

design? I declare myself unable to discover, any thing like prudence or sound discretion in the affair.

5. Where is the *fitness* of a plan that has a limited foundation, a general provision, and an unsightly projection of parts; or a denial of utility to the provision? Election strikes the limits of mercy's building, redemption makes the provision, and calling-grace carries up the edifice. Now, if we have a general redemption, we must have either a superstructure much larger than the foundation, or else a great deal of the provision will be useless. But then, where is the *fitness* of such a plan? Do not a limited redemption, and an efficacious call by the power of the Holy Ghost answer much better to the doctrine of election, and seem much more analogous to the idea of a building?

THE WILL OF GOD.

My thoughts on this attribute shall be condensed into as small a compass as the nature of the subject will admit. I consider the following positions as fundamental principles in the scheme of religious theory.

Position 1. *Jehovah must be a self-determining being.* We cannot conceive of a being possessed of all possible perfection, without allowing him to have the attribute of self-determination; and that in the most *absolute* sense.

Position 2. *A being absolutely self-determining, must be as absolutely independent.* He can depend on no being, nor be under any obligation to any being whatever; because they all borrow their existence of him, and draw their supplies from him.

Position 3. *A being absolutely self-determining and absolutely independent, must possess an absolute liberty of WILL.* By an absolute liberty of will, let me not be understood as supposing that his will has the liberty of opposing his other attributes in their respective exercises. I mean no such thing. But I mean to assert, that whatever is done, he either does or *permits* to be done most freely.

Position 4. *This WILL must be unlimited and active.* His will must be like himself, and as he is infinite and

active, his will cannot be limited and passive, because that would introduce disparity and incongruity among his perfections.

Position 5. *His will must comprehend all things that do exist, ever did exist, or ever will.* Without admitting this we cannot maintain the infinite activity of his will, because it is impossible for a thing to be infinitely active, without embracing or surrounding every existence in every period and place.

Position 6. *His will must be unchangeable.* If he could in any instance change his will, it must be either to prevent or create unintended existences, or else to give a new disposition to those existences with a view of producing a new train of events, differing from his original design either formally or substantially. We should then be brought to this alternative, either to admit that his will is *capricious*, or else contend for *Divine ignorance*. If we allow the former, we strip him of every lovely appearance, and render doubtful the safety and happiness of the very elect both on earth and in heaven. If we plead for the latter, we destroy his character and our own confidence; for it is impossible that we can put any faith in either the policy or the promise of a being, who, unable to form a plan free from defection, is under the necessity of shifting and altering his measures day by day. But if he is infinitely wise, and knows no levity of purpose, he must be immutable and invariable in his will. The former will be granted, and the latter is demanded.

Position 7. *The will of God is omnipotent.* His will is a representation of himself, and cannot be impeded, diverted, or destroyed. His will is not governed by strength, but his Almighty power subserves his sovereign and unbending will. He can will nothing but what is consistent and right, and therefore we may rest assured that unmeasured power will lend all its energies to render his will effectual. His will is clothed with omnipotence.

Position 8. *Whatever comes to pass must be the result of his will.* A will that is infinite, active, and effective, must will the existence of all that breathe,

of all that is, and of all that can be. If he did not will their existence, they must either exist against his will, or else his will must be in a state of quiescence, and the Almighty himself unconcerned respecting men and their affairs, and consequently his own concerns likewise. But a quiescent will and a careless God sound rather oddly in sound divinity. The truth is, there is not a single thing in the whole universe of affairs, but what exists "according to the good pleasure of his will." "*Thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.*" Rev. ix. 11.

Position 9. *Every thing in nature, grace, and glory, owes its order and disposition to the divine will.* The volitions of the divine will are neither capricious nor incoherent. There is order and disposition, as well as act and volition. The Divine Being can no more will things *disorderly*, than he can *arbitrarily*; I mean without any reference to right or wrong. Time and place, modes and circumstances, enter as much into the divine will, as the consideration of right and wrong. "*He doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him what doest thou?*" Dan. iv. 35. *He doeth*; there is the act that developes: *according to his will*; here is the rule by which he works: in the army and inhabitants; there are the creatures among whom he displays his eternal power and Godhead: the army of *heaven* and the inhabitants of *earth*; there are the *places*: none can stay his hand; there is his *efficiency*: or say unto him what dost thou? there is his righteousness and majesty. In fine, "*Whatsoever the Lord PLEASED, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and in all deep places.*" Psalm cxxxv. 6.

Lastly. *His will must be WITHOUT A CAUSE.* Whatever is the cause of every thing, cannot be caused by any thing. Nor can the volitions of the divine will be caused by any exterior action; because the divine will can no more be wrought upon than his divine nature, seeing his will is himself willing. All without himself is *time*; could therefore any thing out of himself

produce volitions in his will, they must be things in *time* effecting eternal acts, or things in time producing acts in eternity; that is to say, before those things had any existence; for we cannot suppose that God wills any thing in time which he did not will in eternity. His will is eternal, and so are all its acts; and whatever is eternal must be without a cause originating in time.

From these positions it will be seen, first, *that the whole scheme of salvation drawn by the hand of omniscient wisdom, stands for ever fixed in the divine will.* “Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight,” must be our language whenever we are privileged to contemplate the plan of endless mercy and redeeming merit.

Secondly. *The self-determining will of God must immutably fix the everlasting state of all the guilty descendants of a guilty head.* This may appear to be a startling consequence, and to many, no doubt, is too true to be pleasant. But the propositions support it, Jehovah himself declares it, the bible establishes it, and I believe it, therefore have I thus spoken. His will was the same in eternity as it will be at the judgment day, “and whosoever’s name is not found written in the book of life, will be cast into the lake of fire.” Rev. xx. 15. This puts the question beyond a doubt, that no more will be saved than are written to eternal life. And that they were written in the book of life before they were called by grace, before they were born, or before the world was made, is a point most satisfactorily proved by the same beloved disciple, when depicting the attractions of papal splendour in chap. xvii. 8. “*And they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were NOT written in the book of life FROM BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD.*” It was a prediction which fell from the lips of him in whose mouth no guile was found, that there should arise false Christs and false prophets, that should show signs and wonders to seduce, *if it were possible, even the elect.* Mark xiii. 22. This evidence which cannot be contradicted, establish one grand point in this enquiry, namely, that there is a certain number of

mankind whose names were enrolled in heaven before the foundation of the world, and will be honourably and gloriously saved from everlasting wrath to the praise of the glory of his grace.

O may my name recorded be,
 In that eternal place ;
 That I with joy thy face may see,
 And sing redeeming grace.
 This, this shall end the painful strife—
 My name within thy book of life.

On the other hand we are assured that there are some who were before of *old ordained to condemnation*, Jude 4. Now the ordination of some to eternal life and some to eternal death, must be by his willing or determining their eternal states. Suspending all enquiry for the present into the *justness* of such determination, the fact appears plain.

3. *The numbers of those who are saved and lost will exactly agree with his will.* The elect were eternally predestinated according to his *will*, Eph. i. 5. eternally sanctified by his *will*, Heb. x. 10. spiritually begotten by his *will*, John i. 13. James i. 18. They obtain forgiveness by his *will*, Rom. ix. 18. Practical sanctification is promoted by his *will*, 1 Thes. iv. 3—v. 18. The Holy Ghost distributes his gifts severally as he *will*, 1 Cor. xii. 11. The gospel is the mystery of his *will*, Eph. i. 9. Intercession is made for them according to his *will*, Rom. viii. 27. Their confidence at a throne of grace in being heard and supplied, arises from the conformity their petitions bear to his *will*, 1 John v. 14. Our perseverance is owing to his *will*, for it is God that *worketh* in them both to *will* and to do of his own *good pleasure*. Phil. ii. 13. In short his *will* runs through the whole of our salvation; and considered as one comprehensive whole, salvation is the “MYSTERY of his WILL.”

Now if the number of the elect cannot be augmented, it follow by just consequence that the number of those who will be lost cannot be diminished. It will be found at the last day that there will be just as many saved as God willed to save, and just as many cursed as were appointed to condemnation. “*God*, (says the

apostle) hath not appointed us to wrath, (as the consequence of sin) but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ," 1 Thes. v. 9. A plain indication that there were some who were appointed to wrath though *they* were not; or the apostle could not have urged the appointments of God to eternal salvation as a particular favour, in order to stimulate to a line of conduct, by which they were to be distinguished from those whose conduct was disgraceful and disgusting. Now the appointments of God are nothing more than his *willing* things to be. And respecting the agreement of the wicked with his will, it is said, that "God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will and to agree, and give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled." Rev. xvii. 17. Why did not Pharaoh emancipate the children of Israel? because the Lord hardened his heart. Why did not Hophni and Phineas hearken to the voice of their venerable father when gently reprov'd for their conduct? it was because the Lord would slay them, 1 Sam. ii. 25. Moses sent peaceable messengers out of the wilderness of Kedemoth unto Sihon king of Heshbon, to negotiate with him for a passage through his dominions; but the king rejected the propositions, dismissed the messengers, put his army in motion, passed the frontiers of his own kingdom, and gave battle at Jahuz; the battle was to his disadvantage, for he was defeated, his army dispersed, his territories invaded, and his whole land possessed by the successful Israelites. But how came this about? Let the dying historian, the Jewish lawgiver and the man of God declare,—“Sihon, king of Heshbon, would not let us pass by him, *for the Lord thy God hardened his spirit and made his heart obstinate*, that he might deliver him into thy hand, as appeareth this day.” Deut. ii. 30. This, let it be remembered, is the language of one of the greatest proficient in science, politics and divinity that ever existed—it was the language of the concluding part of his life, which was made up of many visits from God, much fellowship with him, and a progressive acquaintance with his will both political and divine. He is

styled, by way of eminence, "the man of God," and could feel no opposition to his law, nor have any design to libel the Divine Being. Yet he declares that God hardened his spirit, and made his heart obstinate, which was the reason of his hostile conduct. I do not suppose that God *actually* infused an hardening principle into his soul, but that he so ordered circumstances that they operated upon the latent principles of evil, which made him regardless of danger and destitute of the fear of the Lord. And as it respects the moral and eternal condition of sinners, there always was, is, and will be, some whose eyes are blinded that they cannot see, and whose hearts are hardened that they cannot repent, nor be converted unto God. See Isai. vi. 9. John xii. 39, 40. In a word, respecting eternal life, it will be clearly seen in the great day of the Lord of Hosts, that the election have obtained it, and the *rest* were blinded. Let not Arminian minds content themselves by merely disclaiming against these things, but let them show by sound reasoning on the divine will, that it is even *possible* for it to be otherwise. The principles which I have laid down, and the remarks which accompany and follow them, though they may be despised and disputed, will never be *destroyed*.

But, now to the grand *apex*; can offers of grace and general invitations consist with the will of God? I say no: it is impossible, absolutely impossible. It is a clear case that God has not willed the salvation of any but his church, but that he has negatived their salvation by most justly determining their condemnation, which will be executed upon them in righteous displeasure for their sin and rebellion against him. Now I ask how can the Almighty Jehovah make an offer of salvation to those whom he has consigned in his appointment to everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from his holy angels?

1. *It would divide his will against itself.* If his will is from everlasting, and I have clearly proved that it is, he must will the condemnation and the salvation, of one and the same individual at one and the same time. A person whose senses are distracted might act

thus, but then his will would be of no importance. But God forbid, that we should impute such things to him. The division of his will, would be its total overthrow, and it would effect its own destruction in its own volitions. And this must be the case if an offer of salvation is made to the reprobate part of mankind. There are no means of evading this conclusion but by overturning the ten positions at the commencement of this article; which will be to resist and overthrow the will of God itself. Even "men of renown," had better walk upon thistles bare-foot, or handle nettles without gloves, than to come in contact with the sovereign and inflexible will of the Almighty. It is hard to kick against the pricks.

2. *Supposing that a divided will could continue, offers of grace would destroy its ACCURACY.* They are said to be born of the will of God—the Son quickeneth whom he will—of his own will begat he us, &c. I have already remarked that every thing that can exist in any form, time, dispensation, &c. are unalterably fixed by the will of God. (See Position 9.) Consequently, time, manner, circumstances, means, and every thing belonging to the conversion of those who get to glory, are all willed, foreknown, and fixed in the great plan of God. But if there is any discrimination in his will, it must stand in the way of offered mercy and general invitations. For if an offer of grace is made to mankind upon the condition of their faith and repentance, it must suppose that they are at liberty to either reject or accept it. And if so neither the number nor the individuals of them that are saved, can be known until the quick and the dead stand before the judgment seat of Christ; what then must become of his will? And if they can accept or reject at one time just as they please, of course they can at another under the same or similar circumstances; and supposing that a sinner who had sat and heard grace offered to him for fifty years before he should take it in his head (for it seems that there requires nothing to be put into the heart) to accept the offer by performing the conditions on which it turns, I ask could he

not have received it fifty years before? Had he not the same ability to perform the conditions at first as at last? The man might according to this principle have been born fifty years sooner if he pleased, or at any other intermediate period; or he might have deferred it longer; nay, he might have died unconverted and been damned to all eternity. Now it is plain from this case, that all accuracy and steadfastness in the will of God is out of the question. Men are born when they please, and most probably we shall hear of people dying only when they think proper. Descartes was such a consistent freewiller that he is said to have been in the habit of abusing to no very sparing degree, any of his friends who might happen to die before they desired; urging, that man was a *self-determining being*, and therefore, could not die except he *determined upon it!!!* The scheme of offered grace is to all intents and purposes *opposed* to the *will* of God. And the question seems to be this—is God's will to be governed by the creature's, or the creature's by Jehovah's? Whether the former or the latter is the most reasonable, let reasonable men judge. Should it be said, that 'though grace is offered, and men without distinction are invited to come, yet God must regenerate the heart, and enable them to come. I answer, are you sure, that if God must do the work, he has not a *set* time to do it in? and are you sure that he who formed them will have mercy on them? His will is again out of the affair, for he is bound by consistency to regenerate every one to whom the offer is made, without any regard to the eternal solicitations of his will—whether he designs their salvation or not.

Beside, the offer loses all utility, for if an offer is made on conditions which only God can fulfil, what effect can it have? Can it save them? No. Can it inspire them with any spiritual feeling? Impossible. Can it hasten their new birth? Ridiculous. Can it humble the proud heart, and display the sovereignty of grace? It can do no such thing. What then can it do? O! it prevent sinners from despair! Wonderful! And so God's will is to be prostituted, the covenant of grace destroyed, the doctrines of the gospel concealed,

and the mercy of God misrepresented, to keep ungodly sinners out of despair!!!

Compose yourselves, my dear sirs, there is no ground for the alarm: sinners in a state of nature, are in no danger of despairing about the salvation of the cross; and when any are awakened to a sense of their moral condition, the gospel unfolds all its beauties to meet the eye, touch every tuneful chord to charm the ear, and unlock all her stores to fill the soul. It is free grace, and not offered grace, that can keep a sin-burdened soul from despair.

Where is either the efficacy or propriety of your scheme, if there is a settled order of things, and if God must do the work? and where is your own consistency? You must either studiously conceal the will of God, or else you must be driven to the pitiable necessity of contradicting yourselves. You must tell your hearers, that the will of God is sovereign, eternal, active, absolute, unlimited, efficient, &c. That all things proceed from his will; are regulated and governed by his will—that all divine appointments or purposes arose out of his will, and that he has willed some to life, through Christ, and appointed others to death, as the reward of their transgression. You must tell them, that all whom he has willed to everlasting life, must be called, pardoned, &c. according to his will: and that, as his will cannot be resisted, the rest are justly permitted to live in their sins, and die in their guilt. Your conflicting system will oblige you to observe further, that God has in *great wisdom* and goodness, made a tender of salvation to all, whether elected or not, by which they all may be saved if they will—that God is willing to save them, if they will but be saved by him; and that he has richly provided for their everlasting interests, by offering to them the felicities of eternal glory.

But how will this agree with the language of our Lord, when he said, “I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight.” And, with the apostles, when he said, “God

the Father had blessed his people with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus," &c. How can these things be reconciled? And to make the inconsistency more glaring, you must tell them that they have neither will nor power to perform the conditions; that this is God's work, and that it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy. Will not your intelligent hearers exclaim, 'where then is either the use or propriety of offering us grace and glory, if we are unable to fulfil the conditions, and if a given number is only to be saved?' 'O but we tell them, that if they do but ask of God, he will give them strength to repent and embrace the offers of mercy. If they seek, they shall find; and if they knock, it shall be opened to them.'

So then, they are to go to God, and say

" An unregenerate child of man,
To thee for faith I call."

Wesley.

The principle is still defective, because it militates against the will of God, and destroy the nature and fitness of things. *It militates against the will of God;* for if spiritual mercies are to be guided by the exercises of natural principles, and every person possesses ability to exercise those principles or faculties, who will be saved and who will not, will be still unknown to God, till mankind are cut off from the face of the earth. God's will is again shut out, and the creature's will, all in all.—*It destroys the nature and fitness of things;* for there is no propriety in supposing that natural things are to be either the cause or the means of spiritual favour. It is more proper to suppose that the Holy Ghost plants a principle of spiritual life in the soul, and that this new life breathes, thirsts, move, seek, love, fear, hope, &c. than it is to suppose, that natural, sinful, debilitated man, can produce them from his own *treasures*, and by his own materials. Golden oil fill golden lamps *only*, and that by the means of *golden pipes*.

'But could he not will them to believe when they please?' Certainly not. At least, not in the sense in which the objection views the subject. Because that

would leave things in a state of *uncertainty*. And an uncertain plan would be an imperfect one; an imperfect one would be unworthy of his wisdom and a disgrace to his character. Absolute certainty can arise only out of immutable fixation; and unalterable fixation can arise only out of his will. Uncertainty in a plan is a defection in that plan; a defection in God's plan is a defection in his will, because he formed his plan by his will; a defection in his will is a defection in himself, because his will is himself willing; and a defectible being cannot be God. Thus are we solidly landed upon the *quagmire* of atheism, which is the necessary conclusion not only of the system called Mr. Fuller's, but of those known by the name of Baxter's, Wesley's, Arminius's, Pelagius, and others.—N. B. I do not mean to insinuate, that either these men or their followers were atheists: many of the two former classes were and are very blessed men of God; spiritual minded, humble, active, communicative, and useful; but I mean to assert, that such is the *just consequence* of their respective creeds.

‘But could he not will things to exist, as he foresaw they would be the result of voluntary actions?’ By no means. For that would be like looking for a system of certainty professedly founded upon capricious principles. Besides, that would bring his will under the government of contingent circumstances and events. And not only so, but it would make the volitions of the creature's will the *cause* of divine purposes. For according to this principle, God could will nothing but what his creatures pleased. He could not have willed what he did, had not his creatures have chose to have acted as they have and will, and had they have thought proper to have acted otherwise, he must have willed accordingly. In short he could not know how self-determining beings would act, and therefore Mr. Watson, the Wesleyan, was perfectly consistent with his creed in saying there is after-knowledge, and new ideas with God as there is with us! But this divests him of all volitive power, and render his will entirely dependent on the will of his creatures. Now a dependent

being is a created being, a created being is an originate being, an originate being is not eternal, and a being not eternal cannot be *God*. We are again arrived at the same unhappy conclusion, a conclusion as *just*, as it can be *painful*. And it is easy to see, if we keep in view the attributes of God, and particular his *will*, wisdom and sovereignty, that universal redemption, offers of grace, rejection of grace, falling from grace, and all the whole family of errors, guide us to the same awful terminance. Very mercifully however, for popular men, their hearers seldom indulge in such dry *speculation*, they hear the gentlemen and like them well; but leave the thinking part to those who have nothing else to do, and find great difficulty in sleeping. Of how many professors may it not be said, Ye hear, and “ye worship ye know not what!” John iv. 22. I know of only one more plea that can be used in favour of offered mercy, which plea I will state in all its parts, and meet in all its force; it is this, ‘His will of precept may differ from his will of purpose, and yet not be contrary: what more inconsistency can there be, in supposing that he offers salvation to those whom he intends to damn everlastingly, than in supposing that he commands men to do one thing by his law of precept, and yet determined upon their doing another by his law of purpose?’ *Answ.* Much every way. For,

1. *God can command nothing of his creatures but what they had an original capacity to render.* Man was originally furnished with a capacity of obeying in every relative point of view, the law of the Lord his God. True, sin has shrivelled up his capacity, though his relation and obligation remain the same. But with regard to performing the conditions by which offered grace is only to be obtained, he never had the capacity, nor never will, except it be freely given to him of God.

2. *Whatever capacities God may endow his creatures with, he must afford them an opportunity of exercising those capacities.* Now if Adam possessed the capacity of believing spiritually in Jesus Christ, how was it that he had not an opportunity of exercising

that capacity? Before the fall he had not the object, after the fall he had lost the capacity, supposing him to have ever possessed it. We must therefore either admit, that Adam had not the capacity for spiritual acts like unto a regenerated person, or else we must content ourselves with believing, that God endowed his creatures with capacities, for the exercise of which he was either unable or unwilling to afford them an opportunity. In short, we must believe that he furnished man with endowments by no means adapted to the dispensation under which he was brought into existence! When therefore the holy law of God require men to perform that which under present circumstances is impossible, the justice and consistency of his character is preserved, because they were once in circumstances which enabled them to obey his law perfectly. But when he offers everlasting things on conditions which under no dispensation they were ever able to perform, the consistency of his conduct is placed in a very questionable point of view, and his government trembles to its very base.

3. *When he commands his creatures to obey him, however his secret will may run counter to his revealed, he commands nothing but his RIGHT.* This is clear. But when he offers them everlasting mercies, he offers, first, what he could not grant supposing the condition could be fulfilled. When I say he could not give what he offers, I mean considering the unchangeable constitution of the plan of grace. For, 1. he never designed their salvation. 2. As such he never provided for it. 3. Therefore he has not what he pretends to have, supposing that offers of grace are true. 4. The addition of one single individual to the family of grace would derange his counsels and institute a new order of things.

If it is their duty to accept the offers made, by what law is it required? not the law of innocence. For, 1. That is the *ministration of death*, whereas this would make it the *ministration of life*. And if so where are we to look for the difference between law and gospel? 2. How can the law condemn and hold out a pardon

at one and the same time? how can it stop a man's mouth, and yet command him to cry for mercy to receive mercy, &c. Now if it was not the law given in innocence what law could it be? when was it given? and how came it to pass that a law should be introduced which bore no relation to the faculties of those it was intended to govern? The design of God's law must be to govern the energies of his creatures; but how he could introduce a law where there are none to govern, and then damn them for disobeying that law, is a problem that I think admit of no very easy solution. Man when he breaks the law of God, breaks a law that he had in innocence, was capacitated to obey, and is still held to obligation by it. There is therefore no inconsistency in asserting, that God command his creatures to do that which is right, though he permits them in many instances to do that which is wrong. But if he offers them everlasting favours, and punishes them for not receiving his blessings, he acts *unrighteously*; because, he condemns them by a law that was never adapted to them.

4. *Whatever is a law of command is a law of sanction, and therefore a penalty is threatened when the command is not observed.* If offers of grace are made to mankind, it is either their duty to accept them by fulfilling the conditions, or it is not. If the latter, then there is no resemblance between an offer of salvation and a precept of the law, and the conduct of his creatures is cognizable by no law whatever: this seems something like naked antinomianism. On the other hand if it is their duty, they certainly sin in not performing impossibilities, and the gospel instead of adapting itself to their miseries and condition, only opens fresh sources for irresistible guilt, and increase their damnation beyond conception. What he requires by his law he requires as his right from man as his creature, but man can continue to be his creature without an offer of grace, which offer can never be available to him, but which loads him with intolerable anguish—anguish incurred, not by despising the gospel, nor for disbelieving its contents, nor for refusing to

hear it preached, nor for neglecting to read it, but simply for not doing that which it was absolutely impossible for him to perform under any dispensation.

4. *The law of God have been perfectly obeyed by innocent man, and is partially obeyed even now, by sinful and sinning man.* But offers of grace have never been received, nor never will upon the ground of faith and repentance, as required of human nature in its lapsed condition.

5. *The law which God gave to his creatures was necessary, for without it he could not have displayed his authority, grandeur, &c. nor could he have maintained his independency.* But offers of grace are by no means necessary to support his authority, nor to reveal his majesty, nor to display his independency; indeed they seem of all things the least adapted for any such ends. His independency for instance is but ill displayed in fettering himself to the levity of his creatures; nor is his grandeur represented much more to advantage in beseeching, inviting, entreating, praying, &c. his creatures to have compassion on themselves and let him save them—in inviting all, gaining some and saving a few.

“ Sinners, turn, while God is near,
Dare not think him *insincere*;
 Now, even now, your Saviour stands,
 All day long he spreads his hands;
 Cries, *ye will not happy be*;
No ye will not come to me :
Me, who life to none deny ;
Why will ye resolve to die ?
 See the suffering God appears !
 Jesus weeps ; believe his tears !
 Mingled with his blood they cry,
 Why will ye refuse to die.”—WESLEY'S HYMNS.

The Divine Being is not exhibited in a very majestic situation in the above lines, and many others of the same import, where he is represented as being extremely anxious to save his creatures—stretching out his arms to embrace them—expostulating with them—telling them they will not come to let him save them—weeping and mingling tears with his blood, and though he made them to live with him and wants them to live with him, yet his designs are overturned, he is disappointed in his

end, crossed in his love, and grieved in his soul, while thankless man so far from accepting his calls and receiving his offers, never so much as deign to thank him for his kindness. Were such things predicated of a human being, we should certainly conclude him to be placed in very pitiable circumstances; and so far from regarding him as a wise and august sovereign, we should look upon him as some poor maniac, who had a comprehensive claim upon our pity and indulgence. Should it be said every person do not carry things to the same length; probably not, but the principle is the same in one and all. Offers of grace disrobe Jehovah of his majesty, and reduce him beneath the level of his creatures. He could not therefore introduce the system of offered grace and general invitations, with a view of displaying his perfections and saving his creatures. If the system does exist—it seems to be a mere excrescence, formless, dark, and useless. In a word, there is no resemblance between his law and offers of grace, neither in form nor principle. His law is a necessary representation of himself, offers of grace are not; this degrades his majesty, that displays his authority; the latter arise out of his perfections, the former has no relation to them; his law is the mirror of his attributes, but offers of grace conceal them. The former stands adapted to every dispensation, this is suited to none. As his revealed will contemplates the moral state of things, his will of purpose may differ from his will of precept; but as his holy law must command every thing that is morally right, and man possesses feelings and principles repugnant to his just commands, it will be clearly seen that his will of purpose is a will of permission, lending none of its energies to guide the mind from his revealed will. Nor do his will militate against itself, because the one is purely secret and the other clearly revealed. The latter is the rule of his creatures; the former is the rule of himself. But in the system of offered grace the case is very different; it is no secret respecting the appointment of those who are unpredestinated to life, for we are assured that they are appointed to wrath. A will

therefore, which points out damnation as *inevitable*, and yet represent salvation as *possible*, is a will composed of the most glaring contradictions.

THE OMNIPOTENCE OF GOD.

Offers of grace are, in my opinion, opposed to the power of God. They represent him as standing, knocking, waiting, and ready to save them, but that he cannot until they give him the opportunity. Thus Mr. Wesley expostulated with sinners :—

“ You whom he ordained to be,
 Transcripts of the Deity ;
 You, whom he in life doth hold,
 You, for whom *himself* was sold ;
 You, on whom he still doth wait,
 Whom he would anew create :
 Made by him, and *purchas'd*—why,
 Why will ye for ever die ?”

Surely if this is a just representation of the Deity, he must be very unhappy ; for it seems his ordinations are overturned, he is *crossed* in his love, and his creatures will do as they please, though contrary to his wishes !! He ordained them to be copies of the Deity, but they are of their father the devil, and the works of them they will do ! He sold himself to procure their ransom, and yet they will remain in slavery ! He waits on them to create them anew in Christ Jesus, but they will not suffer him !! He uses every form of persuasive entreaty, but all to no purpose ; they will not listen to the voice of the charmer though charming never so wisely ; but run heedless on in the downward road, and force their passage to the flames ! Now, what are we to think of sentiments like these ? Can we say that they agree with the scriptures, when rightly understood ? We cannot. Can we affirm that they correspond with all the perfections of Jehovah ? We can do no such thing. Can we be sure that they can be made to harmonize with *any* of them ? We cannot. Do they agree with his power ? Quite the reverse. But his intelligent creatures are free agents, and he will not act against his will.’ Allowing them to be free agents,
 1. It is a freedom only to that which is evil. Job xxi. 14.
 2. Their hearts are in a state of enmity against God.