it is in the nature of love to be effective, according unto the ability of the person loving, of the good which it wills unto the object beloved, I expressed it as I thought meet, by loving these things to us. And I am so far on this occasion, and [on account of] the severe reflection on me for an acquaintance with Christ, from altering my thoughts, that I say still with confidence, he who is otherwise minded is no Christian. And if this man knows not how the love of Christ is the cause of grace and glory, how it is effective of them, and that in a perfect consistency with all other causes and means of them, and the necessity of our obedience, he may do well to abstain a little from writing, until he is better informed. But saith he, “This is an excellent love, indeed, which does all for us, and leaves us nothing to do.” But who told him so? who ever said so? Does he think that if our life, grace, holiness, glory, be from the love of Christ originally causally, by virtue of his divine, gracious operations in us and towards us, that there is no duty incumbent on them who would be made partakers of them, or use or improve them unto their proper ends? Shall we, then, to please him, say that we have neither life, nor grace, nor holiness, nor glory, from the love of Christ; but whereas most of them are our own duties, we have them wholly from ourselves? Let them do so who have a mind to renounce Christ and his gospel; I shall come into no partnership with them. [As] for what he adds “All that the gospel teaches us,” etc., he should have done well to have said, as far as he knows; which is a limitation with a witness. If this be all the gospel which the man knows and preaches, I pity them whom he has taken under his instruction. Does Christ in his love do nothing unto the quickening and conversion of men? nothing to the purification and sanctification of believers? nothing as to their consolation and establishment? nothing as to the administration of strength against temptations? nothing as to supplies

of grace, in the increase of faith, love, and obedience, etc.? This ignorance or profaneness is greatly to be bewailed, as his ensuing scoff, repeated now usque ad nauseam, about an opposition between Christ and his gospel, is to be despised. And if the Lord Christ has no other love but what this man will allow, the state of the church in this world depends on every slender thread. But attempts of this nature will fall short enough of prevailing with sober Christians to forego their faith and persuasion, — that it is from the love of Christ that believers are preserved in that condition wherein he does and will approve of them. Yea, to suppose that this is all the grace of the gospel, that whilst men are good Christ loves them, and when they are bad he hates them (both which are true); and farther, that he does by his grace neither make them good, nor preserve them that are so made, — is to renounce all that is properly so called.

He yet proceeds, first to evert this love which I asserted, and then to declare his own apprehensions concerning the love of Christ. The first in the ensuing words, p. 210, “But, methinks this is a very odd way of arguing from the divine nature; for if the love of Christ as God be so infinite, eternal, unchangeable, fruitful, I would willingly understand how sin, death, and misery came into the world. For if this love be so eternal and unchangeable, because the divine nature is so, then it was always so; for God always was what he is, and that which is eternal could never be other than it is now: and why could not this eternal, and unchangeable, and fruitful love, as well preserve us from falling into sin, and misery, and death, as love life and holiness into us? For it is a little odd, first to love us into sin and death, that then he may love us into life and holiness: which, indeed, could not be, if this love of God were always so unchangeable and fruitful as this author persuades us it is now; for if this love had always loved life and holiness into us, I cannot conceive how it should happen that we should sin and die.”

It is well if he know what it is that he aims at in these words; I am sure what he says does not in the least impeach the truth which he designs to oppose. The name and nature of God are everywhere in the Scripture proposed unto us as the object of, and encouragement unto, our faith, and his love in particular is therein represented unchangeable, because he himself is so; but it does not hence follow that God loveth any one naturally, or necessarily. His love is a free act of his will; and therefore,

though it be like himself, such as becomes his nature, yet it is not necessarily determined on any object, nor limited as unto the nature, degrees, and effects of it. He loves whom he pleaseth, and as unto what end he pleaseth. Jacob he loved, and Esau he hated; and those effects which, from his love or out of it, he will communicate unto them, are various, according to the counsel of his will. Some he loves only as to temporal and common mercies, some as to spiritual grace and glory; for he has mercy on whom he will have mercy. Wherefore it is no way contrary unto, and inconsistent with, the eternity, the immutability, and fruitfulness of the love of God, that he suffered sin to enter into the world, or that he does dispense more grace in Jesus Christ under the New Testament than he did under the Old. God is always the same that he was; love in God is always of the same nature that it was; but the objects, acts, and effects of this love, with the measures and degrees of them, are the issues of the counsel or free purposes of his will. Want of the understanding hereof makes this man imagine, that if God's love in Christ, wherewith he loveth us, be eternal and fruitful, then must God necessarily always — in or out of Christ, under the old or new covenant — love all persons, elect or not elect, with the same love as to the effects and fruits of it; which is a wondrous profound apprehension. The reader, therefore, if he please, may take notice, that the love which I intend, and whereunto I ascribe those properties, is the especial love of God in Christ unto the elect. Concerning this himself says, that he loves them with an everlasting love, and therefore “draws them with loving-kindness,” Jeremiah 31:3; which love, I shall be bold to say, is eternal and fruitful. And hence, as he changeth not, whereon the sons of Jacob are not consumed, Malachi 3:6, there being with him “neither variableness, nor shadow of turning,” James 1:17; so accordingly he has in this matter, by his promise and oath, declared the immutability of his counsel, Hebrews 6:17, 18, — which seems to intimate that his love is unchangeable. And whereas this eternal love is in Christ Jesus as the way and means of making it certain in all its effects, and with respect unto its whole design, it is fruitful in all grace and glory, Ephesians 1:3-5. And if he cannot understand how, notwithstanding all this, sin so entered into the world under the law of creation and the first covenant as to defeat in us all the benefits thereof, at present I cannot help him; for, as I am sure enough he would scorn to learn any thing of me, so I am not at leisure to put it to the trial.

His own account of the love of God succeeds. P. 211, “Not that I deny that the love of God is eternal, unchangeable, fruitful; that is, that God was always good, and always continues good, and manifesteth his love and goodness in such ways as are suitable to his nature, which is the fruitfulness of it: but then, the unchangeableness of God’s love does not consist in being always determined to the same object, but that he always loves for the same reason; that is, that he always loves true virtue and goodness, wherever he sees it, and never ceases to love any person till he ceases to be good: and then the immutability of his love is the reason why he loves no longer; for should he love a wicked man, the reason and nature of his love would change. And the fruitfulness of God’s love, with respect to the methods of his grace and providence, does not consist in procuring what he loves by an omnipotent and irresistible power; for then sin and death could never have entered into the world: but he governs and does good to his creatures, in such ways as are most suitable to their natures. He governs reasonable creatures by principles of reason, as he does the material world by the necessary laws of matter, and brute creatures by the instincts and propensities of nature.”

This may pass for a system of his divinity, which how he will reconcile unto the doctrine of the church of England in her articles, she and he may do well to consider. But, whatever he means by the love of God always determined unto the same object, it were an easy thing to prove, beyond the reach of his contradiction, that persons are the objects of God’s eternal love, as well as things and qualifications are of his approbation; or, that he loves some persons with an everlasting and unchangeable love, so as to preserve them from all ruining evils, and so as they may be always meet objects of his approving love, unto his glory: and whereas these things have been debated and disputed on all hands with much learning and diligence, our author is a very happy man if, with a few such loose expressions as these repeated, he thinks to determine all the controversies about election and effectual grace, with perseverance, on the Pelagian side. The hypothesis here maintained, that because God always and unchangeably approves of what is good in any, or of the obedience of his creatures, and disapproves or hates sin, condemning it in his law, [and] that therefore he may love the same person one day and hate him another, notwithstanding his pretenses that he is constant unto the reason of his

love, will inevitably fall into one of these conclusions: — either, that God indeed never loveth any man, be he who he will; or, that he is changeable in his love, upon outward, external reasons, as we are: and let him choose which he will own. In the meantime, such a love of God towards believers as shall always effectually preserve them meet objects of his love and approbation, is not to be baffled by such trifling impertinencies. His next reflection is on the manner of God's operations in the communication of grace and holiness; which, he says, is “not by omnipotent and irresistible power,” — confirming his assertion by that consideration, that then sin and death could never have entered into the world; which is resolved into another sweet supposition, that God must needs act the same power of grace towards all men, at all times, under each covenant, whether he will or no. But this it is to be a happy disputant, — all things succeed well with such persons which they undertake. And as to the manner of the operation of grace, how far grace itself may be said to be omnipotent, and in its operations irresistible, I have fully declared there; where he may oppose and refute it, if he have any mind thereunto. His present attempt against it in those words, that God “governs reasonable creatures by principles of reason,” is so weak in this case, and impertinent, that it deserves no consideration; for all the operations of divine grace are suited unto the rational constitution of our beings, neither was ever man so wild as to fancy any of them such as are inconsistent with, or do offer force unto, the faculties of our souls in their operations. Yea, that which elevates, aids, and assists our rational faculties in their operations on and towards their proper objects, which is the work of efficacious grace, is the principal preservative of their power and liberty, and can be no way to their prejudice. And we do, moreover, acknowledge that those proposals which are made in the gospel unto our reason, are eminently suited to excite and prevail with it unto its proper use and exercise in compliance with them. Hence, although the habit of faith, or power of believing, be wrought in us by the Holy Ghost, yet the word of the gospel is the cause and means of all its acts, and the whole obedience which it produceth. But if by “governing reasonable creatures by principles of reason,” he intends that God deals no otherwise by his grace with the souls of men, but only by proposing objective arguments and motives unto a compliance with his will, without internal aids and assistance of grace, it is a gross piece of

Pelagianism, destructive of the gospel, sufficiently confuted elsewhere; and he may explain himself as he pleaseth.

His proceed is, to transcribe some other passages, taken out of my book here and there, in whose repetition he inserts some impertinent exceptions; but the design of the whole is to “state a controversy,” as he calls it, between us and them, or those whom he calleth “they” and “we,” whoever they be. And this, upon the occasion of my mentioning the fullness of grace, life, and righteousness that is in Christ, he does in these words: — P. 215, “They say that these are the personal graces of Christ as mediator, which are inherent in him, and must be derived from his person; we say, they signify the perfection and excellency of his religion, as being the most perfect and complete declaration of the will of God, and the most powerful method of the divine wisdom for the reforming of the world, as it prescribes the only righteousness which is acceptable to God, and directs us in the only way to life and immortality.”

I shall not absolutely accept of the terms of this controversy, as to the state of it on our part, proposed by him; and yet I shall not much vary from them. We say, therefore, that “Jesus Christ being full of all grace, excellencies, and perfections, he communicates them unto us in that degree as is necessary for us, and in proportion unto his abundant charity and goodness towards us; and we Christians, as his body, or fellow-members of his human nature, receive grace and mercy, flowing from him to us.” This state of the controversy on our side I suppose he will not refuse, nor the terms of it; but will own them to be ours, though he will not, it may be, allow some of them to be proper or convenient. And that he may know who his “they” are, who are at this end of the difference, he may be pleased to take notice that these words are the whole and entire paraphrase of Dr. Hammond on John 1:16; the first testimony he undertakes to answer. And when this author has replied to Mr. Hooker, Dr. Jackson, and him, and such other pillars of the church of England as concur with them, it will be time enough for me to consider how I shall defend myself against him. Or, if he will take the controversy on our part in terms more directly expressive of my mind, it is the person of Christ is the fountain of all grace to the church (as he well observes my judgement to be), and that from him all grace and mercy is derived unto us; and then I do maintain, that the “they” whom he opposeth, are not only the church

of England, but the whole catholic church in all ages. Who the “we” are, on the other hand, who reject this assertion, and believe that all the testimonies concerning the fullness of grace in Christ, and the communication thereof unto us, do only declare the excellency of his religion, is not easy to be conjectured; — for unless it be the people of Racow, I know not who are his associates. And let him but name three divines of any reputation in the church of England since the Reformation, who have given the least countenance unto his assertions, negative or positive, and I will acknowledge that he has better associates in his profession than as yet I believe he has. But that Jesus Christ himself, God and man in one person, the mediator between God and man, is not a fountain of grace and mercy to his church; that there is no real internal grace communicated by him, or derived from him unto his mystical body; that the fullness which is in him, or said to be in him, of grace and truth, of unsearchable riches of grace, etc., is nothing but the doctrine which he taught, as the most complete and perfect declaration of the will of God, — are opinions that cannot be divulged, under pretense of authority, without the most pernicious scandal to the present church of England. And if this be the man’s religion, that this is all the fullness we receive from Christ, — “a perfect revelation of the divine will concerning the salvation of mankind; which contains so many excellent promises that it may well be called ‘grace;’ and prescribes such a plain and simple religion, so agreeable to the natural notions of good and evil, that it may well be called ‘truth;’” — and complying with its doctrine, or yielding obedience unto its precepts and believing the promises which it gives, in our own strength, without any real aid, assistance, or communication of internal saving grace from the person of Jesus Christ, is our righteousness before God, whereon and for which we are justified, — I know as well as he whence it came, and perhaps better than he whither it will go.

The remaining discourse of this chapter consisteth of two parts: — First, An attempt to disprove any communication of real internal grace from the Lord Christ unto believers for their sanctification; Secondly, An endeavor to refute the imputation of his righteousness unto us for our justification. In the first he contends that all the fullness of grace and truth said to be in Christ consists either in the doctrine of the gospel or in the largeness of his church. In the latter, that faith in Christ is nothing but believing the gospel,

and the authority of Christ who revealed it; and by yielding obedience thereunto, we are justified before God, on the account of an internal inherent righteousness in ourselves. Now, these are no small undertakings; the first of them being expressly contrary to the sense of the catholic church in all ages (for the Pelagians and the Socinians are by common agreement excluded from an interest therein); and the latter of them, contrary to the plain confessions of all the reformed churches, with the constant doctrine of this church of England: and therefore we may justly expect that they should be managed with much strength of argument, and evident demonstration. But the unhappiness of it is (I will not say his, but ours), that these are not things which our author as yet has accustomed himself unto; and I cannot but say, that to my knowledge I never read a more weak, loose, and impertinent discourse, upon so weighty subjects, in my whole life before: he must have little to do, who can afford to spend his time in a particular examination of it, unless it be in the exposition of those places which are almost verbatim transcribed out of Schlichtingius. Besides, for the first truth which he opposeth, I have confirmed it in a discourse which I suppose may be made public before this come to view, beyond what I expect any sober reply unto from him. Some texts of Scripture that mention a fullness in Christ he chooseth out, to manifest (to speak a word by the way) that indeed they do not intend any such fullness in Christ himself. And the first is John 1:16; the exposition whereof which he gives is that of Schlichtingius, who yet extends the import of the words beyond what he will allow. The enforcement which he gives unto his exposition, by comparing the 14th and 17th verses with the 16th, is both weak and contradictory of itself; for the words of the 14th verse are, “The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth.” It is evident beyond contradiction, that the expression, “full of grace and truth,” is exegetical of his glory as the only begotten of the Father, which was the glory of his person, and not the doctrine of the gospel. And for the opposition that is made between the law given by Moses, and the grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ, I shall yet rather adhere to the sense of the ancient church, and the most eminent doctors of it, which, if he knows not it to be concerning the effectual communication of real, renewing, sanctifying grace by Jesus Christ, there are snow who can inform him; rather than that woeful gloss upon them, —

“His doctrine is called ‘grace,’ because accompanied with such excellent promises; and may well be called ‘truth,’ because so agreeable to the natural notions of good and evil,” which is the confession of the Pelagian unbelief: but these things are not my present concernment. For the latter part of his discourse, in his opposition unto the imputation of the righteousness of Christ, as he does not go about once to state or declare the sense wherein it is pleaded for, nor produceth any one of the arguments wherewith it is confirmed, and omitteth the mention of most of the particular testimonies which declare and establish it; so, as unto those few which he takes notice of, he expressly finds his answers unto them on that woeful subterfuge, that if they are capable of another interpretation, or having another sense given unto them, then nothing can be concluded from them to that purpose, — by which the Socinians seek to shelter themselves from all the testimonies that are given to his Deity and satisfaction. But I have no concernment, as I said, either in his opinions or his way of reasoning; and do know that those who have so, need not desire a better cause nor an easier adversary to deal withal.

In his third section, p. 279, he enters upon his exceptions unto the union of believers unto Jesus Christ, and with great modesty, at the entrance of his discourse, tells us, first, “how these men,” with whom he has to do, “have fitted the person of Christ unto all the wants and necessities of the sinner;” which yet, if he denies God himself to have done, he is openly injurious unto his wisdom and grace. The very first promise that was given concerning him was, that he should save sinners from all their wants, evils, and miseries, that might, did, or could befall them by the entrance of sin. But thus it falls out, when men will be talking of what they do not understand. Again, he adds how he has “explained the Scripture metaphors whereby the union between Christ and Christians is represented; but that these men, instead of explaining of those metaphors, turn all religion into an allegory.” But what if one should now tell him, that his explanation of these metaphors is the most absurd and irrational, and argues the most fulsome ignorance of the mystery of the gospel, that can be imagined; and that, on the other side, those whom he traduceth do explain them unto the understanding and experience of all that believe, and that in a way suited and directed unto by the Holy Ghost himself, to farther their faith, obedience, and consolation? As far as I perceive, he would be at no small

loss how to relieve himself under this censure. The first thing he begins withal, and wherein, in the first place, I fall under his displeasure, is about the conjugal relation between Christ and believers, which he treats of, p. 280. “As for example,” saith he, “Christ is called a husband, the church his spouse; and now all the invitations of the gospel are Christ’s wooing and making love to his spouse; — and what other men call believing the gospel of Christ, whereby we devote ourselves to his service, these men call that consent and contract, which make up the marriage betwixt Christ and believers. Christ takes us for his spouse, and we take Christ for our husband, and that with all the solemnities of marriage, except the ring, which is left out as an antichristian ceremony; Christ saying thus, ‘This is that we will consent unto, that I will be for thee, and thou shalt be for me, and not for another.’ Christ gives himself to the soul with all his excellencies, righteousness, preciousness, graces, and eminencies, to be its savior, head, and husband, — to dwell with it in this holy relation; and the soul likes Christ for his excellencies, graces, suitableness, far above all other beloveds whatsoever, and accepts of Christ by the will for its husband, Lord, and savior. And thus the marriage is completed; and this is the day of Christ’s espousals, and of the gladness of his heart. And now follow all mutual conjugal affections; which, on Christ’s part, consist in delight, valuation, pity, compassion, bounty; on the saints’ part, in delight, valuation, chastity, duty. But I have already corrected this fooling with Scripture metaphors and phrases.”

It might, perhaps, not unbecome this author to be a little more sparing of his correction, unless his authority were more than it is, and his skill, also, in the management of it; for at present those whom he attempts upon are altogether insensible of any effects of his severity. But whereas he seems much at a loss how to evidence his own wisdom any other way than by calling them fools with whom he has to do, it is sufficient to plead his excuse. But what is it that he is here so displeased at, as unfit for a man of his wisdom to bear withal, and therefore calls it “fooling?” Is it that there is a conjugal relation between Christ and the church? — that he is the bridegroom and husband of the church, and that the church is his bride and spouse? — that he becomes so unto it by a voluntarily, gracious act of his love, and that the church enters into that relation with him by their acceptance of him in that relation, and voluntarily giving up themselves

unto him in faith, love, and obedience, suited thereunto? Is it that he loveth his church and cherisheth it as a husband, or that the church gives up itself in chaste and holy obedience unto him as her spouse? or is it my way and manner of expressing these things wherewith he is so provoked? If it be the latter, I desire he would, for his own satisfaction, take notice that I condemn his censures, and appeal to the judgement of those who have more understanding and experience in these things than, for aught I can discern by his writings, he has yet attained unto. If it be the former, they are all of them so proved and confirmed from the Scripture in that very discourse which he excepteth against, as that he is not able to answer or reply one serious word thereunto. Indeed, to deny it, is to renounce the gospel and the catholic faith. It is, therefore, to no purpose for me here to go over again the nature of this relation between Christ and the church, — wherein really and truly it does consist; what it is the Scripture instructeth us in thereby; what is that love, care, and tenderness of Christ, which it would have us thence to learn; and what is our own duty with respect thereunto, together with the consolation thence arising: the whole of this work is already discharged in that discourse which these impertinent cavils are raised against, and that suitably to the sense of the church in all ages, and of all sound expositors of those very many places of Scripture which I have urged and insisted on to that purpose. Let him, if he please, a little lay aside the severity of his corrections and befouling of men, and answer any material passage in the whole discourse, if he be able; or discover any thing in it not agreeable to the analogy of faith, or the sense of the ancient church, if he can. And though he seem, both here and in some of his ensuing pages, to have a particular contempt of what is cited or improved out of the book of Canticles to this purpose; yet, if he either deny that that whole book does mystically express the conjugal relation that is between Christ and his church, with their mutual affections and delight in each other, or that the places particularly insisted on by me are not duly applied unto their proper intention, I can, at least, confirm them both by the authority of such persons as whose antiquity and learning will exercise the utmost of his confidence in calling them fools for their pains.

From hence for sundry pages he is pleased to give me a little respite, whilst he diverts his severity unto another; unto whose will and choice what to do in it I shall leave his peculiar concern, as knowing full well how

easy it is for him to vindicate what he has written on this subject from his impertinent exceptions, if he please. In the meantime, if this author supposeth to add unto the reputation of his ingenuity and modesty by assaulting with a few pitiful cavils a book written with so much learning, judgement, and moderation, as that is which he excepts against, not daring in the meantime to contend with it in any thing of the expository or the argumentative part of it, but only to discover a malevolent desire to obstruct the use which it has been of, and may yet farther be, to the church of God, — I hope he will not find many rivals in such a design. For my part, I do suppose it more becoming Christian modesty and sobriety, where men have labored according to their ability in the explication of the mysteries of Christian religion, and that with an avowed intention to promote holiness and gospel obedience, to accept of what they have attained, wherein we can come unto a compliance with them; than, passing by whatever we cannot but approve of, or are not able to disprove, to make it our business to cavil at such expressions as either we do not like, or hope to pervert and abuse to their disadvantage.

P. 296, he returns again to my discourse, and fiercely pursues it for sundry leaves, in such a manner as becomes him, and is usual with him. That part of my book which he deals withal, is from p. 176 unto p. 187; and if any person of ingenuity and judgement will be pleased but to peruse it, and to compare it with this man's exceptions, I am secure it will need no farther vindication. But as it is represented in his caviling way, it is impossible for any man either to conceive what is the true design of my discourse, or what the arguments wherewith what I assert is confirmed; which he does most unduly pretend to give an account of: for he so chops, and changes, and alters at his pleasure, going backwards and forwards, and that from one thing to another, without any regard unto a scholastic or ingenuous debate of any thing that might be called a controversy, merely to seek out an appearance of advantage to vent his caviling exceptions, as no judgement can rationally be made of his whole discourse, but only that he had a mind to have cast aspersions on mine, if he had known how. But such stuff as it is, we must now take the measure of it, and consider of what use it may be. And first he quotes those words from my book, "That Christ fulfilled all righteousness as he was mediator; and that whatever he did as mediator, he did it for them whose mediator he was, or in whose

stead and for whose good he executed the office of a mediator before God: and hence it is that his complete and perfect obedience to the law is reckoned to us.” He adds, “This is well said, if it were as well proved. And because this is a matter of great consequence, I shall first examine those reasons the doctor alleges to prove that Christ fulfilled all righteousness, as he was mediator, in their stead whose mediator he was.”

These assertions are gathered up from several places in my discourse, though p. 182 is cited for them all. And if any one find himself concerned in these things, I may demand of him the labor of their perusal in my book itself; and for those who shall refuse a compliance with so reasonable a request, I do not esteem myself obliged to tender them any farther satisfaction. However, I say again, that the Lord Christ fulfilled all righteousness as mediator; and that what he did as mediator, he did it for them whose mediator he was, or in whose stead and for whose good he executed the office of a mediator before God. He says, “It is well said, if it were as well proved.” I say, it is all proved in the places where it is asserted, and that with such testimonies and arguments as he dares not touch upon. And although he pretends to examine the reasons that I allege to prove that Christ fulfilled all righteousness, as he was mediator, in their stead whose mediator he was, yet indeed he does not do so. For, first, I say no such thing as he here feigns me to say, — namely, that “Christ as mediator fulfilled all righteousness in our stead;” but only, that “Christ being the mediator, in our stead fulfilled all righteousness:” which is another thing, though perhaps he understands not the difference. Nor does he so much as take notice of that testimony which is immediately subjoined unto the words he cites in the confirmation of them; but he will disprove this assertion or at least manifest that it cannot be proved. And this he enters upon, p 297, “As for the first, we have some reason to require good proof of this, since the notion of a mediator includes no such thing. A mediator is one who interposeth between two differing parties, to accommodate the difference; but it was never heard of yet, that it was the office of a mediator to perform the terms and conditions himself. Moses was the mediator of the first covenant, Galatians 3:19; and his office was to receive the law from God, to deliver it to the people, to command them to observe those rites, and sacrifices, and expiations which God had ordained: but he was not to fulfill the righteousness of the law for the

whose congregation. Thus Christ is now the mediator of a better covenant; and his office required that he should preach the gospel, which contains the terms of peace and reconciliation between God and men; and since God would not enter into covenant with sinners without the intervention of a sacrifice, he dies too, as a sacrifice and propitiation for the sins of the world.”

I yet suppose that he observed not the inconsistencies of this discourse, and therefore shall a little mind him of them, although I am no way concerned in it or them. For, first, He tells us, that “a mediator is one who interposeth between two differing parties, to accommodate the difference;” and then gives us an instance in Moses, who is called a mediator in receiving the law, but did therein no way interpose himself between differing parties, to reconcile them. Secondly, From the nature of the mediation of Moses, he would describe the nature of the mediation of Christ; which Socinian fiction I could direct him to a sufficient confutation of, but that, thirdly, He rejects it himself in his next words, — that Christ as a mediator was to die as a sacrifice and propitiation for the sins of the world; which renders his mediation utterly of another kind and nature than that of Moses. The mistake of this discourse is, that he supposeth that men do argue from the general nature of the office of a mediator the work of mediation in this matter; when that which they do intend hence to prove, and what he intends to oppose, is the special nature of the mediatory office and work of Christ; which is peculiar, and has sundry things essentially belonging unto it, that belong not unto any other kind of mediation whatever; whereof himself gives one signal instance.

In his ensuing pages he wonderfully perplexeth himself in gathering up sayings, backward and forward in my discourse, to make some advantage to his purpose, and hopes that he is arrived at no less success than a discovery of I know not what contradictions in what I have asserted. As I said before, so I say again, that I refer the determination and judgement of this whole matter unto any one who will but once read over the discourse excepted against. But for his part, I greatly pity him, as really supposing him at a loss in the sense of what is yet plainly delivered; and I had rather continue to think so, than to be relieved by supposing him guilty of such gross prevarications as he must be if he understands what he treats about. Plainly, I have showed that there was an especial law of mediation, which

Christ was subject unto, at the commandment of the Father: that he should be incarnate; that he should be the king, priest, and prophet of his church; that he should bear our iniquities, make his soul an offering for sin, and give his life a ransom for many, were the principal parts of this law. The whole of it I have lately explained, in my exercitations unto the second part of the Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews; whereon, if he please, he may exercise and try his skill in a way of opposition. This law our Lord Jesus Christ did not yield obedience to in our stead, as though we had been obliged originally unto the duties of it, which we neither were nor could be; although what he suffered penally in any of them was in our stead; without which consideration he could not have righteously suffered in any kind. And the following trivial exception of this author, about the obligation on us to lay down our lives for the brethren, is meet for him to put in, seeing we are not obliged so to die for any one as Christ died for us. Was Paul crucified for you? But, secondly, Christ our mediator, and as mediator, was obliged unto all that obedience unto the moral, and all other laws of God, that the church was obliged unto; and that which I have asserted hereon is, that the effects of the former obedience of Christ are communicated unto us, but the latter obedience itself is imputed unto us; and [I] have proved it by those arguments which this man does not touch upon. All this is more fully, clearly, and plainly declared in the discourse itself; and I have only represented so much of it here again, that it might be evident unto all how frivolous are his exceptions. It is therefore to no purpose for me to transcribe again the quotations out of my book which he fills up his pages with, seeing it is but little in them which he excepteth against; and whoever pleaseth, may consult them at large in the places from whence they are taken; or, because it is not easy to find them out singly, they are so picked up and down, backwards and forwards, curtailed and added to at pleasure, any one may, in a very little space of time, read over the whole unto his full satisfaction. I shall, therefore, only consider his exceptions, and haste unto an end of this fruitless trouble, wherein I am most unwillingly engaged by this man's unsuspected disingenuity and ignorance.

After the citation of some passages, he adds, p. 301, "This, methinks, is very strange, that what he did as mediator is not imputed unto us; but what he did, not as our mediator, but as a man subject to the law, that is

imputed to us, and reckoned as if we had done it, by reason of his being our mediator. And it is as strange to the full, that Christ should do whatever was required of us by virtue of any law, when he was neither husband, nor wife, nor father, merchant nor tradesman, seaman nor soldier, captain nor lieutenant, much less a temporal prince and monarch. And how he should discharge the duties of these relations for us, which are required of us by certain laws, when he never was in any of these relations, and could not possibly be in all, is an argument which may exercise the subtilty of school men, and to them I leave it.”

It were greatly to be desired that he would be a little more heedful, and with attention read the writings of other men, that he might understand them before he comes to make such a bluster in his opposition to them: for I had told him plainly, that though there was a peculiar law of mediation, whose acts and duties we had no obligation unto, yet the Lord Christ, even as mediator, was obliged unto, and did personally perform, all the duties of obedience unto the law of God whereunto we were subject and obliged, p. 181, sec. 14. And it is strange to apprehend how he came to imagine that I said he did it not as our mediator, but as a private man. That which, possibly, might cast his thoughts into this disorder was, that he knew not that Christ was made a private man as mediator; which yet the Scripture is sufficiently express in. [As] for the following objections, that the Lord Christ was neither “husband nor wife, father nor tradesman,” etc. (wherein yet possibly he is out in his account), I have frequently smiled at it when I have met with it in the Socinians, who are perking with it at every turn; but here it ought to be admired. But yet, without troubling those bugbears the school men, he may be pleased to take notice, that the grace of duty and obedience in all relations is the same, — the relations administering only an external occasion unto its peculiar exercise; and what our Lord Jesus Christ did in the fulfilling of all righteousness in the circumstances and relations wherein he stood, may be imputed to us for our righteousness in all our relations, every act of duty and sin in them respecting the same law and principle. And hereon all his following exceptions for sundry pages, wherein he seems much to have pleased himself, do fall to nothing, as being resolved into his own mistakes, if he does not prevaricate against his science and conscience; for the sum of them all he gives us in these words, p. 204, “That Christ did those things

as mediator which did not belong to the laws of his mediation;” which, in what sense he did so, is fully explained in my discourse. And I am apt to guess, that either he is deceived or does design to deceive, in expressing it by the “laws of his mediation;” which may comprise all the laws which as mediator he was subject unto. And so it is most true, that he did nothing as mediator but what belonged unto the laws of his mediation; but most false, that I have affirmed that he did: for I did distinguish between that peculiar law which required the public acts of his mediation, and those other laws which, as mediator, he was made subject unto. And if he neither does nor will understand these things when he is told them, and they are proved unto him beyond what he can contradict, I know no reason why I should trouble myself with one that contends with his own mormos, though he never so lewdly or loudly call my name upon them. And whereas I know myself sufficiently subject unto mistakes and slips, so when I actually fall into them, as I shall not desire this man’s forgiveness, but leave him to exercise the utmost of his severity, so I despise his ridiculous attempts to represent contradictions in my discourse, p 306; all pretenses whereunto are taken from his own ignorance, or feigned in his imagination. Of the like nature are all his ensuing cavils. I desire no more of any reader, but to peruse the places in my discourse which he carps at, and if he be a person of ordinary understanding in these things, I declare that I will stand to his censure and judgement, without giving him the least farther intimation of the sense and intendment of what I have written, or vindication of its truth. Thus, whereas I had plainly declared that the way whereby the Lord Christ, in his own person, became obnoxious and subject unto the law of creation, was by his own voluntary antecedent choice, otherwise than it is with those who are inevitably subject unto it by natural generation under it; as also, that the hypostatical union, in the first instant whereof the human nature was fitted for glory, might have exempted him from the obligation of any outward law whatever, — whence it appears that his consequential obedience, though necessary to himself, when he had submitted himself unto the law (as, “Lo, I come to do thy will, O God”), was designedly for us; — he miserably perplexeth himself to abuse his credulous readers with an apprehension that I had talked, like himself, at such a rate of nonsense as any one in his wits must needs despise. The meaning and sum of my discourse he would have to be this, p. 308, “That Christ had not been bound to live like a man, had he

not been a man,” with I know not what futile cavils of the like nature; when all that I insisted on was the reason why Christ would be a man, and live like a man; which was, that we might receive the benefit and profit of his obedience, as he was our mediator. So in the close of the same wise harangue, from my saying, “That the Lord Christ, by virtue of the hypostatical union, might be exempted, as it were, and lifted above the law, which yet he willingly submitted unto, and in the same instant wherein he was made of a woman, was made also under the law, whence obedience unto it became necessary unto him,” — the man feigns I know not what contradictions in his fancy, whereof there is not the least appearance in the words unto any one who understands the matter expressed in them. And that the assumption of the human nature into union with the Son of God, with submission unto the law thereon to be performed in that nature, are distinct parts of the humiliation of Christ, I shall prove when more serious occasion is administered unto me.

In like manner he proceeds to put in his exceptions unto what I discoursed about the laws that an innocent man is liable unto. For I said, that God never gave any other law to an innocent person, but only the law of his creation, with such symbolical precepts as might be instances of his obedience thereunto. Something he would find fault with, but knows not well what; and therefore turmoils himself to give countenance unto a putid cavil. He tells us, “That it is a great favor that I acknowledge, p. 310, that God might add what symbols he pleased unto the law of creation.” But the childishness of these impertinencies is shameful. To whom, I pray, is it a favor, or what does the man intend by such a senseless scoff? Is there any word in my whole discourse intimating that God might not in a state of innocence give what positive laws he pleased unto innocent persons, as means and ways to express that obedience which they owed into the law of creation? The task wherein I am engaged is so fruitless, so barren of any good use, in contending with such impertinent effects of malice and ignorance, that I am weary of every word I am forced to add in the pursuit of it; but he will yet have it, that “an innocent person, such as Christ was absolutely, may be obliged for his own sake to the observation of such laws and institutions as were introduced by the occasion of sin, and respected all of them the personal sins of them that were obliged by them;” which if he can believe, he is at liberty, for me, to persuade as

many as he can to be of his mind, whilst I may be left unto my own liberty and choice, yea, to the necessity of my mind, in not believing contradictions. And for what he adds, that I “know those who conceit themselves above all forms of external worship,” I must say to him that at present personally I know none that do so, but fear that some such there are; as also others who, despising not only the ways of external worship appointed by God himself, but also the laws of internal faith and grace, do satisfy themselves in a customary observance of forms of worship of their own devising.

In his next attempt he had been singular, and had spoken something which had looked like an answer to an argument, had he well laid the foundation of his procedure: for that position which he designeth the confutation of is thus laid down by him as mine, “There can be no reason assigned of Christ’s obedience unto the law, but only this, that he did it in our stead;” whereas my words are, “That the end of the active obedience of Christ cannot be assigned to be that he might be fit for his death and oblation.” And hereon what is afterward said against this particular end, he interprets as spoken against all other ends whatever, instancing in such as are every way consistent with the imputation of his obedience unto us; which could not be, had the only end of it been for himself, to fit him for his death and oblation. And this willful mistake is sufficient to give occasion to combat his own imaginations for two or three pages together. P. 314, he pretends unto the recital of an argument of mine for the imputation of the righteousness of Christ, with the like pretense of attempting an answer unto it; but his design is not to manage any controversy with me, or against me, but, as he phraseth it, to expose my mistakes. I cannot, therefore, justly expect from him so much as common honesty will require, in case the real handling of a controversy in religion had been intended. But his way of procedure, so far as I know and understand, may be best suited unto his design. In this place, he does neither fairly nor truly report my words, nor take the least notice of the confirmation of my argument by the removal of objections whereunto it seemed liable, nor of the reasons and testimonies whereby it is farther proved; but, taking out of my discourse what expressions he pleaseth, putting them together with the same rule, he thinks he has sufficiently exposed my mistakes, — the thing he aimed at. I have no more concernment in this matter but to refer

both him and the reader to the places in my discourse reflected on; — him, truly to report and answer my arguments, if he be able; and the reader, to judge as he pleaseth between us. And I would for this once desire of him, that if he indeed be concerned in these things, he would peruse my discourse here raved at, and determine in his own mind whether I confidently affirm what is in dispute, (that is, what I had then in dispute; for who could divine so long ago what a doughty disputant this author would by this time sprout up into?) and that this goes for an argument, or that he impudently affirms me so to do, contrary unto his science and conscience, if he had not quite “pored out his eyes” before he came to the end of a page or two in my book. And for the state of the question here proposed by him, let none expect that upon so slight an occasion I shall divert unto the discussion of it. When this author, or any of his consorts in design, shall soberly and candidly, without scoffing or railing, in a way of argument or reasoning, becoming divines and men of learning, answer any of those many writings which are extant against that Socinian justification which he here approves and contends for, or those written by the divines of the church of England on the same subject, in the proof of what he denies, and confutation of what he affirms, they may deserve to be taken notice of in the same rank and order with those with whom they associate themselves. And yet I will not say but that these caviling exceptions, giving a sufficient intimation of what some men would be at, if ability and opportunity did occur, may give occasion also unto a renewed vindication of the truths opposed by them, in a way suited unto the use and edification of the church, in due time and season.

From p. 185 of my book he retires, upon his new triumph, unto p. 176, as hoping to hook something from thence that might contribute unto the furtherance of his ingenious design, although my discourse in that place have no concernment in what he treateth about. But let him be heard to what purpose he pleaseth. Thus, therefore, he proceeds, p. 315, “The doctor makes a great flourish with some Scripture phrases, that there is almost nothing that Christ has done but what we are said to do it with him; we are crucified with him, we are dead with him, buried with him, quickened together with him. In the acting of Christ there is, by virtue of the compact between him, as mediator, and the Father, such an assured foundation laid, that by communication of the fruit of these acting unto

those in whose stead he performed them, they are said, in the participation of these fruits, to have done the same things with him. But he is quite out in the reason of these expressions, which is not that we are accounted to do the same things which Christ did, — for the things here mentioned belong to the peculiar office of his mediation, which he told us before were not reckoned as done by us, — but because we do some things like them. Our dying to sin is a conformity to the death of Christ; and our walking in newness of life is our conformity to his resurrection: and the consideration of the death and resurrection of Christ is very powerful to engage us to die to sin, and to rise unto a new life. And this is the true reason of these phrases.”

Any man may perceive, from what he is pleased here himself to report of my words, that I was not treating about the imputation of the righteousness of Christ, which he is now inveighing against; and it will be much more evident unto every one that shall cast an eye on that discourse. But the design of this confused rambling I have been forced now frequently to give an account of, and shall, if it be possible, trouble the reader with it no more. The present difference between us, which he was ambitious to represent, is only this, that whereas it seems he will allow that those expressions of our being “crucified with Christ, dead with him, buried with him, quickened with him,” do intend nothing but only our doing of something like unto that which Christ did; I do add, moreover, that we do those things by the virtue and efficacy of the grace which is communicated unto us from what the Lord Christ so did and acted for us, as the mediator of the new covenant, whereby alone we partake of their power, communicate in their virtue, and are conformed unto him as our head; wherein I know I have, as the testimony of the Scripture, so the judgement of the catholic church of Christ on my side, and am very little concerned in the censure of this person, that I am “quite out in the reason of these expressions.”

For what remains of his discourse, so far as I am concerned in it, it is made up of such expositions of some texts of Scripture as issue, for the most part, in a direct contradiction to the text itself, or some express passages of the context. So does that of Galatians 4:4, 5, which he first undertakes to speak unto, giving us nothing but what was first invented by Crellius, in his book against Grotius, and is almost translated verbatim out of the

comment of Schlichtingius upon the place; the remainder of them corruptly Socinianizing against the sense of the church of God. Hereunto are added such pitiful mistakes, with reflections on me for distinguishing between obeying and suffering (which conceit he most profoundly disproves by showing that one may obey in suffering, and that Christ did so, against him who has written more about the obedience of Christ in dying, or laying down his life for us, than he seems to have read on the same subject, as also concerning the ends and uses of his death; which I challenge him and all his companions to answer and disprove, if they can), as I cannot satisfy myself in the farther consideration of; no, not with that speed and haste of writing now used: which nothing could give countenance unto but the meanness of the occasion, and unprofitableness of the argument in hand. Wherefore, this being the manner of the man, I am not able to give an account unto myself or the reader of the misspense of more time in the review of such impertinencies. I shall add a few things, and conclude.

First. I desire to know whether this author will abide by what he asserts, as his own judgement, in opposition unto what he puts in his exception against in my discourse: — P. 320, “All the influence which the sacrifice of Christ’s death, and the righteousness of his life have, that I can find in the Scripture, is, that to this we owe the covenant of grace;” that is, as he afterward explains himself, “That God would for the sake of Christ enter into a new covenant with mankind, wherein he promiseth pardon of sin and eternal life to them that believe and obey the gospel.” I leave him herein to his second thoughts; for as he has now expressed himself, there is no reconciliation of his assertion to common sense, or the fundamental principles of Christian religion. That God entered into the new covenant originally only for the sake of those things whereby that covenant was ratified and confirmed, and that Christ was so the mediator of the new covenant, that he died not for the redemption of transgressions under the first covenant, whereby the whole consideration of his satisfaction and of redemption, properly so called, is excluded; that there is no consideration to be had of his purchase of the inheritance of grace and glory, with many other things of the same importance; and that the gospel, or the doctrine of the gospel, is the new covenant (which is only a perspicuous declaration

of it), are things that may become these new sons of the church of England, which the elder church would not have born withal.

Secondly. The reader may take notice, that in some other discourses of mine now published, which were all of them finished before I had the advantage to peruse the friendly and judicious animadversions of this author, he will find most of the matters which he excepts against both cleared, proved, and vindicated, and that those principles which he directs his opposition against are so established, as that I neither expect nor fear any such assault upon them, from this sort of men, as becometh a serious debate on things of this nature.

Thirdly. That I have confined myself, in the consideration of this author's discourse, unto what I was personally concerned in, without looking at or accepting of the advantages which offered themselves of reflecting upon him, either as unto the matter of his discourse, or unto the manner of expressing himself in its delivery. For, besides that I have no mind, and that for many reasons, to enter voluntarily into any contest with this man, the mistakes which he has apparently been led into by ignorance or prejudice, his fulsome errors against the Scripture, the doctrine of the ancient church, and the church of England, are so multiplied and scattered throughout the whole, that a discovery and confutation of them will scarce deserve the expense of time that must be wasted therein, until a more plausible countenance or strenuous defense be given unto them. And as for what he aimeth at, I know well enough where to find the whole of it, handled with more civility and appearance of reason; and therefore, when I am free, or resolved to treat concerning them, I shall do so in the consideration of what is taught by his authors and masters, and not of what he has borrowed from them.

Fourthly. I shall assure the reader, that as a thousand of such trifling cavillers or revilers, as I have had some to deal withal, shall neither discourage nor hinder me in the remaining service which I may have yet to fulfill, in the patience of God, for the church of Christ and truth of the gospel; nor, it may be, occasion me any more to divert in the least unto the consideration of what they whisper or glamour, unless they are able to retake themselves unto a more sober and Christian way of handling things in controversy: so if they will not, or dare not, forego this supposed

advantage of reproaching the doctrine of nonconformists (under which pretense they openly, and as yet securely, scorn and deride them, when they are all of them the avowed doctrines of all the reformed churches, and of this of England in particular); and if they think it not meet to oppose themselves and endeavors unto those writings which have been composed and published professedly in the declaration and defense of the truth scoffed at and impugned by them, but choose rather to exercise their skill and anger on passages rent out of practical discourses, accommodated in the manner of their delivery unto the capacity of the community of believers, as it is fit they should be; I do suppose that, at one time or other, from one hand or another, they may meet with some such discourse, concerning justification and the imputation of the righteousness of Christ, as may give them occasion to be quiet, or to exercise the best of their skill and industry in an opposition unto it, — as many such there are already extant, which they wisely take no notice of, but only rave against occasional passages in discourses of another nature, — unless they resolve on no occasion to forego the shelter they have been taken themselves unto.

End

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