

Rom. viii. 7. 3. It is impossible for moral suasion or moral instruction to reconcile the carnal mind to God. I Cor. ii. 14. 4. Divine omnipotence is always exerted to make them willing. John vi. 44. 5. This power will never be displayed toward any but the elect. Psal. cx. 3. Now if this is the true state of the case, which it undoubtedly is, why does he not give them the will? But if they had the will, they must have the principle of regenerating grace, and if so they must be new-created beings. This then is the sum and substance—God wants to save his creatures, but he cannot, because they are unwilling to be saved by him; and they cannot be otherwise than unwilling, seeing the moral condition of their minds is in a state of irreconcilable enmity against God, not being subject to his law, neither indeed can it be. If this is the rationale of religion, man is lost for ever. No person ever will, or can be saved, either in this world or the next.

‘But God does not display his power in a capricious manner.’ True, and one would think he could not act so. But if he wishes to save them, is not his power to be employed in accomplishing his wishes? Is it not said, “whatsoever his soul desireth even that he doth?” His wishes are either right or wrong. If wrong, he is a sinful being—if right, he must accomplish them. In either cases the scheme of general invitations, &c. must fall to the ground. ‘O but God does not *wish* to do any thing contrary to their will.’ Why then does he invite them? Man in a state of nature has no will to be redeemed, regenerated and made holy, and yet God is said to invite them to him, though they say, ‘depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.’ He wants to make them his epistles, but they will not allow him to write his laws in their hearts, nor his name in their foreheads. What is this but wishing to do something contrary to their carnal and fleshly desires? If God never does anything *spiritually* till men wish for it *carnally*, there will never be any thing done. The scheme supposes that the immortal and omnipotent God is perplexed, crossed, thwarted, and overcome by worms of a day, by creatures crushed before a moth. “Once hath God

spoken, twice have I heard this, that *power belongeth unto God.*" But according to this system it is of no use to him, he cannot use it to accomplish his wishes, nor to save his creatures. O wretched system! O miserable divinity! Arise, O Lord, thou, and the ark of thy strength, let thine enemies be scattered, while they that love thy name shall say continually, the Lord be magnified that hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servants. O send out thy light and thy truth, and let them guide me to thy holy hill; and all my bones shall say, Lord, who is like unto thee.

I notice one more objection—it is this: 'Every person do not stretch things to such a length, and a general offer of salvation imply no such extravagancies.' *Answ.* Though some people may not draw out their general principles in the same unthinking manner as others, still I contend, that any system so framed as to admit, and enforce offers of grace and general invitations, must be constructed upon the same fundamental principles; so that though there may be a circumstantial disparity, there will nevertheless be a substantial agreement. Thus, if God make an offer of grace to all without distinction, he must wish them to be all saved without distinction; and if so, he must have provision for them without any exception; and then he must wish that they may all enjoy that provision. To accomplish this, one would think he would employ his power so that they all should be saved, his perfections be glorified, his redemption realized, and all his creatures made eternally happy. But no! we are denied this conclusion; and because man is thought to be a free agent, the divine will and power must truckle to the independency of his creatures, and the whole government of God depend upon the meretricious volitions of the human will. But if Jehovah do really wish all mankind to accept the offers of grace so as to be saved by them, he must have *willed* their salvation; for he can never wish for any thing, the existence or accomplishment of which he has not eternally willed; and if he is a Being of eternal rectitude, he could will nothing but what was naturally and morally right; and if so, his power must

be employed to accomplish his will and wishes. And if they are not accomplished, it must arise from the insufficiency of his power by which he is unable to do what he *would*, and what he *willed*; and, like his creatures, is unable to do that which is right. Persons who plead for a general tender of mercy, must by necessary consequence plead for a *powerless* God!! And then, what comfort can we take, from the many exceeding great and precious promises? And what safety can there be in the everlasting arms? Such is the scheme which I am examining. Arminians and Wesleyans may amuse themselves with such a *feeble* Deity, but let not those who would be thought consistent preachers of the gospel, unite with them in such unworthy speculations by pertinaciously adhering to the system of offered mercy and general invitations.

THE GOODNESS OF GOD.

Much has been said about the goodness of God, by the votaries of offered grace, representing it as impossible for God to be good without offering everlasting salvation to all his rational creatures; and persons who have most justly and accurately considered offers of grace as an anomaly in the divine dispensation, and in consequence thereof discarded the system, have been loudly accused of entertaining views entirely repugnant to the goodness of God. But how if it should be made to appear, that the accusations are false, and may be justly retorted? This I pledge myself to do, or give up enquiry.

First. The goodness of God does not require an offer of grace and salvation to be made to all mankind. I presume every one will admit the distinction, between the *nature* and the *exercise* of divine goodness. It must be granted, that a state of things may and do exist, that may not oppose the *nature* of his goodness, though it may, in many instances, prevent its *exercise*. This must be allowed, or moral evil denied. It must be further acknowledged, that his goodness cannot be extended beyond the limits of rectitude and pro-

priety. I conclude this will be granted, because to contend for the idea would lead to a flat denial of his justice, and the accuracy of his measures. With these things in view, it is plain that a system which contemplate divine favour, as freely and sovereignly given to some without being offered to any, is by no means opposed to the goodness of God, but perfectly consistent therewith, and that too, both in its *nature* and *exercise*. In its *nature*, because it regards the source from whence all spiritual mercies flow, which source is infinite and eternal. Here, therefore, is a system which views the attribute of goodness in all its native extent and excellence. In its *exercise*, because they, and they only, are elected, redeemed and quickened. Divine goodness invested them with a right to glory, and effects their deliverance from sin and slavery; it provided their *Christ*, ensures their *call*, and preserves their *crown*. In short, it is exercised in all possible forms to all the elect in all places and at all times. The salvation of unnumbered millions is owing to his goodness, and is the result of the *good pleasure of his will*. It is hoped, that no person with such considerations can charge the system with hostile appearances to divine goodness, seeing it views the attribute in all the infinity of its nature, and in all that extent of exercise which justice and propriety can allow; which is more than can be said of any other system. ‘But it does not consider divine goodness as making provision for all its creatures?’ Certainly not. And must it not be a very extraordinary system that do? I think it must. For are not brutes and beasts his creatures? ‘Yes, but then we mean all his intelligent creatures who are capable of enjoying it through eternity?’ And are not fallen angels capable of enjoying it through eternity? Undoubtedly they are. ‘But they are God’s enemies!’ so are wicked men. ‘But he has determined to shew them no favour, and has appointed them to everlasting misery, according as it is written, the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.’ And has he not likewise determined

that he will shew no favour to many of Adam's race? and appointed them to eternal misery? As it is written, "he that made them will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them will shew them no favour." Isaiah xxvii. 11. And hence we read of ungodly men, who were from of old ordained to condemnation. Jude 4. 'But they were never redeemed;' nor were all the human race; for, "he gave his life a ransom for many." Now though all may be *many*, yet we cannot say with any propriety that many is *all*. The latter may involve the former, but the former cannot comprehend the latter. *All* may include *many*, but *many* cannot suppose *all*. If persons offer grace to all mankind because all intelligent creatures must have a chance of participating in his goodness, to be consistent they ought to send missionaries to the regions of fire and brimstone, or at least to contrive some plan to make them acquainted with the offers of mercy. 'O but they have no atonement.' But why did not divine goodness provide them one? 'They never deserved it;' nor did we. 'But they never desired it;' the same may be said of us. 'But it was God's sovereign will and pleasure that they should have no provision made.' True, and if he can punish devils for their sin and rebellion consistent with his goodness, why not man? If he could pass by *all* the angelic race that fell, why not pass by *some* of the human race? If he can consign all the fallen host of heaven to eternal misery without making any overtures to them, or any provision for them, and yet retain his goodness, surely he ought not to be considered as opposing it, when he makes provision for perhaps the major part of mankind, and actually confers grace and glory on a great number of every nation, kindred and tongue under heaven; a number which no man can number. When people can talk no more to the point, might they not as well remain silent? Surely it is as good policy not to say any thing as to say that which is *worse* than any thing. But,

Second. I will shew in my turn that offers of grace are inconsistent with divine goodness, and that the charge might be fairly retorted.

If offers of grace fail to accomplish their humane object, and instead thereof, become mischievous in their operations, they must be contrary to the divine goodness; but offers of grace do fail to accomplish the end proposed, and instead thereof, produce the most mischievous effects: therefore offers of grace must be contrary to divine goodness.

The end proposed by the offers of mercy and general invitations, is said to be the everlasting salvation of those to whom the tender and invitation is made. Notwithstanding which, it is acknowledged that there are vast numbers in eternal misery, who had offers and invitations made to them again and again; and that in consequence of such offers and solicitations their misery is most alarmingly augmented; or to use their own phraseology, they have a *hotter* place in hell than otherwise they would have had, provided no such offers and invitations had never been made. In these instances the design must have failed, and instead of effecting their salvation have increased the weight and rivets of their chains; or, in other words, have produced such mischievous effects as will be felt through all eternity. Now I ask, how can such a system be made to harmonize with divine goodness? Let me not be told redemption is general, the will is free, and men may be saved if they will. These and other things of the same nature, are mere figments and pitiable shifts.

2. *The system of offered grace must necessarily produce an infinite portion of mischief without effecting the salvation of one sinner. How then can such a system be consonant with divine goodness?* A Fullerite tells me that no more than the elect will ever be saved; and yet it is the duty of every man to be saved, and that they will be damned for not saving themselves by accepting the overtures of mercy, and which, by the by, is literally and absolutely impossible. A *methodist*, when pinched, will allow that divine power is necessary to regenerate a sinner. Now if divine power is necessary to regeneration, and the purposes of God according to election must stand, the system of offered grace must *necessarily* be of a most pernicious cha-

racter. Because on the one hand, according to Mr. Fuller's scheme, predestination presents an everlasting barrier against which no efforts however powerful and well directed, can ever be available. If it is said that no man will ever be disposed to accept the offers but those who are elected, I ask, why then are the offers made to any others? It can be with no other view than to increase the punishment of the non-elect. Because, 1. They are not *necessary* to convert the elect, seeing many of them have been called under a ministry where offers, &c. are never made. 2. Not to render them accountable creatures, because many people die without ever knowing any thing about offers of mercy, and no doubt will be found at the left hand of the judge, which is a situation they could not occupy without being accountable. 3. Nor could the system be introduced with a view of saving them, because he determined not to shew them any favor; and will say at the last day, I never knew you, "depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." 4. Nor could offers of grace be made with a view of *liquidating* their misery, seeing their obligation is increased, their items of guilt necessarily multiplied, and of course their misery is proportionately augmented. And if nothing can come to pass but what Jehovah has designed, it will follow by resistless consequence, that God designed increasing the damnation of those who perish in their sins by introducing a system for which there was no necessity. Not content with merely passing by them in election, and simply withholding *necessary* power from them, he seem bent upon multiplying their torments through all eternity. I ask, how can these things be consistent with his goodness? Can his introducing an engine of endless torture under the cloak of friendship, be a proof of his affectionate feeling toward those who are lost for ever? Is adding insult to injury an evidence of his goodness? Is his framing a system which in its operations must necessarily increase the agony of millions, a testimonial of his benevolence towards those very characters? Is this his goodness? and are these the people who charge

other persons' sentiments with repugnancy to the attribute of divine goodness, while their own system is confessedly opposed to the goodness of God? a system (themselves being judges) neither useful nor necessary. His purposes reject its *utility*, and his power destroys its *necessity*. The only possible use that it can be, is to increase the *damnation of hell*. Talk about Antinomianism surveying the wreck of the reprobate with savage satisfaction, here is a scheme which represents the Almighty as not contenting himself with passing by a great number of mankind and consigning them over to eternal perdition, but introducing a system defective in its very construction, destitute of adaption, deceptive in its appearance, extortionate in its claims, and cruel—indisputably cruel, in its operations. When such a system can be reconciled to the goodness of God, we never need feel any alarm lest his goodness should be obscured or opposed, by any creed professedly religious.

It is thought, that if many people were to examine their own form of doctrine, they would find more room to suspect the accuracy of their own views, and fewer reasons to reject those of some other people. But in the present day, it is no unusual thing for people to take up religious sentiments and trade with other people's faith, much in the same manner as business is conducted by other people's property. The creed of the one and the bills of the other, are alike objectionable; neither of them being equivalent to a single *denarii*.

But further, I will suppose my friendly disputant to be a professed Arminian or Wesleyan, who is disposed to charge the system I embrace with hostility to divine compassion and immutable goodness. I enquire, do the offers and invitations, about which you are so very noisy, increase men's obligation? 'Certainly.' Did such a law exist before the fall of man? 'Certainly not.' Is there then two laws? and if so, must not each of them be imperfect? 'It looks like it.' But can there be an imperfect law? 'Oh, no.' Then if there can be no imperfect law, and the law of offered grace has been introduced since the fall, must not the law of

innocence be destroyed? 'Unquestionably.' Then we have nothing to do with the original law of God? 'Why no, it seems not.' But how will you screen yourself from antinomianism? Neither you nor any body else can find a covert from the charge. 'O, but man's obligation is not diminished, but increased.' Indeed; but is not relationship the ground of authoritative command? 'No doubt of it.' Then the introduction of moral evil, I presume, changed man's relation as well as his condition? 'Oh, no,' say some. Then how could his obligation be increased? Here is the extreme point of methodistical polemics. His relation, say others, is altered. Where, and in what does the alteration consist? Did their fall produce *spirituality*? 'Quite the reverse; depravity was occasioned thereby.' Then a depraved situation gave birth to spiritual obligation, did it not? Now, either yea or nay. If the former, the grossest absurdity must stare you in the face; and if the latter, then no spiritual relation was formed, and therefore no spiritual obligation can possibly be imposed. The conclusion is, that the law of innocence and nature, sustains the attributes of perfection, and thus destroys the notion of another law which offers mercy upon impossible terms, and inflicts eternal punishment for not accepting the overtures by performing impossibilities. 'O but you are mistaken, man has a *free will*.' Do you mean to say that he is capable of determining the will to spiritual things? 'Yes.' Then what propriety was there in saying, "thy people shall be *willing* in the day of my *power*?" And must not our adorable Lord be deceived when he said, "the sons of God were not born of the *will* of the flesh." And must not the apostle have been sadly imposed upon when he said, "*of his own will begat he us*?" But perhaps the social term did not include *methodists*. Methodists may be born according to the dictates of their *free will*; but every one who has been taught the deep things of their own nature, and God's *sovereign* grace, will say with the apostle, "of his own will begat he *us*." If methodists are spiritually begotten, according to *their own will*, it is not the case with *us*, for we neither willed nor runned; it was of

“*his own will that he begat us.*” The work of God in the soul, and the continued tuition of the Holy Ghost, is one of the best arguments that can be used against all the varnish and tinsel of free will. James, the apostle, spoke from his own experience, which was consonant with the experience of those to whom he wrote. “Of his own will begat he us.” *Query. Could the us be methodists.* Must not James, and the twelve tribes whom he addressed, be calvinists? And if so, must not methodism be as diverse from apostolic sentiment as it is from calvinism? What will our arminian friends think, when they see their favorite James hand in glove with Paul and John—with Matthew, Mark, and Luke, who are allowed, to *rather lean* towards what is now called *calvinism*. And what must they think, when in stating their calvinistic sentiments and tracing their origin and effects, they addressed the great body of primitive christians in the language of social confidence; in such monopolizing terms as *we, ours, us*. One would imagine that the inference must be tolerably easy and powerfully convincing; for we must infer, that if the apostles were right in their calvinistic creed, methodism must be wrong, if at least it is another thing from calvinism; and if it is not, why are methodists so dreadfully alarmed and enraged at calvinism. Surely they are not frightened at their own creed. ‘But we think divine power necessary.’ *Necessary* for what? ‘To regenerate and make a man a new creature in Christ Jesus.’ But is not man’s power as capacious as his will? Let us have a straight forward answer; either yea or nay. If you put a negative on the question, you destroy your own system; if you answer in the affirmative, your affirmations are like rows of armed men, with their swords unsheathed to stab and cut each other through. Take the least of two evils, ‘man can do all that he will.’ Then if in a state of fallen nature he can will spiritual things, can he not will to be regenerated? No doubt. Then can he not regenerate himself? ‘No, but God will regenerate him if he is desirous of it.’ Setting aside the contradiction implied, then he can not only determine his own will but

Jehovah's also? He is not only the subject of self-government, but command the volitions of the divine mind likewise, does he not? 'O no; he only *causes* divine power to be exercised in his behalf.' But does God do any thing against his will? 'I should *think* not.' Then how can his power be governed without his will? Here is another of the unanswerables. I would ask further; if divine power is *necessary*, is it bestowed upon the condition of creature acts? 'God will renew them and save them if they repent and are faithful to the grace which is *given*.' But will my exercising faith and repentance render me a claimant? 'Most assuredly.' Must I do these things without divine assistance, or before I can receive his grace? 'To be sure.' Then he bestows his favors by the rule of human merit? 'No, no merit whatever.' Well, but if I do certain acts as the conditions of certain benefits, must I not be *deserving* of those benefits? and if I *deserved* them by doing, must I not merit them? 'Aye, but there is no merit, say what you will.' But by what rule of reasoning can it be shown that there is none? It must be by a sort of logic, perfectly original, and to common minds entirely unknown. But supposing (for the sake of showing a little more of the absurdity of the thing) we are saved by free grace, what sort of an article must free grace be? What is its definition? 'Why it is generally defined free favour—unmerited love!' Free favour, regulated by carnal performances!—Unmerited love, procured by willing and running!—Grace *given* after it is *purchased*!—Unmerited love bestowed by our deservings! Theological conundrums these, which but few persons will ever be able to comprehend; and people fond of such enigmas are in no danger of lacking amusement, provided they will but sift the system of offered grace and general invitations. Nothing else is necessary to overturn erroneous systems but free and sober enquiry. Pursue investigation, and you gain the *ne plus-ultra* of all that can be touchingly ridiculous in every human system.

All that can be made of the system after all its colourings and qualifications, is, that it never can of itself

save a single individual, but must increase the endless torture of blackness and darkness for ever. It contradicts the perfection of his law—opposes his attributes—contends with the freeness of his grace, and represents the Most High as employed in devising the means of increasing endless torment on those whom he has left to perish in their sins. He thus becomes the author of sin, and is guilty of *positive mischief*. Because, the scheme of offered mercy is connected with duties, the magnitude of which exceed the capacity of human nature. The very moment, therefore, that this law came into operation, that very moment the powers of the mind were crushed before its tremendous demand. Now it must be admitted that any system which seeks the aggravation of a sinner's torment, without effecting his ransom or designing his deliverance, must be a system broadly opposed to the justice, holiness, and goodness of God; and, perhaps, I shall not quit the premises of truth and sobriety if I say, it would be an atrocious libel upon the spotless character and glory of *independant majesty*. Now just such a system is offered grace; the more I view it the more I abhor it; and think is it possible that the advocates for such a scheme can clamour about calvinism as opposed to the goodness of God. Can such persons reject the views of others, because they are thought to clash with the goodness of God? But sovereign, certain, and efficacious grace, seeks the destruction of no one. It never injures where it does not benefit; and it never operates without benefiting. It breaks the chain of slavery, tear down the walls of confinement, binds up the broken-hearted, and comfort all that mourn; it elevates the low-fallen, frees the prisoner, clothes the naked, feed the hungry, and shield the defenceless; it breaks the arms of the oppressor, and let the oppressed go free. Immanuel is their wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and *redemption*; his grace renders them invincible, support them in trouble, and relieve their anxieties. It regenerates the mind, dignifies the thought, elevates the tone of moral feeling, subdues sin, reigns righteously, and will triumph most

gloriously. In a word, it discriminates its objects in eternity, singles them out in time, and will surround them in death. It calls them on the earth, and crowns them in the skies. And where is the injustice, cruelty, and tyranny of such conduct? I can see none. His goodness seems to run in every vein, and meander in every stream. Goodness is the gorgeous apparel with which his plan is clothed; it is the system which self-plumed persons abhor, but which God delights to honour, and of which he shall have all the glory. "Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name, O Lord, be all the praise."

Methodism is quite the reverse; true, it professes to call every one, but it makes nobody hear; it tells the slave he may be free, but never strikes off his chain; it tells the blind to see, but never open his eyes, nor anoint them with eye salve; it *offers* grace to every one, but *gives* it to never a one; it talks about life to the dead, but never infuses the quickening principle; it *pretends* to embrace all men, but *secures* not a single individual; it exhorts all men to fly, but never furnish them with wings; it talk about God's wishing, desiring, and longing to save all mankind, when, if their system is true, he has devised a scheme by which the furnace of perdition will be heated, not only seven fold hotter then that it would have been, but most probably above seven hundred fold. To be sure, it holds out the idea of heaven, but then it is by *improving* the grace of God, &c. In fine, it does nothing effectually that is worth doing, but acts injuriously. If a person talks about pulling my house down, in order to build me a more commodious one, he is entitled to my thanks; but if after he has removed the old one he neglects to build a new one, and I am obliged to sleep in the open air, he destroys my confidence and injures my circumstances. Now just such a system is methodism, it acts no longer than it can do mischief. If a person thicken my chain by *offering* me liberty, should I not be better without such offers? If his majesty was to commission certain persons to offer liberty to a colony of slaves upon impossible conditions,

and in case of their non-compliance, to punish them for their *obstinacy* by increasing the magnitude of their toil and the weight of their chains, what should we think of his clemency? Where should we look for his humanity and goodness? And what opinion should we form of those men, who applauded to the skies such revolting measures? Certainly we could not entertain a very high opinion of either his majesty's benevolence or his subjects intelligence: or if we admitted their intelligence, we must deny their integrity.

Apply this to methodism, and its claims to superiority must be abandoned. A little alteration would make it fit Mr. Fuller's system with great exactness. His majesty determines to save a certain number of his subjects from slavery and ruin, without any regard to merit of character; and indeed, their situation is such as supposes the entire absence of all recommendatory qualities. Now if he saves these without injuring the condition of others, his goodness is apparent, (this is the system that I embrace,) but if not, his goodness can only be determined by balancing the good conferred against the evil increased. Now though there might be a preponderance in favour of goodness, it is clear his goodness must be diminished in proportion as misery may have been extended. And further, if the means which embitter the condition of those to whom his majesty is unpropitious, is neither necessary nor available to the deliverance and welfare of those who are to take up their freedom, must not the introduction of those measures be derogatory to the magnanimity, compassion and humanity of their author? If he dispatch ambassadors to publish his royal decrees and open his rich designs, and thus effect his purposes, his goodness, mercy, sovereignty, justice, wisdom and prudence, are all exhibited, admired and adored. But if he authorise his ambassadors to make an overture of mercy to *all*, though he designs the benefit of only some, we should question the propriety of his measures, and consider the author as betraying symptoms of insanity, or at least weakness of intellect. We could not call it a plan wherein he had *abounded* in all wis-

dom and *prudence*. But if his general overtures increase their obligation, without proportionately enlarging their capacity for obedience, the measures become pernicious and unjust. If the public should be led to understand that his majesty knew before hand how such measures would act, and was fully aware that they were not needful to the accomplishment of his design in saving some, but must operate to the prejudice of many without benefiting any, and that nevertheless he determined to introduce it and persisted in continuing it, what would be the consequence? Why every virtuous mind would despise his conduct, and every independent pen would reprobate his measures.

Such is the system of Mr. Fuller, and such is the system of his followers. And yet these, with their Arminian brethren, are the very people who are so intensely anxious, to represent their system as so vastly superior to every other; when, in fact, it has nothing of the sublime, nor the beautiful—is destitute of harmony and proportion—adapted neither to the mind of man, nor the dispensations of free grace—is at variance with the wisdom and goodness of God—is disunited and powerless, effeminate and useless. It is to be wished that people would scrutinize their own systems with a little more severity, before they applauded them, or before they speculated upon other systems vastly superior to their own.

When Thales, the Melisan, broke his shins by falling over a stool, which a village girl had placed in his way, he was informed with philosophic coolness, that the design was to teach him the propriety of *looking at home*, before he turned his attention to star-gazing. Would it not be prudent for some of our general brethren to pay a little attention to their ill-constructed creed, before they pretend to investigate others much superior to their own? Should they, however, obstinately persist in their celestial speculations, without understanding the first rudiments of the science, they must not be alarmed, if now and then they meet with a few circumstances quite as disastrous as that of the celebrated philosopher's. At least, they ought not to be offended,

if while they are speculating upon the system of sovereign un-offered grace, and loading it with illegitimate and hateful consequences, some silly person or other should not remind them in no very agreeable manner, that they had much better examine their own creed before they interfered with the system of electing, redeeming, and efficacious grace; a system as much superior to their's as the furniture of the heavens is to that of an Irish peasant, or as the sublime science of astronomy is to the humble art of feeding chickens. If in short, they should be told to *look at home*. I mean no reproach by such comparisons, but merely to illustrate the honest conviction of my own mind.

THE SINCERITY OF GOD.

To show that the system of offered mercy and general invitations, is at variance with the sincerity of Jehovah, I submit the following considerations.

First. The love and displeasure of God are from everlasting. See Jer. xxxi. 3. Rom. ix. 11. If his affections are everlastingly the same, I want to know how he can offer to save those whom he has never loved, and be consistent with himself? If he everlastingly hated Esau, could he sincerely make him an offer of salvation? If, at the last day, he will collect all the objects of his love about him, can he be sincere in offering to save them whom he never loved, nor never can, except he is the Lord, and change *oft*. The thing speaks for itself.

Second. All that ever will be saved was chosen in Christ before the world began, and wrote in the Lamb's book of life. Now as none can ever get an interest in Christ, because their interest is prior to their own existence, how can Jehovah sincerely make an offer of mercy to those who are not in Christ, nor never will be? If he wished to save all to whom the offer is made, why not give them an interest in Christ Jesus when he placed his church within the circle of redeeming merit?

Thirdly. Jehovah is to be contemplated as eternally immutable. If he is immutable, he can never change

neither his appointments nor affections; and if not, how can he wish to save those in time whom he had no desire to save in eternity? Respecting the choice of his church in eternity he did what he pleased, both as to persons and number. Now if he makes an offer of salvation to those whom he never chose to everlasting life, either he must have altered his mind, and his affections, or else he cannot be honest in his representations. There is no middle path; it must be either one or the other. If he is sincere he must mock his purposes; and if not he must trifle with his creatures. He first appoints them to wrath, and then offers to save them; but it is in such a way, and on such terms, as never to effect the salvation of a single individual, but which will increase their misery world without end.

Fourth. If Jehovah wish to save those whom he has not elected, must he not study to promote their welfare? Then why offer them salvation on impossible terms? Why not employ his omnipotence to fulfil his desires, and make them willing in the day of his power? How can he be sincere in inviting them to be saved, in a manner which they cannot without divine strength, and which strength he is determined to withhold? And how can he really be upright in his professions of love towards them, while he is employing those very measures that will embitter their condition through all eternity? Is this divine consistency? Can this be eternal rectitude?

It is of no use to say, that the constitution of things will not admit of any other procedure. I ask, did not Jehovah form the plan of salvation himself? and if so, now came he to form a plan, the execution of which denied the very condition of things which he longed and desired, wished and planned for? The conclusion is manifestly this—if offers of grace and general invitations are true, the supreme Author of nature and grace is not that sincere Being that some people have imagined him to be. And if he is insincere in one thing he is capable of insincerity in another, and another, and so on *in ad finitum*; for who can tell where his dissimulation will end? Nay, who can tell that any

one thing is true? The scriptures may be false, election a foible, redemption a farce, the influences of the Holy Ghost a mere puff of wind, not amounting to the breath of a *fly*; hell may be nothing more than a frightful name, and heaven a mere elysium of dreams. In short, the idea of an insincere God, is attended with endless and horrid consequences—consequences that must fill saints with distrust, hell with triumph, and heaven with confusion; supposing, however, that such things and places should have any existence. Nor can the consequences be eluded without pleading for divine ignorance, feebleness, mutability, perplexity, and insecurity. Contend for these things, and I have done. Such advocates destroy the sinews of argument, and rank among atheistical incurables. But admit the eternity, sincerity, simplicity, intelligence, and omnipotence of Jehovah, and offered grace must appear in a very odious light. Admit his eternal power and Godhead, and there are no *safety escapes*, no *loop-holes*, no *back-doors*, nor *trap-doors*. Persons must either give up the principles, or submit to the inference; abandon the creed, or be involved in the consequences.

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF JEHOVAH.

By his sovereignty I do not mean his doing or not doing, giving or withholding, in an arbitrary manner, without any regard to his truth, justice, holiness, goodness, &c. But I mean that which, consistent with his own perfections, he might either have done or not done, given or withheld. Salvation is said to be of grace, and grace involves the idea of sovereignty; seeing it is favour conferred in *sovereignty*, which might have been withheld in *equity*. View mankind in any position you please *out* of Christ, and no rule can be discovered which could oblige the eternal Jehovah to confer electing, adopting, redeeming, and sanctifying grace on any of the human race. He must, therefore, find the motives of salvation in his own sovereignty, to the praise and glory of his own grace. Sovereignty reigns in all the covenant distributions of divine mercy. Jehovah throws