

The Trial & Triumph of Faith

SERMON 24

By Rev. Samuel Rutherford

“THY faith.” Faith is so Christ’s, as the fountain and the cause, that it is ours, as agents moved and acted by Christ. Hence it is a foul error to say, ‘That there is no inherent righteousness in the saints, and no graces in the souls of believers, but in Christ only.’ There is water, even “the Spirit poured on the dry ground,” (Isa. 44:3); “God’s Spirit put within us,” (Ezek. 36:26,27); “the Spirit of grace and of supplication poured on the house of David,” (Zech. 12:10); “a well within the saints, springing up to life everlasting,” (John 4:14). The Father and the Son, through the operation of grace, take up house in them, (John 14:23). Such a new stock and plant of heaven set in them, as they have the “anointing dwelling in them,” (1 John 2:27), “The seed of God abiding in them,” (1 John 3:9). “Unfeigned faith dwelling in Timothy,” (2 Tim. 1:5). Grace in them, as fire under ashes, (2 Tim. 1:6). And a new “divine nature,” (2 Pet. 1:4). “An inward man,” (2 Cor. 4:16). “Christ in you the hope of glory.” (Col. 1:27.) Nor are the faculties of the soul, and the workings thereof in our conversion destroyed, as some say, as if the Holy Ghost should come instead of these; for Christ taketh down old work, and maketh a new building for himself, but the stones are ours, the soul remaining in its powers and operations; the understanding and will remain, but opened, (Luke 24:45; John 21:18; Eph. 1:17,18; Eph. 4:23,24). Christ removeth the rubbish and the frowardness, and overgildeth our stones; it is our matter, and his workmanship. Hence we are agents. Grace teacheth no man to be lazy; for, because all the moral actions of the renewed are commanded of God, if we by grace were no agents in these, but mere patients, and Christ and the Holy Ghost the only immediate agents,—in the omitting of believing, praying, praising, hearing; in not doing all our natural and civil actions for God, and in a spiritual way; yea, and in our forbearing to murder, whore, blaspheme, etc., (for, by the grace of Christ the saints abstain from sin), we should not sin;—all these wicked acts were to be imputed to the grace of Christ, and the Holy Ghost, which is blasphemy, and a flat turning of the grace of God into wantonness. Now we are, by grace, to be agents, to purge ourselves, (1 John 3:3,) to run with enlarged hearts in God’s way, (Psalm 119:32,) to stir up, and blow upon grace under ashes, (2 Tim. 1:6;) “To walk in Christ as we have received him,” (Col. 2:6;) “To keep ourselves in the love of God,” (Jude 21).

USE.—We are to be careful of the stock, not to hurt or waste the stock of grace. He who is spending his stock, before it be long shall have nothing. Cast not water

upon your own coal, to quench the Spirit, or to grieve it. See what grows out of your stock; what income and crop of the fruits of the Spirit shall return to Christ. The Lord demandeth of every child of God, what, and where is the stock, and where is the rent of heaven? It is the virtue of the merchant to increase the stock; and, in all losses to strive to keep it whole. There is a wasting of the habit of grace, which is a dangerous thing, (Eph. 4:30). There is a sadding of the Spirit, and a rubbing off of some letters or characters of the broad seal of the Spirit, which is forbidden; even as break some spokes or axletree of the wheels of a great work, and the mill or horologe [chronometer, clock-work] is at a stand, and can work nothing. Beware, that no wards of the conscience be broken, for fear that the key of David that openeth the heart, fit them not, or suit not with the lock. David brake a ward, and a sprent of the new heart, by his adultery and bloodshed, and therefore, no artificer but one only in heaven, could put the lock in frame again, (Psalm 51:10). The new creation is like a curious horologe, made of crystal glass; it must be warily and tenderly handled: the frame of the workmanship of "the Holy Ghost dwelling in us," (2 Tim. 1:14,) must be kept from the least craze or throw in all the wheels and turnings thereof; yea, the least mote must not rest on it.

Question.—What must be done to keep in good temper the new creation?

Answer. (1.) Beware to go to bed and sleep with a bone broken or disjoined in the inner man. It is good to be disquieted in spirit, as if there were an aching in the bones, after some great sin not repented nor bewailed. When Peter, by denying his Lord, had rotted a bone, or a joint of the new man in himself, he rested not well that night; "He went out, and wept bitterly," (Matt. 26:57). Jeremiah made a rash and passionate vow, to speak no more in the name of the Lord; but he could not sleep with that coal of fire in his bones, (Jer. 20:9). (2.) Put the keeping of the new creature off your hand;—make it a pawn committed to Christ's keeping, (2 Tim. 1:12,)—let him answer for it,—be not you under the burden of it yourself. The habit of grace, and the man put under lock and key to Christ, is in sure keeping; consider what cometh of him, (Jude 24). This is a broken world, there be many loose-handed devils going abroad through the earth; there be robbers lying await in the way to heaven, to take the crown from us, (Rev. 3:11). The believer, who hath a stock of grace, must be at holding and drawing with men and devils. "Commit the keeping of your souls to the faithful Creator;" but be not you idle, do it in "well-doing," (1 Pet. 4:19). (3.) Deal kindly with Christ, when you have him; break not with Christ, if you would keep the habit of grace safe; do nothing against your state. Grieving of the Holy Ghost, is unworthy of the condition of a redeemed one; your place cannot consist with walking after the flesh. The camp you are in cannot well bear compliance with the flesh; "You have put on the Lord Jesus," (Rom. 13:14). You cannot lay in for, nor victual such a castle as the flesh; for some exercise a providence, and lay in provision for the flesh. (4.) To be doing good, keepeth the habit of grace in exercise, and in life also; for grace is of the nature of life, and life is preserved by motion, and the frequent operations of life; yea, with this difference, the natural

life may be worn out, and consumed away, with too frequent and violent labour and toil. This life is increased by assiduous walking with God; for “Every branch that beareth fruit in Christ, my Father (saith he) purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.” (John 15:2.)

“Be it unto thee as thou wilt.”—Christ cannot long dissemble (to speak so), and keep up his love; he tried this woman hardly, now he praiseth her in her face,—“Great is thy faith,”—and granteth her desire to the full. If there was such a brotherly and natural compassion in Joseph, (Gen. 43:30,) Joseph’s bowels yearned, they were hot, and, “Joseph could not refrain himself.” Vatablus noteth, that the Hebrew word is, ‘He could not do violence to himself.’ (Gen. 45:1); his love was like a hot furnace and it was like to make a captive of him, and to overcome him: now, the man Christ, hath the same heart and bowels of a man; and I conceive, as Christ was a man void of sin, so the acts of natural virtues, as to pity the afflicted, were stronger in him than in us. Sin blunteth natural faculties, especially such as incline to acts laudable and good—such as are love, compassion to the miserable; and sin boweth, or rather breaketh natural acts that are indifferent in their nature, and farther removed from morality, and maketh them intense above nature, sin being a violent thing. So, in natural men, there is little power in carnal reason over acts of generation, hunger, thirst, sleep, and such as have their rise from the sensitive soul. Christ having strength of sinless reason natural, far above Adam, was strong in the acts of the former kind, and moderate in the other; especially, being a High Priest that matcheth us in natural passions, (Heb. 4:15). Even, in a sympathy, and having these same passions that we have, he wept over Jerusalem, (Luke 19). When they were crying Hosanna to Him, and occasion of joy furnished to him, yet he wept over the city, and spake words of compassion, but broken and imprisoned with sighing and sorrow, “Oh, if thou knew, even thou,” (verses 41,42). Now, what compassion must be in him, when his compassion had such an edge? Joseph is nothing to him, he having taken a man’s heart to go along with the saints to heaven, sighing, weeping, mourning, “tempted in all these, as we are, but without sin,” (Heb. 4:15). Now, though there be no passions, as there are no infirmities in God, yet the flower, the blossom, the excellency of all these are infinitely in God: he striketh, and trieth, and yet pitieth: Israel cry to the Lord in their bondage, he giveth them a hard answer, “Go to the gods,” (saith he,) “that ye have chosen, and let them deliver you.” They still are in bondage, and weep upon him; “The Lord’s soul was grieved,” (Judg. 10:16), (Hebrew, “Cut short for the miseries of Israel”). So Jer. 31: Two evils befall Ephraim, one is, God’s correcting hand; another is, bemoaning and sorrow for sin; both are trials. But how doth God express himself toward Ephraim? “Is Ephraim my dear son? Is he a son of consolation?” (verse 20.) So the Hebrew, “Is he my dainty child? For since I spoke against him I do earnestly remember him still, therefore my bowels are troubled for him.” Observe the income of God’s consolations, after sad and heavy trials: “O, thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and thy foundations with sapphires.” (Isa. 54:11.) “Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith our God. Speak to the heart of

Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is accomplished.” (Isaiah 40:1,2.) There is a violence of heavenly passion in Christ’s love; it will come out at length: tempted ones, wait on, you shall see Christ as Christ, in the end of the day: Christ is well worthy a day’s weeping, and a day’s waiting on. Compassion strangled and inclosed in Christ, must break out; it easeth Christ’s mind, that his bowels of mercy find a vent. Pity kept within God’s bowels (to speak so) paineth him? it must come out: “Mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together.” (Hos. 11:8.) Oh, how rude and inhuman hath sin made our nature! His love who died for us, brake heaven, and rent the two sides of the firmament, as it were, asunder: our Lord descended, and was made a man in all things like us, except sin. But, oh, the first, nay, the doubled summons of Christ’s love is not obeyed. Love crieth—we are deaf; Christ’s love hunteth no other prey but our heart, and he cannot have it. After Christ hath tempted a soul, he must put it in his heart; it is an ease and comfort to Christ, to ease and comfort the tempted. He is now trying Britain, and giving his bride a cup of blood and tears to drink; but who knows what bowels, what turnings of heart, what motions of compassion are in the man Christ now in heaven! Those who shall live to see the Lord take his bride in his arms, and embrace her after these many temptations that now your eyes see, shall subscribe to the truth of this; and those who find Christ’s love-embracements, after desertions, know this. Should we suppose that there were in Christ but this one attribute of tender compassion toward his own tempted ones, it should make him altogether lovely to us. For the motion of tender mercy in Christ, upon the supposition of free love that he died for his own, is natural, he having taken a man’s heart to heaven with him, and borrowed nature from us: as our compassionate High Priest, he cannot but pity; mercy acteth as a natural agent in him. Now, suppose we that the mother were eternal, and her child eternal, but eternally weak; compassion should eternally flow from the mother to the child. Suppose a fair rose to grow eternally, and the summer sun to shine near it eternally, and life and sap to keep it vigorous eternally; it should cast out a sweet smell, and offer its beauty to the eyes and senses eternally. In Jesus Christ, the heart and tender bowels of the sweetest, mildest, and most compassionate nature of man that God can possibly form, have met with eternal and infinite mercy in God-Chris; and to say nothing, that mercy in Christ-man hath been putting forth the sweet-smelling acts of love, without tiring, summer and winter, night and day, these sixteen hundred years; and that, even now, while you read this, he is casting out acts of love and mercy—an eternal High Priest could do no other thing for ever, but compassionate his own redeemed flesh. Mercy chooseth a lover freely, Jacob, not Esau; this man, not that man; the fool, not the wise man; the beggar, not the prince; the servant, not the master; but, having once made choice, it worketh necessarily and eternally. Christ’s love hath no vacation, no cessation; but when he tempteth, smiteth, afflicteth, & trieth, love and tender mercy work in the dark. Joseph’s bowels were upon action, and busy, when his brethren saw no such thing, even when he was accusing them as spies, and dealing roughly with them. When the sword of the Lord, drunken, swelled, and fatted with blood, is now raging in the three kingdoms, mercy is in our High Priest, and his bowels are rolled within him,

though we cannot see Christ's inner side. It is likely, the place, (Heb. 4:15,) is but an allusive exposition of the rolled and moved "bowels of God," (Jer. 31:20). Christ is, as it were, in heaven burning, and flaming in a passion of compassion toward his weak ones. He is not only touched, but pained "with our infirmities," so the word doth bear. We shall not do well, to make the tempted condition that either the church or a soul is in, the rule of God's love: God's fiery dispensation in Zion, or in a soul, in the burning bush, speaketh not always wrath. Make not false commentaries on Christ's tempting dispensation. Hell is accidental to the love of Christ, and cannot change it. Suppose Christ's tender mercy were in the midst of the flames of hell, yet there mercy should be mercy, and work as mercy, and not belie itself.

Never a rod of God upon any elect child of God (save upon Christ only) did speak satisfactory vengeance for sin. Question.—Why? Is not Christ now red in his apparel, and his garments dyed and dipped in blood; and hath he not put on vengeance as a garment, in the three kingdoms? Answer.—Yes, and for the provocations of England, their unrepented idolatry, superstition, vanity, pride, security, unthankfulness to God, who hath broken the rod of the oppressor, and delivered them from pressures of conscience under Episcopacy, a mass service, and burdensome ceremonies; and for the sins of the king, queen, court, prelates and prophets; the persecuting and killing the witnesses of Christ in Queen Mary's days, and in the late prelates' time; and the present injustice, careless and remiss minding religion; and their labouring to spoil the kingdom of Christ of that power that Christ hath given to his people of church discipline, and translating it to their parliament to make church discipline parliament discipline, confounding so the two kingdoms; their tolerating blasphemous sects, some denying the godhead of Christ, some his kingly office to sanctify and govern his people, some his priestly, some his prophetic office; and many other sins of prophets and people, not repented of; and most of these sins, and many others, and especially the breach of the covenant in Scotland;—these two kingdoms are to fear heavy judgments, and that their calamity is not yet at an end; but rather, "one woe is passed, but another cometh," except these lands be humbled, and lie in the dust before the Lord. Yet, in all this, the dispensation of God, though bloody, is but the Lord saying, as of old, so now to Britain, "And I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin. And I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning; afterward thou shalt be called the city of righteousness, the faithful city. Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness." (Isa. 1:25-27.)

2. A rough dispensation of Christ, cannot abide long rough to the saints, he must answer, and ease the pain of the woman's broken spirit. It is a night's pain to Christ, to cause the tears run down the cheeks of his church all the night,—he cannot but bring a day-light of joy, before the sun's ordinary time to rise, (Psalm 30:5.) Christ smiteth, and weepeth for compassion, both at once. Tender mercy in Christ moveth as much, if not more, within than without. The mother's bowels are as much on work within, when the child is but upon her breasts, and he is not

capable to know a mother as a mother; and love as love, as ever. When the deserted is but new and hot come out of the second womb, and a babe born over again, yet, in a spiritual fever, he is as much as ever in the bowels of Christ, though he be not in that case capable of the sense and actual apprehension of Christ, as Christ, and of the sense of Christ's love, as his love: "Since the time that I sufficiently talked with him in correcting him, or since the time of my sufficiency of speaking against him, in remembering him, I do remember him." (Jer. 31:20.) I spake much in mine anger against him, and half against my will; I did chide him, and scourge him; but my moved bowels, the stirrings of a compassionating heart, did contradict (in a manner) my rough correcting: my heart came out of me, with every rough word and stroke. The sun and nature work long, and many years under earth, in the generation of gold and silver, ere we see gold and silver. God, and his servant Nature, did us a pleasure and a great favour in that kind, in secret, down in the bowels of the earth, to make unseen and concealed provision for our purses: this secret love to us acted down in the dark, is no love to us, till we find it, and see it; yet is nature in a mystery under a veil, sweating under earth to bring forth for us metals, trees, herbs, flowers, corn for our service, but we see no harvest at that time. Christ's bowels are sweating, and as much labouring in childbirth, pain of compassion, and love, and tender mercy towards us, when we are in an ague, and a fit of desertion, as at any time; but we are loved of Christ and pitied, and we know no such thing. All Christ's answers and words to this woman, till now, were but interpretations and proclamations of wrath, and rejecting of her, as not one of the lost sheep of the house of Israel; a dog under the table, not a child of the house. Love came never above ground till now; yet did Christ's affection and love yearn upon her all the time.

Out of all this we collect, Christ may love persons, and yet his dispensation may be so rough, as that to their sense, there is no ground of being assured that Christ loveth them, till he shall be pleased to manifest it. Hence we may gather these propositions, to be considered for the times:

Free Love goeth before our Redemption.

PROPOSITION 1. God's free and unhired love, is the cause of our redemption, vocation, sanctification, and eternal salvation: he loved us in our blood, and while we were polluted in our blood. (Ezek. 16:6,8.) When we were the lost world, (John 3:16,) ungodly, (Rom. 5:6,) enemies, (verse 10,) he quickened us, called us, when dead in sins, (Eph. 2:1,) without works, (2 Tim. 1:9). The bill of grace is Christ's welcome, and pay nothing.

God Loveth the Persons of the Elect, but Hateth their Sins.

PROPOSITION 2. Our divines say, God loveth the persons of the elect, but hateth their sins. Mr. Denne is offended at this, and so are the Arminians for the

same reason; "If God hate the works of iniquity, he cannot but hate the persons and workers of iniquity also." It is true, the Lord hateth so the persons of the elect for their sins, as he taketh vengeance of their sins on their surety, Christ; but this consisteth with the Lord's loving of their persons to eternal salvation. The truth is, God's affection ad intra of hatred and displeasure, never so passeth on the persons of the elect, as on the persons of the reprobate: he had thoughts of love and peace, in secret, from eternity, to his own elect; he did frame a heaven, a Saviour for them, before all time.

A Twofold Love of God, one of Good-will to the Person, another of Complacency to his own Image in the Person.

PROPOSITION 3. Our divines do rightly teach, that there is a twofold love in God; Amor benevolentiaë, a love of well-willing, which he did bear to them before the world was, and it is called the love of election. Of this love, Paul speaketh. "I have loved Jacob, and hated Esau." (Rom. 9:13.) This is fountain-love, the well-head of all our salvation. There is another love called Amor complacentiaë, a love of complacency, a love of justification (so Mr. Denne termeth it,) which presupposeth faith, 'without which it is impossible to please God,' (Heb. 11:6). Of this Christ speaketh, "He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him." (John 14:21.) "If a man love me he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him," (verse 23.) So Christ, the wisdom of God, saith, "I love them that love me," (Prov. 8:17). And so Christ speaketh of his love to his redeemed and sanctified spouse, "Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse; thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck." (Cant. 4:9.) Holiness and the image of God is the object of this love, not the cause nor any hire. It is not so properly love as the other. God rather loveth persons, desiring well and good to them, than things. Mr. Denne is not content with this distinction; and why? 'The love of election and the love of justification,' saith he, 'are not divers loves or divers degrees of love, but divers manifestations of one and the same infinite love: as when a father hath conveyed an inheritance to his son; here is no new love from the father to the son, but a new manifestation of that love wherewith the father loved the son before.' Answer. Men should not take on them to refute they know not what: not any protestant divines ever taught, that there is a new love in God, or any new degree of love in God, that was not in him before. Arminians, indeed, tell us of new love, new desires, and of ebbing and flowing; love and hatred succeeding one to another in God's mind:—these Vorstian blasphemies we disclaim. It is, indeed, one and the same simple and holy will of God, by which he loved Peter and John from eternity, and chose them to salvation, and by which he so loveth them in time, as of free grace he bestoweth on them faith, holiness, pardon in Christ, and followeth these with his love: and the former is called his love of good will to their person, ere they do good or ill;—the latter his love of complacency to their state,

and the Lord's new workmanship in them; as with the same love the husband chooseth such a one for his wife, and loveth her, being now his married spouse.

Objection. 2. Men like those whom they love, and so doth God.

Answer. We grant all; these terms of God's good loving, and good liking, are chosen of divines to express the thing. God loveth and liketh Jacob, not Esau, from eternity, ere he believe or do good; but he doth not so love and like Jacob from eternity, to bestow faith and the image of the second Adam on him, till in time he hear the word, and be humbled for sin. And the truth is, the love of complacency is not a new act of God's will, that ariseth in God in time, but the declaration of God's love of good will in this effect, that God is pleased to bestow faith and his beauty of holiness, which maketh the soul lovely to God; and it is rather the effect of eternal love, than love. And God hath a love of complacency toward the persons of the elect, and love of good will (though not of choosing good will toward them) for their holiness. (Cant. 4:9.)

Objection. 3. It is absurd that God should love the elect with infinite love to choose them to salvation, as touching their persons, and withal to hate them with an infinite hatred, as workers of iniquity. Answer. It were absurd, I grant, if God's hatred to the elect as sinners, were any immanent affection in God opposite to his love, by which he should be averse to their persons. But God's hatred to the elect, because they are sinners, is nothing but his displeasure against sin, (not against the person,) so as he is to inflict satisfactory punishment on the surety, Christ, for their sin. A father may so love his prodigal son, as to retain a purpose to make him inheritor of a kingdom (if he had a crown for himself) and to pay his debts, and yet both hate and punish his profuse and lavish wasting of his goods.

Mr. Denne would teach us how love and hatred towards sinners doth consist. "The law (saith he) and the gospel speak divers things: the one being the manifestation of God's justice, tells us what we are by nature; the other, the manifestation of God's mercy, tells us what we are by God's mercy in Jesus Christ. The law curseth and condemneth the sinner; the gospel blesseth and justifieth the ungodly." [Denne. Serm. Grace, mercy, & peace, p. 38.] Answer. What is this else but that which Mr. Denne and other Antinomians condemn in us? How can one and the same unchangeable God curse, condemn, and so hate sinners, as to punish them eternally, and yet bless, justify, and love to eternal salvation their persons, except they teach the same very thing which we do? For the law and the gospel are no more contrary one to another, than love to the persons of the elect, and hatred and revenging justice to their sins. Mr. Denne would further clear the point thus: "Whatever wrath the law speaketh, it is to the sinner under the law; although the elect are sinners in the judgment of the law, sense, reason, yea ofttimes conscience, yet, having their sins translated into the Son of God (in whom they are elected) they are righteous in Christ the Mediator." Answer. The law speaketh wrath, in regard of its reign and dominion to death, to the elect not yet converted, and to the reprobate, without exception of persons.

But it cannot speak wrath to the believer, though he be one that daily sins, and is under the law; that is, under the rule of the law. Now, to be under the law, to Paul, is to be under the damnation of the law. (Rom. 6 and 7.) In which regard, believers are not under the law, but under the sweet reign of pardoning grace; yet are they under the law as a tutor, a guide, a rule. And that the rule and reign of the law are different, is evident, (1.) Because the ruling power of the law is an essential ingredient of the law, without the which, the law is not the law. The reign or damnation of the law agreeth to the law by accident, insofar as man is a sinner, which is a state accidental to the law. (2.) The law is a rule, and hath a proper guidance and tutory over the confirmed angels, and should have had over man, if he had never sinned; but the law can have no reign to death over the confirmed angels, and man, in that case; as the jailor, hath no power over the man, who was never an evil doer. (1.) We are sinners in the judgment of law, both sin dwelling in us; and (2.) The guilt of the law lying on us to condemnation. But being once in Christ, and justified, we remain sinners, as touching the indwelling blot; but we are not sinners, as we are justified in Christ, as touching the law-obligation to eternal condemnation, from which we are fully freed. But the justified and redeemed of Christ, remain as formally and inherently sinners, as milk is formally white, a raven black. Justification removeth not the indwelling of sin; and so, in regard of sense, reason, and conscience, we are sinners to our dying day, but not condemned sinners. Mr. Denne objecteth—we pray daily, “Forgive us our sins;” then we are not righteous in Christ: he answereth, that Protestants say, we beg greater certainty and assurance of forgiveness. But not content with this answer, he addeth, “When we pray for forgiveness, we magnify His grace, who hath freely given us forgiveness: it were not folly to a condemned person, having received a pardon, and being assured of it, to fall down and say, Pardon me, my lord the king.” Answer. (1.) What Protestant divines say in this, we acknowledge; but if we seek only a fuller certainty of forgiveness in this petition, and not also the application of the general pardon, as appropriated to the sins we daily fall in, I see no other thing we seek, but a greater measure of faith, to lay hold on remission. I should ask a warrant of Scripture to prove, that forgiveness of sin signifieth assurance of the pardon of sin. (2.) That to seek forgiveness daily, is to glorify and magnify him from whom we once received forgiveness, is not to purpose, for that is a general in all petitions that we put up to God, no less than in this. (3.) If a pardoned malefactor, having assurance he were pardoned, should fall down and beg pardon of the king, and not rather tender him thanks and blessings for a received pardon, I should believe he called in question the king’s favour; but should he every day, when he eateth bread, beg pardon from the king, as we beg daily forgiveness, he might be charged with more than ordinary folly. Mr. Denne [pages 45, 46, 54.]—God loves us in blood (saith he) and pollution, as well before conversion, as after conversion. And though faith procure not God’s love and favour, yet it serveth us for other uses, that we may be sealed by believing, (Eph. 1:13,) and may thereby know the love of God. It is said, he that believeth not, is damned; not because his believing doth alter or change his estate before God, but because God hath promised, that he will not only give us remission, but also faith for our consolation; and so, faith

becometh a note, and a mark of life everlasting, as final infidelity is of eternal condemnation. Answer. It is true, God loveth the elect before conversion equally as after conversion, in regard of that free love of election, that moved him to give his Son to death for them, (John 3:16,) and to call them effectually, (2 Tim. 1:9; Eph. 2:1-4; Titus 3:3,4).

How God Loveth us before Time & how He Loveth us in Time.

PROPOSITION 4. It is a palpable untruth, that the elect, by believing in Christ, and being translated from death to life in their conversion to God, are equally loved of God before conversion, as after conversion, if we speak of God's love of complacency; for though the inward affection and love of God, as it is an immanent and indwelling act in God, be eternal, and have not its rise in time, and be not like the love of man to man, which is like the sea ebbing and flowing; or the moon, which admitteth of a cloudy and dark visage, and of an enlightened and full condition; yet as the same love of God is terminated upon sinful men, or rather, that which is called the love of complacency, which is indeed the effect of God's love; it is not every way one and the same, after conversion and before; as it is the same fountain and spring that runneth in its streams toward the south, which, by art and industry of men, may be made to run toward the north: the change is in the streams, not in the fountain; yet we say the fountain now runneth not southward, as it did before, but northward. Also, give me leave to doubt, if these same very visible sun-beams, that did fall upon Adam and Eve, do this summer fall upon us; yet, I doubt not, but the same sun that did shine the first six hours of the creation, on the garden of Paradise, shineth upon all our gardens and orchards that now are. So God's love is one and the same toward the elect before time, and while they are wallowing in the state of sinful and depraved nature, and now, when they are changed in the spirits of their mind. But it may well be said that God loveth his Church, as washed, as fair, and spotless, (Cant. 4:7,) and that he doth now say of her, "How fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse! how much better is thy love than wine, and the smell of thine ointments than all spices?" (Cant. 4:10.) Whereas, the Lord said before of her, "Thy birth and thy nativity is of the land of Canaan; thy father was an Amorite, thy mother an Hittite; as for thy nativity, in the day that thou wast born, thy navel was not cut, neither wast thou washed in water to supple thee; thou wast not salted at all, nor swaddled at all;" (Ezek. 16:3,4). "And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thy blood, I said unto thee, when thou wast in thy blood, live." (verse 6.) And all this the Lord might speak to the same Church yet unconverted; and at that time, the Lord could not utter that expression of love, to say to a bloody and polluted church, as he doth, "Thou art all fair, my love, there is not a spot in thee."(Cant. 4:7,) Now, could it be said, that the Father and the Son love such a Church, as such as loveth the Father, and keepeth the words of the Son, as it is, (John 14:21,23,) when the church was not fair, not spotless; but filthy, polluted, not washed, not justified as yet? And though it be true, that faith procures not God's love and favour (it is a calumny, that ever a protestant divine taught any

such thing); for the work of God's eternal love in election to glory, or his hatred in reprobation, is not the yesterday or to-day's-birth of our faith, or our unbelief; yet that believing, or our effectual conversion maketh no alteration or change in our state before God, is a gross untruth. Faith and conversion make indeed no change of any state in the Ancient of days, in the Strength of Israel, who cannot lie or repent; and putteth not God from the state of a reprobating or hating, or a not loving and choosing God; whereas, before he was such, who did love and choose us to salvation. The Lord is our witness, we asserted the contrary doctrine of free grace, against Arminians and Papists.

PROPOSITION. 5. Our believing and conversion to God, doth alter and change our state before God, (1.) Because God esteemed an unbeliever that which he was,—even an unbeliever, a child of wrath, one that is disobedient, serving divers lusts; a soul unwashed, polluted in his blood before his conversion to God: but being once converted, and graced to believe, his state before God is altered and changed, even in the court of heaven; in the Lord's books he is another man, he goeth now for a fair and undefiled soul. The church that was in a polluted, filthy, and miserable condition, (Ezek. 16:3-8,) is now in Christ's heart as a seal, (Cant. 8:6,) so fair, as her beauty ravisheth the heart of Christ. Now, Christ nameth things according to their nature. (2.) The condition is so changed before God, that "It cometh to pass, that in the place where it was said to them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, ye are the sons of the living God." (Hos. 1:10.) "Which in time past, were not a people, but are now the people of God; which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy." (1 Pet. 2:10.) The words of Scripture, that import a real change, do prove the same; as Col. 1:12, "Who hath made us meet, (or sufficiently qualified us,) to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." Christ is a qualified workman, and changeth hell, and the most untoward timber of hell, to heaven, and to a vessel of glory. It is a vain thing to dream, that Christ hath no other esteem and warmness of heart to us, when we are dead in sins and trespasses, and posting as in a horse-race after the devil, who rideth, and acteth, and breatheth in the children of disobedience; and when he hath raised and quickened us for his great love, and placed us in heaven with Christ, "And made us kings and priests unto God." (Eph. 2:1-4.) Then the state of hell and death, should be the very state of grace and heaven, before God. "A new creature, (2 Cor. 5:7). "Light in the Lord," (Eph. 5:8). "Partakers of the divine nature," (2 Pet. 1:4). "Renewed in the spirit of the mind," (Eph. 4:23). "Such as are begotten again, unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead," (1 Pet. 1:3). "Born again, not of corruptible seed," (1 Pet. 1:23). "Kings and priests unto God," (Rev. 1:5). "A generation of kings and priests unto God," (1 Pet. 2:9,) must be in their state some other thing than old creatures, than darkness, than unrenewed, uncircumcised old men, slaves of sin, persecutors, blasphemers, injurious persons. The Lord speaketh of a change great enough; "Since thou wast precious in my sight; thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee." (Isa. 43:4.) Were the children of wrath from eternity honourable? No. Were they more precious and honourable actually before God from eternity, than the rest of the

nations? No; the contrary is evident, (Ezek. 16:3; Deut. 7:7,8; Psalm 147:19,20; Deut. 26:5). Certainly, if faith or conversion to God, (a special part of which is faith), doth not alter the state of believers before God, then are they believers, and actually converted before God, and so, justified from eternity. When were they then sinners? Never; their sins were just no sins from eternity, and blotted away as a cloud, as a thick cloud, as it is, Isa. 44:22, and that from eternity, and from eternity sought and not found, because pardoned, (Jer. 5:20). “No more remembered,” (Isa. 43:25). Now they were justified from eternity, and ere they believe in him that justifieth the ungodly, no other ways than in God’s decree and eternal purpose.

But the truth is, this is the principal false and rotten pillar of all Libertinism, which I evert thus, and they shall never be able to answer it: If faith be so far forth a manifestation of our justification before God, because justification was in the sight of God actually done from eternity, before all time, then are we never ungodly, and actually sinners before God: ‘For it is impossible,’ say Antinomians, ‘that God can both hate us, as ungodly, and love us, as justified in Christ; and it is vain and nonsense,’ say they, ‘that God loved the persons from eternity, and hated the sins; or that he loved the elect with the love of election, or love of good-will, and did not also love them with the love of justification,’—this is their term, not mine—‘or with the love of complacency, and his good liking to faith in them.’ Then, say I, from eternity the justified were never ungodly, never sinners, never the heirs of wrath, never such as served divers lusts, and were disobedient, polluted in their own blood: which is downright contrary to the word of truth.

Observe the principle of Antinomians:—We are not justified by faith, say they. How then? Because ‘we are justified from eternity, only we are said by Paul to be justified by faith, in that, by faith, we come to the knowledge and assurance of the state of election, and of justification, and God’s act of not imputing sin to us, which acts were passed upon us from eternity, and before the children had done good or evil,’ (Rom. 9:13). And observe the words of Mr. Henry Denne [“Sermon of Grace, Mercy, & Peace,” pages 33,34.] to this purpose:—‘I do believe,’ saith he, ‘sin to be of that hideous nature, and the justice of God so perfect, that he cannot but hate the person unto whom he imputeth, and upon whom he chargeth sin, if so be the person charged cannot give full, perfect, and present satisfaction; and yet will I not say, that the Son of God, upon whom all our iniquities were charged, was at any time filius odii, a son of hatred, (for the Father was eternally well pleased with him): the reason is, that our sins were no sooner charged upon him, but that he had given full and perfect satisfaction, being the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world,’ (Rev. 13:8).

Answer 1. If God cannot but hate the person upon whom he chargeth sin, either God never charged our sins upon Christ, contrary to Scripture, (Isaiah 53:6; 1 Pet. 2:23,24; 2 Cor. 5:21,) or then he hated Christ; which no sound divine dare say. The payment and satisfaction which Christ made, cannot hinder Christ to hate sin, & so the person upon whom sin is (as Antinomians teach, while as they

refuse this distinction), no more than the satisfaction that Christ made for sin, can hinder itself, or hinder Christ to die for sin; for if God should hate Christ, it should be satisfactory hatred, and penal.

2. I much wonder, if God, from eternity, charged sin upon his Son Christ, (for the place he citeth, Rev. 13:8, and the judgment of Antinomians so expounding it, evinceth this to be his meaning), how Christ from eternity could give full, perfect, and present satisfaction, to prevent the hatred of his Father, is not imaginable. Indeed, when Christ gave satisfaction, I believe that it was full and perfect: but that Christ from eternity gave present satisfaction, and that to make us actually justified from all eternity, is a point no head can conceive, except Herod, Pilate, Jews, and Gentiles, the traitor Judas, and all who were wicked actors in killing of Christ, be men uncreated, who had existence and being, and sinned from eternity. This lieth fairly for the eternal world of Aristotle. Then, surely, faith doth not bring us to the knowledge only of our state of justification, as past, and done from eternity, as if election to glory, and the love of God therein, and justification, and that love, as manifested by faith, were two co-eternal twins, both at once begotten from eternity. Sure I am, we are justified by faith; but sure I am, we are not elected and chosen to life eternal by faith. And if to be justified by faith be, as our masters (though ignorantly) teach, nothing but this, that we come to the knowledge of our justification by faith, as by a sign, even as the day-star maketh not the sun to rise, it being only a sign that the sun shall rise, and that justification is as old a child of free love, as election to life; then, say I, Paul might have taken the like pains to prove these propositions: "We are chosen to glory before the world was, by faith, and not by the good works of the law." And this, "Men are reprobated from eternity by final unbelief." For sure it is, that we come to the knowledge of our election to glory, by believing; not to say, that Paul's large dispute with justiciaries, was not, whether we know and apprehend our own justification by the works of the law, or by faith in Christ.

3. If Antinomians say, that Christ was slain for our sins from eternity, not actually, but only in God's eternal purpose, and they must say, either he was the Lamb, actually crucified for us from eternity (which is a new eternal world,) and we are actually justified from eternity, and our sins imputed to Christ, and actually translated off us, and laid on him, and so our sins actually pardoned from eternity—or then they must say, Christ was the Lamb slain from eternity, not actually, not really, but only in the decree and gracious purpose of God: now, that is, I grant, sound divinity. Christ died not from eternity; but God only decreed and purposed, that in the fullness of time he should die. But then it must follow, that God did not actually charge sin on Christ from eternity, and that Christ did not actually from eternity justify the ungodly, but only in his eternal purpose he did justify the ungodly. Then the ungodly are justified in time;—and when is this time? I believe the word of God, that it is never while [until] the poor soul believes; even as the sinner is condemned, and under wrath, but never while [until] he misbelieves, and rejects the Son of God.

But, 4. If the meaning (that Christ is the Lamb slain for our sins from eternity) be, that he is slain only in God's purpose, then we are no more justified and pardoned from eternity, and so before we believe, than the world was created from eternity. Now, in the Antinomian sense, as we are justified by faith, that is, we come to know that we were in God's mind actually justified, then it may be said, the world was created by faith; for through faith we understand that the world was created; (Heb. 11:3;) and God laid our sins upon Christ by faith: and Christ died for us, and bare our sins, on his own body, on the tree, by faith. For, by faith, we come to know, that God made the world; but because the knowledge and apprehension of the creation, (may some say,) is not a point serving for peace of conscience and Christian consolation, which yet is false (every point of saving faith is apt to breed peace and consolation), yet certainly, we come to know and apprehend, that God laid our sins upon Christ, by faith, (Isa. 53:6:) and that Christ died for us, and bare our sins on his own body on the tree, by faith, and by faith only, to our peace and consolation. And so, if justification by faith be nothing but the manifestation of God's love to us, in imputing our sins to Christ, and have no subordinate organical act in our justification, but we be justified before we believe, and that from eternity, upon the very same ground, God created the world by faith, Christ died for our sins by faith.

5. Yea, in this sense, the world must be created from eternity, and all things which fell out in time, fell out in eternity; because, as Christ was the Lamb slain from eternity, in God's eternal purpose, so were all things, and the world created from eternity in God's purpose and decree. But things that only have being in the decree of God, are not simply, nor have they any being at all; and, therefore, our free justification from eternity had no being, but only was to be, and actually is, when God giveth us faith to lay hold on the remission of our sins.

Nor is it enough to say, that faith is only given for our joy and consolation, and not for the alteration and change of our state; that of unjustified, we may be justified: for this layeth down these false grounds, (1.) The believer is so in every moment of time to rejoice, as he is never to sorrow for sin, nor to confess sin, because sins were pardoned from all eternity; but so, neither after a soul believes, nor before he believes, is he to confess sins, or mourn for them; because both after and before, yea, from eternity, sins are not at all, but removed in Christ. (2.) It layeth down this ground, that we are justified no more by faith, than by the works done, by the saving grace of God after regeneration; and that Paul in the Epistle to the Romans and Galatians, does contend with justiciaries, how these who were from eternity justified, shall come to know and apprehend, for their own peace, joy, and consolation, that they were justified and elected to glory—whether men may know this by faith in Christ, or by the works of the law. But, [1.] This is not the state of the question between Paul and the justiciaries. For (Rom. 3,) Paul concludeth strongly, we are really and indeed changed from a state of sin, unto a state of justification even before God; not because, by keeping the law, we know we are justified, but because all have sinned, and are come short of the glory of God, and so are inherently wicked, abominable, doers

of ill, and condemned therefore before God, from David's testimony, (Psalms 14, 53). This argument concludeth real and intrinsical condemnation, not the knowledge of condemnation, nor the knowledge that we are not justified by the works of the law. Paul proveth that we are justified as David and Abraham were. (Rom. 4.) Now they are not said to be justified by faith, because they come by faith to the knowledge of their justification. For Abraham's righteousness, and the blessedness of the justified man, opposed to the curse of the law, from which we are freed in justification, (Gal. 3:10-13,) is the real fruit of justification, and of believing in him that justifieth the ungodly, (Rom. 4:1-9). But this blessedness, and freedom from the curse of the law, is not any fruit, or effect, or consequent of our knowledge and apprehension of our justification in Christ, as if we were, before we believe, blessed and freed from the curse of the law; because even the elect, before they believe, are under the curse, and are not blessed: {1.} Because they are, before they believe, the children of wrath, (Eph. 2:2). Ergo, they are under the curse. {2.} Because Paul and the elect, before they be under grace and belief, were under the law, and so, under wrath: (Rom. 6:14-17:) "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law, by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another." (Rom. 7:4.) "For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members, to bring forth fruit unto death. But now, we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in oldness of the letter." (verses 5,6.) Hence it is clear, there was a time when Paul, and the elect at Rome were servants of sin, (Rom. 6:20,21,) under the lusts and motions of sin, which work in their members to bring forth fruit, that is, sins to death eternal, (Rom. 7:5;) ergo, they were then under the curse of the law, and so, far from blessedness, and the servants of sin, (Rom. 6:20,) and persons in the flesh. But the case is changed; they are now not the servants of sin, but servants of righteousness, (Rom. 6:22,) married to a new husband, Jesus Christ, (Rom. 7:4). Whence came this change of two contrary states, yea, and before God contrary? (for before God, it cannot be one state, to be servants of sin, under the law, and servants of God, and under grace). Certainly, from faith on our part, or some other grace in us—at least, there must be something of grace by which the alteration from a cursed estate to a blessed estate is made. Then faith is not a naked manifestation of the blessedness of justification, to the which we were entitled before we believed; for before we believed, we were in a cursed estate. This also may be added, that if faith be but a declaration or manifestation that we are justified before we believe, Paul had no reason to deny that we are justified—that is, that we know to our comfort, by works of holiness, that we are justified; for works of sanctification are evident witnesses that we are in Christ, and are justified, (2 Cor. 5:17; 1 John 3:14; 2:3; James 2:24,25; 2 Peter 1:10). (3.) It layeth down this false ground, that grace is nothing in us, but a mere comfortable sense and apprehension of free love, and grace is conceived to be only and wholly in Christ; so that there is no inherent grace in the believer, by which he is distinguished from an unbeliever; sanctification and duties flowing from the habit of grace are nothing but dreams of legal men: Christ justifying the sinner is all and sum in the elect; strict and precise walking conduce nothing to

salvation. 'To think that it can do anything in order to salvation, is to worship,' saith Mr. Denne, 'an angry Deity; to satisfy justice with our works, fastings, tears, duties.' Therefore our

PROPOSITION. 6. is, That it is a vain distinction of Mr. Denne, who would have a reconciliation of God to man, and of man to God; (1.) Because we read that man is reconciled to God, (Rom. 5:10; 2 Cor. 5:18-20; Col. 1:20,21; Eph. 2:16). Man is the enemy, whereas in Adam he was a friend, and in Christ, the second Adam, he is made a friend. But that God is reconciled to man, or changed toward his own elect from an enemy, and a God that hateth their persons, into a friend and lover of them, I never read: if at any time God be said to be comforted toward his people, or eased, these are borrowed speeches. (2.) Love of election, yea, the love that putteth God on work to redeem, call, justify, sanctify the elect, is no love bought with hire, yea, the price of redemption which Christ gave for sinners, cannot buy eternal love. Blood, and the blood of God shed, cannot wadset ancient love; all the sins of devils, of men, cannot forfeit it: make sins, floods and seas, and ten thousand worlds of rivers, they cannot quench that eternal coal and flame in the breast of so free a lover as God;—in a word, the shed blood of Christ is an effect, not a cause of infinite love. (3.) What then, doth reconciliation place any new thing in God? No. Doth it turn him from a hater into a lover? No. Reconciliation active on the Lord's part, is a change of his outward dispensation, not of his inward affections. "Fury is not in me," he saith himself, (Isa. 27:4). He cannot wax hot and fiery in the acts of his spotless and holy will. Reconciliation turneth not the heart, but the hand of the Lord upon the little ones, as he speaketh, so that he cannot deal with or punish his elect, as otherwise he would do. The Lord's justice may be satisfied, his love cannot be bribed or hired, and the effect of justice, the inflicting of infinite wrath, is diverted, as a river that runneth east, hath been made to run west, and an issue of blood in one member of the body, hath been diverted to run in another channel. Justice was to run through the elect of God in the due and legal punishment of the sinner, (which yet is extraneous to the just and eternal will of God;) but infinite wise mercy, caused that river to run in another vein, through the soul of Jesus Christ.

PROPOSITION. 7. Joy of the Holy Ghost is a fruit of the kingdom of grace, (Rom. 14:17). But not that joy spoken of, Rev. 21:4, and Isa. 35:10, which excludeth all tears, death, sorrow, crying, all sighing, as Mr. Denne dreameth; so as joy can no more be separated from the subjects of that kingdom, than light from the sun, heat from the fire, or ebbing and flowing can be stopped in waters, as he saith. Far less is it true, that actual love and obedience do inseparably follow this condition, except we were made angels, when we are once justified. Nor is the kingdom of God spoken of, 1 Cor. 6:9,10, and the seeing of God, Heb. 12:14, the kingdom, or state of grace, or the seeing of God in a vision of faith here in this life (but of the kingdom of glory and of the vision of God in the other life) as Mr. Denne expoundeth it [Sermon I, Reconciliation pages 85-87], that he may elude all necessity of holiness; but that which floweth from no obligation of any law or

commandment of God, but which is in our power of love to perform or not perform, if we perform it not, it is no transgression of any law of God.

1. Mr. Denne himself granteth, page 84, 'God is not like some niggardly man, who will not bid us welcome to his house, unless we bring our cost with us.' Nor is holiness required of us without faith, and before we believe and enter citizens of the kingdom of grace; nay, by this interpretation, 1 Cor. 6, we must be justified and washed before we can inherit this kingdom, (verses 9-11). But we are not to be washed and justified, before we inherit the kingdom of grace, and before we believe; for so, we should be justified and washed before we be justified and washed. And the like I say of the kingdom of God, (John 3:3.) For it should follow that a man must be born again, ere he be born again, if he must be born again ere he enter a subject of the kingdom of grace. Nay, not any such condition can go before man's reconciliation to God.

PROPOSITION. 8. Christ can love dearly, and tempt roughly both at once. (1.) His love consisteth not in a taking his Church into his bosom, and a continual, and never interrupted laying of her between his breasts; yea, tempting floweth from the love of God, nor is it any act of justice, yea to take vengeance on the inventions of his people (satisfying justice he cannot exercise toward his elect; yet, a punishing and correcting justice, he may, and doth, put forth on them), but it hath its rise from love. All the wheels of God's dispensation; sweet or sour, are rolled upon this axle-tree of free love: the bowels of Christ act, move, and breathe all dispensations to the saints, through no other pipe and channel, but free and tender compassion, so as mercy is an immediate actor, when the Lord is wasting his church with bloody wars. And, which is wonderful, Mercy is Christ's armour-bearer, and Mercy immediately killeth, even when Death climbeth in at the windows, and enters into the house of the believer, either in a pestilence known to come from no creature or second cause, or in the raging sword, when "the carcasses of men fall as dung in the open field, and as the handful after the harvestmen, and there be none to bury them," (Jer. 9:21,22). (2.) Tempting mercy is wise mercy; it were not a tempting mercy, if we saw all the secrets of love, and the reasons why the Lord buildeth Zion with blood. Even the elect and beloved of God, though they be in Christ's court, they are not always upon his council, (John 13:7). Many are within the walls of the palace, that are not in the king's parlour, and taken into his house of wine. The love of Christ hath its own mysteries and unknown secrets; as why one saint is led to heaven, and to men's eye "the candlestick of the Almighty shineth on his tabernacle, and he washeth his steps in oil," he is rich, holy, prosperous; and another no less dear to Christ, never laugheth till he be within the gates of heaven, but eateth the bread of sorrow all his days; his face never dryeth till he be in glory, is a secret of heaven. The love of Christ is often veiled and covered, and we know not what he meaneth: but he hasteth to show mercy.

USE. This should make us very charitable of Christ when he frowneth, and covereth himself with a cloud, and very inclinable to pardon (if I may so speak)

rough and bloody dispensations in Christ. He loveth, and he bleedeth, scourgeth, and giveth his own child a cup of gall and wormwood. Could we in silence believe it is Christ with two garments on him at once—Christ clothed with love, wrapt in the unseen mystery of tenderness of compassion, and yet his upper garment is vengeance, and rolled in blood, we should kiss the edge of Christ's bloody sword. So we are to believe, for Christ at one time "travaileth in the greatness of his strength, and speaketh in righteousness, and is mighty to save," and at the same time his upper garment is blood. (Isaiah 63:1.) It is true, it is the blood of his enemies; but it is often the blood of the children of his own house and sanctuary, (Ezek. 9:6; 1 Peter 4:17). And what more concerneth us, than to keep our first love to Christ, when he multiplieth our widows in the three kingdoms, as the sand of the sea, and bringeth against the mother of the young men a spoiler at noonday? (Jer. 15:8.) This woman stayed on her watchtower, and now, the vision speaketh mercy to her. Say they were injuries that Christ inflicteth (which is a blasphemous impossibility) yet it is Christ, it is the Lord, let him do what seemeth good to him. The absolute liberty of the potter closeth the mouth of the clay vessel, if it could speak, (Rom. 9). That unbelief hath no reason to stomach and dispute against hell's fire coming from him, who hath absolute dominion over us. As devils and wicked men burn in hell with eternal fretting against God for their pain; so, if it were possible, that the elect and regenerate were thrown into hell, they are to have eternal charity and love to the holy and just Lord, and to believe his eternal love.

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