

Fourteen Queries and Ten Absurdities

About the extent of Christ's Death, the power of the creatures, the justice of God in condemning some, and saving others, presented by a free-willer to the Church of Christ at Newcastle, and answered by Paul Hobson, a member of the said church.

In which answer is discovered, the extent of Christ's Death, the nature and truth of Election, the condition of the creature both before and after conversion, &c.
Published in tenderness of love for the good of all, especially for the churches of Christ.

*"Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God."
Matt.22:29.*

"But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." Gal.1:8.

PAUL HOBSON

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THE EPISTLE DEDICATORY, TO THE CHURCH OF CHRIST AT NEWCASTLE.

The Grace of our Lord be multiplied upon you all, and strengthen you in every good word and work. Beloved in the Lord, you may remember that one William Pedelsden, who professes and preaches the universal points, did present to me and some others in the face of the church certain dangerous queries, requiring our answer, and for truths sake, there being other business lying upon brother Gover, you desired me to write and publish an answer to them, and though I am sensible that in my appearing publicly, I am called rather to manifest the present dealings of God with me, and my former unkind dealings with him; but being sensible how much this opinion spreads, and what dangerous consequences are produced by it, I could not but after a serious seeking of God, endeavor to answer your desires herein, and the rather, knowing that it is one of the general ways wherein the devil deludes poor souls, for I have found by experience, that these two ways are the general heads which the devil commonly goes upon, and gradually proceeds in, to draw away souls from the good way of the Lord; first persuading men under specious pretenses to allegorize Scriptures, and turn all into a more spiritual understanding and enjoyment than at present they have attained to, who stand by the rule of truth in the practice of Gospel order and ordinances, and this is followed by, as I told you before, with specious pretenses of spirituality, though in truth it is that which ends in carnality, though at the first it doth not so appear, which I can sadly witness, the devil commonly employs this way, with such spirits that are taken with curiosity of words and notions, leaving the wholesome Word of the Lord. The second general way the deluder takes, is by

discovering the way of God and the doctrine of the Gospel under a greater way of nationality, though it be but that which doth answer that reason which indeed is carnal, which the Apostle speaks of in I Corinthians, the second and third chapter at large; the second way the devil takes many who are not capable of the first, but both ways are very dangerous; and though the first was my proper snare, yet I judge it not amiss to let some part of my employment be also to discover the second, which according to my weak ability in this writing I have endeavored, desiring the Lord that it may accomplish that end which you and I desire, to wit, the putting a stop to that opinion which the author of those queries doth hold forth, which in many places doth so sadly spread, and for the establishing of the weak that are ready to stagger, so desiring the Lord in his power and presence to own it, I shall say no more as to the manner, nor end, but commend you to God and the word of his Grace; I remain, your poor brother in the faith and fellowship of the Gospel, Paul Hobson.

TO THE READER.

Courteous Reader, I'm sensible the devil never lacks cunning inventions to court men to the embracement of evil, and lacks no ability to manage his wiles to take men's hearts off from owning good, and I'm sensible that he needs go no further to incense thee against this matter, than his using arguments from the former miscarriages, and present insufficiency of the author. But it is the desire of my soul to the Lord, that though I have formally stumbled, and not stood steadfast in the truth; yet my unsuitableness may not stave you off from a serious consideration of the matter that is here expressed; for I must confess that I am not apt to think it may do so,

because the same temptations have been in me, by which I have been almost taken off from ever appearing publicly bearing my testimony for truth, having been for a long time such a cloud to truth; yet being as you will see by the ensuing matter so providentially put upon it, and besides seeing that great necessity for it, this opinion of free will, with the rest therein expressed, does increase so much in these northern parts, and it comes with such a face of rationality, that many poor precious hearts who are weak in the faith are apt to stumble, and in a special manner some about Hull, for what I was an eye and ear witness not long since of the sad disaster that is befallen the church of Christ there upon that account; therefore in tenderness of love to them, and answering the desires of the people with whom I walk, and for the prevention of this opinion spreading further here, I could not but break off the difficulties, I mean, the sense of my own insufficiency, and the great objections that will endeavor to be made by men opposite to the truth against the matter, from the insufficiency of the author, but I trust of the Lord, {or at least I desire it,} that he will give you a heart to look above the instrument to him who is the Author and Fountain of all truth itself, considering that it is not the excellency of means, but the truth of the matter that we are to mind; for it is still in God's way to manifest truth by weak and contemptible means, I Cor.1:27,28, and so truth may be entertained upon its own naked account, for sure I am that we have too long embraced truth, upon confidence of the instrument or author, not saint-like examining the matter, or else concluding our judgment upon all that we have, seen or read but in part, all which I desire thee to avoid in reading this small treatise, which though the dress is such, that will not court men's fancies, it was not for that end intended, but that truth may be entertained in thy affections, that it may appear to be so, both in you and me; it is the desire

of my soul, that we may live in the power, life and spirit of truth and so be sure that we can bear a testimony in our lives, to what our words or lines do discover, lest we be found in the day of the Lord too light; which day is coming and will not tarry. And even Zion itself cannot be a shelter to cover hypocrites, but in the day of the Lord their fear will be made manifest. "The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?" Isa.33:14. A virgins state with light in our lamps, without oil in our vessels, will not make way for entertainment in that day, Matt.25:1-13, neither will preaching nor prophesying, Matt.7:22-23, neither will our being called by the name of Israel, nor passing through the waters of Judah, nor swearing by the name of the Lord, nor calling ourselves of the holy city, Isa.48:1-2, without a real oneness with Christ, which is always accompanied with soundness of principle, and suitableness in practice; not in bare words and forms, but in power and life in each performance; that it may be thus, with you and me, it is and shall be the earnest prayer of him that is {courteous reader} one that desires to appear before men, as to only approve himself to the Lord, and be found faithful at his coming,

Paul Hobson.

**TO ALL THAT LOVE THE LORD IN
SINCERITY, AND ARE CALLED
ACCORDING TO HIS PURPOSE.**

Beloved, it is fearful to consider how far antichrist has darkened the glorious and pure truths of Jesus Christ, with his veils, wizards and covers, so that it is hard to find out their face or form, as also to restore any one truth to its primitive institution and being; though God is pleased many times by an eminent hand to bring truth to light, notwithstanding these false covers, which do yet lie upon it, as to many, though much discovered by others. Yet when I consider where the cause of all this is, not in the truth itself, but in men's blindness and darkness in their understanding thereof, and {which is yet worse} it being like so to remain till the glorious Gospel of Christ shall take hold of them, therefore the consideration of this should stay our spirits, when we see such contendings, oppositions and carnal reasonings against the clear and pure truth of God in the Scriptures; and now seeing our dear brother, the author of this treatise hath endeavored to bring forth his talent in the behalf of truth, in answer to those queries, wherein I judge that God hath in a good measure enabled him to give a clear answer, to the satisfying and confirming of them who are or have been apt to scruple or stagger at the truth which is here affirmed by him, and owned by all saints. I judge that this light of his should not be put under a bushel, but be brought forth to public view; so that if there be in it that which may give satisfaction to one, it may be useful, the rather when I consider, what necessity there is of it, in other places, where the words of such kind of persons are like the words of Hymenaeus and Philetus, II Tim.2:17, which will eat as doth a cancer. This is the ground of his so appearing in a public way; yet what room and

entertainment it may have or meet withal among the sons of men, I know not, because we know that wisdom is only justified of her children, if it be so among wisdom's children, it doth accomplish wisdom's end, and herein we have ours; possibly it may meet with reproaches and scorns, either in respect of its dress and habit it appears in, which was minded to the author, but could not well to be avoided, it being the only suitable way to him, to make out his mind in, namely syllogisms, and of the rather because Hagger's book which he answers runs in the same strain, or in relation to the author against whom some may be ready to cavil, and so fight and undervalue the truth, possibly conceiving him to have been formally dead, if not twice dead, as to such appearances, yet not plucked up by the roots. I know it may seem strange to many that he should now appear in the house of God, the strangeness of which hath been beheld as much by me as by any; and we have been ready to wonder at the admirable rich grace, patience and long-suffering of God towards him, who formally walked in notions and pretenses of spirituality, though in wantonness against Christ himself. Were it not that the Lord is merciful, because he delighteth to be merciful, we had not known how or where to have centered our judgments and understandings concerning him in that condition; yet knowing there is no difference where God makes none, I cannot but be satisfied, the rather, I being a personal eyewitness of the authors great alternation and change, not only in reference to a gracious frame of heart, and a close walking with God daily; but also in respect of those his many principles as to notions, which were embraced by him, and I fear too much by many now, to the turning of their minds aside from the simplicity of the Gospel and the truth as it is in Jesus. If the truth here affirmed shall take place in any hearts, to the securing of their judgments and keeping their consciences free from error

and pollution, we wish the Lord may have the praise, and we shall have cause therein to rejoice. Friends, I judge that now things will no longer go upon trust as formally the truths of God have too much gone upon the legs of human testimony; now therefore it is our desire, it may go upon trial, gold losing nothing by its trial, but its nature is discovered more excellent. To the Law and to the Testimony there must be a day of testing and trying, gold must appear to be gold, and dross to be dross, as it will no longer pass for current with God, though it doth with men; therefore it behooveth all the people of God, to have their loins girt about with truth. This is all at present I shall say, either in behalf of the author or matter, or persons to whom it is to be tendered, and so desire daily to pray for your furtherance in the Gospel, laboring while I am in this tabernacle, on this side of glory, to approve myself in the sight of God.

Your unworthy, yet faithful companion, {through Grace,}
in Gospel service,

Thomas Gower.

Dear friend, I received fourteen queries from you, desiring my judgment, about the death of Christ, the ability of the creature, and the justice of God relating to the condemnation of the creature, &c., and with them ten absurdities, which you are pleased to annex to the queries; but as for the absurdities I shall leave them till seasonably I may answer them, and come to show you the fallacy of them, only one or two things, first as to them, mind.

First, to draw absurdities from the cross answer of your queries, before your queries are answered is but a fallacy.

Secondly, the drawing absurdities from the answer of your queries, or what you judge will be the answer, doth show that you do not propound queries to be informed, because you conclude your answer before you propound them, or else your absurdities be but the fruit of fancy, the truth of which will appear when we shall speak to them. Now to speak to your queries one by one as they are there laid down will neither be proper nor profitable, because the foundation of the most of them is from a groundless supposition, to wit, that I and the rest do not hold that Christ died for all, which is contrary to your judgments; for we do hold that Christ did die for all, but not for all alike; therefore the very foundation of your query which relates to the death of Christ will appear groundless, and seeing that your queries lack any foundation, and besides I judge some of them contain contradiction, I shall not speak to them one by one. Now that we may not uphold contention, but in the fear of the Lord speak for information, knowing where the difference between us and you lieth, which gives you advantage to put so many forms upon queries, and faces upon absurdities, to present your opinion, though groundless yet pleasing, I shall according to the small ability the Lord gives me, in answer to my relation to truth, lay down and

speak to these things following, and so in the close answer your queries and absurdities.

First, wherein you and we do seem to be one in judgment, as to the death of Christ. Secondly, wherein we differ. Thirdly, the ground of your mistakes as to the death of Christ, the ability of the creature, and the clearing up of the justice of God. Fourthly, the sad absurdities, which of necessity must follow your opinion, not that which is to be discovered, but which is already discovered, in your protest position in your query, and then you shall see the necessity of the resorting of the most of the absurdities upon yourself, and the residue of them must needs fall, as to us, they having no foundation. First to the first.

First, I do judge that Christ died for all, though not for all alike. Secondly, that his death without any exemption is to be presented to all.

First, that he died for all, I shall prove it by Scripture, and then show you how. To prove this truth that Christ died for every man, I shall not prove it from these Scriptures – John 3:16; 6:33; II Cor.5:19; I Jn.2:2; 4:14, and my reason for it is that those Scriptures, though they speak out the word “all” and the word “world” yet there is no safety to make positive conclusions upon doubtful expressions, I mean as to the nature and measure of the word “all” or “world” for sometimes the word “world” includes the whole, as Psal.24:1; 50:12; 98:7; Jer.10.12, Acts 17:24.

Secondly, the word “world” is taken for a part as well as the whole, as in these Scriptures, John 13:1; 14:17; 15:18,19; 17:6,9; Acts 17:6; 19:27 & Rev.13:3.

Thirdly, as the word “world” doth include sometimes a part, so sometimes of that part, it doth intend properly the wicked of the world, as Acts 17:31; Rom.12:2; I Cor.3:19; 4:9; 6:6; Heb.11:7; II Pet.2:5; I Jn.5:19. Again in other places it doth also properly intend

only the professors or believers in Christ, as in these Scriptures, John 12:19; Rom.11:12,15; John 17:21,23. Now all that can be said or declared from these fore-mentioned Scriptures where the word "world" or "all" is expressed, where the death of Christ is declared, or reconciliation by him is to you very doubtful, whether it be to everyone, or only believers, and therefore seeing that a doubtful supposition is no foundation for infallible conclusions, nor to end any controversy in discourse, because supposition is as strong in the one as the other, and convinces none, but produces disputes in all; therefore I shall in my answer not positively conclude from, but set them aside in this discourse, and draw my proof as I told you before, either from Scripture or reason that doth arise no other way than from an Absolute necessity.

So now to my affirmation, which is, that Christ died for every man, but not for all alike. First, that he died for every man, for the proof of that see, I Tim.4:10, where it is said, that he is the Saviour of every man, but especially to them who believe, so there is a common Salvation by Christ intended to all. This truth is also made good in II Pet.2:1, where the Apostle declares some men to be men of destruction, and tells them that they had denied the Lord that bought them. So that wicked men and men of destruction were comprehended in the purchase of Christ; see further Heb.2:9, where it is stated that Christ by the Grace of God tasted death for every man.

Now I shall show you what I do intend thereby, and my grounds for it, besides what already hath been said, consider, that all men were comprehended in Adam, according to Scripture. "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Rom.5:12. And what God speaks as to blessing and cursing, when he

speaks to Adam, Gen.2:17, saying, in the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt die the death; now Adam when he ate did fall, and all men fell in him and came under this curse, according to the Scriptures. Rom.5:12-17; I Cor.15:21-22.

Now what the Lord saith must be true and exactly performed, which was in the very day when he ate, he must die, which word "death" doth comprehend death, in every sense. Now had not Jesus Christ been brought forth by the Lord to step between the pronounciation of the curse and the act meriting, and the execution of the curse, man must immediately have died, or else God had not been exact in his word, but we know that he is. Now Christ was brought forth to bear the wrath of the Lord, and the satisfaction of his justice, in that great breach and gap that man had made, and so Christ was the Saviour of every man from the immediate execution of that curse, and they have some time to live here in the world, or else their destruction had been in their conception, either in all or so many as Christ did not undertake for, for God's word is exactly true in all things. So that in the first sense, Christ is the Saviour of all men from the execution of that curse, at which time, and in which purchase, the world is no longer God's upon the old account, but as it is the inheritance of Jesus Christ, according to Col.1:16-17; Heb.1:2; Matt.21:38.

Secondly, Christ by his death doth not only set free the creature from the immediate execution of that curse, but he hath also taken them from under the dreadful killing power of that state which man was when he fell, which was to lie under the killing appearances of God's wrath, in that killing Law, nothing standing between God as fire, and they as stubble, but he hath brought them into a state and under the authority of himself, wherein there is a cessation from that fiery appearance of God, and they are now under the proclamation of Life and

Salvation by Jesus Christ according to these Scriptures. Matt.24:14; 26:13; Lk.24:47; Mark 14:9; 16:15; Rom.10:18; 16:26; Col.1:6. And this is to be done for the gathering out of the chosen of God from the world, till Christ hath brought his enemies under his feet, and then resign up the kingdom to his Father, and God become all in all. I Cor.15:24-25.

Besides the Scriptures which I have brought, which are sufficient to prove what I have affirmed, yet for your further satisfaction, mind my reasons to prove that everyone hath the benefit of Christ's death in those two particulars before expressed.

First reason, that which was included in the curse must needs be in the immediate execution prevented by Christ. But the immediate execution of a temporal death must needs be included in the curse, therefore the major is not questionable, the minor proposition is proved by this reason, for that which was a fruit of sin must be comprehended in the curse, but a natural death is a fruit of sin; and therefore the major proposition none can deny, whilst the minor is proved from these Scriptures. I Cor.15:21,56; II Kings 14:6; II Chron.25:4; Job 24:19; Rom.6:23. Besides these Scriptures I prove the minor proposition thus.

If anything that is a part of temporal death be a fruit of sin, then is the whole, but afflictions and pains in men and women, which is a part of temporal death is a fruit of sin; and therefore none can deny the major, whilst the minor is proved from these Scriptures. Gen.3:16; I Kings 8:33-35; Psal.38:3; Jer.8:14; Isa.3:10; Jer.50:7.

Now as the freedom from anything of this temporal misery is a fruit of Christ, so what comes instead of that, as the enjoyment of life with other mercies of this world, with the sun shining and the rain falling upon the just and the unjust must needs be a fruit of Christ which extends to all. Matt.5:45; Eccl.9:2; Psal.145:9; 36:6.

Now my reasons to prove this second thing, to wit, that all men are by Christ brought under the authority and power of Christ, and discoveries of life by him, are these.

First, that which the Scriptures declare us to be a truth we must believe, but that all men in that state are under the power and authority of Christ, and discoveries of life by him, the Scriptures assert and we believe. The major proposition none can deny, and the minor is proved from these Scriptures. Matt.28:18; Jn.17:2; Mark 2:10; Eph.1:19-22; Heb.2:8.

Secondly, if men's sins be aggravated by the abuse of the mercies they enjoy in this life, in being under the authority and discoveries of Christ, then to be under the authority and discovery of Christ must needs be a benefit; but men's sins are aggravated by their abusing of mercies that they enjoy under the authority and discovery of Christ; therefore, the major is proved by this reason.

Sin is never aggravated, but either by the extent of a law, or discoveries of love; and if sin be aggravated, as before expressed, then it must be either by the extent of the law or the discovery of mercy; and if either it discovers the truth of the major, to wit, that they are under the authority and discoveries of Christ, by whom now all law and love is handed out to poor creatures, they being all under his power; the minor proposition is proved from these Scriptures. Jn.15:22-24; Matt.11:21-23.

I shall say no more as to the business concerning the extent of Christ's death to every man, but shall now speak to the second part of my affirmation, to wit, that Christ did not die for all alike. Now that I may not speak to maintain that corrupt way of men's exercising wit to conquer one another, but shall desire in the fear of the Lord and the love of his truth, to speak to inform you about the difference relating to you and others about the death of Christ, and to maintain my affirmation, to wit,

that Christ died not for all alike. Now judging that these proposals following will help forward that work, I shall in this part of my affirmation propound them, and speak to them, which are as follows.

First, that there is a people that God hath chosen, and elected in his Son before the world was spoken into existence. Secondly, that he had a special design for the advancement of his Grace and Love, to carry on by Christ for them and them only. Thirdly, that this great design of Christ for them was and must be accomplished. Fourthly, that this great design of God in Christ for them, and only them, was satisfaction for all sin, and the purchase of Salvation, and everlasting life by him. Fifthly, that faith which is essential of all them that enjoy him, is not a cause but an effect of the aforementioned privilege. Sixthly, that the publishing or declaring the aforementioned privileges, which is the Gospel, is God's way or means to effect or produce faith or other Gospel obedience in the heart of his own. Seventhly, that this faith which is produced in obedience to truth, by the discoveries of the Gospel of Christ, is not the bringing up of something that is in men before conversion, but it is a peculiar work of God, which nature in the highest improvement is not capable of until conversion or the new work of Grace be wrought, which work is God's, not upon a common but a special and Gospel account, wrought by him. Eighthly, that it is God's mind and way, and a necessity it must be so for the advancement of his Grace, and the accomplishing, begetting of faith in the hearts of his own, that this Gospel is to be presented or discovered to all without any exception as to the declaration of itself.

Now I shall speak to these eight particulars in order, which when I have finished, then that part of my affirmation will appear to be true, to wit, that Christ died not for all alike.

First, to the first which is, that there is a people that God hath chosen and elected in his Son before the world was, the proof of which I shall make good so clearly from Scripture, and by the truth of such reasons by Scripture, that I hope through the Grace of God it may be a means to inform you. The first Scripture is II Tim.1:9, where the Apostle declares this truth, that God "hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." I need not paraphrase upon the expression, they are without all controversy that truth that God will own, which is, that Salvation and Election was determined by God, for his people, before they were called, or did any work suitable to the work of that mercy.

The second Scripture is Ephesians 1:4. "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love," which shows that Election was in Christ, and was before the foundation of the world, and it further shows that holiness and love in saints was then determined, not as causes of the former, but as consequences that must needs follow. "And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord, and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed," Acts 13:48, which in like manner declares, that they that have eternal life were ordained to it, and that faith was not the cause, but an effect of it, therefore ordination must be, before faith. There are many more Scriptures, but these are sufficient, now to the reasons.

First reason, whatsoever is made good by God in the conclusion of time, must needs be concluded of God before all time, but the Election of his own is made good in the conclusion of time, therefore, the minor will none deny, but the major, which is, whatsoever is made good in the conclusion of time, it must needs be concluded of

God before all time, and my reasons to prove that are these.

First, whatsoever comes to pass was before determined of God according to these Scriptures. Acts 2:23; Job 20:29; Dan.9:35; Isa.46:10; Lk.22:29; II Tim.1:9; Acts 17:31; I Thes.3:3; 5:9; Heb.9:27; Rom.9:11.

Secondly, whatsoever before was determined of God, doth and must come to pass, which is evident from the following Scriptures. Psal.33:11; Prov.19:21; 21:30; Isa.46:10; Acts 5:39; Job 23:14; 30:23; Dan.11:27-29,35. Besides that, mind this reason, that God who comprehends all, from whence all things take their rise, admits of no alteration or change in himself, but what is before was, and what was must be, and whosoever saith the contrary, must prove these three things. 1. Ignorance in God. 2. Mutability in God. 3. Weakness in God. Ignorance not knowing, mutability altering, weakness and being moved by causes before unknown and outside himself, which is blasphemy for any to assert.

Whatsoever God doth do for us in relation to Heaven, before Grace was wrought in us, is done before time, but election or choosing of us is done for us before Grace is wrought in us. Therefore, I need not stand to prove the major, it is so undeniable; the minor is proved from these Scriptures. Rom.5:8,10; Eph.2:4,5; I Jn.4:10,19; Ezek.16:4-6; Isa.43;23,24; Acts 9:3-6; Isa.56:1; Rom.10:20; Jn.10:16. And so much for the first particular.

Now to the second, which is, that he had a special design for the advancement of his Grace and Love to carry on by Christ for them and them only. What the great design is I have in some part told you, but if you would further know the great design of God for his people, and for the advancement of his own Glory and Grace, and would understand the time, way and means, and the truth

of the thing that there is such a thing, as a great design of God, mind well these Scriptures. Isa.53:10; 63:1-3; Psal.89:19; Dan.9:24-27; Isa.42:15-16. In all which Scriptures the particular will clearly be discovered; if you question the singularity of the design in this word for them and them, only for the manifesting of that, mind this reason.

What is good in God's sight must be done by him, but singularity in his love to some, or his manifestation of his love in Christ to some, and not to others is good in God's sight, therefore, the major none can deny, and the minor is proved from the Scriptures. Matt.11:25-26.

The third thing, that this great design of Christ for them, was and must be accomplished, which is clearly made good from these Scriptures. Isa.46:10; 55:11; Eph.1:9-11.

If you desire any reason besides what is brought, mind this, suitable to the Author must the act be, but he that carries on this design is God, whose power is infinite, whose determinate counsel is unalterable, whose intents are undividable, whose will considered in himself must stand, all which you may plainly see if you mind these Scriptures. Psal.33:11; Prov.19:21; 21:30; Isa.44:26; 46:10; Acts 2:23; 4:28.

The fourth particular, which is, that the design of God in Christ for them, was satisfaction for all sin, and the purchase of Salvation and eternal life by him, according to these Scriptures. Isa.53:5-6; I Jn.3:5; Col.1:14; Eph.1:7; 5:25-27. And further to manifest this truth, mind these three particulars.

First, God ordained Christ to that end. I Pet.1:19-20; Lk.1:68-69. Secondly, God fitted Christ for that end. Heb.10:5; Isa.42:1-4; Psal.89:19. Thirdly, what Christ was ordained to and fitted for was fully accomplished by him. Jn.19:28-30; 17:4; 4:34.

Now if any should say that Christ did accomplish the same design for all, as well as for some, they do exceedingly abuse God's intent in Scripture, and lay weakness upon God, as if he could not carry on what he did intend and in sufficiency upon Christ, or else you must deny these three things, to wit, first that God ordained Christ to it; secondly God's fitting of Christ for it; and thirdly that Christ did accomplish what he was ordained and fitted for, which to deny is very sad. Now though what hath been said is sufficient to prove this fourth thing, yet to satisfy you that this privilege that we have been now speaking of, is for some and not for all, I beseech you in tenderness to God and love to your own soul, and the honor of truth, mind these particulars.

First, though this Scripture which is God's word doth declare what God says, and what at present God doth, yet it is his essential will that doth declare fully and exactly what God is, which will is in himself, and himself so in that will, that his will is and must be himself, which self is not so much discovered in the form and face of present things, as by the conclusion of things.

Secondly, if the truth of prophecies by prophets are to be judged by the conclusion, or making good what they declare, Jer.28.7-8, then much more this truth we have been speaking to, is to be judged of by the conclusion, which if you do, you must of necessity hold that the great design of God and Christ, which was satisfaction for all sin, and purchase of Salvation, and everlasting life, must be for some and not for all, or else this Scripture must be needless. "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Matt.25:41.

Thirdly, though in the declaration of the Gospel it be said, that whosoever believes shall be saved, which is a truth, yet there is no Scripture that declares either by

prophets or promise that everyone in the world doth or shall believe, and though the commandment be universal, that doth not decide the controversy, for God's authority extends over all, which is manifest in his language commanding of them, but the peculiarity of his love is not to be judged by the extent of his authority, but by the application or making good of his mercy, which work or privilege is but some, and is solely his work, as we shall afterwards show you.

Fourthly, though faith be required in the declaration, and is the way to enjoy the manifestation, yet a lack in faith doth not nor cannot make any alteration in the foundation, which is clear from these Scriptures. "If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful, he cannot deny himself," applied to the verse following, "nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his. And, let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." II Tim.2:13,19. "Although my house be not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure, for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow." II Sam.23:5. Mind well, now it is clear that the foundation is God's unchangeable love and grace, which if it were to all upon the condition of faith, giving a propriety in the foundation, then any lack in faith would work some alteration, which is contrary to the aforementioned Scriptures.

Fifthly, in the fear of the Lord consider this Scripture, John 17:4, were Christ says to his Father, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." Now if Christ was ordained or appointed of the Father to satisfy for the sins of all, and to purchase life and salvation for all, then he hath finished it, and they must be saved, or else Christ doth not speak truth, which is blasphemous to assert; but you see and must know that all are not, nor shall be saved; therefore it was not given him by the

Father to do. Now if any shall say that Christ hath finished the work of eternal life for any who will not believe in him, I answer, that the work cannot be finished, if it depend upon anything else, and especially upon that which is so mutable as the minds of men, whether they receive it or not receive it, as you would affirm; therefore without controversy Christ speaking truth, the work is fully finished, as the pardon of sin, purchase of salvation and eternal life by him, faith doth not make up the work, but is merely a fruit that flows therefrom, which is the next thing we shall enter upon, and so I shall say no more to this fourth thing, to wit, that the great design of God in Christ was to satisfy for all sin, and purchase salvation and eternal life for the elect, and none but them.

The sixth thing is, that faith which is required of all them that enjoy him is not a cause but an effect of the aforementioned privilege, that is to say, that it is not the cause but an effect of election, and I that I shall promptly prove three ways. 1. From Scripture. 2. From the nature of causes. 3. From the nature of the thing.

First, from the Scripture, "and when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord, and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed," Acts 13:48, which clearly shows that ordination is before faith, in this order and form Christ declares when he said to his disciples, "ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you." Jn.15:16. They had chosen Christ, that is to say, loved him and by faith embraced him, but his intent is, that they were first chosen by him, and that is why the Apostle saith, "we love him, because he first loved us." I Jn.4:19. And for your further satisfaction, mind these Scriptures. Rom.8:30; 9:11; II Tim.1:9; Ezek.16:6; Hos.14:8.

Secondly, consider the order of causes, and you will find that Henry Hagar, who is a man I much regard, and out of whose book I see you have drawn your

absurdities; if you do there but see how he deciphers causes, you will there find that he makes no distinction of essential, meritorious, instrumental and final causes, but jumbles up all together without distinction. Dear friend, it is not a form of words that will make things orderly in God's sight, unless there be divine wisdom to rectify the judgment, making man to deny his own natural wit, when he goes about to decipher or discover God's great design in Christ.

Again, if you will say, though he sets down successive causes, yet he doth not set down the cause of Election, in any of these seven causes he mentions, neither can he unless he can discover a cause of him that is the Cause of causes.

For my part I am of his judgment in these particulars, &c. 1. That God's love was the cause of his sending of his Son to die for sinners. 2. That Christ dying and rising is the cause of the Gospel being preached. 3. The Gospel being preached is the cause of men's believing. 4. That men's believing is the cause of justification, but then it is justification in conscience, and not justification before God in Christ, which is the fountain, and this in conscience is but the stream. 5. That our knowing ourselves justified by faith through the blood of Christ is the cause of our love to Christ. 6. That our love to Christ is the cause of our obedience to Christ. But then the seventh cause, which is, that our obeying Christ is the cause of his giving us everlasting life, which is something I deny.

And if you view these Scriptures which he brings to prove it, it will not make good. Mark 16:16; Rev.22:14; Heb.6:9. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," and "blessed are they that do his commandments that they have right to the tree of life," and may enter in through the gate into the city, and Christ being made perfect through suffering, becoming the Author of

everlasting Salvation, unto all them that obey him; the Scriptures are truth, and declare, that they that obey Christ shall have eternal life, but they nor no other Scriptures declare anything contrary to this position, that obedience is the way of life but not the cause of life. If you look upon causes either essential or meritorious, but if you look upon it instrumental, that is to say as the means or way to such an end, then it is true, and so is faith and so is prayer, according to these Scriptures. Phil.1:19; I Pet.1:5; Prov.2:8; Jer.32:40. Now when I tell you that I do approve of these six causes successively before mentioned, it is also with this restriction, to put a difference between causes, for the first cause which is God's love, that is the efficient cause; the second cause being Christ's death and it being the meritorious cause, the 3rd through 6th causes he speaks of are the instrumental causes, and if you speak of these things in themselves, and as they are to us, then they are causes, but if you speak of them all, as they relate to God, who is the Cause of causes, then they are but effects, Christ's death is but the effect of God's love, the preaching of the Gospel is but an effect of God's love, faith in Christ is but his gift, and our love to him and obedience do all flow from him as the Fountain, according to these Scriptures, Gal.5:22; Eph.6:23; Heb.12:2; James 1:17-18, so they cannot in that sense be called causes but rather fruits.

Further, consider what that friend saith in his book, as he declares a cause in all the seven things, yet he shows you no cause why God should love us. Now election or choosing is so considered, in the singularity of his love, and doth so live in the bowels of it, that there is no more cause for the one than there is for the other, and he requires nothing without himself, to beget or maintain that in himself for us. And now the thing which I would have you consider, follows.

Thirdly, consider what we mind by election. It consisteth in God's foreknowledge, wherein he was pleased from all eternity in the riches of his grace and love to pitch upon and make choice of some in a peculiar sense to be vessels of glory, whom he elected in the election of his Son, who was the public Person comprehending the whole, and this prerogative of God and privilege to us, is not to be deciphered or discovered, like as other privileges are; for the death of Christ, and our faith in Christ, these have the time of their rise, reign and perfection; but for the other privilege it is done in God and with God, without relation to anything outside Himself. It only depends upon the prerogative of his will, and his good pleasure, according to the Scriptures. Rom.9:16-22; Eph.1:1-8. Therefore when we speak of causes we must make a distinction between what is done by God out of God, and what is done by God in God; and whatsoever is done in the last sense hath no rise but Himself and his own pleasure, and if you give not God this, you must deny his prerogative and prove that he may not do with his own what seems good unto him, which is contrary to the Scriptures. Matt.20:15; Exod.33:19; Rom.9:15,16. Now besides what hath been already said to prove that faith is but an effect and not the cause of election, mind these two reasons. First, if election be before men have faith, then faith cannot be a cause, but it must be an effect; but election is before we have faith. Therefore the major is not to be questioned; and the minor, which is, that election is before faith, is proved from these Scriptures. Acts 13:48; II Tim.1:9-10; Eph.1:4-5.

Reason 2. God is the first cause of causes, and whatsoever doth take its rise or is immediate from Him hath no other cause, the truth of that you will see from the Scriptures before mentioned, therefore faith must needs be an effect. But besides all the Scriptures and

reasons I have brought; do but consider, that election is not capable of being caused by any causes out of God, for we are elected in the election of Christ, and Christ did not merit his own election, for his death is not the cause of election, though it be the meritorious cause, and God's great way to accomplish life and salvation. If so be that faith is the cause of our election, then election is subject to a cause, and if in the lesser than in the greater; but we know that in the greater which is the election of Christ, in which general all particulars are comprehended; it is not caused, nor depends upon any condition or causes out of God, but immediately flows from Him, and all other works and acts of grace and mercy done by God in Christ for us, or by God in us towards Christ, are the fruits of this eternal fountain. I mean God's love, in which God's owning or choosing is so involved in it, as it is one with it, and both arise from one and the same fountain, which is his own will and pleasure.

Now there being some that make objections against this truth, which pre-adventure may be the cause of your stumbling, I shall in faithfulness to Christ, and love to your soul, mention some of them, and give you my answer to them.

First, some there are, as Henry Hagar in particular, that do acknowledge this truth from these places of Scripture, Eph.1:4, where it is said that God hath chosen us in Christ before the world was; and also the same in I Pet.1:2; II Thes.2:13. Now though they acknowledge these words, yet they endeavor to evade or turn the meaning another way, by giving this answer from Romans 4:17, where it is said, that God declared unto Abraham that he hath made him the father of many nations. And in Rev.13:8, were Christ is said to be a Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Now from thence they reason thus, that the Apostle in Romans 4:17, declaring the promise of God to Abraham saith, that God calls those

things that are not as though they were, for saith he, Abraham at that time was not the father of Isaac in whom the nations should be blessed, and yet God saith, I have made thee the father of many nations; but saith he, it was not so, for the Apostle doth declare it saying, he calls things that are not as though they were, and so Christ is said to be a Lamb slain from the beginning of the world, though he was not slain many thousand years after. So saith he, are we to understand Election, for the Scripture saith, that he did choose and elect us before the world was, yet it was not so, only God calls things that were not as though they were, and therefore men saith he, are not elected till they are called.

Now dear friend, in the fear of the Lord, as I tender the information of your own soul, seriously consider what an evasion here is, without any way in truth discovering what the Apostle intends in these expressions, for without controversy when God said, "I have made thee a father of many nations," he spake truth, without any such evasion as our carnal wits will prompt us to believe.

But that I may give an answer to this objection, judging that if that cover were removed, the truth would lie naked, I desire you to mind in answer to it these particulars.

First, in every action there is these three things to be considered. 1. The life or virtue of the act. 2. The fruit of the act. 3. The form of the act. "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love; having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved." Eph.1:4-6. "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." I Pet.1:2. "But we

are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." II Thes.2:13. The life of the act is that which produceth the form, the fruit of the act lives in the life, and is spoke out, or brought forth by the form. Had not this been so the sin of Adam could never have brought a curse upon his posterity, for the life of his act was in unity, in all that were comprehended in his person, and the evil fruit of his act took place upon all, in that sense, when it took place upon him, but the manifestation or execution of this took place successively as mankind was brought forth, and so it appears the form of the act, was to be made manifest according unto the succession or appearance of forms in mankind, but the life of the act from whence the denomination of the act comes was really acted and executed in Adam; so in the promise of God to Abraham, you are to look upon the life or virtue of the promise, the fruit of the promise, and the form of the performance, which is but the mouth and language to speak out the life by; which was made good when Isaac and his seed successively took place. So in Christ; he was a Lamb slain from the beginning of the world, the life or virtue of the act, which was the efficacy of Christ's death, which did arise from the Author and life of the act, that took place so soon as ever God did promise Christ, the form of the act, which is the language, as I told you before, to speak out the life, that takes place in time, and is not formally presented till actually performed; but the life or virtue of the form, that takes place for us when first promised, and so the death of Christ was effectual so soon as ever the promise was propounded, or else Adam must have died, and none could have been saved till Christ had come and suffered in the flesh. The very same we are to mind in election. The life of the act, which is the essence, took place from the beginning; as to the form we shall

mind it in the second particular. Now as to the discovery and the fruits of the act, that takes place in forms, as forms are presented, but the act is as truly alive before the form appears, as it is afterwards, and the truth is, every act takes its denomination from the life, and the antiquity is derived from thence; and so Abraham was a Father of nations, when the promise was first propounded, and so Christ was really slain, as to the life and of virtue, when he was first promised, and election was then done when it took place in its rise, which was God's singular love and good will to choose some to be vessels of glory. Now when the apostle saith, that God "calls things that are not as if they were," he doth not intend the life or virtue of the act, but the form of the act, and he that denies it, endeavors to overthrow the whole tenure of Scripture. For in this sense we are to understand our fall in Adam and our rise in Christ, according to the tenure of the Gospel, and so also the promise to Abraham, and so we are to understand the intent of a Law, as in Matthew 5:28, which declares lusting after a woman to be adultery, I John 3:15; that hatred is murder, which declares the act to live in the life and the virtue though it lacks its outward form, and if so really before the form is brought forth, and in this sense we are to understand Christ's love and rejoicing in the sons of men before the world was. Prov.8:31.

Secondly; consider, as the life and virtue of some acts take place before the form, and is really in being before the form appear either of our acts or Gods; so further mind, that whatsoever is done, not only of God, but also in God for us, the life and form of that act, as to God takes place together, and both is in being before it doth appear, though the discovery of that is not, till the object to which the action relates be brought forth, and this is true election, for that is an act done as well in God as by God, and so life and form take place together as to

God, though as to the form of the discovery to us, it is not till formable we are brought forth. So this act is not to be parallel with such acts that God doth for us, though by himself yet out of himself, as redemption, or the promise to Abraham is; and therefore what is said from the words of the apostle, Rom.4:17, is not sufficient to overthrow this truth; namely, that election is before the beginning of the world, according to these Scriptures. Eph.1:4; I Pet.1:2; II Thes.2:13.

A second objection that is made against this truth, by the fore-mentioned party and some others is from these words in I Peter 1:2, "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ," and in II Thes.2:13,14, "but we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth, whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." From whence they reason thus, if we are chosen through sanctification of the Spirit, then none are chosen before they have the Spirit and are sanctified by the Spirit; and if Saints are chosen to Salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth, and were called to believe through hearing of the Gospel, then say they, men are not chosen before they did believe the truth, and before they did hear the Gospel, by which they were called to believe.

Answer. That kind of reasoning is very sad and unsuitable to the intent of the Apostle in those expressions, and that their arguments have no foundation from thence, seriously view the words that the Apostle saith in both the places, that we are chosen to Salvation through sanctification, unto obedience and belief of the truth, whereunto we are called by the Gospel. All that can

from thence be gathered is thus much, that sanctification and belief of the truth, or obedience, is the way to accomplish that end, unto which Election doth intend; for there are three things to be considered.

1. The act of Election, and that has been punctually proved, both to matter, manner and time.
2. The end of Election, which is the advancement of God's Grace, in bringing vessels of mercy to glory.
3. The way or means to accomplish the end, which is by or through sanctification or believing the truth.

But it is no other way discovered, but as the way and means, nowhere as the cause or foundation, therefore there is no ground from thence to prove that Sanctification and Election must be both at one time, no more than the people of Israel going through the wilderness to Canaan to be a discovery, that God did not ordain them for Canaan or gave them promise of Canaan before they came into the wilderness, which was the way to it. The Scriptures declare, "that without holiness no man shall see God," Heb.12:14, but I know no Scripture that declares, that man shall not, nor is not elected till he be holy, though they that are elected must and shall be holy, and they that are holy shall see the Lord and live with him in glory, not as the efficient and meritorious cause, but as the way and means to such an end. If men will draw syllogisms from such corrupt apprehensions of such divine expressions as the Apostle uses in those Scriptures, they may as well prove from thence, and with as small a paradox, that sanctification is before men are born, as to prove from the Scriptures that Election, which is before the world, to be not till men are sanctified; but to exercise wit to prove either of these two things is sophistry and no reason, and not becoming a saint to meddle with.

Objection 3. No men can be elected in Christ, until they be in Christ, but no men are in Christ until they

believe or trust in Christ, for the elect Ephesians were once out of Christ. Eph.2:11,12.

Answer. Men are said to be truly and really in Christ two ways. First; by election, and so believers are all in Christ, he being the public person in whom all the election was comprehended, and all the elect are really in Him, before they are brought forth, as every man is in Adam before they are born, and this last affirmation they themselves do grant, and so they must the other, if they do but truly view the mind of God in his word, and not draw reasons from bare expressions, without discovering the true intention. Now if they could prove that no man in any sense is in Christ until he doth believe, then they must say something, or else their argument is of no force, for we are one with them in their second being in Christ, which is when we are called, and in that sense even the elect of God, until they are converted, are without God and without hope, and by nature the children of wrath as well as others. Eph.2:3. But before ever the elect are brought home to Christ in their calling and conversion, they were in Christ in election, or else Christ would not have said "other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice," John 10:16; so that they did belong to Christ, as his particular sheep before he brought them in, and that there is such a property and unity before conversion, you will see, if you seriously mind the Scriptures. John 10:16; Acts 18:10; II Tim.1:9; Eph.1:3. Now there is an outward being in Christ, which is only the outward profession of Christ, that men may be in and fall according to these Scriptures. John 15:2,6; I John 2:19; I Tim.1:19,20. But I shall not speak to that.

They have some other objections about trusting in Christ and believing in Christ, but we have said enough to that already, showing that faith, and all other obedience

is not a cause of, but flows from that privilege according to these Scriptures. Eph.2:4,5; John 15:16; I John 4:19.

There are some other objections that do arise from some other mistakes of Scripture, which I shall taken occasion to speak something to in my declaring the third thing which I promised you, to wit, your mistakes, which are the cause of your stumbling.

The sixth thing, which is, that the publishing of the aforementioned privilege, which is the Gospel, is God's way or means to effect or produce faith or other Gospel obedience in the hearts of his own; as to this, there being but little difference between you and I, and the speaking much to it will not upon that account add much to the deciding the controversy between you and others, therefore I shall only set down the Scriptures to prove it, and so leave it. I Cor.4:15; Rom.10:17; II Thes.2:13; II Tim.1:10; Gal.3:2.

I shall say no more to this but come to the seventh particular. Seventhly, that faith which is produced in obedience to truth, by the discoveries of the Gospel of Christ, is not the bringing up of something that is in men before conversion, but it is a peculiar work of God, which nature in its highest improvement is not capable of, till conversion or the new work of grace be wrought, which is God's, not upon common, but a special Gospel account wrought by Him.

Now dear friend, before I speak to this particular, give me leave to speak two or three words to you, relating to some things that do very much trouble me in relation to the abuse of this truth, for there are two truths miserably abused, even by them that do profess the Lord; the one is, that all power we have to act or do things, in a Gospel sense is produced alone by the power and Spirit of God, not upon a common but a special account.

The second is, that the best of Saints while they live here have sin; therefore to exhort those that profess

the Lord to exactness in duty, or reprove them for any neglect in duty, presently this is replied, "we can do no more than we have power," which is a truth in its sense, but it is sadly applied, for when God hath begun to work grace in us, the way to increase in strength is by careful watching and waiting hourly and daily before the Lord, and they that do so wait and walk, have experience that God will not be wanting to increase strength according to these Scriptures. Isa.40:31; John 7:17; Isa.64:5; Psal.9:10; Matt.13:12; Luke 8:18. And the truth says, were this practiced, there would not be such sad un-saint-like walkings as now appear to be among them that profess the Lord, both in their pride, fashioning themselves after the world, covetousness, frothy language, wanton carriages, and other un-saint-like practices, inasmuch that it is a hard thing to know a saint from a sinner, in his daily practice and conversation, unless you find them in particular acts of worship, which is that which doth sadly wound the Name of God, and the glory of Christ amongst men. I do not speak this for to accuse others only, but also to bear witness against myself for my former unsuitable walkings, wherein my daily watchings and waitings, and exact conforming and cultivating faith, was not kept alive, and therefore I died, {"for if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live," Rom.8:13, "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap; for he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting," Gal.6:7,8,} but blessed be the Lord who hath discovered the truth of this to my soul.

Now they abuse the second truth thus, come to some professors and tell them of their pride, fashions of the world, covetousness, passion, courtly complements, frothy language, manifesting that these things are

unbecoming saints, and inconsistent with a growing heart; this presently is replied, "everyone hath sin, Paul and the rest of the Apostles, the very best of saints had sin, and so I confess that I have." This they answer, and peradventure they will say that they do grown under it, which is a perfect deceit; for though there is sin in the people of God, yet there is a daily growth and overcoming in Christ by faith in the blood of Christ, and by a diligence in waiting and watching, by which the sin of the heart, or corruption of the will and the mind is kept under, and there is not an allowance of any one sin where Christ is in truth.

And therefore those that do shelter themselves under truth, in this sense, and do not daily grow and get power against sin, let them know this from a heart that knows it from woeful experience, that they only live in notions and not in the power and spirit of truth, to be a witness of the truth of the new birth or work of grace which God hath wrought in them that are his. Now having discovered what troubles me, and what makes me so unwilling to mention these truths, but with discovering also wherein men do abuse them, I shall now say no more, but come to the proof of this seventh particular, and for the proof of that mind these particulars.

1. The whole testimony of Scripture. 2. The nature of the work. 3. The titles that are given by God and Christ to the work. 4. The nature of every creature before this is wrought. Which four things will sufficiently prove that this work of faith is not gained by improving nature before conversion, or a work before conversion that nature is capable of, but is singly the work of God, not in a general sense, as in a works sense, but in a peculiar and Gospel sense.

First, the testimony of Scripture to make good this truth is very full and clear. "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness

unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." I Cor.2:14. Which fully declares that the receiving or entertaining through faith the truths of the Spirit of God is a work which nature or natural men before conversion are not capable of, nor able to perform, but is a special work of the Spirit of God. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," Jn.3:3, and in verse 5, he saith, "except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God," where you see the two special employments of faith, to wit, the seeing or viewing the glory of God's kingdom and the entering of the kingdom; both which are to be done through faith; and Christ doth here affirm that it is a work impossible for natural man to do, or anything in nature to perform before conversion or the new birth, a work singularly God's by his Spirit, according to his own good will and pleasure, which Christ affirms in verse 8 of the same chapter, "the wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth, so is every one that is born of the Spirit."

Ephraim's experience doth testify to this, that repentance, smiting, and being ashamed followeth turning, and that turning and instructing in this Gospel sense, in the act of conversion, is God's singular work. "I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus; thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke; turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the LORD my God. Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh, I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth." Jer.31:18-19. "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil." Jer.13:23. The comparison

declares, that it is impossible for unconverted man that lives in sin to do good as good, that is to say, to do any Gospel work. Besides, these testimonies which are sufficient, I desire you to further mind these Scriptures. "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." Phil.2:13. So it is singularly God's work produced by his good pleasure. "The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the LORD." Prov.16:1. "O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself, it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." Jer.10:23. "Turn thou us unto thee, O LORD, and we shall be turned." Lam.5:21. "And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me forever, for the good of them, and of their children after them, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me." Jer.32:39-40.

Now as for the second, which is, what the nature of the work is, before I speak of the nature of faith, give me leave to speak a word or two of the new birth or conversion, which of necessity must be wrought before any work or employment of faith can appear; and the truth is my dear friend, if we cannot witness the new birth, we are not in a capacity to inform one another of the things of God, for till then we are but natural, and not fit for such an employment. I Cor.2:14. "But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things." I Jn.2:20. "But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you, but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him." I Jn.2:27.

This work of conversion and new birth I shall present it to you thus. It is by the glorious and powerful appearance or discovery of the glory of God in Christ,

which doth so seize upon the soul, and convincingly conquers the soul, that the soul in the discoveries of that light is so killed and made silent, and confounded in the sense of his own unsuitableness to God, and undoneness without Christ, that the heart is presently made to loath and abominate itself, and whatsoever was wrought or done before Christ came, and is so restlessly carried out for Christ, that the soul cannot rest till it doth enjoy Him, or enjoy him as his own, which is alone done through believing.

Now faith is a supernatural light and life setup in the soul by God's causing the creature to assent to and close with the authority of God's truth in Christ, upon which direct application followeth, which is the applying of Christ as his own from the truth of God's word, which is from his peculiar love, which love the heart is made sensible of in that appearance.

Now dear friend, do but consider this small description of the work of conversion and faith, and see if anything in nature before the new birth is wrought, is capable of, or able to perform such a work, do but pick out some particulars of it.

1. This appearance of God doth and will kill, make silent, and confound or conquer whatsoever is in the soul before Christ comes. Jer.31:18-19; Rom.7:9; Zech.2:13; Acts 2:37. 2. The believer is so overcome with the sight of this light that he can no longer love, but only loath himself. Job 40:26; Job 9:31; Phil.3:8. 3. It is made able to go out of itself, and give away for, and assent to the Authority and Truth of God's Word. John 3:33; Rom.4:18-20; II Thes.1:10. 4. It can find no rest in itself, nor whatsoever self did before or can do, but solely waits upon and attends the authority of this discovery. Acts 2:37; 16:30; Song 5:6-8; Psal.63:1; Matt.11:12. 5. It's made able to apply; that is to say, to own a propriety, and to bring home that to itself, as its own, which is as

high as heaven, and far above what nature can either reach or attain unto, according to the Scriptures. Heb.11:7-13; John 8:56; I Cor.2:9,10.

Now I beseech you to consider what hath been said, and you will see, that the nature of this truth, as we said before, is too high for any improvement of nature to attain unto, before the new birth.

Thirdly, consider the titles that are given by God and Christ to the work, I mean to the work of regeneration, in which faith is comprehended or included. It is called a new birth. "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Jn.3:3. Now dear friend, consider what it is to be born, and mind that a spiritual birth transcends a natural birth; if you can truly witness this, you will see and must acknowledge this truth.

1. That it is impossible by any improvement of nature to be performed before the work of Grace is wrought. 2. It is called spiritual. "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." I Cor.2:14. Now you know that every effect is caused by a cause suitable to itself, and everything is producible in its proper element; and if so, then a state of nature cannot produce a work that is spiritual. 3. It is called a rising or quickening from the dead. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." Col.3:1. "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins." Eph.2:1. Can the dead raise itself, or can that which is dead quicken itself, without a power beyond itself? 4. It is to deny a man's self. "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, if any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." Matt.16:24. Self cannot deny itself in no

consideration, but it must be by a power above and beyond it. 5. It is a killing or mortification. "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die, but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." Rom.8:13. "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry." Col.3:5. Now the power of killing or mortifying is above the thing killed or mortified.

Fourthly, consider what man is before this work is wrought. 1. He is not only in sin but dead in sin. "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins." Eph.2:1. "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ." Eph.2:5. 2. He is without God, without grace, and without hope. "That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." Eph.2:12. 3. They are in blindness, and this until supernatural light by God be set up in the soul, thus he cannot see nor know the things of God in a spiritual and saving sense. "And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness." Isa.29:18. "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped." Isa.35:5. 4. He is in a state of enmity, and is an enemy to God and to the Gospel, to light and life. "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Rom.8:7. "And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled." Col.1:21. "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." Rom.5:10. 5. They are children of

wrath. "Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others." Eph.2:3.

Now summing this altogether. That state which is a state of death; a state of being without God and Christ; of so much blindness; a state of enmity to God, and to the light and life of the Gospel; a state wherein men are children of wrath. I say, consider this, and mind what the work of faith or the new birth is, lay both together and you will be forced to say, that the highest improvement of nature, whilst men are in nature, is not capable of, nor able to perform it.

I shall say no more to this fourth particular, which is for the making good of the seventh position, to wit, that faith that is produced in obedience to truth, by the discoveries of the Gospel of Christ, is that which nature in the highest improvements, before conversion is not capable of performing.

I would come to the next thing, but there is one or two objections by the way, which I judge some may make against what I have spoken, as to the insufficiency of creatures to such work, and therefore in a way of query, for your satisfaction that nothing may be left undone to the utmost of my power, to satisfy and inform your judgment, which in tenderness of love I desire to do, I shall mention them, and give you my answer to them.

Query 1. This that you have spoken or declared seems to unpower the creature entirely, as if it had no power before the new birth, which seems very contrary to Scripture, which speaks of the creatures improving their talent. Answer. As to any Gospel work or works relating to God in Christ, that every creature is incapable of and averse to, nay, an enemy to before this appearing of God in the work of Grace, and yet this does not at all deny, that there is a power in the creature to do much

more than at the present I can see the most natural men do; therefore I beseech you, that I may not destroy one truth by maintaining another. Consider what the Lord hath shown me in the searching of the Scripture which I shall briefly lay down in these particulars.

1. That every man naturally hath a talent, which he is bound by the Law of God to improve. 2. That this talent or power in the highest improvement is but to answer the moral law, or so much of it as nature is capable of retaining. 3. That they who do thus improve it, do very much come up to the answering of the righteousness of the Law, as Paul did before his conversion. Phil.3:5-6. 4. When creatures do thus improve their talent in the answer of the moral law, or so much as their nature is capable of, though there is an enmity between that, in the Scripture sense, and the righteousness of Christ, yet Christ seems to have some kind of regard to that improvement, and therefore you may see, when the young man came to him, though he was unacquainted with saving Grace, yet in his improvements had very much answered the outward requirements of the Law, and therefore the text saith, that Christ looked upon him and loved him, Mark 10:17-23, so that such improvements of nature in answer to a law is more pleasing to Christ than the embezzling a man's talent, polluting of nature in the neglect of improvement.

Consider, if there be such a power, and such an improvement, and so much owned, certainly it is good for men to be exact in it; and it is very much my judgment, that God approves of and meets men there; if so, I think we are to wait upon God there; and yet this will not prove that men have power by improvement of nature to work up their hearts in a Gospel sense for the entertaining of Christ; though this improvement may be a way to wait upon God in, for even Gospel ordinances, or outward

means of Grace are commonly that which God is met in, and the Lord meets souls there, but yet that doth not prove that the ordinances have power in themselves to bring up to Grace. Nay, if men do rest on them, or look upon power in them, not looking up to God, above them, then they are so far from coming to God, that they and their performance are condemned and loathed by God, according to these Scriptures. Isa.1:11-13; 66:3. The same we are to consider in this, and much more, for I see clearly by Scripture that there are more promises fixed to Gospel ordinances than are to the improvements of natural abilities, though both are good, yet neither is able to bring up to Christ; but in the highest abilities of either we are to consider the work of Grace or the New Birth to be produced by the working of God's mighty power, above and beyond both, and that appears clearly, if you consider these particulars.

1. The case of the young man in the Gospel, he had the highest improvements of nature of any that I read of, but when Christ brings his improvements to the touchstone of Gospel principles, he in his improvements left Christ. Matt.19:16-22. 2. Consider that the work of Grace in a Gospel sense is of a nature far above and beyond the righteousness of the Law, and that you will see in the Scriptures. Rom.9:31-32; Gal.3:10-12; Phil.3:8-9; Tit.3:5-7. When any soul that ever improved nature, as Paul, Phil.3:5-6, or any other when once they are come to be brought home to Christ, these moral improvements are so far from closing with this new work, that it is solely to be laid aside in denied. Phil.3:8-9.

I mean in relation to a conjunction with Christ, as having any ability or power performing the new birth, which is solely done of God; and verily there is a greater and more eminent appearance of God's power in converting such a man, who by improvement hath made himself righteous as to the Law, than in converting him

that is a greater sinner, which is clear from these Scriptures. Matt.11:21-23; Lk.11:32. The case you may also see in the proud Pharisee. Luke 18:10-13. But this does not arise so much from the nature of the righteousness, as from the corruption in the creature, who doth sinfully improve the righteousness, endeavoring to find the way to Heaven without Christ, though they do use the name and title of Christ in what they do. Therefore I would not have any neglect to improve their talent, though I would have you and all know, when you have done all as to the work of Grace and procuring Heaven, you are unprofitable servants and far below the work of Grace, and so far from being able to perform it, till Grace comes in a Gospel sense, that nothing can be done, when it is come, though it doth teach you to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, which fulfills the law, in answering the Gospel, yet it doth teach you to deny and loath all your former improvements and righteousness, according to these Scriptures. Phil.3:4-9; Gal.3:10-14; Eph.2:8-9; Tit.3:5-7. And so much in answer to these queries. Only dear friend, that we may understand truth truly, let us draw up the result thus, for when the Scripture speaks of any power in the creature before the new birth, it is only that small proportion of power, which is to be improved in answer to the righteousness of a moral law; so far as the discovery of it is retained in nature; and when I declare this truth which the Scripture owns, to wit, that the creature hath no power, that is, to a work of Grace in a Gospel sense, which is God's peculiar work, not in a common but in a Special and Gospel account, which work the former ability is far below, and in the highest improvement is not able to perform.

Peradventure you may make a second query, which you were pleased to express when I saw you, which is, what is done before this new birth, and that which is

done since, is all by the power of God, and if by the power of God, why make we the distinction?

Answer. We do not make any distinction of power, as it is considered in God, for the power of God is undividable in himself, but our discourse relates to the exercise of God's power as to us, and that is distinguishable, and is to be considered, either higher or lower, either common or special, according to these Scriptures. Deut.9:29. Job.23:6; 26:14; Psal.79:11; Lk.9:43; Eph.1:19; Col.1:11. Besides, we see clearly, that some acts of God's power are universal and communicable to all, and some are peculiar, as gifts of Grace to some, and not to all, and they that have the former may and do many times want the latter. For your better understanding of that truth, do mind Deut.29:2, "and Moses called unto all Israel, and said unto them, ye have seen all that the LORD did before your eyes in the land of Egypt unto Pharaoh, and unto all his servants, and unto all his land," and in verse 3, "the great temptations which thine eyes have seen, the signs, and those great miracles." Now all that Moses discovers there, is to manifest the exercise of God's power in a common or general sense, but doth not at all include the peculiar exercises of God's power as to Grace, which we have been all this while speaking of, therefore he saith, verse 4, "yet the LORD hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day." The same you may understand in these Scriptures. Matt.11:25 applied to Matt.13:11; 19:11; Jn.6:65, all which I entreat you in the fear of the Lord to mind, and not to conclude anything in opposition to this truth, from the unity of power that is in God, but seriously mind the exercise his power as to us, and then you will find, that you have no ground to propound such a query, or to stumble at your apprehensions of the unity of the power in God, but I shall say no more as to that query.

Now I should come to the eighth particular, which is, that it is God's mind and way, and therefore of necessity it must be so, for the advancement of his Grace, and the accomplishment of faith in the hearts of his own, that this Gospel is to be presented or discovered to all without any exception, as to the declaration itself, to which I shall say little, it being so clear, only refer you to the Scriptures which declare God's will to present or declare Christ to all, and that according to these Scriptures. Matt.26:13; 28:18-19; Mark 16:15,16. That God's end is for working of faith in the hearts of his own, or the gathering his own to himself, according to these Scriptures. Rom.10:14-15; I Cor.4:15; Col.1:15; I Thes.2:13; I Pet.4:6. This is all I shall say to this eight position.

Now I know there are some that will make some objections further to what hath been said, which I desire to mention, and give my answer to. Objection. It is clear from what you have said, that Christ is to be presented to all, and that he is enjoyed by none but through believing, and you say the power of believing is entirely of God, and not by any improvement of the ability of nature prior to the new birth; if so, how can it be just with God to condemn them that do not believe, seeing the power is not of them but in God? Answer. I judge this very mistake to be a chief ground of your stumbling, therefore for the clearing up of that, according to the third particular in my writing, wherein I promised to clear up the justice of God; and in this case I shall desire you not stand upon curiosity of words, but in singleness of heart owning the truth of God, to consider with me these particulars following.

1. That Christ is to be presented to all, which is not disputable; that faith is the way of the Gospel, to entertain Christ and Salvation by Christ, which is clear. 2. That this faith thus considered is not in the power of the

creature to perform by its ability from God's authority in a common sense, but it is a peculiar gift in a Gospel sense, by the Grace of God given to some and not to all, which is clear from these Scriptures. Matt.13:11-12;17; I Cor.2:14; Matt.11:27; John 15:15; Phil.1:29. 3. Mind that notwithstanding all this, God's justice is absolutely clear, not only as to the prerogative of his will, which we have no grounds to dispute against, but is also clear to us if you mind these particulars.

First, it is the power of God to condemn all, it is only Grace and Love that saves any, according to these Scriptures. Eph.2:5-8; II Tim.1:9; Tit.3:5. Secondly. God condemns no man, if you look upon the meritorious cause, not for the creatures inability of exercising a power of believing in Christ, but for that exercise of power in rejecting Christ. Should God condemn creatures for their not exercising a power in receiving Christ, then he did condemn them for what they have not, but he condemns them for their rejecting Christ, which power they have. It is true the Scripture saith, "he that believes not is damned," for not believing is a declaration of an abiding state without Christ, which is a state of condemnation. It is also said that they are condemned "because they believed not the Son of God," but that cause is the declarative cause; but the meritorious cause, which is, that God doth and will go upon to clear up his justice by, is not the creatures refusing to exercise a power in receiving Christ, for that they have not, but it is the exercising of a power of darkness in rejecting Christ, and that men have, and God is just in doing it; and that, that is the ground God will go upon is clear from these Scriptures. John 3:19-20; Acts 7:51; Heb.12:25; Psal.118:22.

Now there are other objections, which I judge may occasion mistakes, but I shall speak to them in the next thing, which is the third particular that I promised in the

beginning of my writing, to wit, to discover your mistakes, which are the cause of your stumbling, in which discovery you will see some of the objections that further may be made both expressed and answered. Now as for the mistakes which is the cause of your stumbling, they are many, and I shall mention so many as I have been acquainted with, which are as follows.

First, the measuring or judging of man's ability by the extent of God's authority, which is manifest in his word, for in all the Scripture God manifests his authority over us, and your mistakes are from his authority to conclude the creatures ability, as in such Scriptures where God saith, "do this and you shall live," and "turn yourselves," or be this or be that, which Scriptures are principally to discover God's authority, but not the creatures ability. When man fell he lost his ability, but this change wrought no alternation in God, if no change in God, then why should any change be in his language? If God had changed that way of his language, the creature would have been apt to conceive, that in man's fall there had been a change of God's power or authority as well as of the creatures ability, which is not so.

A second mistake is your not distinguishing of causes, putting no difference between the essential, meritorious, instrumental and final causes; and so it occasions you to conclude that God or some of his eminent acts done in Himself to be subject to something that are but instrumental causes, and so you do bring the efficient cause into subjection unto the instrumental cause, and sometimes the effects of the efficient cause is declared in Scripture as a declarative cause; as, "he that believes not is damned," or as an instrumental cause, "he that believes shall be saved." Now this not understanding causes is an occasion of your stumbling.

A third mistake is, not applying one Scripture with another in the understanding of the extent of some

expressions in Scripture, as of the word "all" and the word "world." 1. Now the word "all" and the word "world" are diversely taken, sometimes the word "all" doth signify some of all sorts, as appears in these Scriptures. Matt.3:5-6; 4:23; Acts 10:12. 2. The word "all" doth also signify the greater part, as in Luke 16:26; Phil.2:21. 3. The word "all" is many times understood with limitation unto the present subject, according to the Scriptures. Heb.12:8.

So it is with the word "world" for sometimes is taken for a part, according to these Scriptures. John14:17; 15:18-19; I John 2:2; 4:14. Sometimes for the better part, as professors in the world. John 12:19; Rom.11:12. Sometimes for the wicked of the world, according to these Scriptures. Acts 17:31; Rom.12:2; I Cor.3:19; 4:9; 6:2; Heb.11:7; II Pet.2:5; I Jn.5:19. Sometimes for the whole world comprehending everything in the world, according to these Scriptures. Psal.24:1; Psal.50:12; Acts 17:24.

Now not distinguishing the extent of words and not interpreting one Scripture with another is very dangerous, and a special cause of stumbling; as in the misapplying of things to the subject, that is expressed in a particular Scripture, without understanding that Scripture by another, as in Ezek.33:11, where the Lord saith, "as I live, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked," from which particular you conclude all sinners. Now if you look in the Scriptures you will see yourselves mistaken, for there are three sorts of sinners. One sort that sins out of confidence of God's mercy, and upon that account resolves to sin, Deut.29:19, "and it come to pass, when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst." We will add drunkenness to thirst for God will be merciful; but see what the Lord saith in verse 20, "the LORD will

not spare him, but then the anger of the LORD and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the LORD shall blot out his name from under heaven." If so, then this cannot be the sinner that God intends in Ezekiel 33:11.

A second sort of sinners are those that sin and are not sensible of their sinning, but rather think it goes well with them when they sin, as the generality of the world doth; and this sort of sinner God speaks of in Jer.44:16-29, and in Isaiah chapter 11. Now if you look in Jeremiah 44:26, God there swears that He will show them no mercy. And in Isa.27:11, there God doth affirm, he will show no mercy to them. "For it is a people of no understanding; therefore he that made them will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them will shew them no favour." Now both these sorts of sinners cannot be those God intends, when he saith, "as I live, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked."

A third sort of sinners are those that are so in a Gospel sense, and they are those to whom Christ saith, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance;" as in these Scriptures, Matt.9:13; Mark 2:17; Luke 5:32; I Tim.1:15; and those sinners appear to be such, and are declared to be such, when they have through the gracious appearance of God a discovery of themselves unto themselves, that in the sense of their sins do groan and long after Jesus Christ. These are those that Christ invites, saying, "come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Matt.11:28.

And that so much of that Scripture, and so in some other Scriptures, you take one person for another, misunderstanding the drift or scope of what is there intended, as in Hebrews 10:29, "of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden

underfoot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?" Now your mistake is, in the taking one person for another, for the Apostle doth not intend in the word "he" by which he was sanctified, the party that treads the blood of Christ underfoot, but it is Christ Himself that is sanctified. Now sanctification is to be set apart, and it is Christ alone that was set apart through the blood of the covenant, through that God sanctified him, through that he sanctified himself according to John chapter 17. For Christ was capable of no other sanctification, and if any man with an ingenuous heart will but read that verse as it is in the translation, though there is much more to be considered, otherwise they cannot conclude, but the party there sanctified is properly intended Christ, and not he that treads, unless they will overthrow the intent of this Scripture, and makes Scripture to be of private interpretation, which is not to be done. II Pet.1:20. I might mention many other places of Scripture, as to the mistakes of persons, taking all for some, and one for another, I only mentioned these for the rest.

Fourthly, as those former mistakes do arise from your mistakes of the letter of the Scripture, as it is said in Matthew 22:29, "ye do err, not knowing the Scripture," that is comprehended in what we have already said, but see what follows, "you err not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God," that is to say, the power and authority of Scripture, which all are ignorant of until the truth of God in Scripture is made good in them. So that a fifth cause of your mistakes, which I much fear, is your unacquaintedness with the power of God in Scripture, that is the Scriptures being made good in you, as to the work of conversion or the new birth, for dear friend, though I am unwilling to speak anything that hath the face of censuring, yet I cannot but judge, that if ever the power

and authority of God had passed upon you in the great work of conversion, there would need no further argument but only present experience to convince such a soul, that power to stand up before the Lord, and to entertain the sweet proclamations of Christ, is solely and alone the work of God, not upon a common or general account, but in a special and peculiar sense. And so much of this fourth particular.

A fifth mistake is your confining your judgment of the essentiality of God the unchangeableness of his essential will to the visibility of God in his outward word and actions, as they are in our view; and though those things do declare the outward actions of God, as they relate to our actings towards him, yet they are not given to us to judge of and measure the unchangeable love of God in Himself to us by. I mean that goodwill and love that is in himself and hath no dependence upon anything outside of himself; for God is said to repent, Jonah 3:10; he is said to forsake, Jer.23:33,39; he is said to be grieved, Gen.6:6; he is said to go down and see if things were so, according to the cry of the sins of Sodom, Gen.18:20,21; as if he had not known before. Now these expressions doth declare the outward acts of God, as they relate to our acting towards Him, or the manifesting the visibility of God, as it is in our view, and not to measure the essentiality of God and the unchangeableness of his love and good will; for if you do you will both wrong God and deceive your own soul. And so much for the fifth mistake.

There are many more causes of your stumbling, but I only thought good to give you these which at present I remember, desiring the Lord by them to manifest the rest, and to clear up truth in your soul, that you may no longer stumble, but through the manifestation of God's Grace, you may be made able to understand the truth as it is in Jesus. Eph.4:21. Now before I come to show you

the sad absurdities that must of necessity follow your opinion, and how injurious you are by that unto the glory of God's Grace, to Christ, and to your own soul, I shall from what hath been said already give you a brief answer to your queries and absurdities.

Query 1. If Christ died not for all, what ground hath any man to believe he died for him? Answer. I have discovered the fallacy of that query, by showing you that the efficient cause of our believing in Christ is more supernatural, heavenly and spiritual, than such a low exercise of a common reason, as to conclude Christ died for us, because he died for all. The work of faith I have showed you to be of another nature.

Query 2. How can God be said to be just to condemn those persons for whom Christ never died? Answer. How can God be just to condemn them for whom Christ died? I mean in your sense, but I have already answered this query fully, in showing you that Christ tasted death for every man. I showed you that it was just with God to condemn all, and it is only singular mercy that he saved any. I have sufficiently declared from Scripture, that the meritorious cause of condemnation is not for the creature in not exercising a power of faith in receiving Christ, but for exercising darkness in rejecting Christ, and though creatures want the first, yet they are possessed of the last.

Query 3. How can remission of sins be preached to those for whom Christ never died? I have answered that, by showing it is the great design of God to have Christ preached to all, and from amongst all, his own elect through his mercy might be called to believe. I have showed to you that there are no exclusions as to the proclamations of the Gospel; for distinctions in that case are nowhere but in ordination and application; and I have clearly proved to you, that one depends upon the prerogative of his will, and that the other is produced by

the singularity of his Love and Grace, which in justice he might have withheld from all; but for the advancement of his Glory and Grace he is pleased to bestow on some.

Query 4. I have fully answered in my answer to the second query, about clearing up of God's justice, and in showing you what is the meritorious cause of man's damnation. Now as I have fully showed you concerning faith; first, consider it in the real exercise, then it is an instrumental source of man's consolation and salvation in Christ. Again, consider a man's state in the want of faith, the want of faith is a declarative cause manifesting that a man so wanting faith is still in the state of wrath or condemnation. "He that believeth on him is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." Jn.3:18. But now to the meritorious cause of condemnation, which God goes upon, is not the creatures neglect in the exercising of a power to receive Christ, but for exercising darkness in rejecting Christ. "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." Jn.3:19. Which truth I have fully made good before from Scripture.

Query 5. I have answered in my answer to the third query, wherein I have showed you the ground and cause why all are exhorted to repentance and to faith, and how clearly God is justified therein, and how eminently his Grace and Love is discovered by it.

Query 6. Whether hath not Christ given out power and ability to all men to believe on him? That I have fully answered by showing you that the work of God is beyond the improvements of nature, in the highest sense, and is not common to all, yet peculiar to only some and yet there remains a power in all, as I have showed you, to do more than most creatures at present do, yet in the highest improvement the work of faith is far above it.

Query 7. It is one with the sixth query, and that which doth answer the one doth fully answer the other, for I have in the discovery of the work of believing on Christ, and Salvation by Christ, discovered how things are between God and us, wherein you will see if you read them over where the stick lieth, and that in all God and Christ are just.

Query 8. Whether unbelief be not the condemning sin? That I have answered in answering the second and fourth query, and that particular doth very fully answer that this, especially if you consider, first what I have said, as to the distinction of causes; and secondly, what I have said as to the meritorious cause of man's condemnation.

Query 9. Whether God hath not appointed all to be saved? To that my answer hath been very full; first, in showing that there is a general Salvation that every man partakes of; and secondly, showing you that there is a peculiar people ordained before the world was, unto a special Salvation, which is peculiar unto some but not to all, and yet God eminently abides just, not only upon the prerogative of his will, but upon the exercise of his power and justice in condemning creatures, not for want of what they have not, but for the ill exercising of what they have.

Query 10. Whether Adam was in a state of Grace before his fall? To that I answer, where the Scripture lacks a voice let us hold our tongues, besides you do not express what you mean by Grace? If you meant by Grace as Grace is understood in a Gospel sense, relating to faith in Christ, that the Scripture doth clear up, that Christ was not discovered till man fell, and that there was no employment for faith in that sense before.

Query 11. Whether infants by generation are in a state of Damnation or in a state of Salvation? As to that I have fully answered, by showing you, that man by nature, considered in himself, in which every man is to be considered, until God is pleased to bring forth the effects

of Election, which is alone to distinguish, and until then every man so considered, as before, is in a state of wrath or condemnation, according to the Scriptures. Eph.2:3; I Cor.6:11.

Query 12. Which doth arise from the unchangeableness of predestination, from whence you say, from what end the Scriptures are set forth? That I have fully answered in my answer to the third query.

Query 13. Whose names they are that are written in the Book of Life, whether they be the elects or the reprobates? If the elects, whether they shall not be blotted out, if they add or diminish from the word of God? I know that you are not ignorant, but you know that the word presents the Book of Life in a several sense, the Book of Life doth not only hold out eternal life but the visible kingdom of Grace, and God hath also provided a way and means, that any that are received in shall as well be cast out, if they appear to be such that walk in doctrines contrary to the Gospel which was by Christ and the Apostles delivered. If you can prove that by the Book of Life is only meant Election, and that those that are elected may so add and be diminishers of that revelation that John speaks of, and upon that from being elected to become reprobated, then you have some ground to query, or else your queries are groundless, as to what I judge you intend; but I have at large showed you the sad danger of drawing up forms from a variety of faces in God's outward declaration, especially when fancy is the former, which of necessity must be, unless you distinguish causes, and distinguish between God's effectual and declarative will, and the difference between the general and the special exercises of God's power, understanding one Scripture with another, all which I desire you in the fear of the Lord to consider of, which is in full and to all your queries, and now I shall show you the fallacy of your absurdities.

Now as for your absurdities, though they must needs fall with the answer of your queries, and need no other return, yet that you may see the fallacy of them more fully, I shall briefly speak a word or two to them. Most of them depends upon the conclusion of Christ dying for all, and doth arise from an absolute denial of that. Now you may clearly see by what I have written, that as to that which is the foundation of your absurdities, that I and others do not deny, but with you hold that Christ tasted death for every man, according to that Scripture in Peter, which you mention in your sixth absurdity, and I in your first absurdity, and therefore your first absurdity, to wit, that the devil destroys not those men for whom Christ died, which say you is contrary to that Scripture before mentioned, I need say no more in answer to that absurdity, only that it is impossible for the devil to destroy any for whom Christ died, not because he died for all.

Absurdity 2. If Christ died not for all men, then despair is no sin in them that perish. Despair or infidelity is a sin in itself. Further consider, that it is unknown that Christ did not die for them, until the conclusion comes. Further, that which is to be applied to every creature, and to be believed by every creature, is not in a Gospel sense believed by them that perish, for they that do not in that sense believe one thing cannot in that sense believe anything. But further mind, that want of ability doth not take off God's authority, nor change the nature of sin in itself, therefore your absurdity is absurd.

Absurdity 3. If Christ died not for all men, then it were a sin for some men to believe that Christ died for them. The answer of your second absurdity answers this, and the truth is, the reading of either is sufficient to make a gracious heart to blush, it being a language the Scripture doth not own.

Absurdity 4. If there were some men for whom Christ acted not, such men should be exempted or freed

from the condemnation of unbelief, or treading under feet the blood of the Covenant by which they are sanctified. Though I have answered this fully, yet mind, that the outward proclamations of Christ, as we have proved, excludes none, that by it the chosen of God may be called out of the world through Grace to believe, and should these proclamations of Grace make an exemption of some men from believing, it were a contradiction in that proclamation, which is to all, excluding none. And further consider, that infidelity is the declarative cause of man's damnation; but I have fully proved that the meritorious cause of condemnation itself is the exercising of darkness in rejecting Christ. As for that expression in your absurdity, about men's being sanctified by the blood of Christ, and yet treading under their feet the blood of Christ, your misapprehending that Scripture, have fully answered in one of your mistakes, which is the cause of your stumbling.

Absurdity 5. If Christ died not for all, then Satan in persuading people that Christ died for them, doth no evil. Your absurdity is very sad, and you cannot have the least face to report that upon us, unless you can prove that infidelity in itself is no sin. And secondly, that the devil knows exactly who it is that God designed for Heaven, which secret God retains to himself, and is revealed to none but them to whom Christ reveals it; besides it is impossible for any footing to be for that absurdity, because Christ in some sense have tasted death for every man.

Absurdity 6. If Christ died not for all men, then it were not heresy to teach some men to deny that Christ bought them, contrary to that Scripture in II Peter 2:1. I have proved from that Scripture that Christ tasted death for every man, and to deny it is heresy; but if you mean dying for every man alike, that Scripture doth not prove it; yet, for any man to make a particular application to

this or that man, saying that Christ died not for him in particular, that way is unwarrantable, and contrary to truth, for in the proclamations of the Gospel there are no exclusions, and for Ordination and Application they are secrets belonging unto the Lord himself, made known to us as he seems good.

Absurdity 7. If there be some that Christ died not for, it is an error for them to believe that he died for them. I have answered this absurdity in the answering of the former four, it being one and the same, only you love to make repetition of one and the same.

Absurdity 8. If Christ died not for all men, then some for whom Christ died not do believe a truth in believing Christ died for them, which say you is blasphemy to affirm. There is no ground for such an absurdity, unless you can prove these three things. 1. That we hold that Christ died in no sense for some, which we deny. 2. That men may know Reprobation or Election before it is discovered. 3. That men may truly believe and yet be damned.

Absurdity 9. If Christ died not for all men, then some should be damned in hell, for not believing that which is not truth.

Absurdity 10. If Christ died not for all men, then their damnation is not to be attributed to their not believing, but to Christ's not dying for them in particular. I have answered these two absurdities so fully that it will be but a vain repetition to say anymore, for I have fully showed what is the meritorious cause of damnation, and how just God is in doing of it, not condemning the creature for his neglect in the exercising that power which he hath not, but the exercising of a power of darkness which he hath, which if you read over you will see these two absurdities with the rest, not only to be without foundation, but will produce sad repercussions upon your own spirit, if you look upon them through the rule of truth,

and do not suffer God in his actions to be brought under the dispute and control of your own low reason. So having spoken briefly to your queries and absurdities, from what in general I did before declare, I shall now draw up a few absurdities, which of necessity must flow from your opinion, and so commend you to God.

The absurdities are. 1. You deny the prerogative of God's will, as if he had not power to do with his own, as seems good to him, crossing these Scriptures. Matt.20:15; Rom.9:18-23; Isa.45:9; 43.13.

2. You do as much give Christ the lie, where he saith, the work is finished that the Father gave him to do, Jn.17:4, when you say that Christ died to purchase Salvation for all, and yet you say that all are not saved.

3. You do exceedingly undervalue God and the churches of his grace and love, whose love is the efficient cause of all Grace in us, when you affirm, that there is no privilege considered in his love for you, till you do believe; and withal you do affirm, that faith is produced by the improvement of men's abilities which all enjoy from God before conversion.

4. You lay injustice upon God, when as you say, that Christ died to satisfy fully for all the sin of all men; and yet you say, that all men shall not be saved. And whereas you and your second queries ask how can God be just to condemn them for whom Christ died not? It may with more ground be questioned, how it is just to condemn them for whom Christ died? I mean "died" in that sense that you speak of.

5. You change the nature of causes, and set the effect before the cause, when you say that faith is the cause of Election, and consequently the cause of God's special or singular love, when his love is in himself, nay, the Apostle saith in I John 4:8, that it is himself, therefore you may as well say that faith is the cause of God. The

Lord make your soul sensible of sadness of this opposition.

6. You do by your opinion what in you lies, which is to strike down the great ordinance or design of God in it, I mean in that great distinction that God made between the seed of the woman and the serpent and his seed, Gen.3:15, that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpents head, and the serpent and his seed should bruise their heel. Now that by the seed of the woman is meant Christ, and all the elect in him, is not to be denied; and by the serpent and his seed is meant the devil and the reprobates is as clear, which division or distinction God made at the beginning, as his great design or grand way to bring about his glory, that is to say, the glory of his Grace, in vessels of mercy, and the glory of his power and justice in vessels of wrath, which design is directly opposed, and endeavoring to be destroyed by your opinion. Now your holding Election of qualities and not of persons, cannot heal the lameness of your opinion, nor in any way maintain this great design of God, for if Salvation and Damnation be carried on upon any other account, relating to the creatures doing or not doing, then God's glory in his Grace, is not exalted but denied; for if it be of works, then of debt, according to these Scriptures, Rom.4:4; Gal.5:4; Eph.2:8-9, and if by debt, then we have wherewithal to boast; and if God who might justly have condemned all, doth not by his free gift and pleasure save some, then the singularity of his love in the vessels of Grace is denied, and then for the advancement of his power and justice in the vessels of wrath, according to Romans 9:18-23, is solely overthrown, and the prerogative of his will and pleasure absolutely denied. The sadness of this absurdity will look grim upon your face in the day of the Lord.

7. Your opinion is so inconsistent to truth that it destroys itself, for if Christ died for all alike, then he must

needs satisfy for all the sins of all. Now that he hath satisfied for all the sins of the elect, I have fully proven; and if for all in that sense, then all must be saved, or else infidelity is not a sin; for if it be a sin and Christ satisfied for all sin, and died for all alike, as you affirm, then infidelity cannot destroy, or else you must hold, that he died not for that sin, and then not for all sin. That you may further see how absurd this absurdity you are guilty of is, I shall prove to you these things. 1. That infidelity is a sin. 2. That it is a sin that Christ died for.

First, that it is a sin is clear from the Scriptures. "Of sin, because they believe not on me." Jn.16:9. "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins, for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." Jn.8:24. Besides the Scriptures mind this reason, that which crosses the command of God must be a sin, but infidelity crosses the command of God and therefore the major is proved from the Scriptures, where the Apostle saith, that sin is the transgression of the Law. I Jn.3:4. The minor is proved from these Scriptures, I Jn.3:23; Mark 5:36; John 1:14, and the conclusion follows.

Reason 2. That which is to be confessed and bemoaned to Christ as a sin that is a sin, but infidelity or weakness of faith is and was bemoaned to Christ as a sin. Therefore the major none can deny; and the minor is proved from the Scriptures. Mark 9:24. That which gives God the lie must be a sin, but infidelity gives God the lie; and thus the major is not questionable, and the minor is proved from I John 5:10. "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself; he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son."

The next thing is, that Christ died for this sin, and that I prove thus. 1. If Christ died for all sin, then he must die for this, this being amongst the rest, but Christ died for all sin, and this is clear from these Scriptures. I Jn.1:7;

Heb.10:14; Isa.53:5; Rev.1:5. 2. If men find mercy for this sin, then it must needs be that Christ died for this sin; but men find mercy for this sin according to these Scriptures. Rom.11:32; I Tim.1:13. Then Christ must needs die for it, for mercy is given out by God through Christ, and what is given through Christ, is given as remission by his blood, for without blood there is no remission. Heb.9:22.

Lastly, if infidelity is a sin, that the elect of God are subject to, then Christ must needs die for it; and that infidelity is a sin that the elect of God are subject to, is clear from these Scriptures. Matt.17:20; Mark 16:14.

Now dear friend, in the fear of the Lord, consider how inconsistent with truth your opinion is, which holds that Christ died for all alike, and yet all shall not be saved; one of these things must of necessity follow upon your opinion. That Christ died not for all sins; or that infidelity is not a sin; or that God doth condemn creatures for that sin which he receives satisfaction by Christ for.

All any of which is sad to aver; but one or all of them you must own, and therefore in the fear of the Lord search the Scriptures, and beg of God to give you light, that your poor soul may not be deceived, nor God so sadly dishonored or abused, by bringing him and his eminent acts of Love and Grace, Power and Justice, under the control of your low reason; for the prevention of which, it shall be the daily prayer of him who in sincerity can say, that he is a real lover of your soul. Paul Hobson.

FINIS.