

SERMON 7

REMARKS UPON A PAMPHLET, INTITLED, 'SOME DOCTRINES IN THE
SUPERLAPSARIAN SCHEME IMPARTIALLY EXAMIN'D BY THE WORD OF GOD'
1736

CONTAINING A DEFENCE OF SEVERAL
EVANGELICAL DOCTRINES THEREIN OBJECTED TO.

I HAVE lately met with a Pamphlet, entitled, *Some Doctrines in the Superlapsarian Scheme impartially examined by the Word of God*, which does not bear the Name of its Author: For what Reason he chose to conceal his Name, I don't pretend to determine; only conjecture, it might be to keep clear of a public Imputation of the Want of Skill in the sublime Subjects of which he treats, and of a due Deference to some worthy Persons on whom he pours Contempt.

My firm Regard to religious Liberty, and Desire of Improvement in Knowledge, will not permit me to be offended with any who shall think proper to animadvert upon what I publish to the World; and, if treated with Decency and Respect, by such as examine my Opinions, I shall esteem It as an additional Favour done me. How much I am indebted to this Author, on this Account, the Reader will easily determine.

It might be justly thought, from the Title this Performance bears, that Impartiality and Ingenuity, with a steady Regard to the Holy Scripture, run through the whole; but any may readily see, that *Fronti nulla Fides* is a very proper Motto for it.

This Writer militates against the Supralapsarian Way of stating the Doctrine of Election; which, he imagines, has run its Savourers into many false Opinions and great Absurdities.

Here he opposes it under these Considerations: As a Doctrine destitute of Scripture-Support; repugnant to God's Foreknowledge; as It lessens the Grace of God; and is injurious to his Justice.

The *Supralapsarian* Opinion, in itself, doth not labor under the Difficulties with which this Author endeavors to clog it. Those who state the Doctrine of Election in this Way, think that the Objects of God's Choice were considered by him in their Election to the End, that is to say, to eternal Glory, as in *massa pura*, or as unfallen; but that in Election to the Means tending to that End, they were viewed, as in *massa corrupta*, as fallen, guilty Creatures. ***And therefore it is sufficient, to obviate the Objections he advances against their Sentiments in this Point, to give a just Account of them. However, I shall briefly consider his Objections: And,***

Object. 1. *He charges this Opinion with the Want of Scripture-Support.* In Answer to this, let it be observed: That the *Supralapsarians* think their Opinion receives some Evidence from these Words, *Whom he did fore-know, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the Image of his Son:* And also from these Words of the same Apostle, *As he hath chosen us in him* (Ephesians 1:4.): Which plainly suggest, that Christ is the Object of Election, as Mediator. Now he could not be considered but as pure; and it is reasonable to suppose, that his Members were so considered, who were chosen in him. This Author's Sense of these Words is certainly unnatural: He supposes, God chose us to the *Enjoyment of spiritual Blessings, in order to effect our Sanctification.* Is not Sanctification one of those Blessings? How then can it be said, that we are chosen to the Enjoyment of Sanctification, in order to effect it? The effecting of a Thing is, doubtless, prior to the Enjoyment of it. It is unblameable Holiness, or absolute Perfection in Heaven, that is intended in these Words. And therefore, the *Supralapsarians* are not guilty of a Contradiction, when they say, that God chose us that we might be holy and not because he foresaw we would so be, previous to that his eternal Choice, as he asserts they are: When they thus speak, they design Election to the Means.

The Decree of God to sanctify his Elect necessarily supposes, that they were considered as sinful Creatures; but his Purpose of their standing before him in unblamable Holiness in Heaven does not, which is the Holiness designed in these Words. Again, it will be very difficult to prove, that the Elect were ever considered as guilty, sinful Creatures, in Christ. Farther, Christ is laid to be *chosen from out of the People* (Psalm 89:18.). Now, as he was considered pure in his Election, to be an Head to the Church, it is not unreasonable to conceive that those, from among whom he was chosen, were also so considered. Moreover, it is manifest, that *Esau* and *Jacob* were not considered as having contracted any Guilt in God's eternal Decree; when the latter was chosen to everlasting Life, and an Act of Preterition was passed upon the former: *For the Children being not yet born, neither having done any Good or Evil, that the Purpose of God according to Election might stand, not of Works, but of him that calleth* (Romans 9:11.).

Object. 2. *This Doctrine of theirs is repugnant to their own Opinion of God's eternal Fore-knowledge.* The *Supralapsarians* freely allow the Doctrine of God's eternal Prescience; that by one Act of his infinite Understanding, he foresaw all the differing Scenes the Objects of his Election would run through, perfectly consistent with their Opinion of his considering them as pure in their Election to the End, but as fallen in their Election to the Means tending to that End: And this, without the Supposition of Priority, or Posteriority in God, whose infinite Mind conceived of all Things at once; the End, and the Means: *Known unto God are all his Works, from the Beginning* (Acts 15:18.).

Object. 3. *This Doctrine tends to lessen the Grace and Mercy of God in Election.* This is a great Mistake; for, though God chose his People to eternal Glory above the Consideration of the Fall, he decreed to permit it in order to render his free Grace eminently glorious in bringing them to Happiness.

Object. 4. *He conceits it is contrary to God's Justice.* This Way of Reasoning fixes the Damnation of poor Souls on God's Act of Preterition; if they are rejected as Creatures only, and not as sinful Creatures. In answer, let it be observed, an Act of Preterition was passed on the apostate Spirits, considered as unfallen; yet this was not the Cause of their Damnation, but the Sin which they voluntarily committed: Thus, as to the Non-elect among Men, God's Act of Preterition past upon them, is not the Cause of their Damnation, but their own Guilt. Besides, Pre-damnation, or an Ordination to Punishment, supposes the Consideration of the Fall and Guilt contracted by those who are the Objects of this Ordination to Penalty. The Act of Preterition, or negative Election, was no other than a Determination not to confer such Grace upon the Non-elect, which was no way due to them: And Pre-damnation, or Ordination to Punishment, was only a Decree to inflict upon them the Demerit of their Crimes. In all which there is not the least Injustice.

Our Author proceeds to take Notice of the Doctrine of Eternal Justification; which he ignorantly imagines naturally springs from the Supralapsarian Opinion: Whereas this is a *Sublapsarian* Doctrine, or follows upon the Consideration of the Fall, as every judicious Reader will easily, observe: For, if we were not unrighteous in ourselves, we should not stand in need of Christ's Righteousness to justify us. To that Doctrine he objects, that we *nowhere read of being justified before Faith.* Though we do not read this syllabically, or in such Terms expressly, yet we read that which is equivalent to it, as will be seen hereafter.

He goes on to observe some dangerous Opinions, as he apprehends, that follow upon the Doctrine of Eternal Justification: Such as these; that we are only to pray for a Manifestation of the Pardon of Sin; and that Sin was imputed to Christ: Two other Things he mentions; that God was eternally reconciled to the Elect, which I shall presently consider; and that God loved and delighted in his People while in Sin, the Defense of which I leave to Mr. *Gill*; he being more particularly concerned in that Part of the Argument. And therefore, I shall only consider what he offers on the Head of praying for the Pardon of Sin, the Imputation of it to Christ, and Reconciliation.

Ist. To begin with, Praying for the Pardon of Sin. And it will be proper to consider what Remission, or the Pardon of Sin is: Which I take to be this; The Will of God, to acquit and discharge us of the Guilt that we contract, or the Non-imputation of it; as seems dear from the Apostle's Words, *Who shall say anything to the Charge of God's Elect? it is God that justifies* (Romans 8:33.); *i.e.* he acquits and discharges them. Now God eternally willed not to impute Sin to his Chosen:

For, when he *was in Christ reconciling the World unto himself, i.e.* drawing the Plan of their Reconciliation, it was thus; *Not imputing their Trespases unto them* (2 Corinthians 5:19): And therefore, their Pardon is as ancient as God's Decrees. See this more fully vindicated in my *Defense of eternal Justification*. If God's Will, not to impute Sin to his People, or his Will, not to charge their Guilt upon them, is their Pardon or real Discharge, which this Author has not thought proper to deny; and this Will is eternal in God, as all the Acts of his Will most certainly are; then, when we pray for Pardon, it ought not to be with Ideas of God's beginning to will not to impute that Sin to us, which we pray for the Remission of; but only an Application of Pardon to our Souls, through Christ's Blood, can be justly intended by us in our Petitions of this Kind. The Instances of Saints praying for Pardon, and the Directions given to us so to do, this Author should have proved intend more than this, in order to establish what he designed: Since he has not, they are of no Service to his Cause; nor do they militate with our Opinion in this Article. I freely confess, I think myself under Obligation humbly to pray to God for Pardon, *i.e.* a View of it; although I conceive, if I am so happy as to be of the Number of God's Elect, he has *forgiven me all Trespases* (Colossians 2:13.), past, present, and to come. Let not our Author start, as one in a Surprise, at complete Remission; for 'tis an *Evangelical Truth*, whatever he may think of it.

2nd. He opposes the Doctrine of the Imputation of Sin to Christ; in which I wish he had shewn more Temper and Moderation: I imagine, the Reader can't but think him guilty of intemperate Zeal, how knowing so ever he may conceive him to be. I apprehend, this Doctrine receives evident Proof from the Sacred Scriptures; which declare, that our *Iniquities were laid on Christ* (Isaiah 53:6.); that *he, who knew no Sin, was made Sin for us* (2 Corinthians 5:21.); and that *he bore our Sins in his own Body on the Tree* (1 Peter 2:24.): Which intend a Charge, or Imputation of our Guilt to Christ, as our Surety, as what was necessary to his suffering the Penalty due to us. Our Author does not fairly represent our Opinion, when he makes us say, *it cannot consist with the Justice of God to wound his Son, if he is not really the Sinner*; for we say punish his Son, not merely wound him: An Innocent Person may suffer, but he cannot be punished, without manifest Injustice, unless some Crime is charged upon him. Since, therefore, *Christ was made a Curse* (Galatians 3:13.) in his Sufferings, or the Punishment due to us was inflicted on him, the Imputation of those Crimes to him, that were the meritorious Cause of that Penalty, is necessarily supposed. This Writer thinks, that when Christ is said to be made Sin, it is to be taken in a metonymical. Sense: And in his Margin gives us this Account of that Trope; *A metonymy is a changing of, or putting one Thing, or more, for another*. I excuse his bad Orthography; it ought to be Metonymy. It is not the putting of any Thing in the room of another, as the putting of one Contrary for

another, which he conceives: Unbelief is not put for Faith in these Words, *Lord, I believe, help thou mine Unbelief* (Mark 9:24.).

The Sense of which is not, Lord help my Faith, but assist me against my powerful Unbelief.

Since Christ's being made Sin is a scriptural Mode of speaking, he ought to have treated It with greater Decency than he has done. It is not designed thereby, that he became impure, either in his Nature, or in any of his Actions; but a Sinner, or Guilty, by Way of Imputation only. As the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness to us works no Change in our Nature, from sinful to holy, so the Imputation of our Sins to him effected no Alteration in his pure and holy Nature: That remained untainted, notwithstanding this Imputation of our Guilt to him. He imagines, *sin cannot be imputed, be-cause 'tis not Substance*; by which it appears, he is ignorant of the Nature of Imputation. A Substance, or Body, as Stone, may be cast at, or let fall upon a Person, but cannot be imputed to him, or placed to his Account. Farther, The Filthiness of our Nature was imputed to, and atoned for by Christ; or else it will prove our Destruction: And so also, the perfect Holiness of Christ's Nature is imputed to us; though I do not take this to be our Sanctification, but a Branch of our justifying Righteousness: The Law requiring Purity of Heart, as well as Conformity in Life, in order to our Justification. It is true, that Christ healed distempered Persons of their bodily Disorders, not by taking them upon himself; but it doth not thence follow, that he did not bear away Sin, by having it imputed to him, and atoning for it, as this Author suggests. It is no other than a *Socinian* Gloss he puts upon the Words of the Prophet: *The Lord hath laid on him the Iniquities of us all. Christ was not in all Respects separate from Sinners, except in the blasphemous Accounts of his Enemies*, as he asserts: For Sin was as really imputed to Christ, as his Righteousness is imputed to us for our Justification: But this Doctrine of the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness he seems as averse to, as to that of the Imputation of our Sins to him; for he tells us, *We are made Saviours* thereby. To let aside which, it is sufficient to observe, that we contribute nothing, either to the Being or Value of this Righteousness; nor to its Imputation: And how, therefore, the Imputation of it to us, in order to our Salvation, infers that we are Saviours, will be very difficult for him to demonstrate.

The Liberty he takes with Dr. *Crisp* is very indecent: Let not this low Defamer conceit, it will ever be in his Power to risk the Reputation of that excellent Person, who has been well defended by such as are no way inferior to him in Learning, good Sense, and Knowledge in Divinity; the Doctor's own Son, 'Squire *Edwards*, and Dr. *Chauncy*. In the Writings of which learned Gentlemen, such Arguments are advanced in Favor of Christ's being made Sin by Way of Imputation, in which Sense only Dr. *Crisp* understood it, that, perhaps, he may never dare attempt an Answer to. If some particular Expressions have dropped from his Pen, that are not so well

guarded as might be wished, the Substance of his Doctrine is solid, Spiritual, and evangelical; infinitely more valuable than what the Performance of this Author can boast.

Next, he is pleased to treat the learned and great Mr. *Hussey* in a very scurrilous Manner; him he calls a *ridiculous Writer*.

It might have been thought that his great Learning, extensive Knowledge, and Zeal for Truth, would have raised him, at least, above the Contempt of this Person; who, it will hardly be allowed, is equal to that learned Author in any Respect. The Charge he brings against him, of endeavoring to prove that Christ was not only guilty by way of Imputation, *but filthy too*, hath no more Truth in it, than the Author of the Charge has Modesty: For he is so far from suggesting any Thing like this, that he very cautiously guards against it. The Simile he makes use of, and which this Examiner mentions, is a sufficient Vindication of him in this Particular: It is this; *suppose*, says he, *a Drop of Ink, or Poison, falls upon a fiery Globe* (Mr. *Hussey* don't say here, a Globe as big as this Earth, as he makes him to say) *could that Ink, or Poison, leave any sullyng Mark behind it?*

Now, though Mr. *Hussey*, in his Simile, mentions only a Drop of Ink, or Poison, it was not with a Design to extenuate the Sin Christ bore, or the Greatness of the Filth there is in the Sins of the Elect: For he calls it, *a Deluge of Corruption, and a Sea of Filthiness to us*; though but *as a Drop, in comparison with Christ's infinite Power to Subdue Sin*: Which, if this Writer had observed, it might have prevented his making the first Remark upon the Simile, as it effectually answers it. His second is; *He should have mentioned the polluting Stuff as poured into the Globe, and not as dropped upon it*. I answer, Mr. *Hussey* did not design a Communication of Sin or Filthiness to Christ; but the Imputation of Sin, with all its Filthiness to him, and the quick Sense Christ had of the Father's charging Sin upon him, and of the Pollution of that Sin imputed to him; all which was, without his being, in the least, defiled by it: And therefore, our Author is altogether mistaken, in supposing the Doctrine of the Imputation of Sin to Christ: to be *Blasphemy, and vile Nonsense*. I hope he is one interested in the Intercession of Christ, and shall therefore obtain the Pardon of the Guilt he may have contracted, by his too warm and ignorant Opposition to the Doctrine of the Imputation of Sin to Christ; who, when on the Cross, prayed thus to the Father, in behalf of those of his People, who, through Ignorance, were concerned in his Death, *Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do* (Luke 23:34.): Which cannot, I think, be urged in his Favor, to abate the Greatness of his Crime, in charging Mr. *Hussey* with making Christ *inherently filthy*.

If the Evil he has been guilty of in defaming those, who believe and defend the Doctrine of the Imputation of Sin to Christ, should lie on his Conscience, as what was not imputed to, and atoned for by him, whatever he may think of the Matter,

now it will inexpressibly wound him. *Sin*, which Christ was *made*, stands opposed to *Righteousness*, which we are *made* (2 Corinthians 5:20.). Now suffering for Sin, or the Penalty due to it, is not to be opposed to God's *Righteousness*, or Faithfulness: But Sin, which Christ is laid to be made, may very justly be opposed to that Righteousness which we are made; if we understand by Sin our Guilt, and by Righteousness Christ's perfect Obedience, which is the true Sense of the Text: For the Apostle certainly intends two Contraries, by Sin and Righteousness. Christ's being made an *Offering for Sin* (Isaiah 53:10.), designs his being made Sin, or Guilt; *when thou shalt make his Soul,* א, that is, *Guilt*; which plainly suggests the Imputation of Sin. The Word is sometimes rendered Trespass; *and he shall recompense,* א, *his Trespass*. It is used to express Guiltiness; *and thou be found Guilty* (Numbers 5:7.), א, Therefore, that it was Guilt or Sin that Christ was made, appears from these Words.

It is very unaccountable, that he should pronounce this Doctrine *as absurd and vile, if not more vile* than Transubstantiation. In his next Performance, let him prove it to be so, in a single Instance, if he can; he has done nothing towards it in this.

I now proceed to consider what he offers on the Doctrines of Reconciliation, Justification and Adoption.

3rd. I shall attend to what he delivers on the Article of Reconciliation: And to prevent Mistakes, the Reader will please to permit me to state my Opinion in this Point; I readily allow, that Sin has caused a Distance between God and the Elect, as considered in themselves, on God's Part, which I need only consider. It supposes, A Disapprobation of their Persons, as viewed in themselves: Herein I conceive God is to be considered as a Lawgiver.

That *God*, by his Law, pronounces a Curse against them on account of their Transgressions: So that God's Justice, or infinitely pure Nature, and holy Law, stand engaged against them.

These two Things, I apprehend, are designed, where they are said to be *Children of Wrath* Ephesians 2:3., and nothing more. A Purpose of inflicting any Part of the Penalty, demerited by their Sins, cannot be intended; for the Apostle says expressly, *God hath not appointed us to Wrath, but to obtain Salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ* (1Thessalonians 5:9.). Besides, Christ bore the whole Punishment due to their Crimes; or else he is not a complete Saviour, which he certainly is; for the Father has made him the *Captain* of his Peoples *Salvation, perfect through Sufferings* (Hebrews 2:10.), that is to say, a perfect Saviour: And therefore, Reconciliation cannot design either of these two Things; That God did not love his People prior to Reconciliation made. Such a Supposition is subversive of the Doctrine of God's Love to the Elect, as the Cause of the Gift of his Son for them; which is a Truth our Saviour himself plainly teaches us (John 3:16.).

It does not intend a Change in his Thoughts concerning them. It is not to be imagined, that God entertained a Purpose in his Heart to take Vengeance on Sin in the Persons of the Elect; but was diverted from such an Intention, by the Sufferings and Death of his Son; for he is not liable to any Change in his Resolutions: *The Council of the Lord standeth forever, and the Thoughts of his Heart to all Generations* (Psalm 33:11.). And therefore all that can be designed by Reconciliation, is the Satisfaction of Law and Justice; that the former might be *magnified*, and the Glory of the latter be effectually secured in the Salvation of God's Chosen: No Alteration in the Affections, or Disposition of the divine Mind, can be intended.

This Author strenuously opposes eternal Reconciliation; and very justly, if he had designed Christ's making Reconciliation in Eternity: But, since he intends the Reconciliation of God, or of divine Justice, to the Persons of the Elect, he is egregiously mistaken; for the present Being of Christ's Satisfaction is not necessary to Reconciliation: Divine Justice, or God, as a Law-giver, was reconciled to the Elect, upon Christ's undertaking to suffer and die for them; although he did not then lay down what Justice demanded.

Nor can I apprehend any Difficulty to attend this, more than may be thought to attend God's punishing of his Son for Millions of Sins that were not as yet committed: Actual Reconciliation doth not necessarily suppose the present Being of Christ's Satisfaction, is evident; for, doubtless, God, or divine Justice, was reconciled to *the Old Testament* Saints, who were glorified before the Time of Christ's Crucifixion.

Now, as actual Reconciliation to those of the Elect, did not set aside the Necessity of his making Satisfaction for their Sins, or answering the Demands of Law and Justice in their behalf; Why should it be thought, that actual Reconciliation to them, and all the Elect before Time, renders Christ's making Satisfaction, or answering the Demands of Law and Justice unnecessary, and makes what he did and suffered *ineffectual, yea, needless*? Let our Author shew this if he can. But, in order to remove this Difficulty, which expresses his Opinion very hard, let him not imagine, that *Abraham, Isaac* and *Jacob*, with other Believers, were not admitted to Heaven till Christ had suffered. When he shall demonstrate that actual Reconciliation to them, was consistent with the Necessity of Christ's acting in the mediatorial Character, and dying for their Sins, I shall be able to prove, that the Doctrine of Reconciliation to all the Elect, before

Time, perfectly agrees therewith. If he pleases, I will acquaint him with my Notion in this Matter: It is this; Reconciliation to the Persons of the Elect, is founded upon the federal Engagements of Christ; and therefore, the Certainty of his Suffering was necessarily supposed. From whence it follows, that, unless that which supposes the certain, though future Being of a Thing, destroys the Necessity of its Being, this

Doctrine renders not Christ's Death, and Satisfaction to Law and Justice, or to God, as a Law-giver, unnecessary. Thus, all our Author's Reasoning on this Subject sinks at once, which fills up so many Pages.

Some Time since, I published a *Defense of the Doctrine of eternal Justification, from some Exceptions made to it by Mr. Bragge, and others*; several Things in which, this Author has thought proper to take Notice of: He begins with what I have advanced in Favor of actual Reconciliation before Faith. The Words cited by me, as an evident Proof of that Doctrine, are, *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*. The Sense of which, I take to be this; That *Paul*, and all the Elect of God, were reconciled while Enemies by Virtue of Christ's Death; and that, in Consequence of this Reconciliation, they become reconciled in themselves, or the Enmity of their Hearts is slain; and, being thus reconciled, they may be assured of eternal Happiness by Christ's ever living to intercede for them: So that Reconciliation, in the first Branch, intends the Satisfaction of Justice by the Death of Christ; and Reconciliation, in the second, designs the conquering of our perverse Minds by omnipotent Grace. Herein the Apostle's Reasoning appears very clear and strong; which stands thus: If Law and Justice were satisfied for our Sins by Christ's Death, when we were in open Rebellion against God; much more, since the Perverseness of our Hearts is subdued, we may steadily expect everlasting Happiness by his Life of Intercession for us: This doth not make the Apostle guilty of *Nonsense, or bad Divinity*, as our Examiner weakly imagines.

It is not a little observable, that, though this Writer militates so much against Reconciliation before Faith, he is yet obliged to grant it: When he comes to give his own Sense of the Words, it is thus; *God was hereby reconciled to the Elect, by Virtue of the Price of our Redemption, etc.*

Doth he allow, that God was reconciled by Virtue of Christ's Death!

How then could he assert, that *Reconciliation is not before Faith*?

Perhaps, he may find it no easy Matter to reconcile Petitions so clearly opposite. Unless I am mistaken, he has, in these few Words, overthrown all that he offers against the Doctrine of Reconciliation before Faith: It may be, hereafter, he will write with a better Guard, and deny, that Satisfaction is made by Christ's Death, in order to destroy the Doctrine of Reconciliation before Faith; since he is so great an Adversary to it. He *conceives, that the Price of Pardon, or the Atonement, must be pleaded either by the believing Soul, or else by his Advocate above for him*. But, to what End? Surely, not in order to Satisfaction; for that wholly arises from the infinite Dignity of the Person who suffered: Christ's Intercession with God, in behalf of his People, adds no Efficacy to his Death, as a Propitiation for their Sins; but his Intercession is founded upon the Completeness of his Satisfaction. Besides, doth not the Elects Advocate plead his Sufferings in their Favor, while in Unbelief, in order

to their believing? And can he imagine, that Christ's urging his Death, in Favour of his People, is less prevalent with God, than their pleading it when they believe? Moreover, Faith, in pleading the Sufferings of Christ, considers divine Justice as fully satisfied thereby, for the Sins of those Persons on whose Account he suffered; which the Apostle designs in Part, at least, by *receiving the Atonement* (Romans 5:11.).

And if so, it necessarily follows, that Reconciliation has not the least Dependence on Faith, but is prior to it, and doth not commence with the Being of that Grace.

4th. I go on to answer what he objects to the Doctrine of Justification before Faith. It has been thought, that these Words afford full Evidence thereof: *But believeth on him, that justifieth the ungodly.* Whereupon he thus delivers himself: *I understand, that what Faith applies to, and lays hold of, is intended hereby, and not the Act of Faith only.* Not the Act of Faith *only*; is Faith then, in his Account, a Part of our justifying Righteousness? This is not sound Protestant Doctrine, which teaches that Christ's Righteousness alone is the Matter of a Sinner's Justification before God. Those, who favor the Doctrine of Justification before Faith, think it is strongly maintained in this Text; because it is expressly said, that God *justifieth the Ungodly*: By which they conclude, Believers cannot be designed; nor has this Gentleman thought proper to suggest, that they ever pass under such a Character: And if they do not, then Unbelievers are the Objects of Justification, how unwilling soever he may be to allow it. Why, therefore, does he affirm, that *Justification before Faith is a mere human Conjecture*, that hath not *Scripture to support it*? Unless he can prove, that Believers are ungodly Persons, this Text will remain an immoveable Bar to the Truth of what he asserts with such an Air of Assurance: He supposes the Difficulty may be removed; but it is a very odd Method he takes to do it; not by proving that Believers are designed, but charges the Apostle with down-right Contradiction. It is thus: *The Apostle*, says he, *by a long Train of Arguments, is proving that our Justification is by Faith; therefore, it is highly, irrational to suppose, that he should intend here, that the Believer was pardoned, or accepted of God, while he was in Unbelief.* If this is not to make the Apostle contradict himself, it will be difficult to determine what Self-contradiction is: He grants, that the Apostle designs Unbelievers, by the Term *ungodly*; and yet represents him *as proving, by a long Train of Arguments, that the Believer was not accepted of God, or justified, while in Unbelief.*

He adds, *This would render the Apostle's Meaning as remote from good sense as possible, and as ridiculous, as if he should say, If you believe, you shall have Righteousness imputed to you for your Justification; because that Righteousness was imputed to you while you were Unbelievers, or ungodly Sinners. If this is not the native Style of their Doctrine (the Supralapsarians) then will I submit to be censured*

for an Idiot. He may be assured, I shall never censure him for an Idiot; yet, I cannot think his Talent, in Disputation, will be much admired; not but he might have succeeded better, if he had understood the Subjects upon which he writes. In order to clear the *Supralapsarians*, as he loves to call those who entertain the Doctrine of Justification before Faith, from supposing the Apostle guilty of such bad Sense, I need only observe, that they think their Opinion of the Commencement of the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness before Faith, is clear from his affirming, God justifieth the ungodly, and that he only can intend the Knowledge of Justification, when he declares it is by Faith; and therefore, they are far from imagining it is, as if he should say, if you believe, you shall have Righteousness imputed to you for your Justification: They think, that cannot consist with his Declaration of God's justifying the Elect, while ungodly; but allow, it is agreeable enough to the Apostle's Sense, That, upon believing, the Elect, by Faith, apprehend the Righteousness of Christ imputed to them; and are ready still to maintain, that the Apostle designs nothing more, when he says, we are justified by Faith; if Faith is to be taken in a proper Sense, and the Object of it is not intended. Again, he farther observes, that sometimes Justification is spoken of as future: *By the Obedience of one, shall many be made righteous.* I suppose, by this, he means it cannot be an Act which was past upon the Elect before Faith; but, if he considers that to be, frequently intends the Manifestation of what is; as for Instance, in those Words of Christ, *So shall ye be my Disciples* (John 15:8.); *i.e.* appear to be; I say, when he shall consider this, perhaps, he may conceive such Modes of Expression, he here refers to, make not so much for his Opinion as he imagines they do. Next he informs us, that Mr. *Henry* would have the Text read, *but believeth on him that justifieth that ungodly one; meaning Abraham, who was an Idolater.* The words are not thus rendered by any learned Person that I know of; *Arias Montanus, Beza; Calvin, Pareus, and Hutter,* in his *Hebrew* Version, all read as we do, and the *Syriac* reads *Sinners*; and, what Mr. *Henry* says, will hardly be thought of greater Weight, than the Authority of so many learned Men; nor is there any Necessity for this reading" $\tau\alpha\sigma\epsilon\beta\eta$ is, indeed, in the singular Number, but it is not unusually taken in a collective Sense; as in these Words, *If the Righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the Ungodly? Ο αεβή,* in the singular Number, as here, yet it designs all the Non-elect; *and the Sinner appear* (1 Peter 4:18.). Besides, if that Reading be admitted, unless it is proved that the Apostle considered *Abraham* as ungodly when a Believer, the Argument loses nothing of its Force; if he respects him as an Idolater, and not as a Believer, then God justified him prior to his Faith; and, if he thus justified *Abraham*, he also does every other elect Person.

He objects to Faith being a Manifestation of our Justification, thus: *Certainly we must be very uncharitable to the greatest Part of exemplary Christians, if we will not admit any to be true Believers, but such as have the undoubted Manifestation of*

their being in a justified State. I do not dissent from him in this: But, I think, he will not be capable of proving, that the Doctrine of Justification by Faith, in our Sense of it, involves such Un Charitableness in it: For, though we understand Justification by Faith to be the Evidence, or Perception of Justification, we do not assert, that this must arise to an undoubted Manifestation of our Interest in Christ's justifying Righteousness. What we maintain is, that Faith acting on the Righteousness of Christ alone, for Acceptance with God, is, in itself, a clear Evidence of the Imputation of that Righteousness to us; inasmuch as it is a Branch of the Spirit's Work to convince us of the Necessity of an Interest in that Righteousness, in order to our Justification; although, through Unbelief, we may be prevented of apprehending this to be such an Evidence. We farther maintain, that Hope ever acts in Conjunction with Faith; when the latter is wholly out of Exercise, it will be difficult to discover any Acting's of the former. Besides, the good Measure of Hope that a Believer has of an Interest in Christ, and his justifying Righteousness, has some Degree of Evidence of such an Interest, or else it would be entirely without Foundation to support it; although' that Evidence is not so strong as to carry him to a full Assurance of Faith. Thus it appears, that Faith is an Evidence of Justification by Christ, and that that Evidence is clearer, or less evident, according as that Grace is weaker or stronger: And therefore, this Author mistakes us, if he thinks we assert Justification, by Faith, to be art undoubted Manifestation of our Interest in that Benefit. He tells us, that Ezekiel 16:8. is urged in favor of Justification before Faith, but does not acquaint us by whom; perhaps, he met with it in Conversation with some Persons upon the Subject: Which if he did, and thinks it impertinent, Why does he expose it to Public View? Can he be ignorant, that, if everything which is offered in Defense of Truth in private Converse among Christians should be made public, it would not be much to its Advantage? However, I shall consider his Observations on the Text; and he thus remarks upon it, *If this Verse is to be understood, as (let it be) so God's imputing the Righteousness of Christ, when he is said to spread his Skirts over the Sinner, then I presume, that that Day of the Sinner's being born, refers to the new Birth, or Regeneration in the fifth Verse.* 'Tis not a little strange, that the allegorical Representation of our filthy, miserable, and helpless Condition by Nature, should be thought by this Author to refer to our Regeneration; for that is all that is designed in the 4th and 5th Verses. I imagine, every judicious Reader will easily see that the Birth mentioned cannot be the new. The 6th and 8th Verses give us an Account of our Regeneration, as a Work that passes upon us when in the deplorable Condition that is let forth in the 4th and 5th Verses.

He is very much mistaken in thinking the Soul is represented in the 5th Verse, as conscious of its own miserable State; that is a plain Account of our natural Condition, but not of our Apprehension of that State. Besides, he is as far from the Truth, in supposing, that when God says to us, live, we have such just Apprehensions

of our natural Condition; the true Knowledge of that, follows upon the Communication of spiritual Life, and doth not precede it: We are very far from that Humility, and Self-abasement, which this Author suggests to be in us, when God says to us, live. Farther, I apprehend, the justifying Righteousness of Christ may be intended in the 8th *Verse*, and that, by spreading of it over us, respect is had to a Ceremony used by the *Jews* in their Nuptials. But this designs not the Commencement of the Imputation of that Righteousness, only the Discovery of it to our Souls for our Consolation and joy; as that Phrase, *and thou becamest mine*, does not intend that God's Interest in us commences upon our believing, but only the Manifestation of that Interest, which I shall more particularly consider hereafter. Upon the whole, although this Text doth not furnish us out with a Proof of Justification before Faith, it contains nothing inconsistent with it, as this Author imagines.

5thly. I shall consider his Remarks on what I have offered in favor of Adoption before Faith. The Scripture I quoted to support this was; *Because ye are Sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your Hearts, crying, Abba, Father* (Galatians 4:6.). I pass over his insinuating that I am *infatuated* with a *blind Zeal*, as below my Notice; all such Insinuations will meet with a Contempt from me, equal to that with which he can possibly deliver them. He observes, the Apostle informed the *Galatians* of the *Medium* of their Adoption in these Words, *For ye are all the Children of God, by Faith in Christ Jesus* (Galatians 3:26.). How Faith is the Medium, or Mean of Adoption, I am utterly unable to conceive; it is certain, that Adoption is God's Act, or he fixes us in the honorable Relation of Sons to himself. Now, it is not to be conceived, that God makes use of Faith in this Act of his, it cannot be; for, as we are the Subjects of this Grace, all the Acting's of it are proper to us: Unless, therefore, we make ourselves the Sons of God by Faith, or Believing, Adoption itself cannot be by this Grace. Whence it follows, that the Apostle must design by these Words, that Faith is that Grace by which we know our Adoption, and receive the Immunities arising from that Relation. Faith is the Medium, Mean, or Instrument, by which we partake of the Benefits of Adoption, but it cannot be the Medium of Adoption itself; the manifest Reason of which is, that is God's Act, and not ours.

I cannot tell, whether some of his Readers may not think him chargeable with rash Boldness, which he is very forward to fix upon others, when he says, *That there is not one Word in the Text that favors the Opinion of Adoption before Faith.* He adds, *If it had been written to suit their Scheme, it must have read in the past Tense, thus; and because ye were Sons, etc. Had it been thus wrote, the bold Maintainers of Sonship before Faith might have made their Triumphs with a better Grace.* Our Author seems to take a peculiar Pleasure in representing the Savourers of the Opinions he opposes, as bold, daring, and insulting Persons: How much to the

Advantage of his Argument, it is not difficult to determine. 'Tis not improbable, but many, at least, may conclude, that his contemptuous Way of Writing carries no great Force of Reasoning in it. He should have considered, that we apprehend our Sonship, or filial Relation to God, is the Cause of the Mission of the Holy Spirit into our Hearts; and that these Words are an evident Proof of it, though expressed in the present, and not in the past Tense. We conceive, the Design of the Apostle is to shew, that the Mission of the Spirit results from this our Relation of Sons to God, which this Author has not so much as attempted to disprove; and of Consequence, that we must be Sons before the Holy Spirit is sent into our Hearts; for the Cause is previous to its Effect. Its being expressed in the present Tense, is no Objection to this, as may be evinced by this Supposition: Suppose a Father having a rebellious Son, yet continues to confer Favors upon him, it should be observed to the Son, that his Carriage renders him undeserving of his Father's paternal Affection, notwithstanding such a Favor he has bestowed upon you, because you are his Son; would not everyone clearly discern that the Relation was the Cause of the Favor being granted to him, no less than if it had been laid, because you were a Son? As easy it is to discover this to be the true Meaning of the Apostle's Words: And, I am persuaded, this Author will never be able to fix any other upon them; though, through his warm Opposition to the Doctrine irrefragably supported by them, he may be induced to stretch his Thoughts to the utmost, in order to it.

I must confess my way of Reasoning to be very unhappy, if it is justly Rated by this Writer: It is thus; *Because the believing Galatians were adopted Children of God, when Paul writ his Epistle to them; therefore Paul was in the same State when he was a Persecutor, and an Enemy to God.* He might well ask, if there is any good Divinity, or Reasoning in this Way of Arguing? But, it may be, the impartial Reader will acquit me of such a Way of Disputing, when he considers, that my Design was to argue for Adoption before Faith, from the Mission and Work of the Spirit upon the Hearts of the *Galatians*, as an Effect of their Sonship to God, and so applied it to *Paul*, it being no less true of him, than of them; and think him either ignorant of the Force of my Argument, or which is worse, highly disingenuous in hating it. Since the Communication of the Holy Spirit follows upon our Adoption, as an Effect doth its Cause; that Observation of mine is true, Regeneration doth not make us Sons; but; because we are Sons, we are regenerated; although he is pleased to call it a daring Assertion. Nor are these Words opposite to it: *But to as many as received him, to them gave he Power to become the Sons of God* (John 1:12, 13.): Which intend not Adoption, but the Benefits arising from it: To Believers Christ gives a Liberty, Power, or Right, to claim and enjoy such Privileges as are proper to Children. Neither is this Text; *And were by Nature Children of Wrath, even as others.* These Words consider the Elect as in their natural Condition; thus they are under a Sentence of Wrath or Condemnation by the Law, which is not at all inconsistent with

their Relation to God by Grace; as the Descendants of *Adam*, they are Children of Wrath; as in, and Members of Christ, they are the Children of God: Nor is it any Contradiction to affirm each of these Things concerning them at the same Time; because they are considered in a two-fold Respect, as what they are by Nature, and what they are by Grace, or as they have Christ for their federal Head.

He tells us, That *the Act of Adoption is the owning us to be Children*: But he is greatly mistaken; for, if that is Adoption, it is repeated as often as the divine Spirit witnesses to a Believer that he is a Child of God, that is, God's owning him for a Son, and evidencing to his Conscience, that he stands in such a Relation to him: But the Act of Adoption is not reiterated, though' the giving Evidence of such a Relation is in infinite Mercy repeated. Adoption is an Act in God himself towards his People, it is not a transient Act upon them; and therefore, is eternal, as all God's immanent Acts are. It is no other than an Act of his Will, or a gracious Resolution within himself to account them his Children, and to confer such Privileges upon them, as are suitable to the Nature of so great a Privilege. And therefore, I am very far from being scrupulous to affirm, that there is no Necessity for the Change that Conversion makes, in order to prepare us for Adoption; nay, farther, that Regeneration is so far from being our Meetness for Adoption, that it properly springs from it. The Elect are no less Heirs of regenerating Grace, prior to that Work upon their Souls, than they are Heirs of all future Supplies of Grace and Glory, by Virtue of God's eternal Will, that they shall be his Sons; which Act of the divine Will constituted them *Heirs of God, and joint Heirs with Christ*.

I do not except against the Account he gives of Regeneration, and the Acting's of a regenerate Person, as consequent upon such a Work in his Heart: That he thinks it supposes *a thorough Conviction of Sin, and of the Necessity of a perfect Righteousness, and an Apprehension of Christ as the only suitable Saviour*, I am glad to find. *But he is guilty of a great Mistake*, in thinking Adoption to be God's *acknowledging* the new-born Soul to be a Son or Daughter of his own begetting; that respects the sealing Work of the Spirit upon a Believer, and cannot *be Adoption itself*, as was before observed. The Scriptures which he mentions, to support his Assertion, carry no such Meaning in them; the one is, *for as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the Sons of God* (Romans 8:14.) ; that is, says he, they, *and none but they*. This is too free Addition of his own words to the Apostle, (as he understands them), who lays down the Leading or Instruction of the Holy. Spirit, as a certain Evidence of Adoption: If therefore, he had said, that none but such as are led by the Spirit have the Evidence of their Adoption, it would have been agreeable to the Apostle's Design. Neither do these Words militate with the Doctrine of Adoption before Faith: *Now, if any Man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his* (Romans 8:9.). Can this Author imagine, That Christ has no Interest in the Elect, before the Time of their believing? when they were given to him by the Father, he

laid down his Life for them; they are called his People by the Father, though unwilling, or in a State of Rebellion against him (Psalm 110:3.); and are also acknowledged by Christ himself to be his, even while in that State: *Other Sheep I have, which are not of this Fold, them also I must bring* (John 10:16.). Surely, he cannot thus think; these Things so clearly evince the Elect to be Christ's before the Time of their Regeneration: And therefore, it is not our Interest in him, or his in us, that the Apostle intends, but the Evidence of that Interest.

The next Scripture which our Author takes Notice of, that is urged in favor of Adoption before Faith, is; *And not for that Nation only, but that also he should gather together in one, the Children of God that were scattered Abroad*. Upon which he thus remarks; *If we should grant for Argument's Sake, that, by the Children of God, is intended all elect People of God, whether the uncalled, or unborn, as well as them that are called*. This he must be obliged to allow, not merely for Argument's Sake, but as the real Sense of the Words; for all those, whom Christ gathers together in one, are plainly designed by the Children of God: And therefore, the uncalled, and unborn of the Elect, are no less intended, than those who were living at that Time, and called by divine Grace. Yet, says he, *I suppose these Men will find no small Difficulty, to engage it on their Side; because this is a Prophecy: And it is well known, that the Nature of prophetic Writings is to speak often of Things to come as present, or past, by calling those Things that are not, as though they were*. As for Instance, *we read in the 22nd Psalm, 16th and 18th Verses, (Psalm 22:16, 18.) of our Saviour's Hands and Feet being pierced, as if past and over*. The Force of which Reasoning stands thus; Since it is usual in Prophecy to speak of Facts, that are to be accomplished hereafter, as if they were already done, we may not conclude, from such prophetic Writings, that God, at the present, stands in Relation to the Elect; although such Characters are given to them, in those Writings, which are expressive of his Relation to them. If this Manner of Arguing be allowed of, we may deny, that Christ stood in the Capacity of a King to the *Old Testament Church*, from his being so called in a Prophecy (to which our Author has Reference) that mentions his riding to *Jerusalem* on an Ass (Zechariah 9:9.); which, I presume, he will not think proper to do. Evangelical Prophecies contain Doctrines, as well as Predictions of future Events. Now, though we are not to conclude, that those Events, or Facts, are past and done, because the Prophecy is delivered in the present, or past Tense; yet, certainly, we may be allowed to conceive of the Doctrines, those Prophecies contain, as present Truths: Therefore, though this is a Prophecy, in which all the Elect are called the Children of God, it is not to be objected to their present Adoption any more than Christ's being called a King, in a Prophecy that relates to a future Fact, may be improved as an Objection to his present standing that Capacity. 'Tis not a

little strange, that our Author should be unable to distinguish between Doctrines and Facts, as he seems not to do in his Observations here.

What he offers farther, concerning its being *as reasonable to attempt to prove, that Judas had actually sold Christ in Eternity, etc. as that the chosen Number were actually adopted in Eternity, is* altogether impertinent, and deserves little Consideration. If his Observations of this Kind are just, I allow, that I am very unhappy in my Way of Arguing, and must be concluded guilty of the greatest Absurdities: But, he may be pleased to observe, I maintain that Adoption is God's Act, and an Act of his Will, or within himself, and therefore must be eternal. Now, 'tis not a little unaccountable, that any should imagine, it is as reasonable to suppose the Acts of a Creature are eternal, as that God's immanent Acts are so. If this Author shall think proper to reply, I desire he would either allow Justification and Adoption to be immanent Acts of God, or else prove them transient Acts; or demonstrate, that, though they are immanent Acts, they are not eternal; every Thing short of this will be nothing to the Purpose. Let him shew us, that there is an Exertion of divine Power, in order to our Adoption, or that a transient Act of God is put forth, which gives Being to this Benefit, or else freely grant, that it is an Act of his Will only. He goes on to observe, that the Doctrine of Adoption before Faith, receives no Countenance from these Words; *This, my Son, was dead, but is alive again*: He imagines the Difficulties attending this Account of the Prodigal, taken as a Parable, are exceeding great; and also, that he is able to prove, that, if it is so to be understood, the Doctrine of Justification before Faith is *destroyed* by it (Luke 15:24.); which, I should think, might reduce him to take it in that View, in order to the Service of his Cause. One of the Difficulties he mentions is this; *If they understand by the younger Son, the Gentiles, and by the elder, the Jews; How will this comport with the believing Jews giving Glory to God, for his giving Repentance to Life unto the Gentiles?* This Difficulty as mutely removed by observing, that not believing *Jews* are intended, but pharisaical, self-righteous Ones; such as were offended at Christ's *receiving Sinners, and eating with them*. Another is started by him.: It is this; *If they will have it to be a Spiritual Life that is intended in the Text, then certainly it must refer to one who was formerly possessed of that Life, and so can only relate to a Backslider returned to his God, and to his Obedience; since the Text faith, that he is alive again; which supposeth, that he once, or before his Rambles, was alive*. I answer, a backsliding Believer loses not his spiritual Life, though his Liveliness and Vigor may be abated very much by his Backslidings; therefore, Believers cannot be intended. Besides, it may be truly said of Sinners upon their Regeneration, that they are alive again, who were once dead in Trespasses and Sins; because Regeneration is a Communication of spiritual Life to them: But it is not necessary to understand, that the Life they receive, is of the same Nature with that which they lost; any more than it is, that the Life which the Saints will be possessed of at the Resurrection, when they shall live

again, will be of the same Kind with that mortal and perishing one they now live in this World. If he has no greater Difficulties to raise against this being a Parable, it may be taken for one, as far as I am able to conceive; and, since the Prodigal was considered as a Son when dead and lost, it has a very favorable Aspect upon the Doctrine of Adoption before Faith. Our Author is pleased to assert, that *Predestination is not Adoption*. True, the Act of Predestination is not Adoption, or our Relation of Sons to God; I never met with any who conceived it is. He adds; *Nor does it make them Sons, but is an Appointment to Sonship only, appears plain by Ephesians 1:5, Having predestinated us to the Adoption of Children by Jesus Christ to himself*, This is too freely affirmed, and without any Proof; Adoption is to be distinguished into the Relation of Sons, and the Benefits proper to that Relation: It is frequently taken for the latter, as in these Words, *That we might receive the Adoption of Sons* (Galatians 4:5.); so also in these, *Waiting for the Adoption, to wit, the Redemption of our Body* (Romans 8:25.). The Saints are not in Expectation of becoming Sons to God, though they are of receiving that eternal Glory, which arises from their being Sons; according to the Words of the Apostle *John*, *Now we are the Sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is* (1 John 3:2.). In Predestination we became Sons to God; because God's Will, that we should be his Sons, gave Being to that Relation; although it did not give present Being to us, or to the Privileges proper to Adoption, and is to be considered as an Ordination, or Fore-appointment, of our Participation of those great Immunities only. This is so far from militating with eternal Adoption, that it involves it: For Predestination to the Honor, Dignity, and Privileges of Children, supposes us to be so considered in that Act. That Romans 8:9. is not inconsistent with Adoption, has been already observed. He asks, *If it is agreeable either to Scripture or Reason, to call any of our sinful Race Children of God, before they are either born or begotten of God?* I hope it has been made evident from Scripture, that the Elect Part of the sinful Race of Mankind, are the Children of God before Regeneration: But, I think, Reason is not to be a Judge in evangelical Mysteries, which are above it; though, at the same Time, I affirm, that it is beyond the Ability of this Author to prove this Doctrine to be contrary to Reason.

I have one Thing more to take Notice of: It is this; *Can they be Members of Christ, and yet barren of all Good, but fertile in all Evil? Can this be, when our Lord informs us, that all fruitless Branches are so far from being respected that his heavenly Father taketh them away?* Does he then think that the Elect, while unregenerate, or unfruitful, have no Interest in divine Favor and Respect? or, that God deals with them., as with formal, barren, and hypocritical Professors, who are only in Christ by Profession? This is not impartially to examine our Opinions by the Word of God, but plainly to contradict it; which acquaints us, that, because God

loved his People with an everlasting Love (Jeremiah 31:3.), therefore he communicates Grace to them here, in order to Fruitfulness, and crowns them with Glory hereafter, as the certain Effect of the same Love. ***To conclude, it will be of great Advantage to this Author in his Writing, if he replies, closely to consider the true Nature of the Subjects upon which he shall treat.*** The Want of that, in this Performance, has occasioned him to be guilty of very great Mistakes, in stating the Opinions of those whom he opposes; in drawing such Consequences from them, that are *entirely foreign* to their *Nature*; and in advancing such Objections, as do not, *in the least*, affect the *Argument under Consideration*: Greater *Blemishes* than which, can hardly be thought to attend a Polemical Writer.