

BY JOHN BRINE

CHAPTER TWELFTH OF THE MEDIATION
OF CHRIST

THE Doctrine of the Mediation of Jesus Christ, is of the greatest Importance. It is the only Foundation of a sure and solid Hope, that Sinners can have of Reconciliation with God, and of enjoying him, the Origin of all Blessedness. And it is divine Revelation alone, which can give us an Assurance, that God will pardon and save rebellious Creatures; and inform us in what Way Criminals may be accepted with God, and rendered happy, consistent with the Honor of all his Perfections. As has been before observed, the Light of Nature is sufficient to acquaint us, in some Measure, with our deplorable State, in Consequence of Sin; but here it leaves us, and cannot be a Guide to our Recovery and Happiness: And, therefore, in our Enquiries into the Doctrine of the Mediation of Christ, it is irrational to appoint Reason to judge and determine concerning the Nature, Efficiency, and Ends of his Mediatorial Actions. In this Affair, imperfect Reason is wholly ignorant, and necessarily must be, because Reason, in its State of Perfection, could only know, that God would certainly accept of the unerring Obedience of his perfect Creatures. Reason, in that State, could not possibly resolve, whether, upon a Breach of the Law, God would execute the Threatening denounced against Disobedience, or whether he would pardon and save: Much

less, had it any Means of knowing what Method would be the fitter and best to take, in order to recover from deserved Ruin; and, consequently, it is not rational to constitute imperfect Reason a Judge in these Matters. Let us then humbly submit our Reason to the Discoveries of Revelation, relating to these Points, and embrace without any Scruple, the Doctrine of the holy Scriptures concerning those Subjects.

I. Sin or moral Impurity is contrary to the holy Nature of God, and he cannot but be displeased with it. His righteous Soul necessarily abhors that filthy Thing Sin. *He is of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity*, without Indignation, and awful Resentment. A holy Man views moral Turpitude, with Detestation: The Malignity of the evil Nature of Sin excites his utmost Hatred, and causes him to wish for its utter Destruction. And can we think, that infinite Rectitude is able to spare and bear it in Sight? We must be strangely sunk in our Notions of the Holiness of God, or be under the Influence of strong Prejudice in Favor of ourselves, as Creatures guilty and vile, if we make a Difficulty of allowing, that moral Imperfection is the Object of the infinite Abhorrence of God our supreme Judge.

II. All Mankind are Sinners: Human Nature has lost its original Righteousness, and is become the Subject of innumerable vile Lusts. Men universally have erred from the Way of Holiness, and gone into the Paths of Sin. *We have all*

sinned, and come short of the Glory of God. Not an innocent Person is to be found among the human Race. Who of Mankind, can say with Truth, my Heart is pure, my Hands are unpolluted, and I have done no Iniquity? Not one; we are all guilty in the Sight of God, and deserve his Displeasure. If he should be *strict to mark Iniquity*, none of the human Species would be able *to stand*. Consequently,

III. No Man can be approved of God, and justified in his Sight, considered in himself. Our righteous Judge cannot account us that which we are not, nor are made; if, therefore, we are Criminals, he cannot esteem us innocent and obedient, nor reward us for our Actions. If our Conduct really merits his Displeasure, it is impossible that it should interest us in his Approbation and Favor. God undoubtedly forms a right Judgment of, and puts a true Value upon Actions; if, therefore, it is possible for him to accept of Services, that are tinctured with Sin, as so considered, what Assurance can we have, that he will not some time or other, reject those which have no such Tincture? If he is able to approve the guilty, as such, how may we be certain, that the innocent will never be the Objects of his Dislike and Aversion? It is as rational to think, that infinite Wisdom may be delighted with Folly, as to imagine, that infinite Holiness can approve of Imperfection. And, therefore, no Person among us, can be accepted with the God of Truth and Holiness, as considered in himself. We are all, without Exception, obnoxious to his dreadful Anger: And it would be

just in him to *punish* every one of us, *with everlasting Destruction, from his Presence, and the Glory of his Power.* He will, *by no means, clear the guilty,* without a proper Provision for the maintaining his Authority in the Law, and the Vindication of his Holiness and Justice in doing it, *God is a consuming Fire,* and so we shall certainly find him, unless his Justice is satisfied; to the Resentment of which we have exposed ourselves, by the Omission of Duties, and the imperfect Manner, wherein we have performed every Act of Obedience, and by the Perpetration of numerous Crimes.

IV. The Goodness of God lays him under no Obligation to provide for the Recovery, of his Creatures, who have destroyed themselves by Sin. For it is no Reflection on his Goodness, to permit Justice to take Place in the Infliction of deserved Penalty. The guilty suffering Creature, will not have Cause to charge God with Cruelty, under the greatest Tortures Justice shall inflict for Sin. It is Matter of free Choice with God, whether the criminal Creature shall be spared or punished. To pardon and save a Sinner is Mercy, or at is the Exercise of the Attribute of Mercy; but as no Offender can plead a Right to Impunity, it must wholly be resolved into the Sovereign Will of God, if he shows Mercy to any Transgressor. It is no Act of Unkindness to resolve upon the Execution of the Threatening of the Law against Sin: And, therefore, the Goodness of God may perfectly consist with his punishing of Men, who have rendered

themselves worthy of Death, by a Violation of his holy and just Law.

V. Unless God had provided for our Recovery and Salvation, which he was not obliged to do, our State would have been inevitably miserable. We were absolutely unable to raise ourselves out of those Depths of Misery, into which our Sins have plung'd us. *No Man can by any Means redeem his Brother, nor give to God a Ransom for him: The Redemption of the Soul is precious, and it ceases for ever; i.e.* with Man {Psalms. 49:7-8}. Who could bear the Weight of the Guilt of Sin, without sinking under it? Who of Mankind could sustain the dreadful Curse that Sin demerits, and not be miserable? What Person could stand under the Wrath of the Almighty, and not faint under that insupportable Weight? Not one among us. Stubble might as soon resist the Force of devouring Fire, as we endure *the flaming Vengeance* of an angry God. A few Drops of divine Wrath let fall upon us, give us inexpressible Torture; what Agonies therefore, must the full Flow of that scorching Fury throw us into? If the present View of the Terrors of a holy incensed God *distracts* us, how shall we be able to endure the terrible full Prospect of his infinite Displeasure against our Sins? It is no Mistake, that God is infinitely offended with our Crimes. His Indignation against Sin, is not the *mere* Imagination of a melancholy and disordered Mind, 'tis *real*; and so we shall find it, to our endless Confusion, if we do not *flee for Refuge*,

to lay hold on the Hope set before us, in the Gospel of his Grace.

VI. The good Will and Favor of God caused him to resolve upon the Salvation and Happiness of some of his guilty Creatures, not apostate Spirits, but sinful Men. Not all Mankind; but a Part of the human Race. These Persons *he loved with an everlasting Love*, and his eternal Grace, Goodness and Mercy, is the Source from which their Recovery and endless Bliss spring. Nothing in them could induce him to save and render them happy: For all their Holiness, which is their Meetness for Heaven, is the Effect, and not the Cause of his choosing them to Salvation. Because *they are ordained to everlasting Life, they believe* {Acts. 13:48}. Because *they are chosen to Salvation, they are sanctified by the Spirit* {2Thessalonians 2:13}. So that their Holiness is the Result of their eternal Election in Christ {Ephesians. 1:4}, and not the Foundation on which that divine Decree is built. Their holy Vocation is according to that gracious Purpose formed in the divine Mind concerning them {2Timothy. 1:9}; and, therefore, the Foresight of Holiness in them, could not be the Reason why God determined to save them.

VII. Tho' the sovereignly gracious God, decreed to deliver them from Sin, and all the penal Effects of it, and to confer Honor and Happiness upon them; his Wisdom directed to provide for the Glory of all his Attributes in the

Accomplishment of that Decree. His Grace would triumph in their Recovery, but Justice would not allow, that it should be upon its Ruins. Goodness would shine with an amazing Lustre, in their Salvation; but Holiness would not permit its Glory to be obscured and veil'd in their Recovery. Divine Mercy would magnify itself in their Remission, but Righteousness insisted upon the Punishment of Sin; that Sinners might be saved in such a Way as would not be to its Prejudice. Infinite Wisdom alone could provide an Expedient for answering the just Demands of each Perfection, and for preserving an entire Harmony among the divine Attributes, in the great Affair of Salvation. As God alone could do this, he has made such Provision,

VIII. God chose and constituted Christ to be a *Days-man* and Mediator, between himself and the People whom he intended to save: For this Reason our Saviour is spoken of under the Character of the Father's Elect: *Behold my Servant whom I uphold, mine Elect in whom my Soul delighteth* {Isaiah. 42:2}. He chose him from among the People; and ordained him to this Office: *Who verily was fore-ordained before the Foundation of the World* {1Peter. 1:20}. Christ on his Part freely took this Office upon himself, and voluntarily engaged to do and suffer whatever the Law and Justice required, in order to the eternal Salvation of those Persons, in a Way becoming all the divine Perfections: Hence he is stiled *the Surety of a better Testament*.

IX. Our Redeemer has all the Requisites of a Mediator between God and Sinners: Or he is in every Respect, what it was necessary, that the Mediator should be.

1. He is Man, and the Son of Man. It was proper, that he who undertook to save Sinners of the human Race, should be Man, not only because Justice required a Satisfaction in the same Nature that had sinned; but also that he might be fit to be an Head to those Persons, he was to save and bear the tenderest Affection to them: For these Reasons he was *made of a Woman*, and so he was the Son of Man, as well as of the human Species.

2. Our Saviour was a holy innocent Man. Innocency was a necessary Qualification in the Redeemer. For, no Offender is able to satisfy for his own Offenses, much less, can he satisfy for the Sins of others. Christ is *an High-Priest*, that *becomes us*, as he is, *holy, harmless and undefiled*. The first *Adam* was not an Head to him, or he did not represent him; and therefore, tho' he was to be Man, and the Son of Man, yet he was not to be conceived in a natural Way, as all those are, to whom *Adam* was a Representative: If he had so been, he could not have escaped that Pollution, which attends all his natural Descendants. His being *separate from Sinners*, in his Conception, is the true Reason of the Holiness of his Nature.

3. He is God: It was absolutely necessary that the Saviour of Sinners should possess infinite Perfections, that an infinite Merit might attend his Obedience and Sufferings. Sin hath such Demerit in it, as the Object is against whom it is

committed: And, therefore, greater Punishment is due to Sin against God, than is due to Sin against a Creature; and by the same Reason that Penalty in any Degree greater, is demerited by sinning against God, than against a Creature, infinite Punishment must become due by transgressing his Law, because he is infinitely great and glorious. Our gracious Mediator is God, and equal in Majesty to our righteous and offended Judge. *He is the Brightness of the Father's Glory, and the express Image of his Person* {Hebrews. 1:3}. *God over all, blessed for ever* Ro 9:6. *Being in the Form of God, he thought it no Robbery to be equal with God* {Philippians. 2:6}. *He is the true God, and eternal Life* {1John. 5:20}. Being Man he was capable of obeying and suffering; and being also God, his Obedience and Sufferings are of infinite Value. For such as the Person is, who obeys and suffers; such in Dignity and Worth are his Obedience and Sufferings. As our Lord, who obeyed and suffered for us, was infinitely great; his Obedience and Sufferings are *infinitely* valuable. And, therefore, the Law is *magnified* and made *honorable*, by his Subjection to it, obeying of it, and suffering its Curse. Again, unless our Saviour is God; he cannot have a complete Knowledge of all the Wants of all his People, nor can he supply them. *Christ searches the Hearts, and tries the Reins of Men*; and, consequently, he must be acquainted with all the Necessities of his Saints, and is able to supply them. Besides, divine Power is necessary to be exercised in their Favor, to preserve them in Dangers, to support them under Difficulties, and to prevent their Ruin; seeing that they are

encompassed with numerous, potent, and malicious Enemies. The united Force of Sin, Satan, and the World cannot destroy them, because their Redeemer, is the *mighty God*, he is the *Lord of Hosts*. They are saved by *the Lord their God, and David their King*.

4. The divine and human Nature are most intimately united in Christ. *The Word was made Flesh* {John. 1:14}; and the Obedience Sufferings of our Saviour, are to be considered as the Obedience and Sufferings of his entire Person: Of his human Nature, subjectively; of his divine, relatively; or as it is in Union, and concurred with the human Nature in obeying and suffering: For which Reason his Blood is called the *Blood of God*. The Work assigned to Christ our Mediator, was most important to the Glory of God, and the Good of his People. We may observe, that it is different according to three distinct Offices, which our glorious Mediator acts in. The Mediatorial Office is general, and includes his Sacerdotal, Prophetic, and Kingly Offices. In this Order I speak of them, because it is in this Method I desire to treat of those Offices.

1. He was a Priest: *Thou art a Priest for ever, after the Order of Melchisedec* {Psalms. 110:4}. He is *the Apostle and High-Priest of our Profession* {Hebrews. 3:1}. Our blessed Lord, *did not glorify himself, to be made an High-Priest; but he that said unto him, thou art my Son, today have I begotten thee* {Hebrews. 5:5}. The Father invested him with this Office. And he was a Priest, when on the Earth, or before his Ascension to Heaven. The Objection which *Socinian* Writers

make to this, taken from these Words of the Author of the Epistle to the *Hebrews*: *For if he were on the Earth, he should not be a Priest, seeing that there are Priests, that offer Gifts according to the Law* {Hebrews. 8:4}, is very weak and trifling. The Intention of the holy Writer, is to prove, that the Messiah was to be a Priest, but not of the Order of *Aaron*; nor to officiate in any of the Services which the Priests were called to by the Law; or that he could not be a Priest according to the Law, because the Law limited the Priesthood to the Tribe of *Judah*, of which Tribe Jesus was not; and, therefore, by the Law he could not be a Priest at all. His Design is not to prove, that while Christ was on the Earth, he was not a Priest; but to prove, that he could not be in the priestly Office according to the Law; because the Law restrained that Office to mortal Men on the Earth, who were of the Tribe before-mentioned, of which Tribe he was not; and consequently, since he was a Priest, he must be constituted such by another Appointment; and to act in a higher Sphere, and to far more noble Ends, than any of those Priests did or could do: *Who were made Priests, after the Law of a carnal Commandment, and not after the Power of an endless Life* {Hebrews. 7:16}, which Christ was. This is the clear, strong and conclusive Reasoning of the divine Writer in this Place. His Work, as a Priest, consists of two Branches.

(1.) To offer a Sacrifice for Sin. Offering of Sacrifice enters into the Nature of the sacerdotal Office; no Man can be a

Priest without it. Wherefore, as the holy Writer says, *it is of Necessity, that this Man have somewhat to offer*; otherwise he could not be a Priest. It was not required of him to offer Bulls, or Goats, or Beasts of any Kind, in Sacrifice, *for it was not possible, that the Blood of Bulls or of Goats should take away Sin*; by whosoever they were offered to God in Sacrifice. But it was expected of him to offer himself as a Sacrifice: His own Blood he must shed, his own Life he must resign, if he will answer the important Ends of his Constitution to this Office. He most freely consented to the Will of God, in this Matter, and agreed to become a Victim, a bloody Sacrifice for sinful Men; so great was his Love to them, and so intense was his Desire to save them. His Father's Pleasure, and his own voluntary Engagement to suffer, said him under an Obligation, not to be dispensed with, to die. *Ought not Christ to have suffered these Things, and to enter into his Glory* {Luke. 24:26}. He stood obliged to *lay down his Life for the Sheep*, by the Commandment of the Father, and in Consequence of his own free Promise. In dying he was a Sacrifice for Sin. For, the Sins of others were imputed to him. *The Lord laid on him the Iniquity of us all* Isa 53:6. *He knew no Sin; but was made Sin for us* {2 Corinthians. 5:21}. *He bore our Sins in his own Body on the Tree* {1Peter. 2:24}. The Charge on him of the Guilt of the Persons for whom he died, was prefigured by the Priest's Confession of Sin over the Heads of the Beasts, which were sacrificed under the Law. They bore it typically, only; but Christ bore it really.

Again, in Consequence of the Imputation of Guilt to him, he became liable to the Curse due to it, or obnoxious to Penalty. His Sufferings were properly penal, as all suffering under a Charge of Guilt, or in Consequence of an Imputation of it to any Subject, must necessarily be. And, therefore, he *was made a Curse*, or that Condemnation of the Law, which follows upon the Breach of its Precepts, was inflicted on him in suffering, in the Stead of Sinners and for their Transgressions: *Being made a Curse for us*. Farther, he endured the Displeasure of the Father, who, as a righteous Judge, was infinitely offended with Sin. The Sword, not of a Creature, but of God himself, was commanded to *awake* against and *finite* him. His Father, when he was mocked by wicked Men, and in Torture, and forsook by all his Friends, hid his Face from him, which affected and grieved him more, than all the other afflictive Circumstances, that attended him on the Cross. These Things clearly prove, that he underwent the Punishment due to the Persons for whom he died, and, therefore, we may conclude upon the Truth of the Particulars following, — That Guilt is expiated, or that *Transgression is finished, and Sin made an End of*, relating to those, Persons for whom he suffered. He *purged our Sins, or put them away by the Sacrifice of himself*: And, *hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified*. — That those on whose Account he died, or became a Victim, a bloody Sacrifice, are redeemed from Condemnation: *Who shall condemn it is Christ that died*. — That they therefore, shall not come into Condemnation, or

suffer Punishment: *Being justified by his Blood, we shall be saved from Wrath through him* {Romans. 5:9}. He has *obtained eternal Redemption, and made Reconciliation and Peace by the Blood of his Cry: Or by giving, himself an Offering and a Sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling Savour* {Colossians. 1:20}.

(2.) The other Branch of the Work of Christ as a Prier is, his making Intercession for us, which was typified by the Entrance of the High-Priest into the Sanctuary, with the Blood of those Beasts that were offered in Sacrifice, and sprinkling of it before the Mercy-Seat. Our blessed Lord *is not entered into the holy Places made with Hands, which were the Figures of the true; but into Heaven itself, now to appear in the Presence of God for us* {Hebrews. 9:24}. He is a Priest *upon his Throne, or in his exalted State, and ever lives to make Intercession for us.* As Christ was our propitiatory Sacrifice, he is also *our Advocate with the Father.* And, as such he pleads our Cause, and will *thoroughly plead it.* For his Intercession is founded in Justice, and of Right he may expect to be heard and answered of the Father, in every Petition he presents to him in our Favor: Not only, as he has finished the whole of what was required, that he should do and suffer, to obtain eternal Redemption for us; but also, as his Obedience and Sufferings are an Equivalent for the Justification of our Persons, our Deliverance from Punishment, and the Fruition of Blessedness, and, consequently, we may most assuredly

conclude upon his *Ability to save to the uttermost*, from his *ever living* to intercede. His Intercession being founded on what he did and suffered while on Earth, it is limited to the Persons for whom he obeyed and suffered, who are the Elect of God. Hence the Apostle argues from the Intercession of Christ, the Security of the Chosen of God, without the least mention of any other: *Who shall lay any Thing to the Charge of God's Elect? It is God that justifieth, who shall condemn? It is Christ that died; yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the Right-hand of God, who also maketh Intercession for us* {Romans. 8:33-34}. Agreeably to this, our Lord when on the Earth, declared, that he prayed *not for the World*; but for those, *who were given to him by the Father* {John. 17:9}. And his Intercession in their Favor, as equal in Extent to the Merit of his Obedience and Sufferings for them.

What he merited, by obeying and dying, he has a proper Right to ask and his People may be certain that they shall receive. His Obedience to the Law merited their Justification, and all those Blessings of Grace and Glory, which are consequent upon their Justification before God, by the Imputation of his Righteousness. His Sufferings for them merited their Pardon, Peace, and eternal Redemption. And, therefore, our Saviour may demand whatever is necessary to their Happiness, he accordingly does. *Father, I will, that they also, whom thou hast given me, may be with me where I am, that they may behold my Glory* {John. 17:24. In Justice the Father cannot but communicate future Blessedness to them,

since Christ may claim it for them on the Foot of Right, arising from his Obedience and Death.

2. Our Saviour is the great Prophet of the Church. *Moses* speaks of him under this Character: *The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet, like unto me, from the midst of thee, unto him shall ye hearken* {Deuteronomy. 18:15}. He is very fitly qualified for this Office: For he was *in the Bosom* of the *Father*, and acquainted with all the secret Purposes of his eternal Love and Wisdom, and he hath declared his *Name*: Or his Grace, Goodness, and Sovereign Favor, and all the wise Counsels and Actings thereof. When he was in this World, he published the Will and gracious Purposes of his Father about his People, and their Security and *certain* Happiness upon that solid Foundation, in many of his public Sermons, which will admit of the clearest and most easy Proof. Since his being in Heaven, he has *given some Apostles, some Prophets, some Evangelists, some Pastors and Teachers*; the three former were extraordinary Officers in the primitive Church, whose Business it was to convey to Men the Knowledge of the divine Will, and to form the Saints into Bodies or distinct Churches, and to give them Direction in all Things relating to the Glory of God, and their mutual Edification: The two latter are ordinary Ministers, whose Work it is, to teach, feed, and guide Societies of *Christians* according to Rules prescribed in the New Testament for those Purposes. Besides, our blessed Redeemer sends his Spirit, to enlighten the Minds of his People, to comfort and guide them, in this State of

Imperfection, Danger, and Difficulty. *The Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation, in the Knowledge of him, enlightens the Eyes of their Understanding, and enables them to know what is the Hope of his Calling, and what the Riches of the Glory of his Inheritance in the Saints* {Ephesians. 1:17-18}. This internal Revelation of divine Truths, is necessary to be super-added to the external Revelation of them in the Word, in order to an Acquaintance with the excellent Nature, Importance, and Glory of those Truths: *For the natural Man receiveth not the Things of the Spirit of God, they are Foolishness to him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned*

(3.) Christ is the King, whom God *has set on his holy Hill of Sion: And he rules in Righteousness* {Psalms. 2:6; Isaiah. 22:1}. In this Character, he has conquered all the Enemies of his Church, Sin, Satan, the World and Death. In the Execution of this Office, he subdues the rebellious Hearts of his People, and makes them *willing* to submit to his Authority, as well as, to depend on his Grace, Blood, and Righteousness, *in the Day of his Power*. Again, he gives Laws to them, and demands a cheerful Obedience them to those Laws. Farther, he defends their Persons in all Dangers, and preserves his Subjects safe, though the Number, Power, and Malice of their Enemies are great. Once more, he confers the highest Honor upon them: For he makes them Kings, appoints unto them a Kingdom, and gives them Crowns of the brightest and never declining Lustre and Glory.

Upon the whole, it is evident, that Christ in all his Offices, acts for the Good, Safety and Happiness of his People: Or, that the everlasting Salvation and eternal Felicity of the Church, is intended in the Mediation of Christ; and that it is effectually secured in the Execution of his priestly, prophetic, and kingly Offices, in Subordination to the Glory of the divine Persons and divine Perfections. Who that discerns the Importance and amazing Glory of this Constitution, and seriously considers how rich Grace, infinite Wisdom, Justice, and Holiness, Truth and Faithfulness illustriously shine herein, to the Amazement of Angels, and the everlasting Joy and Rapture of the Saints, who I say can forbear saying as *Witsius* does?

These are the tremendous Mysteries of our holy Religion, kept secret in Ages part, but now made manifest by the Scriptures of the Prophets, according to the Commandment of the eternal God, published throughout all Nations for the Obedience of Faith. Hence the Divinity of the Christian Religion is evidently clear. What Wisdom of Men, what Wisdom of Angels, could devise these Things, that are so deep, so sublime, and in so high a Degree exceed all the Understanding of all Creatures? How does the adorable Wisdom of God, Justice, Holiness, Truth, Goodness, Philanthropy, here display itself, in finding, appointing, and completing this Method of our Salvation? How calmly a Conscience pressed with the Burden of Sin, may rest in such

a Surety, in such an Engagement? Here observing this Method of our Reconciliation, worthy of God, and safe and secure for Man. Who that contemplates these Things in the Light of the Spirit will not break forth into the Praise of the most holy, the most just, the most true, and the most high God? O! the Depth of the Riches of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God! O! the Mysteries which Angels desire to look into! Glory be to the Father, who provided, admitted, gave such a Surety! Glory be to the Son, who clothing himself with human Flesh according to his Engagement and Promise, so freely, so patiently, and so courageously died for us! Glory be to the holy Spirit the Revealer, the Witness, and the Earnest of so great Happiness! Be thou exalted, O Christ Jesus, true and eternal God, true and holy Man, and both united, and the Properties of each Nature preserved in a Unity of Person. We confess thee, we worship thee, we apply ourselves to thee, at thy Feet we lay ourselves, from thy Hand only we expect Salvation, thou only Saviour. We desire to be thy peculiar Portion, and by thy Grace we are, and shall eternally remain. Let the whole World of thy Elect know thee, acknowledge thee with us, and so by thee be saved. This is the whole of Faith, this is the whole of Hope, this is the whole of our Desire, Amen. Oecon. Foed. Lib. 2, Cap. 4.

I shall now attend to what Mr. *Foster* delivers on this most important and glorious Subject, which fills the Angels with Astonishment, engages their strictest Attention, and is an

eternal Spring of Comfort, Joy, and blissful Delight to the Saints.

1. He asserts, *That this Constitution, is not a Scheme entirely new; but that it is closely connected and interwoven with the essential Branches of the Religion of Nature.* *

* Vol. 4 of Sermons, p. 392.

Answ. This is not true according to our Principles, nor his own. Upon our Principles it cannot be true, for natural Religion, knows nothing at all of a Saviour, nor of Salvation, by the Obedience and Sufferings, or Mediation of *Jesus Christ*, and, consequently, not of Acts, of Faith and Hope in him, nor of Love and Obedience to him: All which are founded on his Person, Mediatorial Engagements: and Acts, and those precious Benefits we receive from him, as our only Mediator and Saviour. It is false, even upon his own Principles; for his Opinion of the Mediatorial Scheme, is so far from being a Revival of the Religion of Nature, that it is as base and wretched Corruption of it. Natural Religion teaches us perfect Love to God, and our Neighbor; and that moral Imperfection is displeasing to him, and subjects us to his awful Anger. Mr. *Foster* maintains,, that God, according to this Constitution, accepts, justifies, and rewards guilty Men, upon the Foundation of their own Works. — That he accepts of sincere Obedience, in the Room of perfect; which is not agreeable to the pure Religion of untainted Nature; but

it certainly is a great Depravation of it. In divine Revelation, natural Religion is delineated, and let forth in all its Beauties; and it superadds the Christian Religion to that. This *Gentleman* denies almost every Branch of the latter, and he gives a deformed Representation of the former.

2. The Author complains much of this Doctrine having been *grossly* misrepresented. — *God*, says he, *considered in himself, has been described as an Object of Horror, and absolutely inaccessible by his frail offending Creatures.* *

* Page 395.

And he dares to pass this bold Censure on that Description of God. *An unnatural Imputation, and most absurdly blasphemous.* *

* Ibid.

This is a Home-thrust, 'tis a daring Stroke. Let him see to it, how he will defend this *impious* Censure, in a certain Time to come. If it is not agreeable to the pure Nature of God, to approve of moral Impurity; it is no unnatural Imputation to describe him, as inaccessible by such as are the Subjects of moral Turpitude, in themselves considered. If it is an Act of Justice in God to punish and drive from his most holy Presence, those who sin against him; it is not Blasphemy to assert, that an *offending* Creature, as so considered, or in himself, cannot with Safety appear before the divine

Tribunal. And that it is a righteous Thing with God, to recompense Sin with Tribulation, a very short Time will convince this Person, and all other Men, who may doubt of it now. Thro' Ignorance, Self-Love, Pride and Prejudice, he and others, may at present flatter themselves, that an Appearance before the most holy, and the most high God, tho' they are Criminals, will not be attended with any Danger: But if they are not convinced of this Mistake, and *flee for Refuge* to the great Mediator, they will most certainly find it a dreadful, a fatal one. It would be infinitely less bold and presumptuous in a Rebel to insist upon it, that without Fear or Shame, he may approach the Presence of his Sovereign, tho' he has rebelled against his Crown and Dignity; than it is for sinful Men to stand upon it, that without Terror they may enter the Presence of the infinite Majesty of Heaven, notwithstanding their Rebellion against him. It is no Dishonor to God, to represent him as an Object of Dread and Terror to guilty Creatures; but it is a just Assertion of his eternal, infinite, and invariable Righteousness. He can't be just if he is not *a Terror to evil Doers*, as so considered.

He asks a very impertinent Question, and vainly flourishes and insults, as if he was militating against the most evident Absurdity. *Where, says he, can Access be had, if not to infinite Mercy?* *

* Page 395.

Answ. It is to God, as infinitely merciful and gracious, that guilty Creatures must apply with Hopes of Acceptance, and the Communication of Favors to them. What is undeserved; free Mercy alone bestows on the deservedly miserable. This is freely granted. But if he had put a Query suitable to the Point in Hand, it must have been this: May not rebellious Creatures hope for Mercy, without any Provision for the Honor and maintaining the Rights of Justice? If he proves any Thing to the Purpose, he must prove this; that divine Mercy may exercise itself, in Favor of sinful Men, without any Method taken to answer the Demands of Justice. This he has not yet proved, nor will he ever be able to give Proof of it. That is a Principle he begs and takes for granted, without so much as the least Attempt to confirm it, either from Reason or Revelation. As to what he says of *Men shewing Mercy to Offenders*; *

* Page 396.

it is Weakness in them, not to be able to exercise Justice at the same Time, that they extend Mercy to Criminals. It is a Weakness attending human Nature, not to be capable of supporting the Rights of Justice, when they show Clemency towards the Guilty. Wisdom, if it was in their Power, would always direct them to show Favor to Transgressors, in such a Way, as that the Authority and Sanction of their Laws might be fully established in doing it. But since that it is not in their Power, in all Cases, wherein Mercy is extended to Offenders;

they are obliged to act differently to what the Laws in Force direct, however just and equitable they are. Seeing it is the wisest Way, so to exercise Mercy, as at the same Time to maintain the Rights of Justice; it is reasonable to conclude, that God who is infinitely wise and just, will never be merciful to his guilty Creatures, but in such a Way, as that Justice shall not be obliged to give up any Part of its Right, or its Glory be in the least veil'd; and that he is capable of being clement and favorable to Offenders, in such a Way, tho' Men are not. He adds, *Or if the supreme Being be, in particular Cases, averse to all Commiseration; dare any inferior Being presume to intercede as a Mediator? To dictate Mercy to him, that it all-perfect; to attempt to make more compilable, to sooth, and mollify him into greater Benignity and Indulgence? If God be in himself, an unchangeable and unerring Pattern of every Thing that is right and fit; would not such a Mediator act an indecent, nay, an immoral Part? Would he not behave in a Manner unbecoming an intelligent Being, if he should sue for Mercy, any farther than God is by Nature merciful? **

* Page 396.

Answ. 1. If God was averse to all Commiseration, a Mediator would never have been provided. It was free Mercy, Goodness and Grace, that appointed Christ Mediator; to the End that Mercy might be glorified consistent with Justice, in the Pardon and Salvation of sinful Men. 2. Our Saviour in his

Intercession, does not intreat God to be more merciful and kind, than it is agreeable to his most merciful Nature to be, towards his guilty Creatures, in a Way of Justice. And since Christ became Mediator and Intercessor, as an Effect of divine Love and Goodness; it is not thought, that God is prevailed with, in Consequence of his Intercession, to shew Mercy, not having before a Disposition to exercise it. And, therefore, Mr. *Foster*, after his usual Manner, trifles most egregiously. 3. The Intercession of our blessed Lord, being founded on the Perfection of his Satisfaction; he asks for no larger and more extensive Exercise of Mercy, than consists with Justice; and, consequently, in his

Intercession, he acts no indecent and immoral Part; nor in a Manner unbecoming an intelligent Being. Nothing farther is asked of God, than he is inclined to bestow; and he is not desired to communicate his Favors, in a Way unsuitable to his own Perfections. And, therefore, our Advocate in pleading for us, fully supports his Character of righteous. *If any Man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous {1John. 2:1}. On the contrary, if any Circumstances could be supposed, in which the supreme Model of every Thing truly worthy and noble, might be imagines to be, essentially considered unpropitious and inaccessible; is it not undeniably certain, that the Mediator also ought to be inaccessible? Or can the Deity be degraded by the Exercise of Compassion, in the very same Case, in which the Mediator is exalted and dignified, by pleading for*

*Compassion? **

* Page 396, 397.

Answ. Tho' God is inaccessible by guilty Creatures, without a Satisfaction given to his Law and Justice for their Offenses; yet upon the Ground of the Satisfaction of Christ, he not only may, but he certainly will admit Sinners into his glorious Presence, and receive them to himself; for Justice itself directs to this merciful, kind and gracious acting towards them upon that Foundation. And, therefore, the Mediator may be addressed with Boldness and Freedom, by those for whose Sins he made Atonement, and the Father also may thro' him: *We have Boldness and Access with Confidence by the Faith of him* {Ephesians. 3:12}. Again, God is not degraded by shewing Compassion, consistent with Justice: None suppose that he is: Nor does the Mediator petition him to be kind to Sinners, at the Expense of his Righteousness. It would be a great Dishonor to our gracious and merciful Intercessor to imagine he does. Our Author concludes his negative Account of this Matter with saying, *must not our humble Supplications, even when they are offered thro' a Mediator, be ultimately presented to the divine Mercy? If so, it then necessarily follows, that the true Ground on which the Mediatorial Scheme was established, could not be, that God was in himself, either too terrible, or too resentful, or too inexorable, to be directly addressed and invocated.* *

* Page 397.

Answ. Prayer is directed to divine Mercy, as exercising itself on the Foundation of Christ's Atonement and Satisfaction; and, therefore, in a Way consistent with Justice. But God cannot be invoked by a Sinner, out of Christ, with any solid Hope of being heard, accepted and answered. Yet it is not the Mediation of Christ, that causes a Will in God to be kind and favorable to his People. The Constitution of Christ a Mediator, is the gracious Effect of an eternal Purpose in God, to shew Mercy to Sinners; and supposes a Will in him to save them, *prior* in Order of Nature to that Appointment. But the Mediation of Christ is the only Way, wherein Justice as well as Mercy can be exercised in their Recovery; which it became the infinite Wisdom of God to provide for the Vindication of, in this great Affair. And, therefore, tho' the Death of Christ did not procure a Will in God, to be reconciled to Sinners; yet, since he cannot without neglecting the Rights of his Justice treat them in a merciful Manner, except upon the Foundation of the Propitiation of Christ; it evidently follows, that God cannot be addressed and invoked by Transgressors out of him, to his own Glory, and their everlasting Peace and Happiness. Mr. *Foster* proceeds, positively, to give us an Account of his Opinion, in Relation to this momentous Subject. And, he says thus, *The true Christian Doctrine of a Mediator, the Substance of which is; that our blessed Saviour was appointed by the supreme Authority of Heaven and Earth, to reconcile apostate and*

rebellious Men (these are harsh Terms, but we don't often meet with them) *to their offended* (another hard Word) *Maker and Sovereign; and to be the Distributor of God's Favors to Mankind.* *

* Page 397.

Then he observes, *that it is probable, that Christ did not stand in the Character of a Mediator, till after his Exaltation,* (which is a *Socinian Tenet,*) and several Things to clear up this Appointment from some Objections, wherewith we have no Concern at present: Next he explains what is intended by ascribing Reconciliation and Remission to the Death of Christ: And says, *that it is the undeniable Doctrine of the new Testament, that the Death of Christ, was not intended to render the Deity propitious:* *

* Page 397.

None suppose it was, which I have before observed. — *The whole Use and Efficacy of it,* adds he, *springs from his appointing and declaring it to be an accepted Sacrifice.* *

* Page 401.

If it as so, then the Death of Christ in its own Nature, had nothing of a Fitness in it to atone for Sin: It was merely an arbitrary Act in God to appoint it to such a Use. It was not then in Reality a Sacrifice, or it was not so in itself, only God

accepted it as such. Than which two Particulars the *Gentleman* will never be able to express any Thing more false, and contradictory to the current Sense of the new Testament. Those Writings tell us, that *Christ is sacrificed for us* {1Corinthians. 5:7}. — That he *gave himself for us an Offering and a Sacrifice* {Ephesians. 5:2}. That he *put away Sin, by the Sacrifice of himself* {Hebrews. 9:26}. These Testimonies Mr. *Foster* contradicts, and confidently asserts, that it was no otherwise a Sacrifice, than by Acceptation. How trifling therefore is it, yea how absurd to observe, as he does, *that it is the express Command of God, to consider the Death of Christ, under the Notion of a Sacrifice.* *

* Page 402.

What? Are we commanded by God to consider, or account the Death of his Son to be that which in Fact it was not? A Sacrifice it seems his Death was not; but we are required by God himself to consider it a Sacrifice: This is ridiculous trifling indeed with sacred Things. Three Reasons are assigned for our accounting, by Virtue of divine Authority, the Death of Christ to be what it was not. 1. *That it might be a standing Memorial of God's being propitious, and inclined to pardon the Sins of Men — a Memorial coinciding with the almost universal Sentiment and Practice of the World (among whom Sacrifices were esteemed as an essential Part of Religion and likely, upon that Account to have a more certain and powerful Influence.* *

* Page 402.

Answ. What Fitness was there in the Death of Christ to be such a standing Memorial? None at all according to our Author's Opinion; it became so by a mere arbitrary Act of God, who would have Men consider it under the Notion of a Sacrifice, tho' it was not a Sacrifice. Again, the Death of Christ procured the Pardon of Sin in a Way honorable to the Law and Justice of God; and *in him we have Redemption thro' his Blood the Forgiveness of Sins*. Hence we read of his *purging our Sins, and putting away Sin by the Sacrifice of himself*. And, therefore, it is sinking the Death of our glorious Lord, to serve a very low Purpose, *viz.* to be a Memorial only of an Inclination in God to pardon Sin. Besides, would God meet with the Superstition and Prejudices of the World, who almost universally thought Sacrifices necessary to appease the offended Deity? Or in Compliance to this foolish Prejudice of Mankind, would he have the Death of his Son considered as a Sacrifice, tho' it was not so in Fact? Abominable, shocking and horrid is this! Was it becoming the Wisdom of God, so far to countenance the superstitious Fears and absurd Prejudices of foolish Men, (so Mr. *Foster* speaks) who thought that Sin could not be pardoned without Atonement? Was not this the ready Way to encourage them to retain that Prejudice to the Dishonor of the merciful Nature of God, who is disposed and determined, (as our Author thinks) to remit Sin without any Satisfaction

made to his Law or Justice? Farther, this seems to suppose, that if Men had not fallen into the absurd Opinion, of the Necessity of Sacrifices, we should never have been commanded by God, to consider the Death of his Son, as a Sacrifice. If it is true, that for this Reason, we are required to esteem the Death of Christ what it was not in Fact; the whole Gospel is a mere Fable, and unworthy of the Regard of Men.

2. *That it might be a standing Memorial of the Evil and Demerit of Sin.* *

* Page 402.

Answ. How comes it to be such a Memorial? Was there any Fitness in it to be such a Memorial, or to serve such an important End? No, it was merely an arbitrary Act in God, to appoint it such a Memorial. If Sin had been said on Christ, if he had suffered in the Room of Sinners, if in suffering he had been made a Curse, an Offering for Sin; his Death in itself would have been a full Evidence of the evil Nature and dreadful Demerit of Sin, and it eternally would be a fit Memorial of the vile Nature of it, and of the Punishment it deserves. Each of these Things is affirmed in the holy Scriptures; but neither of them Mr. *Foster* thinks is true.

3. *It seems to have been wisely appointed with this View likewise, viz. to supersede the Use of all future Sacrifices; which extending even to human Sacrifices, had been the most depraved and unnatural Branch of heathen Superstition.* *

* Page 403.

Ans. The Doctrine of the Necessity of the Death of Christ, who was a Person infinitely glorious, in order to expiate Sin, and make Atonement for it, greatly exposes the Folly of Mankind, in proposing to appease the Wrath of God by any Thing, which it was in their Power to offer to him in Sacrifice. Again, the Account given in the Gospel, that Peace is made by the Blood of Jesus, is a proper Foundation for Tranquility of Mind, and inward Satisfaction and Joy, tho' we are conscious of Guilt and great Unworthiness: And hence we clearly discern, that God as a righteous Judge requires nothing of us, in Order to Atonement for our Sins, and the Remission of them. That Christ, *by one Offering hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified* {Hebrews. 10:14}. This Scripture the Author dreadfully abuses, when he says, and, *therefore, that it, i.e. the Death of Christ, might the better produce this Effect, viz. superseding the Use of all Sacrifices; particularly, human Sacrifices, which was worthy the Case of infinite Wisdom and Goodness, we are expressly informed, that Jesus Christ hath by one Offering perfected for ever them that are sanctified.* The Sense according to Mr. *Foster* is this, the Death of Christ, tho' it was not in fact a Sacrifice, yet since Men, through a superstitious Dread of the divine Anger against Sin, have been persuaded of the Necessity of Sacrifices, they shall consider his Death, as a Sacrifice, that they may not hereafter imagine, that any other

Sacrifice, for Sin is expected of them. In the last Place, he compares the Sin of *Adam* and its Consequences to his Posterity, with the Death of Christ, and its Effects relating to Mankind; and very wonderful are the Discoveries he makes on these Subjects. 1. He observes, *That Death is a Misfortune, not a Punishment, to which the human Race became subject in Consequence of the Sin of Adam.* *

* Page 404.

Ans. Without Guilt none are subject to Death; if any are so, then Death is not the Wages of Sin, nor does it follow upon the Imputation of it; but in some Instances at least, it is inflicted without any Charge of Sin at all. Both which are false: The Apostle expressly asserts, that *the Wages of Sin is Death* {Romans. 6:23}. And he plainly supposes, that Sin is imputed to such as die, and that the Imputation of Sin is the Cause of their dying, when he thus expresses himself: *Sin is not imputed where there is no Law: Nevertheless Death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the Similitude of Adam's Transgression* {Romans. 5:13-14}. Again, the Loss which any innocent Person may sustain, in Consequence of another's Guilt is not of any Thing, which Innocency entitles to, because it is unjust to deprive a guiltless Man of what his Innocency gives him a proper Right to. The Children of a Traitor suffer Loss, in Consequence of their Father's Rebellion; but not of any Thing which Innocency entitles them to; their Right to their

Father's Estate follows upon his Right; the Father not preserving that Right in himself, by due Subjection and Loyalty to his Prince, he cannot convey it to his Descendants. Innocency, according to the Constitution of God in his Law, entitled *Adam* to Life; so long as he continued innocent, so long he was free from an Obnoxiousness to Death. And that Law which gave him the Head and Root, a Right to Life, on Condition of preserving his Innocency, could not subject his Descendants to Death, without a Concern in his Guilt.

For it is absurd to suppose, that one and the same Law, should ensure Life to the first Man, if he did not offend his Maker, and bring all his Posterity under a Sentence of Death, considered as innocent; and, consequently, since all Mankind are liable to Death, as an Effect of the first Man's Sin, the human Race must be chargeable with his Transgression, in the Sense of that Constitution and Law. So that Death is not a Misfortune only, but it is a Punishment in itself, and such it remains to all, who are not redeem'd by Jesus Christ, 2. *This Misfortune brought upon us by the Sin of Adam, is counterbalanced thro' Jesus Christ — by restoring Mankind to a Possibility of obtaining eternal Life.* *

* Page 404.

Answ. Will it be allowed, that the Sin of *Adam* brought us into any Danger of losing eternal Life? If this is granted, we

shall have more yielded, than we expected from this Person; tho' the Manner of his speaking does suppose it, yea, that it was lost; for that cannot be said to be restored, which is not taken away, or lost by some Means or other. But those for whom Christ died, or acts in the Capacity of a Mediator; are not only brought into a possible State of Salvation; but they are actually, completely, and eternally saved. He has put away their Sins; redeemed them from the Law's Curse; justifies their Persons; gives them a Right to Heaven; prepares them for the Enjoyment of celestial Glory; preserves them here in this World; and will render them consummately happy in the next. Farther, the Author, I suppose, means that God for the Sake of Christ will justify and reward Men with eternal Life, on the Foundation of their own imperfect Obedience, which is false, and it has been before disproved. 3. Mr. Foster apprehends, that the Things advanced are *a proper Explanation of* {Romans. 5:15, 18,21}. But he is grossly mistaken: For the Things advanced are not true; and, therefore, they cannot be a proper Explanation of that, nor of any other Part of sacred Writ. Besides, the Death of Christ is not there treated of; not a Word relating to it is mentioned in that Place. The Apostle in that Portion of Scripture, limits his Discourse to the Disobedience of *Adam*, and its Effects upon us; and to the Obedience of Christ, and the happy Fruits arising to us, from the Imputation of that Obedience, and our being justified thereby.

Nothing at all is said of his Death and Sacrifice; and, therefore, this Observation is impertinent; it neither serves to explain that Place, nor to confirm what he wishes to establish. 4. *His Death may be much more properly described as a Sacrifice, than any Offering of brute Creatures; which had no such Efficacy, viz. to render the obtaining of eternal Life possible to Men.* *Ans.* According to him, the Death of Christ, in itself, hath no such Efficacy, any more than they had. All the Efficacy spoken of, and that is not much, is of the Appointment of God; or it is the Effect of his arbitrary Pleasure; which is not only false, but absurd, as it seems to me. What Actions are in their own Nature, that they will for ever remain, no Appointment can alter them: And the Actions of an intelligent Being, cannot be attended with greater Worth and Efficacy, than is proper to the Nature of the Acts of such a Creature, by Virtue of any Appointment or Decree whatsoever. If, therefore, the Death of Christ, was not a proper Sacrifice, if it had not in itself, or in its own Nature, Efficacy to take away Sin, atone for it, and save Sinners, no Appointment could make it a Sacrifice, nor give Efficacy to it. 'Tis one Thing to say, that something is accepted in the room of another; and quite different to affirm, that the Thing so accepted, becomes and may be esteemed that very Thing which it is accepted in the Stead of. And to assert, that the Death of Christ, is to be considered under the Notion and Character of a Sacrifice, tho' it was not such, because God accepts it in the Room of a Sacrifice, is advancing a direct Absurdity. And the Death of Christ cannot

properly be called a Sacrifice, or an Offering for Sin, without an Imputation of Sin to him, unless he bore the Curse it subjects us to, and underwent the Penalty that Sin demerits; all which Mr. *Foster* denies: And, therefore, tho' he proceeds to say, *that the Phrases of our being redeemed by his Blood, and reconciled to God by the Death of his Son, must appear to have a clear and very emphatical Meaning*; they can have no such Meaning, that is agreeable to the Idea of Redemption, and Reconciliation, by the Offering of Sacrifice. It is mere trifling, to speak of the Death of Christ under sacrificial Terms; and explain away the Idea of a Sacrifice in Relation to his Death. How can it be a Sacrifice for Sin, without Atonement; without Reconciliation, and the Security of those Persons from Wrath and Punishment, on whose Account he became a Sin-offering? It is as rational to consider and esteem our Saviour a King, without his exercising any regal Power and Authority, as it is to consider him a Sacrifice in his Death, without his being made Sin and a Curse. I have considered what Mr. *Foster* objects to our Opinions; and what he offers in the Explication and Defense of his own, on various Subjects: And I hope, that our Sentiments are fully cleared of those Absurdities he imputes to them; and that the pernicious and dangerous Principles he advances, are sufficiently exposed and refuted. But that I leave with the Reader to determine, as he shall see Reason upon due Examination.