

never saw!!! This is what Mr. F.'s system involves, which shews its inconsistency with itself, and with common sense.

No. 18. Is contradictory, and insinuates that it is possible for a man to be born of God, and not have evidence of it.

No. 23. Is plainly contrary to itself: the latter of the assertions is the true one.

No. 24. Salvation is either possible or impossible; but Mr. F. seems here to suggest that it may be *both*. There is, he intimates, *no natural impossibility*, only a moral one. This distinction is only delusive in the mysteries of sovereign grace and salvation. Is it possible, *in the nature of things*, for the unredeemed sinner to escape the grasp of Almighty and indignant justice? I believe not; yet, if it be not possible to escape this awful attribute of incensed Deity, it must be absolutely and naturally impossible for the unredeemed to be saved. This is not making the secret will of God the rule of duty, for it is fully revealed that, Christ laid down his life for his sheep only; and that he knows not others, nor prays for them; and that those whom he never knew will finally appear on the left hand in the day of judgment; and that all who are not written in the book of life, will be cast into the lake of fire.* This is *revealed*, should it not be *regarded* in our disquisitions on divine things? Compare with this my observations on No. 5, and 25, on a former page.

No. 26. In what sense obligation is applicable to the case of fallen man has been repeatedly shown before. I shall only say that, obligation at the beginning was founded in capacity to obey; that ability is lost by the first offence; to enforce exhortation as though it were not lost, appears ridiculous, and must be ineffectual. The disobedient are to be instructed into their guilty and helpless state, and the equity of God's government is to be defended in the condemnation of the transgressors: the system of redemption is to be proclaimed, and the necessity of true repentance displayed, and the work of conversion unfolded in the light of the Holy Spirit: likewise the rich and free mercy of God, through the vicarious atonement of Christ is to be exalted, as bringing sure and just salvation to every needy

* Rev. xx. 15. Matt. xxv. 31, 33.

sinner, sighing for relief. But grace is to be magnified as sovereignly causing the elect and redeemed to come to Christ; as well as in its freely receiving them when they do come. It is thus we see grace reign in the salvation of men, and not in a sufficient redemption that does not eventually secure its objects; nor in offers of mercy which the sinner is at liberty to embrace, or refuse.

Obligation to the performance of spiritual obedience, is founded in supernatural relation to God in Christ; and this takes place *efficiently*, when a godly state of mind is formed by the Holy Spirit in regeneration; and the obedience is required of all who are created in Christ Jesus unto good works, by *the law of Christ*, and not by the law of God, as the Maker of all men. This point has been fully discussed in my treatise on the law;* and, none but the regenerate are under the law to Christ, nor are any others bound to exercise spiritual faith in him as their Saviour and King. The other extracts, not noticed in this Section, will be found to be considered elsewhere. The contradictions and inconsistencies that are herein observed, sufficiently shew that, Mr. F.'s system was unworthy of his esteem, and opposed to the gospel of the ever blessed God of all grace.

Objection. If obligation were thus founded, it would be needful for a sinner to know his spiritual relation to God in Christ, in order for him to know his duty.

Answer. Faith ought not in this controversy to be looked upon merely as a duty; but to be reckoned a special privilege, peculiar to the redeemed and new-born family of God. It is not true, that the sentiment here advocated, requires the sinner, in order, for him to know his duty, to know his spiritual relation in Christ, so as to be able to assuredly claim his interest in spiritual blessings; it is sufficient, if he be esteemed conscious of those things which are allowed to result from, and be evidence of, supernatural relation to God in Christ. Many are conscious of what proves them to be in a gracious state, although they continue to speak of their interest with doubtfulness. Nevertheless, their feelings, desires, aversions, and pursuits, mark them out as regenerate; and their character in the whole corresponds with the scriptural description of men

* *Vide* Doct. Antinomianism Refuted, Sect. I. II. and XI.

related to God in Christ. They are convinced of their guilt and vileness, and feel, and own themselves utterly lost for any thing they can do to prevent it. Humbled before God, they cry, Lord, be merciful to us sinners: pardon our iniquity for it is great. They plead the merits of Christ, as the revealed price of the remission they seek; and hope the God of Heaven will hear their cry, and save them.

And, Mr. F. says, "A conviction of our being utterly lost must precede an application to the Saviour: any man that owns himself a sinner, hath as fair a ground for his faith, as any one in the world, that hath not yet believed."* Where these things are truly experienced, an attentive perusal of the scriptures may serve to shew that, all such persons are related to God in Christ, and are warranted to trust in Jesus as their Redeemer. For they are conscious of things that evince their regeneracy, and their conduct is influenced in some degree by their sensibilities of heart; though still they hesitate to declare themselves interested in the great salvation. The holy record authorizes all such to reckon, that God has loved them, and therefore, has drawn them: that Christ has redeemed them to God, from the curse of the law; and they are commanded and exhorted to trust in the merits of the slain Lamb, and to walk worthy of God who hath called them to his kingdom and glory.

While such persons are addressed in the ministry, as conscious of the preceding qualities and pursuits, no difficulty arises, nor inconsistency is involved. The will of the eternal Father; the worth of the eternal Son; and the work of the eternal Spirit, are included in their case; and all is plain, consistent, and scriptural. Here is duty founded in relation felt, while grace appears in its reigning sovereignty and power, without any uncertainty or conditionality. It is not yea and nay; but in him is yea, and in him amen, unto the glory of God by his saved ones.

* Reply to Philanthropos, p. 27, 55.

SECT. V.

MR. WEYMAN'S DEFINITION OF FAITH STATED, AND MR. F.'S ATTEMPT TO OVERTURN IT SHOWN TO BE UNAVAILING.

“In order to determine (says Mr. F.) whether faith in Christ be the duty of all men who have opportunity to hear the gospel, it will be necessary to determine what it is, or wherein it consists. It is evident, says he, that *the belief of the truth, which God hath revealed in the scriptures, concerning Christ, is saving faith*. From this definition he has argued for the desired conclusion, namely, that it is the duty of all who have opportunity of hearing the gospel, to exercise saving faith in Christ, as a Saviour *able* to save them to life eternal. His premises however, when closely examined, do not appear to contain his conclusion. Neither *can* immutable justice punish those whom Jesus is *able* to save. Whom Christ has absolutely redeemed from wrath, impartial justice can never consign to future destruction. Either all, who have opportunity of hearing the gospel, are redeemed or they are not; if they are, Christ is able to save them; if they are not, justice is able to execute the sentence of the law upon them; and their punishment is as certain as their criminality is evident. But to return to the point more immediately before us.

The definition objected to, Mr. F. found in a work, entitled *A Further Enquiry after Truth*, by MR. WEYMAN, of Kimbolton, who wrote about ninety eight years ago. It is thus expressed, “*Faith, as an act, is a believing upon an inwrought persuasion, a persuasion upon inward knowledge, being led by the Spirit into the truth.*” To this is subjoined, “I do not say it is a knowing more than the word declares; yet it is such an inward knowledge which no man ever could attain by all the declarations of the word only. And upon this knowledge, follows reliance and recumbency, for there is an inseparable connexion between knowledge and recumbency. When ‘the eyes of the understanding are enlightened by the Father of glory,’ the soul views Christ, believes the truth of God’s salvation as it is in Jesus; and this view may be called faith. In faith, hope, and love, there is a real enjoyment, and a present possessing of the object: as it is written, ‘Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not

seen;’ so, to keep up a just distinction, founded on the word of God, by faith in general, understand a believing of a report or *testimony*; and by special faith, or believing in Christ, *understand a possessing of Christ, an inward appropriating of Christ*. If it be said, this appropriating act is not the lowest act of faith, and that there is a lower act of faith which does not appropriate Christ; I answer, It is a query with me, Whether there be any act of special faith that hath not *the nature* of appropriation in it; and sure I am, there is none where there is not *a right*. Is it faith at all to believe, with appropriation, that the Lord who hath appeared to me is mine? Was it faith in *Thomas*, that said, *My Lord and my God*? And in *Job*, *I know that my Redeemer liveth*? If it be granted, as I think it will hardly be denied, or yet doubted; let this worthy author assign a reason *why it is the duty of unconverted sinners to believe, with one degree of faith of the same kind, and not with another*? Surely my opponent will not deny that *all special faith has a right* of appropriation; or, how can it be *a special part* of God’s salvation, with which the everlasting enjoyment of God is *inseparably connected*? God has said, ‘Thou shalt call me, my Father,’ and pray, does the Spirit work this disposition in regeneration, or when? We do not teach such a confidence as is utterly free from doubtings, but such an one as does not finally yield to them. What is that faith, what can it be, that does not take hold on Christ, possess Christ, and, in some degree, claim Christ, and yet is more than a believing the report? If it be said, it is a looking to him, and a relying upon him; I would desire to know whether it be a looking to him and a relying upon him, only as he is declared in the word, *without an internal revelation*, or by a *special* revelation? If the *former*, it is a merely natural act, and not that faith which is in the question; if the *latter*, then the soul is spiritually enlightened, and so out of the question. Besides, reliance is not of the essence of faith, but is an immediate effect of that inward knowledge and persuasion, by which we define faith. Psalm ix. 10. But, admit that every act of faith does not appropriate Christ, what then? It cannot be supposed by any, who are not perversely disposed to cavil, that by possessing and appropriating Christ, I intended there was no act of faith but that of a *subjective assurance*, or a believing that Christ is

mine. No, but my design was, in the first place, to pitch upon that act of faith, which I supposed none would say was the duty of all who hear the gospel, and then desired my opponent to assign a reason, *why it is the duty of unconverted sinners to believe with one degree of faith of the same kind, and not with another.* Here I stand, and here I must stand still; for, till I am satisfied, by what law it is the duty of unregenerate sinners to believe in Christ, with that faith which is called the faith of God's elect, and yet not their duty to believe that *they have any interest* in the grace that *gives being and denomination* to that faith—there is no progress further for me.”

This is the definition of special faith, to which Mr. F. objected, and “to *overturn* which, he said, would be in effect to answer Mr. Weyman's book.” It is possible for a man to attempt with warm desire, what he cannot accomplish after all his efforts; and of this, Mr. F. is another instance, added to the many that had preceded. The overturning of the foregoing definition of faith, required him to show the following things:—

1. Why it is the duty of the unregenerate to believe with one degree of faith of the same kind, and not with another?

2. By what law it is their duty to believe in Christ, with the faith of God's elect, and yet not their duty to believe that they have any interest in the grace that gives being and denomination to that faith: and to do this, while he himself confessed that, “to believe myself interested in Christ *is the same thing*, as to believe myself *a subject of special grace.*”*

3. That the disposition to call God, Father, is not included in special faith.

4. That there may be an act of saving faith, which shall not have in it the nature of appropriation, nor any right of appropriation.

5. That a man may believe in Christ spiritually, without possessing Christ really, as his own Saviour.

6. That saving faith is a looking to Christ and relying upon him, without any internal revelation of him by the Holy Spirit.

It is very evident that, unless Mr. F. has removed these difficulties out of the way, his arguing has answered no satisfactory end, to the careful reader, who wishes to perceive

and follow truth only. It is believed that he has failed, in effecting this part of his chosen work. But we must now bring forward his reasoning against the above definition, and reply to his objections.

Quot. "I have no objection to allowing, that true faith hath in it the nature of appropriation, if, by this term be meant, an application of the truths believed to our own particular cases. By which application we shall make all the rich treasures contained in the scriptures *wholly our own*, and in such a powerful and peculiar manner enjoy the fruit and benefit of them, as if they had been wholly written *for us*, and none other else beside us."*

Answ. It may be very reasonably questioned, whether many persons, if any, would be able to discover clearly, any material difference, between the application which he here admits, and the appropriation to which he objects.

1. Mr. F. allows *a powerful application* of the fruit and benefit of the rich treasures contained in the scriptures.

2. He affirms that by this application, which he allows is contained in true faith, *we make all these* treasures, and the benefit of them, *wholly our own*.

3. He owns, by this said application, contained in believing, we do, in a powerful and peculiar manner, *enjoy* the fruit and *benefit* of all the rich treasures contained in the gospel, as if they had been set forth for us, and none beside us. Now, how any person can have a powerful application of divine benefits, make them his own, and in a peculiar manner *enjoy* them as wholly for his use and advantage; and yet, this same person, not possess them, and appropriate them interestedly, as one interested in them, it must be impossible for any immortal to prove. Whoever thus believes, lays hold of Christ, as the inestimable and absolute gift of the eternal Father, *to him*, and *for his salvation*, in the well-ordered covenant of gracious redemption, founded on the sure basis of sovereign and personal election in Christ to eternal life. What more can any christian enjoy, than that, which Mr. F. here admitted to be included in true faith? But this concession, on his part, was rather *confirming*, than *confuting* the definition, he undertook to overthrow!

To appropriate Christ, is to take a believing and affec-

tionate hold of him, in his person, and meritorious services, and sufferings, as most precious and lovely to our souls. 1 Pet. ii. 7. Neither can any person believe to the saving of his soul, without laying hold of Christ, in the light and power of the Holy Spirit, as a law-fulfilling surety for him. Faith cannot bring salvation to the heart, without fetching it from Jesus the fountain of life. Nor could the soul receive salvation, in any degree, by faith in Christ, were that salvation not provisionally in Christ for it, by purpose, purchase, and promise, prior to its making such spiritual application. The weakest believer feels some degree of persuasion, that Christ hath loved him, and given himself for him, as is evident in his having a good hope through grace. There appears, therefore, nothing to refute the censured definition, in the above citation from Mr. Fuller, but rather a confirmation of its propriety.

Quot. "By saving faith we undoubtedly embrace Christ *for ourselves*, in the same sense as Jacob embraced Jehovah as HIS God,* that is, to a rejecting of every idol that stands in competition with him."†

Answ. If we thus embrace Christ for ourselves, as *our* Christ, we doubtless are "in a state of salvation," and have a divine right to believe that we are in that state. It is a little surprising, that a man of Mr. F.'s discernment should write thus, to "overturn" a definition of faith, which said, "By special faith understand a possessing of Christ, an inward appropriating of Christ." Mr. F. says, "understand an embracing of Christ for ourselves, *as our* Christ, to a rejecting of every idol that stands in competition with him." Now is not this affirming what he affected to deny? But the secretary of the Baptist mission republished it, after fifteen years had elapsed from the time of its having first come from his hand! But what to some brings blame, to others brings fame.

Quot. "Christ is all-sufficient, and suited to save us as well as others; and it is for the forgiveness of our sins that we put our trust in him: but this is very different from a persuasion of our being in a state of salvation."

Answ. The sufficiency of Christ is here mentioned in a vague manner. "Christ is all-sufficient, and *suited* to save us as well as others." Is this speaking so as to be

* Gen. xxviii. 21.

† Page 6.

rightly understood? Who are we to understand by *us* and *others*?"

1. If he meant himself, with all who embrace the same sentiments, it is not very evident, why he should adopt such an assertion, as it is not likely that any one had questioned our Lord's ability, to save any of his believing followers, though they should be found very inconsistent in their notions about certain points of theological inquiry.

2. If he intended, by the *us*, all the truly godly on earth, and by the *others*, those who were in glory, this was nothing to his purpose, in overturning *Mr. Weyman's* definition of faith.

3. "It is for the forgiveness of our sins, said Mr. F., that *we* put our trust in him; but this is very different from a persuasion of our being in a state of salvation." But, whoever spiritually trusts in Christ, has a revealed *right* to reckon himself in a state of salvation: nor can he be conscious of the exercise of *the former*, but he must also experience some degree of assurance of *the latter*; and it is certain, he must have *evidence* in his soul of his quickened state, and so of his being saved in the Lord Jesus. But it may be proper to remark, that the definition of faith, which Mr. F. undertook to overthrow, does not assert that there is no act of faith, but that of a subjective assurance or a believing that Christ is ours; but *Mr. Weyman* fixed upon that act of faith, which he supposed no man would say was the duty of all who hear the Gospel, and then desired his opposers to assign a reason, *why it is the duty of unconverted sinners to believe with one degree of faith and not with another*. This was the mountain Mr. F. had to remove, but he merely marched round it, muttered its condemnation, seemed disobliged by its standing in his way, and even talked of *overturning* it, but finally left it as he found it, immoveable!

4. That Christ is the all-sufficient Saviour of *his people* the writer of these pages most gladly acknowledges. Christ is, indeed, suited to save *us*, whom his father chose to salvation in him before the world began.* Whom he in covenant represented, he by suffering redeemed, and all these he rose to justify, and reigns to perfectly save, and finally glorify. Herein his sufficiency and suitableness, as a

* Eph. i. 4. 2 Thess. ii. 13, 14.

Saviour, consist, but such as finally perish, he never was “suited to save, as well as others.” For he could only be suited to save those whose sins were laid upon him, punished in him, and for ever put away by him; but those things cannot be predicated of persons who are eternally lost; therefore, he could not be suited to save them.

They who are not saved, Christ was not suited to save;
But the non-elect are not saved, but perish in their sins;
Therefore, Christ was not suited to save the non-elect.

Christ never was suited to save those whom he never knew;*

But he never knew those who are finally ordered to depart from him;

Therefore, he never was suited to save them.

Christ never was suited to save those whom he never loved;

But he never loved those whom he finally disowns;

Therefore, he never was suited to save them.

If Christ be the spiritual Saviour of all, then none can perish;

But many do perish in their sins;

Therefore, Christ is not the spiritual Saviour of all.

“None ever did, or ever will believe, but such as are chosen of God from eternity;” but Christ is not suited to save those who never did, nor ever will believe; therefore, Christ is not suited to save those who are not chosen of God from eternity.

The first member of this last argument is expressed in Mr. F.’s own words. And it may be added that, Christ’s suitability as a Saviour does not depend upon the belief of the saved; for their belief does not make him what he was not, but receives him as he was, prior to their belief. By faith he is endeared to his people; but no part of his worth arises from faith, though it is by faith he is possessed and appropriated. The reader will observe that, hitherto, we have found nothing from Mr. F.’s reasoning to overturn the definition.

Finally, He that spiritually trusts in Christ, for the forgiveness of sins, may not feel himself assured that he is in a state of salvation; that he is so, however, is fully maintained by the scriptures. For *whatever testimony*

* Matt. vii. 23. Rev. xx. 15.

warrants him thus to trust in Christ for his pardon, warrants him to believe Christ died for his offences; for holy recumbency, and certain forgiveness, are inseparably united in the dispensation of God. And forgiveness with God, in Christ, is the secret root of holy recumbency,* though, in a manifest sense, an act of holy confidence precedes forgiveness. The censured definition, therefore, stands unimpaired, and is rather upheld, than otherwise, by what has been advanced.

Quot. "Nothing can be an object of faith except what God has revealed in his word; but the interest that any individual hath in Christ, more than another is not revealed. God has no where declared, concerning any one of us as individuals, that we shall be saved; all that he hath revealed on this subject respects us *as characters.*"†

Answ. Some men have said that Mr. F. makes no distinction in things; but that they are wrong, this last quotation proves: for he has, in a useless manner, distinguished between us as individuals, and us as characters. To whom do these supposed characteristics belong, but to individuals? The sacred word of God assuredly respects us as individuals, as well as characters; and a work of grace in the heart of an individual, is an infallible evidence that every one so wrought upon is interested in Christ through the Holy Spirit, who is the efficient cause of all internal sanctity. This being too evident to be denied, it follows, that, as many as have a work of grace in them, have a revelation of a given interest in Christ, beyond what is common to men.

Surely, if God has declared that the righteous shall enter into life eternal, he has intended it of individuals, of whom the character of being righteous is predicated. They believe with the heart unto righteousness; and it is written *He that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.* He certainly has not any where said of any man, he shall be saved, merely as an individual, but still, salvation is promised, to all them that love him; and these are all individuals; to all that call on his name, and these are all individuals. God has revealed in his word that, all such shall be saved, and to be spiritually persuaded of the truth of this testimony is real faith. And, "faith as an act, is a believing upon an in-wrought persuasion, a per-

* Psalm cxxx. 4.

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suasion upon inward knowledge, being led by the Spirit into the truth: and though it be not a knowing more than the word declares; yet it is such an inward knowledge which no man ever could attain by all the declarations of the word only: it is a possessing of Christ, an inward appropriating of Christ." This is the definition which Mr. F. undertook to overturn, but I see no evidence yet of his having succeeded. Nothing has yet met our attention that at all proves, *why it is the duty of an unregenerate sinner to believe, with one degree of faith, and not with another.* Mr. F. says, "Those who are born of God, and have evidence of it, it is their duty to examine and *believe that evidence*: or believe themselves the subjects of special grace, and so interested in Christ."* Observe, reader, he here *asserts* it to be the duty of the regenerate man to believe his interest in Christ, and in the preceding quotation he *denies* it. He also says, "Whatever a person is, or does, in respect to spiritual dispositions and exercises, when he is regenerated, we think it is no more than what he ought to have been, and done, prior to that period, as well as at the time."†

The argument now will stand thus:

Whatever a regenerate person does, an unregenerate person ought to do the same; but a regenerate person believes that Christ died for him; therefore, an *unregenerate* person ought to believe that Christ died for him!!!

Mr. F. has been generally reckoned a man of strong mind, then may we not fairly conclude, that he would not have contradicted himself over and over again as he has done, had not his system been so heterogeneous, and irreconcilable with itself? The definition remains, and is not overturned, though opposed by contradictions.

Quot. "He hath abundantly promised that all who believe in him, love him, and obey him, shall be saved; and a persuasion that, if we sustain these characters we shall be saved, is doubtless an exercise of faith: but whether we do or not, is not an object of faith, but of consciousness."‡

Answ. 1. There are no promises of grace and glory out of Christ. "For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him amen, unto the glory of God by us." And as

* 1st Edit. page 19. and 2nd Edit. page 7. † 1st Edit. page 131. ‡ Page 6.