

That salvation is of the Lord—that he could have saved all men had it pleased him, and had his glory required it—that he has preferred saving some only—that this preference is no denial of his name in any respect—that he will get himself glory upon his enemies—that he has absolutely chosen the very persons to be saved, who will finally dwell for ever with him—that their number can neither increase nor decrease—that they were all children of wrath by nature even as others—that the salvation of others is as impossible, as is the destruction of those who are chosen in Christ—that the unchosen are, as to an eternal state, in like condition with the fallen angels—that whatever course of reasoning would vindicate the character of God, in the case of the angels lapsed and lost, would likewise vindicate his character in the case of non-elect men—that no man becomes an object of punitive justice, without himself willing the cause of it—that no innocent being needs salvation, and no sinful one can have any natural right to it—that as many do perish, so all might have perished, yea, must have been for ever lost, had not sovereign mercy interposed and found a ransom—that God will never inflict unmerited punishment—that he will never reject the prayer of the penitent, but shew him endless mercy through the atoning death of Christ: all these positions, the author of this work firmly and reverently believes, will be confirmed as sacred truths in the last decisive day, when the election and the rest will appear in two distinct companies.

And further. That the divine persons are inseparable in their acts of grace in saving men—that they have one eternal essence and will, and are equally gracious and merciful—that the saving acts of the Son of God, as a Redeemer, are no more universal, than are those of his Father, in choosing and blessing a certain foreknown people in him—that the death of Christ is of no avail for the spiritual salvation of sinners, any further than it has actually satisfied divine justice on their account—that justice has received no satisfaction for the sins of those persons, on whom it finally inflicts vindictive punishment—that the punishment of their sins in their own persons, has ever been as certain by divine justice, as the exemption of the elect from punishment, has been sure by divine grace—that the penalty of the holy law of God is not, nor can be twice inflicted—that the sufficiency of Christ's death for all

mankind, so much talked of by many, has never saved one sinner yet, nor ever will—that the headship, suretyship, and saving merit of Christ, are of equal extent, and refer to the very same persons—that his three offices, of priest, prophet and king, are of like latitude, as to the persons whom they are intended savingly to benefit—that universal redemption is egregiously false, and is dishonourable to the character of God, and to the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, as the Redeemer of all his people—that the redemption declared in the gospel is *real*, and therefore particular and absolute—that no man is damned for not having believed, while on earth, that Christ had redeemed him—that salvation to eternal life, is either absolutely certain, or utterly impossible—that Christ loved all for whom he died, as the Father loved him—that the chosen, the redeemed, and the sanctified, are, ultimately, the same known and numbered people. All these sentiments, the writer most heartily believes, and hopes for grace to assert, to defend, and to exemplify them, until his undying spirit returns to God who gave it.

Furthermore. That conversion is a spiritual change on the hearts and lives of sinful men, and is as absolutely certain to take place, in a certain people, as the will of the Eternal God is immutable, and as his power is infinite—that the Holy Spirit is as much to be relied on, for the efficient regeneration of the elect and redeemed, as was the Lord Jesus Christ for their real and endless redemption—that the elect *are* delivered from the wrath to come, and are sure to be called to believe to the saving of their souls—that no man has anything more to do with the effecting of his own regeneration, than he had to do with choosing his own natural parents, and fixing his own natural birth day—that the first act of a spiritual kind towards God, is an effect of God's acting upon that man, who is passively saved, before he believes or moves in any spiritual duty—that Christ lives in his redeemed, through his Spirit, before they live on him by faith—that in conversion, the divine influence takes the lead, producing a new and holy state of mind, including spiritual perception, then a persuasion of the truth of the gospel follows, and also a recumbency on the merits of Christ for pardon and sanctity—that, in this manner, all the *elect* are converted, being made willing in the day of our Lord's saving power—that none others will ever be saved upon Mr. Fuller's system, as he, himself,

confesses ; * and, therefore, whatever advantage may be *pretended* to arise from his system, *it is evident it cannot refer to there being a greater number of sinners saved by it*, than by that which is herein pleaded for ; since both agree to assert, that none, but the elect, ever did believe, or ever will. Mark this last sentence attentively.

And further. That the law of works is the rule of all duty to unbelievers—that what is the unregenerate man's duty, *as to the nature of it*, would have been his duty, had no Saviour ever been revealed—that every deviation from the line of conduct, prescribed by the law is sin, and subjects the offender to condign punishment—that if we could suppose an innocent man, such as Adam was, to be now placed on earth, under the dispensation of the gospel sent to sinners ; as it would become such a man to treat the message thus sent from his Maker, so it is the duty of men now fallen, and remaining unregenerate, to treat it—that the obligation of man, to keep the law, requires to be insisted on *exegetically*, for the maintenance of the rights of God his Maker, and to shew forth the guiltiness of man ; but that to insist on this obligation *exhortatively*, would be *absurd* ; because, it is a natural impossibility, for a fallen creature ever to perform it : he must either be delivered by an act of sovereign grace, or finally endure the desert of his sin—that unbelief, actively considered, is not the direct opposite of spiritual belief ; but of that belief, which a man unfallen, as before supposed, would yield, in honour of his wise, holy, and benevolent Creator—that a rational belief of the divine testimony is still possible to a fallen man, although the corresponding regard to the honour of God, which his creation-state involved, is now cut off through sin—that spiritual faith was unknown to the law, under which man was placed by creation, consequently, that law, which is still binding on men fallen, can have no more demand on the exercise, than on the radical existence of it—that as the *absence* of spiritual faith was no sin in Adam, our federal head, so neither is it any sin in his fallen posterity—that the original and natural religion of mankind by creation, and the revealed and spiritual religion of the elect by Christ, are entirely distinct, and ought not to be blended in this controversy, as they usually have been—that faith is *an effect* of vital union with Christ by a heavenly birth,

* Pref. p. 12.

and cannot, in the nature of things, precede its own efficient and vital cause—that the act of holy belief, which, by Mr. F.'s own concession, God himself cannot produce without first changing the heart from carnal to spiritual,* cannot be the duty of any man prior to such change being effected: for what God never produces but by the *causal* principle, he surely does not bind man to produce without that principle—that the law, when considered as requiring the spiritual acts of believing, loving, fearing and trusting, is not to be viewed as rooted in Adam, the natural head of all men; but as rooted in Christ, the supernatural head of elect-men—that although the regenerate, upon whom alone the law enjoins the spiritual acts of obedience, may not have assurance of his regenerate estate, yet, this creates no inconvenience to such persons with respect to their duty; because, the exhortations of scripture are addressed to character, of which they must be supposed to be conscious: the truth of which statement might be further demonstrated, by their being able to pray, to state their experience, to own their Lord in baptism, and in the holy supper, although not assured of their personal interest in him, so as to exclude doubtfulness.

It is hoped, that the reader, after perusing attentively the preceding unreserved epitome of the author's views, will at once observe, that no plea is set up in behalf of moral evil, no pretence of reckoning the sinner unaccountable to God as his Maker, his Law-giver, his rightful Governor, and his final Judge. Neither will he find any thing like what has been unfairly insinuated, against men of like views with the writer of these pages: "that all God requires of man is barely to attend the means of grace;" but on the contrary, he will perceive that any thing short of continuing in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them, leaves the unbeliever under the fearful sentence of the law. It will likewise be observable that, without an interest in the person and work of the Lord Christ Jesus, and that revealed by the Holy Spirit, and received by a faith of divine operation, no one, whatever flaming profession he may make, or however great zeal he may display in upholding the popular systems of modern times, is manifestly exempt from the just claims of the irrevocable law of the ever living God.

* Pref. p. 206.

SECTION II.

MR. FULLER'S LEADING PROPOSITIONS WITH OTHER EXTRACTS FROM HIS TREATISE, TENDING TO SHEW HIS SENTIMENTS, AND HIS OPPOSITION TO HIMSELF.

THE propositions referred to are six in number.

I. Unconverted sinners are commanded, exhorted, and invited, to believe in Christ for salvation.

II. Every man is bound cordially to receive and approve whatever God reveals.

III. Though the gospel, strictly speaking, is not a law, but a message of pure grace; yet it virtually requires obedience, and such an obedience as includes saving faith.

IV. The want of faith in Christ is ascribed in the scriptures to men's depravity, and is itself represented as a heinous sin.

V. God has threatened and inflicted the most awful punishment on sinners, for their not believing on the Lord Jesus Christ.

VI. Other spiritual exercises, which sustain an inseparable connexion with faith in Christ, are represented as the duty of men in general.

In pleading for, and defending the sentiments contained in these propositions, he has expressed himself as follows:—

No. 1. "If I am in error in the sentiments here defended, it will be the part of candour in my opponents, to allow that *I sincerely believe what I write.*" Pref. to Mr. Button.

No. 2. "Regeneration is not used to express any thing *we are, or do,* but what God *does* for us: it is his sovereign and almighty work of making us of a right spirit; it is not used to express our being of a right spirit, if it were, we should say it is every man's duty."

No. 3. "We do not say it is the duty of men to give themselves special grace, all we affirm is, that it is their duty *to be* that which nothing but special grace can make them. Whatever a person is, or does, in respect to spiritual dispositions and exercises, when he is regenerated, we think it is no more than he ought to have been and done prior to that period, as well as at the time."

No. 4. "I conclude, that it is necessary for a sinner to be in a godly state of mind, in order to his believing in Christ. The necessity of a spiritual discernment of the glory of divine things in order to believing, is a principle clearly established in the scriptures:—they trace a change of heart to an origin beyond either belief or perception, even to that divine influence which is *the cause* of both: in the order of nature, the effect is evermore preceded by the cause."

No. 5. "We should not, for instance, think of affirming that the heart while carnal, *can*, by *his almighty power*, be made to love him, and be subject to his law: for this is *in itself* impossible. But the impossibility of the natural man receiving the things of the Spirit of God, while they appear foolishness to him, is manifestly of the same nature as this, and is described in the same language."

No. 6. "All I contend for is, that it is *not by means* of a spiritual perception, or belief of the gospel, that the heart is, *for the first time*, effectually influenced towards God; for spiritual perception and belief, are represented as the effects, and not the causes of such influence."

No. 7. "All acts necessarily arise from their principles."

No. 8. "The thing which I affirm is, that it is the duty of a bad man *to be* a good man: the ground on which this affirmation rests is this, that the thing which God directly requires is the heart."

No. 9. "*So far* as any thing is charged upon men as their sin, *so far* the contrary must be their duty; because where there is no obligation, there can be no transgression."

No. 10. "Every man ought to be Christ's friend, or else his enemy; or else to stand neuter, and be neither."

No. 11. "God requires fallen creatures to love him *the same* as if they had never apostatized: God requires no natural impossibilities." Compare No. 5, 25.

No. 12. "All duty in some sort belongs to the law. An obligation to believe arises from the law. If our obligations to believe do not arise from *the moral law*, they must arise from the gospel *as a new law*: but the gospel is simply good news, and relates not to precepts or injunctions,

No. 4. p. 196, 202, 204, 33.—No. 5. p. 206.—No. 6. p. 212.

No. 7. p. 4. 1st Edit.—No. 8. p. 33. Letter to Mr. Martin.

No. 9. p. 12. *ibid.*—No. 10. p. 78. 1st. Edit.

No. 11. p. 49, 114, 117, 158, 33.

but to tidings proclaimed.”—He contrarily says, “There is a sense in which our *obligation* to believe arises from the gospel itself, which virtually requires obedience.”

No. 13. “The love of God is required of men *without distinction*. There can be no reasonable doubt whether *spiritual* love be obligatory on sinners who have no other means of knowing God, than what are afforded by the works of nature. *In contradiction to this*, He says, “It is true, there are favours, for which the regenerate are bound to love him, which are not common to the unregenerate.”

No. 14. “It is granted that none ever did, or will believe in Christ, but those who are chosen of God from eternity. Unconverted sinners are not interested in Christ.”

No. 15. “Faith, wherever it exists, is the *effect* of divine influence. It is our act as by God enabled. The scriptures generally speak of it as including both principle and act, or the act of faith as rising from its principle.”

No. 16. “The question is, whether faith be not required as the appointed mean of salvation.”

No. 17. “Obedience to the gospel is true special faith, having the promise of salvation. It is evident that the belief of the truth concerning Christ is saving faith: it is *of its nature*, to relinquish confidence in works.”

No. 18. “Those who are born of God, and have evidence of it, it is their duty to examine and *believe* that evidence. Whether we believe in Christ or not, is *not an object of faith*, but of consciousness.”

No. 19. “The promise as given in the word, is general, applying equally to one sinner as to another; but as taken, it is considered as particular, and as insuring salvation.”

No. 20. “That for which he who is eternally lost ought to have trusted in Christ was, the obtaining of mercy, in case he applied for it: for this there was a complete warrant in the gospel declarations.”

No. 21. “Christ by his death opened a door of hope to sinners of the human race *as sinners*; affording a ground for their being invited without distinction to believe and be saved. *The peculiarity of the atonement consists* not in its

No. 12. p. 216. Reply, 53, 56, 57.—

No. 13. p. 76, 77, 198. 1st Edit.—No. 140. pef. xii. p. 4.

No. 15. Def. p. 28. 1st Edit. p. 131, 4.—No. 16. p. 14.

No. 17. Def. p. 40. 2nd Edit. p. 16, 185.

No. 18. p. 19, 1st Edit. p. 6. 2nd Edit.—No. 19. p. 12.

insufficiency to save more than are saved, but *in the sovereignty of its application.*"

No. 22. "Nothing but the depravity of men's hearts renders them incapable of understanding, believing, and loving the truth in a spiritual way."

No. 23. "Men are *not now under the covenant of works*; but under the curse for having broken it. God is not in covenant with them, nor they with him: he requires nothing of fallen creatures as a term of life." On the contrary, he says, "Every unbeliever *is under the law, as a covenant of works.*"

No. 24. "I admit that the salvation of some men is impossible, *it is certain that they will perish*; yet I conceive it is not such a kind of impossibility as to render exhortations to believe in Christ inconsistent." Reader, what think ye? Compare No. 25.

No. 25. "Those things which are impossible with men but possible with God, are not such as are impossible in their own nature: where this is the case, the power of God is never introduced as accomplishing them, any more than the power of man." "God requires no natural impossibilities." Compare No. 5.

No. 26. "Spiritual power, or, which is the same thing, a right state of mind, though it be essential to the actual performance of spiritual obedience, yet is not necessary to our being under obligation to perform it." Did Adam's duty precede his right state by creation?

The preceding extracts are amply sufficient to give the attentive reader a knowledge of what Mr. F.'s views were, respecting the duty of men dead in sin, and to qualify him to understand, what these pages following are intended to oppose, and what they are written to maintain. It is the desire of the writer to render the controversy better understood. Truth is ever consistent with itself, and fears no investigation. He who is determined to be on *one* side in a controversy, without at least carefully endeavouring to understand *both*, is no honour to either, though he should make his affirmations ever so confidently. Whether the author of this work understands the subject, or not, his readers will judge; he, at least, thinks himself entitled to

No. 20. p. 26.—No. 21. p. 109, 110, 190.—No. 22. p. 120.
 No. 23. p. 113, 114. Def. 35.—No. 24. Def. p. 76.
 No. 25. p. 205, 33.—No. 26. p. 212.

say that, he has endeavoured to acquaint himself with it. And though it is long since he first appeared in opposition to the sentiments advocated by Mr. F., he is still constrained to declare that, his views are unchanged concerning them: they still appear to him as an incoherent system, opposed to itself, and to the doctrine of salvation by *absolute* grace, *real* redemption, and *certain* conversion to God.

SECTION III.

ARGUMENTS SHEWING, IN OPPOSITION TO MR. F.'S PROPOSITIONS,
THAT UNREGENERATE MEN ARE NOT BOUND TO HAVE AND
EXERCISE SPIRITUAL FAITH IN CHRIST.

IT is not forgotten that he has appealed to the sacred scriptures, and cited several passages therefrom in support of his sentiment; but they will be noticed hereafter. Men of all sentiments, in the profession of religion, refer us to the oracles of God, in proof of the principles they espouse; it is therefore, highly requisite to guard against the mis-application of them, by "comparing spiritual things with spiritual;" and by "proving all things, that we may hold fast that which is good." The following positions and observations were submitted to Mr. F.'s attention by a very learned man, and as they are to the point in hand, they may not be thought unworthy of the reader's notice.

1. "Divine revelation must be a system of truths."
2. "The proposition, which is at variance with *reason*, cannot be true."
3. "Revelation is the proper medium of truth in religious debates."
4. "But it is the province of reason to judge of the analogy of the application, and the truth of the conclusion. Scripture may be quoted in countenance of every absurdity under the sun. And thousands had rather grope in the Egyptian darkness of the good old way, than open the carnal eye of common sense. In fact, from scripture the world has been overwhelmed with so many modes of worship, and articles of faith, that thousands pronounce the whole a fiction. Against the irruption of so much nonsense, God commands us to lift up the standard of reason, and *prove all things*. For though the light of

nature can no more reveal a *spiritual* truth, than create a world, it is undoubtedly competent to judge of truth in the sense above stated."*

The subsequent arguments, in reply to Mr. F.'s *propositions*, are thought to be worthy of the reader's deliberate consideration; and to contain *an ample refutation of them*; they are not, however, intended to supersede a further attention being paid to those propositions in a following section.

Observation. *Whatever is the duty of the unregenerate towards God, is their duty by the law of their creation-state, and as the children of Adam.*

1. Whatever the law saith, it saith to *all* them that are under the law; but all the unregenerate are under the law; therefore whatever the law saith, it saith to *all* the unregenerate: and not to those only who have opportunity of hearing the gospel.

2. That *kind* of service which the law requires, would have been required if Jesus Christ had never been heard of; but if Jesus Christ had never been heard of, *spiritual* faith and love would not have been required; therefore, that *kind* of service which the law requires, does not include *spiritual* faith and love.

3. Where God exhorts to the act of faith, he has given the principle; but he has not given the principle to the unregenerate; therefore he does not exhort the unregenerate to the act of faith. No *act* can precede its own causal principle: but believing in Christ is an *act*; therefore, believing in Christ cannot precede its own causal principle. All causes *necessarily* precede their *effects*, believing in Christ is an *effect* of regeneration; therefore, *regeneration necessarily precedes believing*. All sorts of acts and exercises do necessarily arise from their principles; therefore, to command the act in the absence of the principle, would be to command "a thing in its own nature impossible, and which God is never introduced as accomplishing, any more than the power of man." No. 25. and No. 7.

4. "God requires no natural impossibility," but to require the act of faith in Christ, prior to the existence of the principle, is requiring a natural impossibility; therefore,

* P. Withers, D. D.

God requires not the act of faith in Christ prior to the existence of the principle. Compare No. 25, and No. 5, herewith.

5. Where the principle, essential to the act of faith, is withheld entirely, the sentence of justice abides everlastingly; but the principle essential to faith is entirely withheld from the non-elect; therefore, on the non-elect the sentence of justice abides everlastingly. If salvation be impossible to certain persons, their damnation must be just; for them no satisfaction has been made by the death of Christ, nor can they be justly punishable for not trusting in it for their salvation. This view of the divine dispensation is not only consistent with itself, *but involves the salvation of as many as that which it opposes.* For Mr. F. has unreservedly declared that, "none ever did, or will believe in Christ, but those who are chosen of God from eternity." He also says, "The salvation of some men is impossible: it is certain that they will perish." If it be certain that they will perish, it must be certain that Christ is not their Saviour; and that they will never be punished for not treating him as their Saviour. Nos. 14, 24.

6. If justice be satisfied for all the unregenerate, Jesus is their Saviour; but Jesus is not the Saviour of all the unregenerate; therefore, justice is not satisfied. If justice be *not* satisfied, God cannot be just in forgiving sin; if it *be* satisfied, he cannot be just in punishing sin again. If salvation be not in Christ for some unregenerate sinners, God must know that it is not; and, surely, he does not exhort them to look to Christ for that which he knows is not comprehended in him for them. It is manifest that *faith is not a putting of salvation into Christ: it is in him for his people, before it is in his people* through the Holy Spirit, and by their faith in his name. Obligation and exhortation, in respect to spiritual things, follow regeneration, or a new state of heart, and thus God acts consistently with his own sovereign acts of grace towards his creatures in Christ, when he commands and exhorts them to certain spiritual exercises, that suppose and evidence their interest in Christ; who is their ordained life and strength.

7. Believing in Christ for salvation, is *an effect* of salvation in Christ, for every one who so believes; but *no effect* can precede its own cause; therefore, salvation is in Christ for every one believing in him, *prior* to their so believing.

Hence it appears that, commanding the unregenerate to believe in Christ *for* salvation, is supposing that salvation is *declared* to be in Christ for them ; but no such *declaration* is made in the scriptures ; therefore, commanding the unregenerate to believe in Christ for salvation is not according to the scriptures. Mr. F. therefore has mis-explained, and mis-applied certain passages of God's word, to uphold his views with the appearance of authority.

8. The law must suppose either the *absence* or the *existence* of sin ; if the *former*, it cannot enjoin any thing with regard to the *removal* of sin, and, therefore, not faith in Christ ; if the *latter*, it *inflexibly* curses the sinner, and, therefore it cannot enjoin any thing on the accursed, that would imply an exemption from its inexorable sentence. As the sinner is destitute of righteousness, the law cannot justify him ; but it can and does condemn him, to endure the curse incurred by disobedience. It makes no mention of mercy ; nor does it enjoin the offender to use means to obtain salvation from its awful sentence : so to do, would be to resign its essential character, as a rule of strict, impartial, and immutable justice. Divine equity cannot act contrary to its known property, of assigning to every one his due. It cannot legally hold guilty and unregenerate men under its governing authority, as condemned to suffer its awful penalty, and also exhort them, as unregenerate sinners, to use means to escape from under its jurisdiction. This proves at once the necessity of distinguishing between equity and sovereignty, and between the law *as a rule of justification* belonging to mankind through Adam ; and the law *as a rule of sanctification* only, belonging to the new creation, in and through Christ the second Adam, their elect head and redeeming Saviour.

Whatever is the duty of the unregenerate, must be so by the law of their creation-state. But the law, considered as the rule of obedience for justification before God, is a dispensation entirely distinct from the covenant of Christ, and hence it is manifest that, whether its subject be deemed innocent or guilty, it in neither case can require spiritual faith in the Redeemer of the elect people of God.

9. If "the law requires men to love God the same as if they had never apostatized," it cannot require that evangelical love, by which faith works, and sinners are saved ; but the law does require men to love God the same as if