

**A Refutation**  
**of**  
**Arminian Principles,**  
**Delivered in a Pamphlet,**  
**Intituled,**  
**'The Modern Question concerning**  
**Repentance and Faith,**  
**Examined**  
***With Candor, etc.,* 'In a Letter to a Friend**

by John Brine

(London: Aaron Ward, 1743)

DELIVERED IN A PAMPHLET, INTITLED,  
*'THE MODERN QUESTION CONCERNING REPENTANCE AND*  
*FAITH, EXAMINED WITH CANDOUR, ETC.'*  
IN A LETTER TO A FRIEND.

*Printed for, and Sold by A. WARD,*  
*at the King's-Arms in Little-Britain,*

*London*

*1743.*

## **WORTHY SIR,**

*My Opinion of your solid and accurate Judgment in divine Things, and of your Candour and generous Disposition towards those who differ from you, in Articles not affecting the Fundamentals of Christian Doctrine, as well as of your firm attachment to the Truths of the Grace of God; Determines me to give you, an Account of the Rise of the Controversy, relating to evangelical Repentance, and special Faith, being the immediate Duties of unregenerate Men;* an Account of my own Apprehensions with relation thereto, and my Thoughts of the Performance, intitled, *The modern Question, concerning Repentance and Faith, examined, with Candour.* I hope, Sir, this Liberty, I take with you, will not be thought too bold or indecent, and as I desire to submit the whole to your Examination, which I am assur'd will be fair and impartial, the Result of your Thoughts, will be received with all that Regard, which your great Abilities, singular Modesty, Christian Charity, and pious Zeal for the Truths of Christ, may justly challenge, from one fully sensible of these your rare and uncommon Qualifications.

The Rise of the Controversy was this. A Lecture had been carried on for some Years, with great Success, in a Village called *Brigstock*, in *Northamptonshire*. Many young Persons were converted, among whom were several Relations of mine; upon hearing of which, I determined, that when I went into that Part of the Country, I would pay them a Visit, and accordingly I did. When I was with them, and the rest of the good People there, at that Time, I thought them some of the most happy Persons, I have ever had the Pleasure of converting with, in this Day of Lukewarmness and Division among Professors. The Conversion of these young People, was a happy Means of Revival to the elder Christians there residing. With Zeal and Fervour they attended the public Worship of God, on Lord's Days, tho' the Places where they had Opportunity of so doing, were five Miles distant from them, and but a few of them enjoyed the Convenience of riding. Upon their Return Home in the Evening, after a little Refreshment, they met together in private; and Exercises of Prayer and Christian Conference, were carried on with perfect Unanimity, spiritual Affection and mutual Edification. Besides which, they had three or four of the like Evening-Meetings in a Week; but

what is justly to be observed to their Honour, is, they diligently attended their Business, and the Management of the Affairs of Life: So well was their pious Zeal tempered with Prudence, and honest Industry. — Would to God, That that Harmony, sincere Love, and holy Zeal, had flourished among them to this Day. But, alas, oh unhappy Change! Now there are Divisions, Contentions and animosities fomented, among that once very happy Number of Christians. The Occasion of which, in short, was this: Some of the worthy Persons concerned in carrying on the said Lecture, had different Apprehensions about the Manner of addressing Sinners, with Relation to evangelical Repentance, and special Faith in Christ: I say about the Manner of it, for with Respect to the Necessity, Nature, Object, Author, and the genuine Effects of Faith, as far as I am able to learn, they were fully agreed. Some of the Lecturers were of Opinion, that special Faith is the immediate Duty of unregenerate Persons, who hear the Gospel. Others of them, apprehended, that unregenerate Persons are not bound to exercise this special Faith in Christ. But were fully convinced of, and constantly asserted and inculcated, the Necessity of Faith in Christ, and were not wanting in the Explanation of its Nature, and proper Fruits. This Matter, was at length controverted by the Pen, between two of the Lecturers, not without too much Heat on one Side, and a great many very ill and dangerous Consequences, were affirmed to follow the latter Opinion. This caused a Dissension among those serious Christians, some taking one Side of the Question, and some the other. At length, the Opposition rose to such a Height, in those who took the Affirmative Side In this Debate, that they formed a Resolution to set up another Lecture, in which Antinomian Principles were to be exposed, and this Opinion particularly. This Design was put into Execution; another Lecture was opened by Dr. *Doddridge*, who is well known for his remarkable Candour of Temper, and Catholic Sentiments: Which was therefore, thought very strange by many, who had not, as yet observed, that but a small Mistake, in those Persons who steadfastly adhere to Principles, which have heretofore been esteemed the Doctrines of free Grace, in Opposition to *Arminianism*, raises the *keen* Resentment of Persons, of great Reputation for their extensive Charity and Catholicism: When large Advances towards general Grace and universal Redemption are highly applauded, by those very pacific Gentlemen. That this Lecture was set up in Opposition to the former, Sir, you cannot doubt, when you are told, that it was proposed that the Gentlemen who carry it on, should come into the old Lecture, and take their proper Turns, with the former Lecturers, to the End that Peace, Unity and Love might be still preserved, which it was apprehended might very well subsist, notwithstanding this Difference in

Judgment, with relation to that particular Point: But this amicable and friendly Proposal, was not agreed to by those on the Affirmative Part. A Person of your Penetration and Impartiality, will soon discover; and as readily allow, on which Side Christian Love and Forbearance were attempted to be maintain'd.

**My Apprehensions, of the Point controverted, I shall very briefly lay before you, Sir, and submit them to your Enquiry and Censure.**

**I.** I apprehend, that whatever was, or would have been the Duty of Man, upon the Supposition of a Revelation, super-added to what he enjoyed in his Creation-State, is the Duty of Men in their fallen State, upon the said Supposition.

**II.** That Man in his perfect State was bound to love, reverence and adore God; and that Men in their lapsed State are obliged to these Acts, notwithstanding their present Want of Ability, in Consequence of the Fall.

**III.** That it was the Duty of Man in his primitive State, to believe the Truth and Importance of every Revelation, he should receive from God; and that it is the Duty of Men in their fallen State so to do.

**IV.** But with Respect to special Faith in Christ, it seems to me, that the Powers of Man in his perfect State were not fitted and disposed to that Act. My Reasons for this Thought are these:

**1.** The Communication of such a Power to Man, in his primitive State, would have been in vain; for there was no Necessity, nor Use of believing in Christ: in that State; and I humbly conceive, that Man was not furnished with a Power, the Exertion of which was unnecessary, so long as he should remain in his perfect State.

**2.** Because God could not require Man, while in a perfect State, to put forth such an Act, as special Faith in Christ is. The Reason is evident, this Act necessarily supposes a Dependence on Christ for Salvation, as Creatures lost and miserable in ourselves; but 'till Man was fallen and become miserable, he could not exercise such a Trust in Christ, as a Redeemer. And therefore, if it is supposed that God furnished Man, in a State of Innocence, with a Power of acting this special Faith in a Mediator, it must, I think, be allowed that he gave Man an Ability, which so long as he continued to possess it, he could

not require him to exert. Whether this is likely, I leave to your judicious and impartial Enquiry.

**3.** My third Reason is, special Faith in Christ belongs to the new Creation, of which he as Mediator between God and his People, is the Author, and therefore, I apprehend, that a Power of acting this special Faith in him, was not given to Man, by, or according to the Law of his first Creation.

**4.** It seems to me a very extraordinary Dispensation, that Man should be furnished with a Power, he could not exercise in his perfect State; and in his corrupt State be deprived of that Power, wherein alone the Exertion and Exercise of it can be necessary or useful. The Substance of these Reasons, *Arminius* delivers in his Apology, Article the Nineteenth. *Maccovius* endeavours to answer them, but in my humble Opinion, his Answer is not sufficient. His Answer, Sir, is, that there was in Man, in his innocent State, Justice as to the Nature of it, which we now call punishing, and yet he could not punish others in a State of Integrity; and there was that in Man which we call Mercy, as to the Nature of it, and yet he could not exercise Mercy, because there is no Place for Mercy, except in a State of Misery<sup>f1</sup> This Answer, Sir, Is by no Means satisfactory to me, because Man might have exercised both Justice Punishing, and Mercy, while in his innocent State, in Care of proper Subjects for the Exercise of this Justice, and this Mercy. But the Exercise of special Faith in Christ, necessarily supposes the Subject of that Act, to be himself a guilty and miserable Creature; and therefore, the Fall of Man must precede this Act, but a perfect Creature, may reasonably be supposed capable of exercising punitive Justice towards the Guilty, and of exercising Mercy towards the miserable, as the holy Angels doubtless do towards miserable and helpless Men.

**I shall now, Sir, consider, The Arguments this Gentleman advances to prove that evangelical Repentance and saving Faith, are the Duties of all who hear the Gospel. He begins with the Institution of Sacrifices.** <sup>f2</sup> It is readily granted, that they were of divine Appointment, vicarious, Types of Christ, and of that real Atonement he has made by his Death for Sin. They also directed to an Acknowledgment of Sin, and that Men deferred Death; and to Christ: as the Object of Trust and Hope for Remission and all spiritual Benefits; but these Things afford no Proof, that all who offered Sacrifices stood obliged to exercise that Repentance and Faith whereof we speak; for if so, then none but true Penitents and Believers had a Right to offer Sacrifices, which cannot be thought. Christ: as a suffering Saviour was typically

represented by those Sacrifices, and it was a Duty incumbent on all who offered Sacrifice, to believe the fulfilment of the divine Promises, concerning the Appearance, Work and Sufferings of the Messiah; but I apprehend it can never be proved, that the Exercise of special Faith in him, was required of all, who offered Sacrifices; or, that the Offering of Sacrifice obliged any to the Exercise of this special Faith. It cannot be pleaded that this Faith was enjoined, as a Qualification on those who offered Sacrifices; for then, none but Believers might lawfully do it, which we know is not true: and therefore, the Institution of Sacrifices, can only be considered, as a typical and external Representation of the Messiah, and by Consequence could be only a proper Foundation for common, and not special Faith.

**The Proof he brings from the general Exhortations to Repentance, delivered to the People of the Jews in the Writings of Moses and the Prophets,** is altogether impertinent in my Opinion. 'Tis to be observed, that the *Jews* were a People separated from all others, *they dwelt alone and were not reckoned among the Nations*, and God became their God providentially, to confer temporal Favours upon them, to protect them; he entered into a Covenant with them, as a Nation, and required on their Part, that they should worship him only, observe his Laws, exercise Justice shew Benevolence and Kindness one to another; on his Part, he promised them a peaceable Possession of the good Land, Plenty, Victory over their Enemies, and their Multiplication in that Land, and long Life, on Condition of their Observance of his Statutes and Judgments, which they on their Part promised; God threatened them with Evils of the forest Nature if they did not, *viz.* the Sword, Famine, noisome Beasts and Pestilence, and with Captivity; but at the same Time assured them, that if they humbled themselves under these Judgments, and turn'd to him, he would remove those Evils, and restore to them Peace, Plenty, and Security from their Enemies, and that he would not totally destroy them. (Leviticus 26. Deuteronomy 4. Chap. 28 and 29) Agreeable to the Plan of this Covenant, the Prophets treat with that People, remonstrate against their national Crimes, exhort to national Repentance, Humiliation and Reformation, denounce temporal Evils, promise temporal Blessings, in Case of Amendment, as may be abundantly seen in their Writings. (Isaiah 1:19,20. Ezekiel 18. Amos 2:3,4,5,6.) But it is not to be proved, that spiritual and eternal Blessings were promised in that Covenant, nor, that evangelical Repentance and special Faith were therein required, it will as soon be made evident, that when the Land of *Canaan*, and Affluence and Plenty therein are promised, that Heaven is intended or included in those Promises, as that, when the People of the *Jews* are exhorted to Repentance

and turning to the Lord, evangelical Repentance is designed and implied in those Exhortations. That Covenant contained not spiritual Blessings, neither did it oblige to any spiritual Acts, such as evangelical Repentance, and special Faith are. It will as soon be proved, that Earth is Heaven, as that the Repentance required and enjoyed by Vertue of that Covenant, was of a heavenly Kind. This Writer, Sir, sometimes makes a great Difficulty of admitting the Distinction of natural and evangelical Repentance, of historical and special Faith; but here he is obliged. to allow of it, tho' he pleads that natural Repentance and historical Faith, were not the whole of the Duty required and enjoyed by the Law of Sacrifices, on the Nation of the *Jews*; this he argues from God being represented as *their Redeemer in Christ*. When he is able to prove this fine Point, I shall freely grant his Work is done. This contains, if I mistake not, a tacit Acknowledgment, that evangelical Repentance and special Faith, are the Duties only of such Persons, to whom God reveals himself in his Word, as their Redeemer through Christ He seems to suppose, that God so revealed himself the Body of the Jewish Nation, than which nothing is more false in Fact; and therefore all his Reasoning on this Head is impertinent, groundless, and inconclusive. There is not any thing advanced from the Old Testament, which amounts to the Proof of the Point.

**Let me now observe to you, what he brings from the New Testament.**

He begins with the Preaching of *John* the Baptist, who exhorted to Repentance, *repent ye for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand*. **1.** Repentance was required of the *Jews*, as a Nation, for all the Blood of the Prophets which had been shed amongst: them, and for that Opposition they made to the true Interest and spiritual Kingdom of the promised Messiah; the Want of that Repentance proved their Destruction, which soon followed the Introduction of the New Testament State.

**2.** Evangelical Repentance was the Duty of particular Persons, which he also preached, and show'd the Necessity of, but it can't, I think, Sir, be proved, that he ever asserted it to be the Duty of unregenerate Persons, to exercise that Grace. This becomes the Duty of Men, when they have Warrant from the divine Word, to consider God as their Redeemer in Christ, which no unregenerate Men have any Warrant to do. It is not question'd, but he also preached Faith in the promised Messiah, but what Proof does this afford, that Faith is the Duty of such Persons, as have not at present Warrant

to consider God, as their Redeemer through Christ? None at all. Christ in his Ministry also preached Repentance.

1. A general and national Repentance.

2. Evangelical, as did also his Apostles; but pray, Sir, do you think, that there is no preaching of Repentance evangelical, and special Faith in Christ, without allowing that Men unregenerate stand obliged to exercise that Repentance and Faith? To me it seems very evident there may. This Writer produces a Multitude of Texts to prove the Point he contends for, but in many of them Repentance and Faith are not so much as mentioned; it will be sufficient to refer you to those Scriptures in the Margin (Acts 4:10,11,12; Acts 5:42; Acts 13:46,47; Acts 18:5,6; Acts 20:26, 27; Acts 28:24, 31.) In others, where Repentance and Faith are exhorted to, it evidently appears, that the Persons addressed were the happy Subjects of a Conviction of their Misery by Nature, and therefore not to be considered in a State of Unregeneracy; to these Places I will also refer you in the Margin (Acts 2:37; Acts 13:26). He farther observes, that Men will be condemned for the Want of Faith in Christ, and brings several Texts in confirmation of this Observation; which are also referred to in the Margin (John 3:18,19,36; 2 Thessalonians 1:7,8; Hebrews 10:28,29). But because he who believes not is condemned now by the Law, under which he is, as a Covenant of Works, and not under Grace; it follows not, that his Want of Faith is the Cause of that Condemnation. With Respect, Sir, to what the Author observes of *all Men* being commanded *to repent*, it intends a forsaking of Idolatry, and embracing the Worship of the true God alone (Acts 17:30,31). **F3** The Distinction of natural and evangelical Repentance, of common and special Faith, which he before allowed, he now denies, and demands Proof that *John* the Baptist uses the Distinction, when he preached Repentance; I think, Sir, I may demand of him to prove that this Distinction, cannot take Place in his Discourses, since it is evidently found in Scripture; and if he is not able to give Proof that his Scope and Design, will not admit of this Distinction, however positive he may be, of being in the Right, at least, it is *possible* he may be in the wrong. I beg leave to observe to you, Sir, that our Saviour manifestly speaks of Repentance, when evangelical Repentance is not intended. The Place I now refer to is Matthew 11:21, *they would have repented long ago in Sackcloth and Ashes*. Upon no Scheme can Repentance here mean evangelical; it cannot upon the *Calvinistical* Scheme is certain, this is so evident that nothing is required to evince it. Nor can it intend such Repentance upon the *Arminian* and *Baxterian* Schemes, for if God foresaw



that they would have repented, in Case such Works had been done among them, he would have wrought those Works in their View to bring them to Repentance; upon the Foresight of which, he decreed the Happiness of Men, according to these Schemes, and therefore this Writer, who is no *Calvinist*, but a *Baxterian*, I should think must grant that evangelical Repentance, is not there intended; for 'tis strange to suppose God to decree the Happiness of Men, upon Condition of Repentance and Faith, and yet determine to withhold those Means from them, which he foresees would bring them to Repentance and Faith.

The Author, Sir, makes the Calvinist: object to him, that special Faith cannot be the Duty of all; *because it is said, that some believed not, because they were not of Christ's Sheep; the Meaning must be this: That as those who believed were of Christ's Sheep, so they believed because, they were so; i.e. they believed because they were chosen to Faith and Salvation. And if others believed not, because they were not of Christ's Sheep, they believed not, because they were not chosen to Faith. And then saving Faith could not be their Duty, but must belong to the Sheep of Christ alone.* I confess I do not see the Force of this Objection, for Men not being chosen to Faith, is no solid Objection, as I apprehend, to that being their Duty. The Author was in the right, not to start a Difficulty which he could not remove; it is no Point of Prudence, to frame an Objection to one's Opinion, which will not admit of a full Answer. But, perhaps, Sir, this was done with a Design to introduce *Arminianism*, rather than confirm the Opinion of special Faith being the Duty of unregenerate Men: For, says he in Answer, *you cannot but know it has been very much doubted, whether these Words have any immediate Reference to the Decree of Election. When those that believed are called the Sheep of Christ, this may be as they were of a more teachable Disposition than the others.* So say the *Socinians* and *Arminians*, whom Dr. *Doddridge*, in his *Family-Expositor* has followed.<sup>f4</sup> This Gentleman insists much upon the obvious and literal Sense of Scripture, when it makes for his own Opinion; but here, Sir, you see, he can allow that the Disposition of Persons, is put for the Persons themselves, and such a Disposition as is not natural, but given to and created in them, when the Scope of the Place requires not this improper Sense but only his anti-evangelical Sentiments. Christ's People are not called Sheep, because of a natural Disposition in them to Goodness, for that they have not, and if this Character is expressive of their natural Temper, it is a wandering one: *All we like Sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own Way.* 'Tis evident, that the Words are expressive of this, that there Persons believed not, because they were not of

the Number of such, who were made the Care and Charge of Christ, and in Consequence of that, hear his Voice, follow him, to whom he gives eternal Life, do not perish, and whom none can pluck out of Christ's Hand, nor out of the Father's Hand. This is clear from the very Scope of the Place. *However*, says he, *your Conclusion from there Words, is directly contrary to the Intention of them. For, when the Jews demand an open and direct Declaration from Jesus, whether he was the Christ, v.23. he blames their Unbelief in there Words, v. 24. I told you, and ye believed not: The Works that I do in my Father's Name bear Witness of me. And pray let it be observed, that it is one and the same Object of Faith, viz. Christ Jesus in his Character of the promised Messiah, which is here spoken of; which one Sort are blamed for not believing in, and which the Sheep of Christ did believe in. And therefore the Duty must be one and the same to both.* I answer, the *Jews* Question is, whether Christ was the Messiah, he observes he had told them that he was, and that his Works testified it, and ye believed not, *i.e.* ye did not think it true that I am the Messiah, which they might have done without special Faith. Special Faith includes common, but common Faith includes not special. And then he asserts, that they believed not, because they were not of his Sheep, in which Words special Faith is intended, or more than common Faith, as appears by what follows; but in the preceding, Faith is put for common Faith, or a bare Persuasion of his being the Messiah, so that this is no Proof, that it was the Duty of these *Jews* to exercise special Faith. Not content with this *Arminian* Observation, he proceeds farther and says, *others that believed not, were left to their own Prejudices and Perverseness, for opposing and resisting the Light, and the Means of Conviction.* And this is what Enmity will eternally do, which the Heart of Man is, against God and all spiritual good.

**He very artfully pretends, that he differs not from the Calvinists, except in some lesser Circumstances,** concerning *the Nature of the divine Decrees in Election and Reprobation, the Condition of Man by the Fall, his standing under the Covenant of Works, the absolute Freedom of the divine Agency and Operations in saving Souls.* This, Sir, is an Observation absolutely false in Fact, as his own Reasoning will fully convince you, who are not to be imposed on by any artful Pretences, to maintain the Doctrines of Grace, when the Salvation of Men is made to rest on the Determination of the human Will, not brought to this Determination by the Grace of God alone, but only excited and stirr'd up by divine Influence. This, Sir, you know to be the very Soul of the *Arminian* Cause, you are sensible, that the *Arminians* deny not the Aids and Influences of divine Grace, but allow of such

Influences, and urge that the Will of Men is left to chose Good or Evil, without the Infusion of spiritual Principles, to effectually determine them in the Choice they make. Some weaker Christians may possibly be led into a Mistake, by this Author's Pretences of believing and maintaining the Doctrines of Grace, but Persons of your Penetration and Acquaintance with the *Arminian* Controversy, will easily discover the Absurdity of all these Pretences. Had not this Writer attempted to build up *Arminianism*, upon the Foundation of the Opinion of evangelical Repentance and special Faith, being the Duties of unregenerate Men, I had not given you and the World this Trouble, for tho' I apprehend that Opinion is not to be supported by Scripture, and the Analogy of Faith, it seems not to me to be of such Consequence, but that Persons differing in this Point, may fully agree about the Doctrines of the Grace of God, tho' those who are for the Affirmative may find it somewhat difficult to defend the Justice of God, in damning Men eternally, for not doing, what Man in no State, was furnished with a Power to do.

**He tries various Methods to prove the Point.** I. By observing, *that the Law, i.e. the moral Law, must command Repentance, or at least include it, in case of Sin, because Men cannot return to Duty without a Sense of and Sorrow for Sin.* This seems self evident. But it will not prove the Truth of the Thing contended for. Heathens, who never heard a Word of Christ and Salvation by him, stand obliged to Repentance for Sin, and Reformation in Life. Farther he observes, *that God in the Renewal and Republication of his Law, under the old as well as new Dispensation, has commanded Men to repent and believe.* True, but then, in order to prove, that Men unregenerate stand obliged to exercise evangelical Repentance and special Faith, it must be made evident, that such Repentance and such Faith, are intended in those Precepts, which as I think is not yet done. He cannot, Sir, rest in this Account of the Matter, not because (as I suspect) it fails of proving the Thing he pleads for; but because this State of the Case would prove an unsurmountable Difficulty, to what he has *greatly at Heart* to introduce, viz *Arminianism*, and would force upon us, under the Notion of pleading the Cause of Repentance and Faith, against all such *Antinomians* as you, and I, Sir, are accounted. And therefore he asserts, *that the Law demanded perfect Obedience, nothing left.* (very true so far). He adds *And therefore, neither in express Terms, nor by any secret Implication could it command Repentance. To suppose this, would directly contradict the Perfection of the Law, and effectually enervate the Obligation and Design of it.* This is strange indeed! What if a Creature offends against God, hath the Law no Power still to

command him to practice his Duty? And is not natural Repentance necessarily included in a Return to Duty, when the Creature has revolted? If not, then, no Remorse or Sorrow for Sin, can justly be expected of those who hear not the Gospel: Nor is Repentance in any Sense their Duty. But he seems to provide an Answer for this, in what he immediately subjoins, which is, *As for the Law of Reason and Equity, resulting from the Nature and Relation of Things between God and Man in his fallen State, this is no Law of Innocency or Covenant of Works; has no positive Seal or Sanction, unless you will make a new Law of it.* To which I answer, is this a Law? So he calls it, and is it not the same Law with the Law of Innocency, or Covenant of Works, but distinct from it, which he asserts it is? Then it is another and a new Law. Did not the Law of Innocency provide for what should or might be expected of Man in his fallen State, in a Way of Duty, upon the Supposition of no Provision being made for his Salvation? If not, Man upon his Sin became free from the Obligation of that Law, 'till a Discovery made of Salvation by the promised Seed; and the Heathen World who are absolute Strangers to Christ, are not now under the Command and Power of the Law, which will not be granted him, Sir, as I think. For, what he calls the Law of Reason and Equity, is that Law which the Apostle affirms to be *written in their Hearts*, and is the Law of Innocency, (in its Remains) or Covenant of Works, *Romans 2:15*, according to which they were sensible they became obnoxious to Death, *Romans 1:32*, for their dreadful Sins. He thinks it a Contradiction to say, that *Repentance and Faith cannot be the Duties of Believers by the same moral Law*, how, says he, shall the standing perpetual Obligation of the moral Law be made to agree with this? *Methinks, this makes the Obligation to arise from the Gospel and the Grace of it. For here it seems the Law, tho' the only Rule of Duty, has no Force without the Gospel; and the Duties of Faith and Repentance only take Place, and become Duties from Gospel Grace. These Things look a little perplexed, as if they would not hang together.* To these Particulars I answer,

1. That natural Repentance is a Duty inferrible from the Law, without the Supposition of a Revelation of Gospel Grace.

2. It is certain, That that Law which obliges Men to adore God, as a Being of all possible and infinite Perfections, lays them under Obligation to assent to the Truth of what, at any Time, he shall please to reveal.

3. The Gospel is a Revelation of divine Truths not discovered to Man in his State of Innocence, and in that State therefore, it cannot be supposed he was oblig'd to assent to them.

4. Man stood obliged to exercise Repentance for his Sin by the Law, immediately and before a Revelation of a Saviour.

5. But before God had revealed to him a Saviour, it was not his Duty to believe in him. The Gospel proposes the Object of Faith, and the Law obliges to the Act of Faith, suited to the Nature of the Revelation of that Object.

6. Men enjoying an external Revelation *merely* of Christ, are bound to believe the Truth of his Appearance in the World, and the Truth of those Doctrines relating to him, as a suffering Redeemer.

7. Such who receive an internal Revelation of Christ, are bound to exercise special Faith, suitable to the Nature of this supernatural Revelation. Thus it appears, that these Things are far from being perplexed in themselves, they only seem so to this Author, they hang together very well. The Gospel presents the Object of Faith, and the Law obliges to the Act, upon the Presentation of the Object, and the Nature of that Presentation, to common Faith if it is only external, to special, if it be internal and supernatural. He represents it as the Opinion of the *Calvinist*, that Sinners are shut up under the Law, and makes him explain himself as to that Point after this Manner. *I suppose the perpetual Obligation of the moral Law; not only for Obedience, but Sinners lie under the Penalty and Curse of it. The Calvinist then, Sir, I should think can't justly be accounted an Antinomian. They have only to do with the God of Nature, and him as an offended angry God. They are shut out from the Gospel of Salvation, 'till Gad by the sovereign Hand of his Grace brings them in. Have nothing to do with God, as the God of Mercy and Grace in Christ, — have nothing to do for themselves, nor to be done with them for Salvation. No Day of Grace, before God's Day of effectual Grace, — no Offers, nor Tenders of Mercy end Salvation, before Salvation is brought Home to them by the Spirit.*

*And even then, Salvation is not properly OFFERED, but given, — and not received 'till after it is given. To these Things I answer thus: Men in a State of Enmity against God, as all unregenerate Persons are, cannot justly be supposed, to have proper Ground and Warrant to look upon God, as*

reconciled to them in Christ. What he makes the *Calvinist* say of Sinners, being shut out from the Gospel, I cannot well understand, nor do I know of any who so say. If by it is intended, that they are not to hear the Gospel; it is as remote from the Judgment of the *Calvinist*, as it is from the Opinion of the *Arminians*, whole Cause, this Writer, is an Advocate for: But if by it is designed, that unregenerate Persons have no *open* Claim to Gospel Benefits and Privileges, he will I think never be able to disprove it. Sinners have many Things to do, *viz.* to pray to God, hear his Word, read the Scripture, and meditate upon it; yet not with a View to become the Authors of their Salvation, surely. But who says nothing is to be done with them for Salvation. None as I know of; *Calvinists* whole Opinion this is supposed to be, think it their Duty to inform Sinners that they stand condemned by the Law, for their Sins, that Salvation from Wrath and Hell, is only in Christ, and that unless they believe in him, and are made conformable to him, they will perish for ever without Remedy, and is this doing nothing with a View to the Salvation of Sinners? It is not indeed telling them, that the Grace of God, is extended to all without Exception, that Christ died with an Intention to save every individual of Mankind, that God and Christ have done their Part, and that if they will not be wanting to themselves, but will exert their natural Powers, they shall have Aids and Assistances of divine Grace, sufficient, if duly improved, to enable them to secure their eternal Welfare. These *Arminian* Tenets, the Author, manifestly intends to make Way for and introduce, to the Dishonour of him Grace of God, the Subversion of Christ's Satisfaction by his Death, and the Overthrow of the Doctrine of the Efficacy, of the gracious Operations of the Spirit upon the Souls of Men. What he means by a Day of Grace, before God's Day of effectual Grace, he should, Sir, have told us, if he means a Season in which God willed that Sinners should with his Aids convert themselves, but they would not, 'tis downright *Arminianism*, and it may justly be enquired, whether when one Season or Day of Grace Is over, a Day of effectual Grace will succeed? This he seems to suggest, which I cannot understand to be either *Calvinism*, or *Arminianism*, it seems to me to suit no Scheme at all. With Respect to Offers and Tenders of Mercy and Salvation to Sinners I observe: That Christ and his Salvation are to be proposed for Acceptance, to all who see their Need of him, that this includes an Offer in it, but is more than an Offer, and that he is graciously given to them, and 'tis their Duty to embrace and receive him. This Subject I have more largely treated of, in my Answer to the Author of *Ruin and Recovery*. No Absurdity attends the Supposition of Christ being given before received, and being given in order to be received.

This Author, Sir, apprehends, that Sinners *may be under the Law, and yet under the Dispensation of Mercy and Reconciliation in Christ Jesus too*. What he means by the Dispensation, *etc.* I cannot understand, and therefore am unable to answer him, if he had said that Sinners may be under the Law or Covenant of Works, may stand condemned by the Law, and yet be under Grace, *i.e.* the Covenant of Grace, and be thereby acquitted of their Guilt, freed from Condemnation and Death, and appear to have a Right to eternal Life, I should have perfectly understood him to have advanced most manifest Contradictions; but as he uses ambiguous Words and Phrases, I am at a Loss to frame an Idea of his Design. If by a Dispensation of Mercy and Reconciliation, *etc.* he intends the Season in which Grace and Mercy and Reconciliation are published to Men, the Sense is plain and natural enough; but this makes nothing for the *Arminian* Principles he artfully endeavours to introduce among Christians. He, Sir, represents the *Calvinist* as starting a new Turn of Thought, to prove Repentance cannot be of the Law. 'Tis strange he should make Men say, what is contrary to their avowed Principles: *Calvinists* are persuaded, that all Duties belong to the Law, and here he represents it as their Opinion, That the Duties of Repentance and Faith belong not to the Law. But let us hear this new Turn of Thought. It is this; *all that the Law of Creation commanded, it commanded to the first Adam. And if there are Duties of this Tenure, they must have been the Duties of innocent Adam. But it has been proved already, that on this supposition the Perfection of the Law cannot be maintained. And if they were not the Duties of the first Adam in this Way, they cannot be the Duties of his fallen posterity, because the Law is the same to both.* I answer, the Law did not command all to *Adam* in his innocent State, which became his Duty in a fallen State, by Vertue of that very same Law: It was not his present Duty to shew Compassion to miserable objects, or to love his Enemies, for he had no Objects of Misery to pity, in his perfect State, or Enemies to love, and yet if I mistake not, Christ's Interpretation of the moral Law in his Sermon upon the Mount, proves that our Obligation to pity the distressed, and to love our Enemies arises from the moral Law. Hence it appears: That that becomes the Duty of Man in his lapsed State by the Law, which it could not command of him for Want of Objects suitable in his perfect State. And thus, tho' Repentance could not be required of innocent Man by the Law, because Sin had not taken Place in him, nor could he consider God as an Object offended, yet upon his sinning and looking on God as an Object displeas'd, Repentance became his immediate Duty by the Law, *i.e.* natural Repentance

or Concern for his Sin, his Obligation to this Repentance, arises not from a Discovery of Salvation, it would have been his Duty, if he had been left without any Provision of Recovery by divine Grace. And is the Duty of all his Descendants, yea, I am persuaded it is the Duty of the Devil himself to repent, this I think must be allowed, if Repentance necessarily attends forsaking of Sin, which I imagine none will deny. Again, if the Obligation to Sorrow and Concern for Sin, arises from a Provision of Salvation for offending Creatures, and the Discovery of that Provision, then, the Devil is under no Obligation to Remorse for his Offence, nor are such of Mankind, who know nothing of Salvation by Christ, under any Obligation to repent of their Vices, how contrary soever to the Light of Nature.

He makes the *Calvinist* argue very unphilosophically in what he subjoins, representing him as saying, *Men must have new Faculties in order to evangelical Repentance and special Faith.* But, Sir, I am persuaded that *Calvinists* may be as good Philosophers as himself, if any thro' Weakness or Inadvertency have so expressed themselves, it is ungenerous and unkind to urge it as the Opinion of the Party. They know perhaps, full as well as he does, that new Faculties are not given or created in Believers, the Mind, the Will and Affections, they consider not as Qualities, but Powers of the Soul, and essential to it, and know that the Supposition of giving new Faculties necessarily implies the Introduction of a new Soul. This is so mean a thing in him, that he may be ashamed of the mention of it. *Calvinists* know that the reasoning Powers of Men, are the same before and after Conversion; before Conversion, the Mind is the Subject of natural Principles only, and therefore is incapable of supernatural Acts: At, or upon Conversion, it becomes the happy Subject of heavenly and supernatural Principles, and is able to put forth supernatural Acts, suitable to the heavenly Objects presented to View by the Gospel, and which *Adam* in his State of Innocence was a Stranger to. What the Author proceeds to observe, of the Law *opening and enlarging itself, into what we call the Law of Reason and Equity, immediately upon the Fall,* Is a mere Invention to serve a Turn; the Law of Reason and Equity, what is it but the moral Law, or Law of Innocence? So far as known to Men, it is no Law distinct, and different from it. Is this Law perfect or imperfect? If imperfect, it is I am sure no Law of God, for he cannot be the Author of any imperfect Law: We *Calvinists* will have nothing to do with it; let *Socinians, Arminians* and *Baxterians* take it to themselves, who are all disposed to make the Power of fallen Man, with common Helps, the Measure of his Duty; we are of another Mind. If it is a perfect Law, it is the moral Law, or Law given to Man in his innocent State, and is the



irrepealable and eternal Rule of Righteousness, by which Men will be hereafter tried and judg'd. The poor *Calvinists* is farther represented, as supposing *Adam in his perfect State, incapable of discerning and understanding Objects above what the Law or Dispensation, under which he then was, presented to him.*

This Person tells us in his Preface, he has taken the Liberty to represent the Opinions of others, in his own Words; so that, Sir, you are to observe, if the Opinions of the *Calvinists* are not very properly expressed, the Impropriety of Expression, Is to be imputed to this Writer, not to them. But if he would not express their Sentiments, in their own Words, (Reasons for which I can guess at, but will not name them) he should have given their true Sense. I know none who have said, or do say, that Man in his innocent State, could not understand the Nature of Objects above what the Law discovers. For, as the Angels who are perfect Creatures, can discern and understand evangelical Truths, so could Man, I question not, if a Discovery had been made of them to him in his primitive State: And have yielded a firm Assent to their Truth, as revealed by God his Creator. But special Faith in those heavenly Mysteries, the Powers of Man in a State of Innocence, it is apprehended were not disposed to, and fitted for, by his Creation Principles, and therefore it is concluded, that special Faith becomes a Duty, only upon the Supposition of the Infusion of super-Creation-Principles, into the Souls of Men. He repeats the Nonsense of the Necessity of new Faculties; for Shame why is this done? *Calvinists* insist upon the Necessity of new and supernatural Principles, but are far from urging the Necessity of new reasoning Powers, they are not for two Souls in Men; their Opinion is, that Believers are the Subjects of two Principles, Sin, and Grace; but they have no Notion of two Souls in one Man. As I before said, if any have so expressed themselves, it was thro Weakness or Inadvertency, and the Candour and Ingenuity of the Author, Sir, appear in this Representation of the *Calvinists* Opinion in this Point.

The Author, Sir, argues from *a Delay of Punishment, and a Communication of temporal Favours, and enjoying an external Revelation of the divine Will, to a Purpose of saving Men in general.* So his old Friends the *Arminians* have always argued, but very impertinently and inconclusively. Providential Dispensations towards Men are no Interpretation of God's Purposes about them, with Relation to their eternal State, whether he designs to punish them hereafter for their Sins, or to fare them from endless Misery, thro' his Son *Jesus Christ.* *'Tis true natural Duties are not to be performed merely upon*

*the Foot of natural Religion, as distinguished from revealed, by Men who enjoy Revelation, but as heightened, and improved, and enforc'd by that Revelation, and as required by Jesus Christ, who is constituted the Ruler and Judge of all Men. And this is from the mere Sovereignty of God. To which he objects thus, to suppose that God acts thus with Sinners, by mere Sovereignty out of Christ, and at the same Time by the Hands of Christ, this is what I cannot possibly understand. Strange! no, God will do that hereafter by Christ towards Men, which he will not do in Christ, viz. try, judge and condemn them to eternal Punishment; if he can understand this latter, I should think without any Difficulty, he may conceive of the former; for the former is in Order to the latter, and leads to it. Says he, please to tell us directly why the Sentence upon transgressing Sinners, according to the broken Law, is not fully executed; but sinners in common are spared long? The Apostle, if he will believe him, resolves this Question; it is because God is willing to shew his Wrath, and make his Power known, endured with much long-suffering the Vessels of Wrath fitted to Destruction. The Answer is direct and full, as he requires it to be; but I suspect his Approbation of it: Tho' the Justice and Equity of the awful Procedure, it is far beyond his Power to disprove. He makes the Calvinist give him this Answer: It is for the Elect's Sake. He enquires, but how for the Elect's Sake? Are they the Purchasers and Procurers hereof? Or is it for their Sakes, thro' the Merits and Purchase of Christ? If the latter is not the meritorious Cause hereof, then the Elect are thus far properly Mediators for Sinners, and something is done for their Sakes, which is not done for Christ's Sake.*

Out of Reverence to our Lord, who has told us, that the Days of Distress brought upon the Jewish Nation, *should be shortened for the Elect's Sake*, one might have expected a more sober Reply from this Writer. Our Saviour did not intend, that the Elect were Mediators for that People: Neither do Calvinists mean any Thing like it, when they so express themselves. Our Lord suggested, That that People should not become extinct, because Elect Persons were to arise from among their Descendants; and we mean, that Mankind are not destroyed, because God's chosen ones of the human Race, must all be born or rise into Existence, and that for this Reason, Men are permitted to live, and to live under such Circumstances, as will admit of the Execution of this gracious Design concerning the Elect. I am, Sir, surprized at what follows in the Author, which is this, he pretends that he agrees in the Doctrines of God's free Grace with those Calvinists, who think that evangelical Repentance and special Faith are the Duties of unregenerate

Men, and apprehend that the Obligation to those Duties arises from the moral Law; whereas there is nothing more false.

They suppose that God has chosen a certain Number of Men to everlasting Life; that for there Christ died in order to save them, and for no others, with that view, that Grace in order to Life and Happiness is given to the Elect alone. He supposes, that God conditionally decreed the Happiness of all, and that the Death of Christ is of unlimited Extent, that Grace is given to the Non-elect in order to Happiness, and that they may obtain Life, through a proper Improvement of this common Grace. Light and Darkness therefore, are not more contrary, than his Sentiments and those of the *Calvinists*, in many Respects, notwithstanding this pretended Agreement.

For this Reason, Sir, I flatter myself, that those of the *Calvinists*, who are of the Opinion before expressed, will not long join Issue with him; but oppose as heartily, at least, his *Arminian* Principles, as some of them have opposed the Opinion, that Sinners are not bound to exercise evangelical Repentance and special Faith. May the Lord, of his infinite Mercy grant, that his People may discern, into what Tenets this Person and some others are about to lead them, before *Arminianism* takes Root, in Societies, where it has long had no Place; but been rejected, as a Scheme of Doctrines not calculated to promote the Honour of God, the Glory of a Redeemer, nor the Comfort of the Saints. When he calls the Opinion he opposes a *novel Scheme*, he speaks very improperly, for it is not of itself Scheme, it is indeed, in the Opinion of some, it is so in my Apprehension, a proper Method to more clearly answer the *Arminian* Cavils and Exceptions to the Doctrines of the Grace of God, and carries not that Harshness and Severity in it, which the other Opinion does, of God's damning Men, for not doing, what Man never had a Power in any State to do.

**The next thing he labours, is to prove that a Day or Season of Grace is afforded to Men in general.** He produces various Scriptures in favour of it; some of which are to be understood of the Permission of Men living a considerable Time before the Infliction of heavy and grievous Judgments. Others are Calls to a reverential Regard to the Gospel, Interest and Kingdom of Christ. Some are Exhortations to the Church and People of God. Others are Calls to external Reformation, in order to escaping temporal Evils and civil Death. And some are Exhortations to an Attendance on the Worship and Word of God. Some are not addressed to Sinners, nor spoken of Men in general, but of some in particular. It will be sufficient to refer you to them in

the Margin for your Perusal (Genesis 6:3; 2 Peter 2:5; Luke 19:41,41; Psalm 2:12; Isaiah 55:6; Ezekiel 18:31,32. Chap. 33:11; Matthew 20:6; Luke 13:24,25. Chap. 14:16,17,22,23; 2 Corinthians 6:2; Hebrews 3:7,13; 2 Peter 3:9; Revelation 2:21).

The *Calvinist* is represented as answering that, *the Time allowed the old World, was not for their Repentance unto Life, but only for the reforming from Gross Wickedness; and so to avert and keep off the threatened Destruction of the Deluge. And the Time granted to the Jews, was only to ward off by external Reformation, the fore Calamity which afterwards befell them in their Destruction by the Romans.* To which he replies thus, *we are under no Necessity of denying this altogether; but may rarely grant, that what you plead was in Part the Design of Providence, but it lies upon you to prove, from evident Circumstances in the Accounts given of there Things, that what you say was the whole of the Design.* You, Sir, will I persuade myself, account this a new Way of Reasoning, to desire the Proof of a Negative, in order to oblige a Disputant to give up the Affirmative. I apprehend it always lies upon him who affirms, to prove what he asserts, from the Scope and Circumstances of the Place, which he urges in Favour of the Opinion he advances from it, and if he is not able to do this, he too hastily draws his Conclusion from it. If Texts of Scripture speak of temporal or civil Death, to be avoided by a national and external Reformation, it would be very improper to argue, from that, eternal Death is to be avoided the same Way; which is the Manner of this Author's Reasoning. This is applying Texts to Subjects, of which they do not speak, and therefore cannot be their Meaning and Sense.

Again, if the Scriptures speak of an external Call to the Duties of natural Repentance and historical Faith, to interpret them of evangelical Repentance and special Faith, is applying them to a Sense far beyond what they Design, and therefore it cannot be true, which is also what this Person does. In order to prove, that this cannot be the Sense of those Scriptures, he produces, one of these two things is necessary to be done.

- 1.** Either to prove, that such a Sense is foreign to the Scripture and is no where expressed, and therefore cannot be the Meaning of the Places alledg'd.

- 2.** Or, to prove from the Scope and Circumstances of those Passages, that this cannot be the true and full Sense of them. The Proof of the first, I

suppose he will never attempt: And the Proof of the second, I am, Sir, of Opinion is beyond his Ability. But if he cannot do this, the Sense he contends for will never be solidly supported. Besides, Sir, the Opinion of a Day, or Season of Grace, appointed to Men in common, supposes that God loves them, that he willed their Happiness, and has provided for it; that Christ died for them to save them, and that the Holy Spirit works upon them with the same gracious Design; but thro' their Folly and Obstinacy, God's Love is turned into Hatred, his Purpose to save them, is changed into a Resolution to damn them, that Christ died in vain with Respect to them, that the Holy Spirit is disappointed of the End he proposed to himself, in his benign Influences upon them. There are not, Sir, you well know the Doctrines of the free Grace of God, which this Writer pretends to have an Approbation of. They are as contrary to those Doctrines, as Light is to Darkness: you see that under a Pretence of maintaining the Opinion of evangelical Repentance and special Faith being the Duties of Sinners, he is for conducting us into rank *Arminianism*.

**He acquaints us, that the Calvinist inclines to the Belief of the Doctrine of absolute Reprobation as the Counter-Part of Election; but the least said of it in the Pulpit is best,** *for there is no knowing who are reprobate till they prove themselves so by their openly wicked and abominable Lives.* But why the least laid of it in the Pulpit is best? If it be a scriptural Doctrine it surely is, at least, a harmless one; nay it is a profitable one, for there is no useless unprofitable Doctrine contained in the Word of God. Some perhaps may think too, it would have been better, if it had not had a Place in the Bible. If Men abuse this Doctrine, through Unbelief or Lust, that is no Objection to the Truth, Importance or Usefulness of the Doctrine itself; and I am well assured, a proper Explanation of it will never be attended with any hurtful Consequences to Men religious or prophane, but thro' their Unbelief or carnal Lust. Farther, why should it be concluded, that Men of openly wicked and abominable Lives are the Objects of Reprobation? Since Christ came into the World to save the *Chief of Sinners*; Men's present Wickedness therefore, is no Proof at all, that they are appointed to Wrath: It is only final Impenitence which can be a Proof of that. He supposes, that a Provision of Mercy and Grace is made for the Nonelect. Then surely God loved them, and if so, how comes it to pass that he ever hates them? If once he willed not to punish them, how is it he inflicts Punishment on them? He then knew, what Manner of Persons they would be; this seems therefore, to necessarily suppose a Change in God. Besides, either the Salvation of Men is wholly to be resolved into the Will of God, and his Influence upon them, or, it is in

Part owing to the Will of Men, if it is wholly and solely the Effect of the divine Will; then it manifestly follows, that God did not will the Salvation of those who perish, and if he willed not their Salvation, he must be supposed to decree or purpose their Misery. If Salvation is in Part of the Will of Man, then it can't be said, *it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth Mercy*; then Men are born *of the Will of the Flesh*, in Part, and not altogether of God, in Regeneration. Besides, this conditional Decree respects either all, or some of the Non-Elect; if all, then all must be supposed to hear the Gospel, for the Conditions of Faith and Repentance, at cannot be thought are expected of them who never hear of the Object of Faith. Again, either there Conditions of Salvation are possible, or they are not, without the Infusion of gracious Principles, into the Souls of Men; is possible, then, *they who are in the Flesh may please God, and the carnal Mind may be subject to his Law*, which I don't take to be true. If they are impossible Conditions to Men unregenerate, then God decreed to save Men upon Conditions absolutely out of their Power, and yet determined not to give them that Grace, which is necessary to enable them to perform those Conditions: which betides the Absurdity of it, leaves them under an Impossibility of Salvation.

He observes, that many *strict Calvinists* have allowed, *that God's Hatred of Esau must be taken in a comparative Sense, and can mean no more than this, that Esau was not loved and regarded in the same extraordinary Way with Jacob*. I thought: Hatred was the contrary of Love, and could not properly be put for a less Degree of it. Besides, the Apostle professedly treats of God's Purpose to lave some and punish others, and produces *Jacob* and *Esau* as Instances of it; his Design, therefore, is to shew that the Salvation of *Jacob*, proceeded from divine Love, and that the Destruction of *Esau* was a righteous Effect of divine Hatred. If therefore, by Hatred the Apostle means a lesser Love, it was a Love of such a Nature in God, from which the Infliction of Punishment for Sin proceeds, and by Consequence, from that Love, a Decree to inflict Penalty might be formed; an Interest in such a Kind of Love, can afford but little Hope of Salvation to a guilty Creature. He adds, *the Apostle Jude doth not speak of any Decree of Reprobation, v.4, but only that God has ordained Condemnation to be the Consequence of Sin, and the Portion of evil Doers*. But, Sir, you will please to observe, that the Apostle is speaking of Persons, who were, says he, fore-appointed, or forewritten, *οι προγγραμηννοι*, to this Condemnation; all the Difference between the Apostle *Jude* and this Writer is, *Jude* speaks of Men as the Objects of a divine Appointment or forewriting to

Condemnation; and this Author speaks of Punishment as the Consequence of Sin in general, without Relation to any particular Persons. This Difference, great as it is, is not unusually found between the Scriptures, and the Writings of the *Arminians*, whose Cause the Author defends (as I suppose,) in the best Manner he can.

**The Author endeavours to clear himself of the Charge of holding the Opinion of a New Law.** The Method he takes to do it, is this: *We maintain, says he, the Perfection and perpetual Obligation of the moral Law of God, and plead for no new Law in the Room of that, so as to annul it. We don't make Repentance and Faith a Covenant of Works, nor Salvation to depend only on these as Man's Duties. But the Gospel we call a new Dispensation, built upon God's Act of Grace in Christ. And as the Fall occasioned a new Relation between God and Man, new Duties necessarily arise from hence. The moral Law is not only kept up in its Perfection, but it is put into the Hands of Christ, as the appointed Lord and King in the Church; and it is also attemper'd to the State and Condition of Sinners and Gospel Grace. The Place which Repentance and Faith hold in the new Covenant, is all of Grace; and there Duties are to be performed by the Help and Strength of God's Grace, and must be accepted thro' Christ. Where then is the Charge of a new Law?* Upon which I thus remark: It seems to be allowed, that a new Law is introduced, yet not so as to annul the old Law; that, notwithstanding retains its Power and Force, only Men are also under another Law, which if they keep, they shall not suffer that Punishment the old Law threatens; but in Case they keep not this new Law, they are delivered over to the Curse of the old Law. Again, if Repentance and Faith are proper Conditions of Salvation, they are made a Covenant of Works; all the Difference is, the old Law required perfect Works as Conditions of Happiness, here imperfect Works serve the Purpose. Farther, it is plainly allowed, that Salvation depends on Faith and Repentance, (tho' not only) as Man's Duties: And therefore Men are in Part causes of their Salvation. I add, I suppose the Act of God's Grace mentioned, is dispensing with the rigorous Demand of Perfection in the moral Law, as a Condition of Life, upon which the Gospel Dispensation is laid to be built, which lowers the Condition to imperfect Obedience. Moreover, if Repentance is one of those Duties, which necessarily arise from the new Relation, occasioned by the Fall, between God and Man, then it would have been the Duty of Men, in Case no Provision had been made for their Recovery, which is what the Author has more than once seemed to disallow. I cannot understand what new Relation between God and Man takes Place upon the Fall. Before the Fall, God was Creator, a Lawgiver and

Judge to Man: So he was upon the Fall; Man before it, was his Creature, the Subject of his Rule and Government, and so he is after it; but now a Creature chargeable with Guilt, and obnoxious to Death, these are new Circumstances to the unhappy Creature Man; but in no Sense, as I can at present apprehend, may they be denominated a new Relation to God. I subjoin, it is granted, that the moral Law is put into the Hands of Christ, and he uses that Law, either as a Saviour, or as a Judge merely; in the former Sense, he acquits his People upon the Foundation of his Obedience and Sufferings, and flees them from it as a Covenant of Works: In the latter Sense, he retains Men under the Curie and Condemnation of it now, and will hereafter try, judge and condemn them to endless Misery, according to that Law. I deny, that the old Law is attempered to the State, and Condition of Sinners and Gospel Grace, it commands the same Holiness it ever did, and threatens the same Punishment in Case of Sin, or Defect in Obedience; otherwise its Perfection and perpetual Obligation cease, which this Writer a few Lines above professes to maintain perfectly inconsistent with what is here said, unless I mistake. To say that Repentance and Faith are Conditions of Life, as an Effect of divine Grace, will not acquit the Opinion, of being contrary to the Doctrine of the Apostle, who constantly denies, that Salvation is of a Law, or of Works. And tho' these Duties are said to be performed by the Help and Strength of God's Grace, and that they are accepted thro Christ; yet it is easy to see, that the promised Benefit of Life, becomes due upon the Foot of Right, on the Performance of those Duties, and therefore, the Reward is not of *Grace, but of Debt*; and that these Duties are to be considered, as the Matter of our Justification before God for Christ's Sake. To the Author's Enquiry therefore, I must take leave to say, Sir, the new Law is here, and that he will never be able to clear himself of so *heavy* but *just* a Charge. All the Art he has used, in the Choice of *ambiguous* Phrases, could not cover his Design, it was a vain Thing in him to expect it; for if Men deliver Principles, which necessarily resolve themselves into the Opinion of a new Law, it can't reasonably be thought, That that Opinion should long remain out of View. But what follows is exceeding strange, he tells the *Calvinist* it would not be difficult to *make Reprisals*. *For you must grant, says he, that the Law is no longer in Force as a Covenant of Works, for the Justification of Sinners: This infers so far an Alteration from the original Law; and therefore one might say you make a new Law.* The Answer is, that it is not merely as a Law, it requires Obedience of Men as a Condition of Life, but as it is a Covenant. Their Freedom from it, as requiring Obedience to such an End, infers no Change in it as a Law, for it is not essential to it as a Law, to command Obedience to such an End; but it is essential to it as a Law to



require Obedience, and if it now demands of Men imperfect Obedience, it is altered in what is essential to It as a Law, and therefore, is not the same Law it was. Farther, it is still in force, as a Covenant requiring perfect Righteousness in Order to Acceptance with God: Believers have such a perfect Righteousness in Christ, and therefore, they stand perfectly justified in the Sight of God, according to this Law, fulfilled for them, by Christ their great Surety and Saviour.

***I proceed, Sir, to give you an Account of the Manner of his treating on the Work of the Spirit.*** And, he observes, that it is God's *usual and ordinary Way to work on such by whom preparatory Works to Conversion are performed, as assisted by his preventing Grace.* Various Scriptures he produces to prove, that there is such a Thing as a preparatory Work, to which I shall refer you in the Margin (1 Kings 14:13; Matthew 3:7; Matthew 10:11, Verse 13; Matthew 13:20,21; Mark 10:17, Mark 12:34; Luke 5:31, Luke 13:24; Acts 2:5,37, Acts 8:27, Acts 10:1, Acts 16:30, Acts 17:4, Acts 26:28). Some of those Places intend the Work of Grace itself, and others have no Reference at all to it. As to the Opinion of a preparatory Work, I cannot but be of the Mind of *Witsius*, that there is no such Thing, he assigns these Reasons for it.

**1. Our Nature** *became as an evil Tree upon eating of the forbidden Fruit, can bear no Fruits really good and acceptable with God, and can act nothing by which it may prepare itself for the Grace of Regeneration: Unless any one should be thought to prepare himself by Sins for Grace.*

**2. Those who seem best disposed to Regeneration,** *it is found are most distant from it. Which the Example of the young Man very clearly demonstrates; who seemed full of good Intention, and burning with a Desire of Heaven, and of unblameable Life before Men, insomuch, that Jesus himself, when he beheld him loved him, yet notwithstanding all these Dispositions, he departed from the Lord sorrowful*

**3. On the contrary,** *those in whom there hath been nothing, not a Shadow of Preparation, as Publicans and Harlots, have gone before the civilly just, and externally religious, into the Kingdom of God; for these believed not John preaching the Way of Righteousness; but Publicans and Harlots really believed.*

**4. God testifies**, in the first Influence of his Grace, he is found of them; that fought him not, and asked not after him (Jeremiah 65:1) Excellently Fulgentius, says he, whom he quotes, *we receive not Grace because we desire; but while we desire not Grace is given.* Milton well expresses the important thought. Grace, —

*Comes unprevented, unimplor'd, unsought,*

*Happy for Man so coming; he her Aid*

*Can never seek, once dead in Sins and loft.*

*Paradise Lost, Book III. ver. 231. 232, 233.*

For there Reasons, I say, with Witsius, who puts the Question, *are there no preparatory Dispositions to Regeneration?* I answer confidently *none*, and subscribe with him to Fulgentius, *As in the natural Birth, the Formation of the divine Work precedes the whole Will of the Man born: So it is in the spiritual Birth, by which we begin to lay aside the old Man.*<sup>f5</sup> Of the same Judgment was the great Charnock, and the late Dr. Ridgley. The Author, Sir, represents the Calvinist as objecting to him, that he *makes upon this Supposition the Salvation of Sinners possible indeed, but barely so.* Which he endeavours to answer, by referring to Angels and to Man who fell; his arguing here, I shall take no farther Notice of, than just to observe, the Cafes are far from being parallel, and therefore, his Reasoning has little Force in it. I must take Liberty to affirm, that the Salvation of Men, upon this Principle, is absolutely impossible, unless it can be proved, that *without Faith it is possible to please God, and that those who are in the Flesh may please their Maker.* He makes the Calvinist object to his Opinion, that supposing the Death of Christ to be of universal Extent, implies *he died in vain.* To which he answers thus: *As often as I meet with this Objection, I cannot find any just Reason or Foundation to support it. There certainly is a twofold Design and Intention in the Redemption wrought out for Sinners. One is, that the Patience and Forbearance, the rich Goodness, Mercy and Grace of God, might be manifested and glorified in his Dealing with Sinners. And the ether is, that his righteous Government, his Power, his Holiness and Justice might be also glorified. Now if thro' the Redemption which is in Christ Jesus, the Patience and Forbearance of God, and the Riches of his Mercy and Grace are displayed and glorified, in his present Dealings with Sinners, which is the Case on our Side of the Question. And if his Holiness, Justice and Power*

*are glorified to the full, in the Condemnation and Destruction of the impenitent and ungodly hereafter; this is not in vain, but exactly of a Piece with God's great and complicated Designs in Providence and Redemption.* Where Grace is rejected and despised, punishing Justice will be glorified. To which I reply, Sir, thus.

**1.** This seems to suppose, it was a Thing indifferent to God, whether his Mercy is glorified in the Salvation of Sinners, or whether his Justice is glorified in their Destruction, upon the Foundation of the Redemption of Christ; that his End is as fully answered in the Gift of his Son for Sinners in their Damnation, as it is in their Salvation; whereas it was his Intention that his Grace and Mercy might be glorified in their Salvation, and therefore, if they are not saved he is disappointed of his End in this extraordinary Transaction, and his Son suffered Death in vain, or the End intended, in his Death is unaccomplished. That this was the End designed is evident; *for God so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting Life.* The Reader may see this more largely insisted on, in the Answer to the Author of *Ruin and Recovery*.

**2.** The Justice and Holiness of God are fully vindicated, and gloriously displayed, in the Remission of Sin, and in the eternal Salvation of Sinners, upon the Foundation of Christ's Death, *Romans 3:25, 26*; and therefore, the Infliction of Penalty on those for whom Christ died, cannot be to the Glory of his Justice.

**3.** It would be contrary to Justice; for Christ having made Satisfaction for the Sins of those, for whom he suffered, it cannot consist with Justice to punish them for their Offences.

**4.** How are the Riches of divine Grace now glorified in God's Dealings with the Heathen, whom he suffers to live in *gross Darkness* and *in the Shadow of Death*? How can his Justice be hereafter glorified in punishing of them for Impenitence, who never had an Opportunity of hearing of Christ, and by Consequence, could not believe in him nor reject him. The Author, Sir, again advances his Opinion of preparatory Works to Regeneration, but offers nothing worth Consideration to support it. I would just observe to you, Sir, that he objects, if the Soul is intirely passive *in all the Steps of the saving Change, how can you assert any thing about the Manner of it.* And represents the *Calvinists* as saying, *this is a Point which is divinely revealed*

*to the believing Son.* Answer, as the Implantation of spiritual Principles in the Mind is Regeneration, the Soul is passive in it, and it is instantaneous or wrought at once, it is not gradual and progressive, and therefore, it is improper to speak of *Steps* in this Change. Again, I can't, Sir, but complain here of great Unkindness done to the *Calvinist*, to represent him as an Enthusiast, there is no Candour in this; *Calvinists* believe in this Matter, upon the Light and Evidence of God's Word, and not upon an imaginary Revelation, which he makes the *Calvinist* to express. He seems to flatter himself with having fully proved, that evangelical Repentance and special Faith are the Duties of Sinners, and that he has brought over, at least very nearly so, one of the Disputants in the Dialogue. How much soever he may be satisfied with his Performance, I can't think it will gain the Approbation of many of those, who agree with him in there Points. A great Number of ill Consequences are drawn from that Opinion, in Answer to which, it is sufficient to observe, that Sinners ought to pray, to read the Word of God, to hear it preached and consider of the dreadful Effects of Sin. That Ministers ought to let before them the Danger of their State by Nature, and the Necessity of an Interest. in Christ, and the Necessity of Faith in him.

That Sinners, sin against God, as the God of all Grace, when they oppose the Doctrines of his Grace, — against Christ as a Saviour, when they oppose their own Works to his Merits and Righteousness, — against the Holy-Ghost, as the Author of all gracious and sanctifying Influences, when they oppose the Necessity of his Influences, — against the Gospel of Salvation, when they oppose the important Doctrines of it, as this Writer does. Sinners are condemn'd for abusing the Gospel. Parents and Heads of Families ought to warn and exhort their Children and Servants, — to call them to their Bibles, to send them to their Knees before God, or put them upon Prayer, to offer up a Desire, a Cry, to Heaven for Mercy and Salvation for them, — and with Importunity and holy Wrestling. — After he has said, *none of these Things can be practised, consistent with this Principle*, and made a Supposition of *a Visit by the pious Soul of a departed Minister*, and his observing, *how Things are going with us, what a dismal Report he must carry back to the World above.* (One might make the same Supposition upon his Principles) *I am afraid*, says he, *of every Offence against the royal Law of Charity; I can easily admit, that great Mistakes and real Godliness may inhabit the same Breast: — I would always love and honour every good Christian, tho' not exactly of my Size, and in my Way. And yet I am at a loss to account for it, how Tenets so formidable in their Aspect, can sit easy upon serious and good Minds. But without farther Aggravation, as there*

*Objections are just, and attended with a Train of Consequences no Way favourable to practical Religion, (all there dismal Consequences are entirely false, and far from being justly drawn) I leave them to your own Contemplation, and Repentance, and Faith, to the Word and Blessing of God. Magna est Veritas, & prevalebit. You, Sir, will observe his Candour and Charity, which I am sure will be highly agreeable to you, for that Kindness and Charity to those who differ from you, which inspire your Breast, must certainly gain your Approbation, when exercised by others. Whether the Consequences he draws are just, as I think the contrary, I desire you to inform me, whether you concur with me in that Opinion, and pray, let me know, wherein you may think me mistaken: I the more desire this Favour of you, because I suppose, I am a Person too contemptible, to be favoured with a Correction of my Mistakes, by the Author of the Performance.*

The Qualifications he requires in one, who should undertake to animadvert on his Work, are most desirable indeed; may the Lord of his infinite Mercy make me a real and fervent Lover of *Truth, Peace and Godliness*. Whether I have acted the Part of *an angry Scribe*, I submit to your Judgment, and conclude this Address, with hearty Desires, that Truth may prevail, with whomsoever it is found.

*I am, Sir, Your most obliged, and humble Servant*

JOHN BRINE.

## FOOTNOTES

**ft1** Ecce enim erat in Homine primaevio Justitia quoad Naturam, quae jam vocatur puniens, fuit enim in ipso perfecta Jusitia, & tamen inepte, quis inferret ex hoc hanc Conclusionem, ergo Potuit Homo punire alios in Statu Integritatis. Item in Homine primaevio erat perfecta Charitas. Ergo, suit hoc quod Misericordia vocatur quoad Naturam; Non tamen bene quis intulerit hanc Conclusionem ex isto antecedente; ergo Homo potuit Misericordiam exercere in Statu Integritatis, quia Misericordiae Locus non erat nisi in Statu Miferiae, qui Status diversus est: a Statu Integretatis. *Loc. Comm. Cap. 44 p. 419.*

**ft2** Modern Question, *etc.* P. 13, 14.

**ft3**Note, this Point I have more fully considered, in my Answer to Ruin and Recovery.

ft4 Causam adsert tantae illorum Contumaciae: Quafi dicat, quia non estis Homines probi, & veri, ac recti amantes, & sic minime idonei ut fiatis Ores meae. *Slichting in Loc.* But you do not believe, because you are not *Persons such Simplicity and Sincerity, as I have described under the Character of my Sheep.* Family Expositor Vol. 2. p 218

ft5 1. Etenim Natura nostra, quum mala Arbor port gusta tam Arborem vetitam facta fit, nullos Fructus vere bonos Deoque gratos proferre potest, nihilque agere, quo se praepararet ad Gratiam Regenerationis: Nifi quis Peccatis se ad Gratiam praeparare cenfeatur. 2. Eos, qui quam optime ad Regenerationem dispositi videri poterant, ab illa tamen quam longissime absuisse compertum est: Quod Juvenis istius Exemplum luculentissime demonstrat; qui bonae, ut videbatur, Intentionis plenus; & Coeli Doliderio flagrans, & Vitae coram Hominibus inculpatae, usque adeo ut Jesus ipse eum intuitus eum deligeret, non obsiantibus tamen omnibus illis Dispositionibus tristis a Domino recessit. *Marc. 10:21, 22.* 3. Contra autem 2, in quibus nihil suit, quod vel Umbram Praeparationis haberet, ut Publicani & Meretrices caeteros civiliter justos & externe religiose praecesserunt in Regno Dei: quippe *hi Johanni annuncianti Viam Justitiae non cre. diderunt; Publicani autem & Meretrices omnino crediderunt.*

<402131>Matthew 21:31, 32. 4. Denique testatur Deus, in primo Appulsu Gratiae inveniri se ab iis, qui ipsum non quaerunt, & de ipso non interrogant, Jeremiah 65:1. Optime Fulgentius Lib. I. *De Verit. Praedest. p. 62. Non ubique quia volumus Gratiam accepimus; sed necdum volentibus nobis Gratia data est.* — Quid ergo, inquires, nullaene ad Regenerationem primam dantur Dispositiones praeparatoriae? Respondeo confidenter nullae. Et subscribo, *Fulgentio, de Incarnatione & Gratia Christi. Cap. 12. Sicut Nativitate carnali omnem nascentis Hominis Voluntatem praecedat Operis Divini Formatio; sic in Spirituali Nativitate qua veterem Hominem deponere incipimus: de Oecon. Foed. Lib 3. Cap. 6. p. 333 — 336.*

Sir, What this Writer produces from the *British Divines*, in Favour of Works preparatory to Regeneration, you may find very well explained by *Witsius*, who observes, that they took Regeneration either for the first Work of Grace, or, for the State of passive Justification, when understood in the former Sense, they did not think, that Works preparatory are done by Men; but when understood in the latter Sense only. So that the Author's Opinion, receives no Support from them, if *Witsius* understands them truly, in this Point.

