

battle. For it was of the Lord to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that he might destroy them utterly, and that they might have no favour, but that he might destroy them, as the Lord commanded Moses," Joshua xi. 20. ; so " he gave them the lands of the heathen : and they inherited the labour of the people," Psalm cv. 44. Thirdly, by the destruction of Babylon, for says the prophet, " Babylon, the glory of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah," Isaiah xiii. " And I will rise up against them, saith the Lord of Hosts, and cut off from Babylon the name, and remnant, and son, and nephew, saith the Lord. I will also make it a possession for the bittern, and pools of water : and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction, saith the Lord of Hosts," chap. xiv. All of which came to pass through the instrumentality of Cyrus the Persian, who was anointed or qualified for the work ; and saith God, " he shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives," Isaiah xlv. 13. And fourthly, by the destruction of all the enemies of Israel, who occasionally made war against them, for " their enemies also oppressed them, and they were brought into subjection under their hands : " but " many times did he deliver them," Psalm cvi. 42, 43. And the false prophets among Israel " brought upon themselves swift destruction ; " for God had commanded Israel to put every false prophet to death, Deut. xiii. 5. In consequence of which command, Elijah was justified in putting Baal's four hundred and fifty prophets to death, 1 Kings xviii. 40., and Jehu acted right in putting all

Baal's prophets to the edge of the sword, 2 Kings x. 25. So the apostle here says, "there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, and like the false prophets of old, shall bring upon themselves swift (or sudden and unexpected) destruction."

Rev. xxii. 19. "If any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life." The Lord does not, by this declaration, design to convey to his church the thought, that having written the names of his people in the volume of covenant counsels, for the purpose of blessing them with salvation and eternal glory, he afterwards blots them out, for "he changeth not," Mal. iii. 6.; but the meaning appears to be this: If any man should commit so presumptuous a sin as to take away any part of this sacred book, God will not suffer his people to own such an one as fellow-heir of the same inheritance. And thus his name in the visible church on earth shall be blotted out, and his professional interest in the book of life taken away. Esau said of Jacob, "he hath taken away my blessing," Gen. xxvii. 36. Now how could this be said by Esau when he had never had the blessing? The fact is, Isaac thought Esau was the person interested in the blessing, and Esau was confident of the same thing; but the event proved that Jacob was the person God had appointed for it. And the "heirs of promise" often receive into the arms of their affection and bosom of their fellowship, the seed of the serpent; deceived by their appearance, they think them interested in the same mercy, blessed with the same grace, and loved with the

same love as themselves; but time often brings them to light, and God's people are obliged to discover them. Thus the election obtains the blessing, and the rest being blinded, they are made manifest to God's saints, by which their part among God's people on earth is taken away.

1 John ii. 2. "He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for our sins only, but also for the sins of the whole world." The word world is often used in the inspired volume, but cannot always mean every one of Adam's race. Thus we read, "the world is gone after him," John xii. 19. This cannot mean even all the Jewish nation, to say nothing about all Adam's posterity, for the pharisees themselves who said this did not go after Christ. "The whole world lieth in wickedness," 1 John v. 19. This must mean the whole world of unregenerate sinners; for if the apostle had meant every one of Adam's race, he would have included himself and fellow-believers, concerning whom he had just before said, "we know that we are of God." And when he says, "Christ is the propitiation for our sins, and also for the sins of the whole world," he must mean, not for us only who already believe through grace, but for the whole world of believers to the end of time, John xvii. 20.

Col. i. 28. "Warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present *every man* perfect in Christ Jesus." The apostle cannot here mean that he expected every one of Adam's children would be presented perfect in Christ Jesus: for in another place he says of some, "God shall send them strong delusions that they should believe a lie, that they all might

be damned who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." The expression "every man," is often used in the inspired volume, but cannot mean every man in the world universally: let us look at a few passages, "God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith," Rom. xii. 3., this cannot mean universally so, for "all men have not faith," 2 Thess. iii. 2., but must mean, "every man" who has faith has it according as God gives it: and faith is called "the faith of God's elect," Titus i. 1., or faith which none but the elect will ever possess. "Every man, according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren," Acts xi. 29. This must mean every one of the disciples, as the whole verse reads, "then the disciples, every man," &c. "Then shall every man have praise of God," 1 Cor. iv. 5. This cannot mean every man in the world universally shall, at the judgment day, receive praise of God; for to some Christ will say, "depart, ye cursed," and to others, "come, ye blessed;" it must mean, every man who is approved or praised, shall receive the testimony not from man, but God. "The kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it," Luke xvi. 16. Now if these words are parallel to Matthew xi. 12. "the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force," not entering by the gate into the sheep-fold, but climbing up some other way, it cannot mean *every man* universally, for then Christ would condemn his own sheep, who "enter in by the gate into the sheep-fold," but must mean every goat who puts on sheep's clothing, presseth into it. Or, if the words are

descriptive of the earnest pursuit of a regenerated soul after the things of God, it must mean, that every man who belongs to this kingdom by eternal union, when called by grace, "presseth into it," or presseth towards heavenly realities, as Paul said of himself, "I press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." "The head of every man is Christ," 1 Cor. xi. 3. This cannot mean that Christ is covenantly the head of every man; for we read, "he is the head of his body, the church," which church consists of those the Father hath given Christ out of the world. "The Spirit is given to every man to profit withal," 1 Cor. xii. 7. This cannot mean *every man* universally, because Christ says, "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world *cannot receive*." But read it as *every man* who can receive the Spirit by virtue of interest in that covenant engagement of the Spirit, "thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power," and all is uniform; and when the apostle, in the words with which I began, said, "warning every man, and teaching every man, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus," he meant that he was anxious "every man" to whom the Lord should bless his ministry, should know that all his perfection was in Christ and from Christ, as many of the Colossian saints knew Christ in them, and Christ alone, "the hope of glory."

"That he by the grace of God, should taste death for every man," Heb. ii. 9. This cannot mean that Christ tasted death for every descendant from Adam, because Christ's death was the consequence of his Mediatorship,

in which Mediatorship he became responsible for all their sins on whose behalf he died; and all those for whom he became responsible, had eternal life given them on the ground of this responsibility: and as "his goings forth in mediatorial acts were of old, even from everlasting," so all interested in his death were "quicken'd together with him," that is, had eternal life given them in him from everlasting. So that Christ being the "beloved Son of God," by virtue of this quickening, they were sons in him: and through his Mediatorship they have, when his spirit is sent forth in their hearts, a living agreement and communion with God. Therefore the "every man" Christ tasted death for, is every son, in other words, "the whole family in heaven and earth named in Christ."

Heb xii. 15. "Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God." The apostle does not mean that those who possess the grace of God should be looking diligently after it, lest they should lose it, as if there were a possibility for grace to fall out of a man. But he is exhorting the spiritual Hebrews to be looking diligently after the work of grace among themselves, for fear any in their communion only had a name to live while dead; and notwithstanding they might profess the name of Christ, yet failed, or were destitute of a gracious and saving knowledge of him; "lest," says he, "there be any fornicator or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birth-right." And the verse preceding is often taken to establish the tenet of progressive sanctification. But the meaning appears to me to be somewhat similar to the other;

indeed the two verses are very closely united by the apostle, and our translators have only separated them by a colon. "Follow peace with all men." What can be this peace? "He," (Christ) "is our peace," Eph. ii. 14. Well, but some will say, "all men have not got Christ, therefore how can Christ be followed with all men?" The apostle, for this very reason, because all men have not really and truly got Christ, thus speaks, "follow peace with all men." Be upon the close pursuit of an experimental revelation of Christ in the heart by the Holy Ghost. Whatever may be the profession of men, nothing but this is true religion, and destitute of this, every man's religion will be found to be rotten and corrupt. Therefore "follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." What holiness is it without which no man can see the Lord? Not creature-holiness; for, says Paul, "I find that in me, that is in my flesh, *that* there dwelleth no good thing," Rom. vii. 18. So the holiness the apostle alludes to cannot be an holiness obtained from creature-doings, for that holiness is worth nothing, because in the creature, considered apart from Christ, there is "no good thing." Even the uprightness of Adam, was not the holiness here alluded to, for "without it no man shall see the Lord." And Adam, while he stood perfect in Eden, never saw the Lord in the spirituality of his law, the fulness of his grace, the riches of his mercy, the glory of his justice, and the sovereignty of his love; but by Christ being brought home to the soul by the blessed testimony of the Spirit, we see the Lord in all the harmony of his attributes, the love of

his heart, the grace of his lips, the preciousness of his relations, and the glory of his covenant characters : we can approach him with holy confidence as the God of our salvation, take his promises as our own, and bless his name as our portion, our friend, and our everlasting refuge.

Titus 3. 8. "This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God, might be careful to maintain good works." These words are sometimes referred to for the purpose of proving that gospel ministers ought to be constantly affirming good works ; but the apostle means, "that being justified by grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life," is a faithful saying, and these things concerning the grace of God he would have Titus, and every other servant of Christ, affirm constantly, that they which know the power of them may produce the effects mentioned.

Jude, ver. 21. "Keep yourselves in the love of God." The apostle does not here suppose that believers are their own keepers, for, he says, they are preserved in Christ Jesus." But having described a certain sort of men who creep in unawares among God's saints, and turn the grace of God into lasciviousness, or charge the grace of God with lascivious effects, then describes the stability of those who have the Spirit of God. "Praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God." That is, by breathing after the love of God, through the unctious power of the Holy Ghost, you are enabled to discover interest in the love of God. And as the consequence thereof, ye are "building up yourselves

on our most holy faith," on the precious doctrines of the gospel, "looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ," which is discovered in those doctrines "unto eternal life."

2 Peter iii. 9. "Not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." This does not mean that the Lord is desirous that all Adam's children should be saved, and come to repentance; but Peter addresses these words to them "who have obtained precious faith," and says, he, "the Lord, is not slack concerning his promise" of deliverance, consolation, and glory, made to his people, "but is long-suffering to *us*-ward," whom he hath chosen to salvation, and as an evidence thereof has made *us* "partakers of the divine nature," not willing that any of *us*, to whom he has "given exceeding great and precious promises," should perish, but that all of *us* should come to repentance. No other people are understood, in these words, but those whom the apostle calls *us*, which *us* are, in his first epistle, iv. 7. called the "house of God." And Paul says, the "house of God is the church of the living God," 1 Tim. iii. 15. Therefore God is not willing that any part of his church should perish, but that all the members of his church should come to repentance.

Luke xix. 41—44. "And when he came near he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, if thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall

lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another, because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation." Many take occasion, from these words, to infer, that the Lord Jesus Christ strives, seeks, and endeavours, to save men universally, but cannot accomplish his wishes; but let it be remembered Jesus is here speaking as a man, in contemplation of the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple by the Romans, together with the dispersion of the Jewish nation, and the miserable cruelties which they would have to endure at the hands of their enemies. But there is no reference made by Christ, in this compassionate exclamation, to spiritual things; but he confines his pathetic language wholly to temporals. Jerusalem did not know "the time of her visitation," when he, as the promised Messiah, had actually come, and for her rejection of him, the Jewish nation was to be scattered. Yet, for the sake of argument, I would suppose for a moment, that the Jewish nation, as a nation, received Christ. This might have been done, and yet the Jews, as a nation, have no grace: England nationally acknowledges Christ as the Messiah, at this very moment, but, alas! very, very few know anything of him by a grace communion with him. Therefore no inference can be drawn from these words of Christ, that Jerusalem had outsinned her day of grace; or that men universally have a day of grace put into their hands, which they may outsin. It might, with as much propriety, be inferred, that because Christ said, when he reached Lazarus' grave, "roll ye away the stone," that therefore

he could not raise Lazarus to life without Lazarus' consent, as to say he desired to save the inhabitants of Jerusalem spiritually and eternally, but could not do it because they were not willing. And yet this is the notion most current among religious teachers. Jesus called the period when he was speaking, Jerusalem's day, not God's day of grace, nor God's day of striving to save it. Jerusalem's peace, not God's peace, nor God's offer of peace. Instead of a day of grace being outsinned, I would say it cannot, for the promise is certain to all who have grace, and they only can be said to have a day of grace: "Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law but under grace."

Rom. viii. 32. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things." The all for whom Christ was delivered up, is explained by the words "all things." Now it is certain God does not give his people a rest in this world, neither does he give them the honours, the riches, the pleasures, the pomps, the vanities, nor the esteem of this world. Instead of these things, God's people are tempest-tossed, contemned, poor, afflicted, and hated in this world. Therefore, by the "all things" freely given, we must understand "all things" treasured up in Christ for them; "all things" God in sovereignty sees fit to give; "all things" needful; "all things" that will be for their good; "all things" that will be for God's glory. If, then, we admit a distinction in the "all things" given, so we must admit a distinction in the "all" to whom they are given. The "all,"

then, for whom Christ was delivered up, and the "all" to whom is freely given "all things," must be "all" who are interested in Christ by election union; "all" whom God in sovereignty is pleased to quicken; "all" whom he needs to compose the mystical temple of his grace; "all" whom he is determined to do good to; and "all" whom he has predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son, glorifying himself in their salvation, and glorifying them in Christ for ever.

Reader, if thy heart accords with the harmonious views I entertain of the Scriptures of truth, thou wilt perceive that Arminianism has no ground to stand upon in either of the portions we have examined. Many more might have been opened up, which the advocates of the heresy I refer to, bring forward to support their God-dishonouring notions; but I should swell my little work too much to notice them. And, by way of conclusion, allow me to remind you of three things; First, God never contradicts himself. What he speaks under the Old Testament dispensation, he proclaims under the New; and what was "written afore time," the Holy Ghost teaches his people at the "set time," and gives them to know experimentally the "patience and comfort of the Scriptures." In the Old Testament it was promised, "the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head," in the New we read, "he hath ascended up on high, leading captivity captive, triumphing over them in it." In the Old Testament God says of his church, "my delight is in her," and in the New we read, it is "the bride, the Lamb's wife," who has the "glory of God." In the Old Testament we find

the Lord reserved to himself "seven thousand men who bowed not to the image of Baal," and in the New we find, he has "a remnant according to the election of grace." In the Old the Lord says of each of his people, "deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom," in the New, Jesus says, "I lay down my life for the sheep." In the Old we read God "gives grace and glory," in the New we find that God's people are "born not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible." Then no promise is given by God but what he fulfils; no persons are delighted in by God but his church; none will worship God aright but the election of grace; no salvation can be known but by the finished work of Christ; and no having grace without having glory.

Second, God never reverses his dealings with his people. He indeed varies their circumstances, changes their situations, and leads them into different paths, so that they "have here no continuing city:" but he never deals unkindly, unwisely, or thoughtlessly, with them. If he suffers them to fall, it is to humble them, to mortify fleshly confidence, and to open up to their view more fully the mercy he has stored up in Christ for them, the love in which he has inwrapped them, and the grace which superabounds towards them. If he permits them to be harassed by the tempter, to be persecuted, oppressed, and afflicted, it is that they might be partakers of his holiness. The Lord always has some good in store for his people, which good is often brought out of evil: and the Lord never suffers his people to be tried but brings

them "forth as gold," and gives them full proof that he sits at the furnace, or that "one like unto the Son of Man" is in the fiery trial, and that he will not suffer a hair of his children's head to fall to the ground.

And lastly, God cannot be charged with creature infirmity. We may, indeed, make promises, but in consequence of some unforeseen circumstance we are unable to perform them. We may love persons and things, but our love being founded upon the loveliness of the objects loved, a something arises which turns our love into hatred. We may be very hospitable, but meeting with poor returns and with much ingratitude, we cease to exercise our benevolence. But not so with the Lord: he knew his people "would deal very treacherously;" therefore did not found his love upon the creature but upon himself. He knew the devil would roar, the world oppose, and the flesh resist; therefore his promises are yea and amen in Christ, and provision in him is made to overcome every obstacle, for "known unto God are all his works from the beginning." He knew that without him his people could "do nothing," consequently, though he should load them with his benefits, yet he knew they would not acknowledge them without his almighty power put forth in their souls; therefore the work of grace in them, as well as the work of salvation for them, stands upon "*I will*" and "*they shall*." Then, dear reader, if taught of God, you know that the "joy of the Lord is your strength," and that "boasting is excluded by the law of faith."

CHAPTER VI.

A Yea and Nay Gospel considered.

“Our word toward you was not yea and nay—but in him (Christ) was yea—for all the promises of God are in him yea, and in him amen.”—1 Cor. i. 18—20.

WHAT a vast fund of devices the devil possesses in order to deceive his own subjects, and to worry the people of God. Never at a loss, he is continually going about seeking whom he may devour. And if he cannot gain his ends by presenting to the mind licentious indulgences, he will endeavour to lull the soul with a natural religion; and making that religion appear as spiritual as possible, all who are left a prey to his bait “call evil good, and good evil; put darkness for light, and light for darkness; put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter.” This is the reason we have that gospel preached in the present age which cannot, I humbly conceive, bear a more suitable title than a yea and nay gospel; because it affirms and denies the same thing. Contingencies and certainties, freeness and conditions, are each advocated in turn, as component parts of the good news from heaven.

Such a gospel as this appears, either directly or indirectly, referred to, according to my humble apprehension of the portion, in Rev. vi. 5, 6. “And I beheld, and lo! a black horse, and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the

four beasts say, a measure of wheat for a penny, and a measure of barley for a penny, and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine." In this chapter the Lord is giving the church, by John, a description of what it has to pass through till the "great day of his wrath is come." And while I consider the twenty-four elders figurative of the church, composed of a perfect number, the four beasts appear to me descriptive of every gospel minister. He has the face of an ox, because of his usefulness, which consists in being as God's mouth, to take "the precious from the vile," by describing the features of the precious sons of Zion, tracing out the footsteps of God's flock, and bringing the clean provender of gospel truth, which hath been winnowed with the shovel of affliction, and the fan of persecution, for them to feed upon. He has the face of a lion for his boldness; for possessing an heavenly signet, heavenly credentials, and heavenly tidings, he has a good commission, therefore has not got to ask those to whom he delivers his message what he shall say, nor does he shrink, or change his message, when he finds it gives offence. He has the face of an eagle, as he often soars into the lofty regions of sovereign, free, sufficient, and invincible grace, carrying the little timid children of God upon his back; and has a discernment into the mysteries of the cross. He has the face of a man, to show that, amidst all his usefulness, boldness, and discernment, he is but a creature, and that it is by the help of the Great Shepherd, and Bishop of Souls, he prospers. The black horse is false doctrine, and the rider is a flesh-pleasing, time-

serving, God-dishonouring, covetous preacher. The balance is carnality; and "a voice in the midst of the four beasts," represents a faithful servant of God exposing the delusion, setting forth the security of God's saints, and unfolding the supporting word of God's grace. The delusion is "a measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny;" a little measure of truth, but none at all, only the scheme will not answer if there is not a little in it, and worldly gain could be obtained without it; but "three measures of barley for a penny," an abundance of error to obtain the same end. "And see thou hurt not the oil and the wine." Here is the security of the saints and the strengthening efficacy of God's word. Though error spread far and wide it shall never extinguish the lamp of life in the souls of God's elect: this is impossible, because the oil of grace in God's regenerate ones is incorruptible: neither shall it turn the sweet "wine" of gospel truth into the "poison of" (Baxterian) "dragons," nor into the "cruel venom of" (Arminian) "asps," Deut. xxxii. 33. But this word of his grace

" Shall bear them up, and ever will,
 Till they arrive at Zion's hill."

In attempting, therefore, to describe a yea and nay gospel, I would observe, it contains nothing but contradiction, confusion, and vanity. Yet this is the gospel that has become most current among professors of the nineteenth century, and has the most admirers only because it is most suited to man's depraved nature. To reduce the system of a yea and nay gospel to any kind of

order is very difficult, because it wears a great many faces, and accommodates itself to all sorts of religious professors and religious principles.

The following, however, are a few of the items of a yea and nay gospel.

1. *That God gave eternal life to the elect in Christ before the world began; BUT THOUGH GOD DID NOT GIVE ETERNAL LIFE TO THOSE WHO ARE NOT ELECTED, YET THEY MAY HAVE IT UPON APPLICATION.*

2. *That God is a sovereign "doing as he will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth," and it is his will to specially save the elect; WHICH HE COULD NOT DO UNLESS CHRIST BECAME A SIN-OFFERING FOR ALL THE HUMAN RACE:*

3. *THAT THEREFORE CHRIST DIED FOR ALL THE HUMAN RACE.*

4. *That to believe in Christ is a supernatural thing; BUT IT IS THE DUTY OF NATURAL MEN, NOT BORN OF THE SPIRIT, TO BELIEVE IN CHRIST.*

5. *That it is the Holy Ghost's work to call a sinner out of the death and darkness of nature into the life and light of grace, which call is consequent upon predestination; BUT THE HOLY GHOST WILL CALL EVERY CREATURE OF ADAM'S RACE, IF THEY FIRST CALL UPON HIM.*

6. *Christ's redemption is particular, that is, it applied only to the elect; BUT IT WEARS A GENERAL ASPECT, THEREFORE EVERY ONE OF ADAM'S RACE IS INVITED TO PARTAKE OF IT.*

7. *The blood of Christ is of infinite efficacy on their behalf for whom it was shed; BUT IT*