

## RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD

HAVING founded this discourse on the Sovereignty of God, as the best and most natural ground of satisfaction (or captivation) to reason, touching Election, now as a means to qualify our spirits, and reconcile them with the doctrine of Sovereignty, it seemeth expedient to annex that of his Righteousness: and, I think, there is not a more rational proposition, or one more clearly requiring submission, than

“That there is no unrighteousness with God.”

This is the natural adjunct of divine sovereignty, which, as we are indispensably bound to believe, so to be well grounded in the faith of it, will be of exceeding great usefulness to us in every condition; especially under those darker administrations, of which we do not see at present the cause, reason, or tendency; when matters of great importance seem to be confused or neglected; when all things in view fall out alike to all; and you cannot know either good or evil, by all that is before you. I shall therefore collect some of those considerations, from which you may find some light and influence in a dark and cloudy day; and by which, as a means, I myself was drawn in and guided to this determination, before I had searched the scriptures expressly concerning this subject: and they may serve, both as arguments to demonstrate the proposition, and as antidotes against those poisonous contradictions, which carnal reason and unbelief will be too often forging and flinging in upon us. And,

*Argument I.* Is founded on that infinite blessedness, which the most high God was possessed of in himself, before the world, or any creature was made. He did not make them for any need he had of them, but for his pleasure, Rev. 4: 11. and if he needed them not, there could be no need, or reason why he should make them such, or to such an end as not to be wisely overruled, and their end at-

tained, without doing wrong to any. The motives by which men are swayed to wrong-doing, are chiefly two, 1. To obtain something they have not. Ahab slew Naboth for his vineyard, 1 Kings, 21: and Athaliah all the seed royal, to get the throne, 2 Kings, 11. Or, 2. To secure what they have. Pharaoh oppressed the people, lest growing mighty they should shake off his yoke, and get them out of his service, Exod. 1: 10. Jeroboam set up his calves to keep the people at home, and firm to himself, 1 Kings, 12: 27, 28, and the Jews put Christ to death, lest the Romans should come and take away their place and nation, John, 11: 48. These two have shared the parentage of all the oppression and wrong-doing that have been in the world: neither of which is compatible with our great and blessed God: for all things are his already; he possesseth the heavens and the earth, and all the hosts of them, with an absolute power and right to dispose of them. And as for securing what he hath, of whom should he be afraid? for, 1. “There is no God besides him;” the Lord himself, who needs must know it, if there were another, professeth solemnly, that “he knows not any,” Isa. 44: 6, 8. And, 2. As for creatures, they are all more absolutely under his subjection, than the smallest dust under our feet is to us. “The nations are to him less than nothing and vanity.” Isa. 40: 17. He needs not so much as to touch them, to bring them down: it is but “gathering to himself his spirit and his breath, and they perish together,” Job 34: 14, 15. If the Lord but withhold his sustaining influence, they fall of themselves; but he remains the same to all generations.

*Arg. II.* Another argument is founded on the infinite perfection of his nature. These those seraphic heralds proclaim under the notion of holy, holy, holy, Isa. 6: 2. Its reduplication imports the highest perfection. And Moses, who of all mortals, had nearest access to God, puts it in the front of his triumphal titles, Exod. 15: 11. “Glorious in holiness!” It is that whereby all the divine excellencies are summarily expressed. The righteous Lord will do no iniquity: he is of purer eyes than to look upon it. It is an high demonstration of his excellency, that he cannot deny himself: that is, he cannot do any thing that is in the least degree contrary to his holy nature; nothing that needs to

be retracted, or to alter his mind about it. His will is the rule of righteousness, and righteousness is the rule of his will. The saints of old were perfectly of this mind: "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" Gen. 18: 25. And the apostle puts it as a question not to be answered, that if God were unrighteous, "How then shall he Judge the world?" Rom. 3: 6.

*Arg. III.* It is also apparent, from the constant rule and measure of God's dispensements, which are not done fortuitously, nor rashly, but with deliberation and exactness. "He lays judgment to the rule, and righteousness to the plummet," Isa. 28: 7. He will not punish without a cause, nor more than is deserved. Touching the sins of Sodom, "I will go down," says God, "and see whether they have done, [altogether] according to the cry of it," Gen. 18: 21. "He renders to every one according to their deeds," Rom. 2: 6. "and gives them [a just] recompence of reward," Heb. 2: 2. "He will not cast away the perfect man, nor help the wicked," Job, 8: 20. Eliphaz puts the question with great confidence, (as well he might,) "Who ever perished being innocent?" Job, 4: 7. His righteousness is such, that it even holds his hands until the innocent be out of danger. The angels were straightly commanded; not to begin the execution of God's wrath on the wicked world, "until his servants were marked out," Rev. 7: 3. and when the Lord came to destroy Sodom, he hastens righteous Lot to Zoar, with this only argument, "I cannot do any thing until thou be come thither," Gen. 19: 22.

*Arg. IV.* It is further evidenced, by the laws he hath given unto men; the sum of which is, to do righteously; and the end of them, the good and welfare of the creature. After a thousand years' experience of these, compared with the issue of men's inventions, they are acknowledged to be "right judgments, good statutes, and laws of truth," Neh. 9: 3. What an admirable catalogue have we in Romans 12: 12. and Gal. 5: 22!

1. Of such as concern our duty towards himself immediately, this is the sum; "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve," Matt. 4: 10. There is nothing more equal and just than to worship and serve him, whose we are: to love and to live to him, from

whom we have our life and breath; especially considering that "his commandments are our life," Deuteronomy, 16: 18, 19.

2. Such as refer more immediately to ourselves, as temperance, chastity, moderation, sobriety, &c. These, as is evident to all, do greatly conduce to our outward welfare, both in point of health, estate, prosperity, &c. And what evil consequents do attend the contraries of those virtues, might be every day's observation; more especially such as relate to our spiritual state and welfare: of which more particularly under the next argument.

3. Such commands also as respect our duty towards men; as to do justly; to shew mercy; to "follow peace with all men," every one to mind his own business, and not intermeddle with others: so, "to be subject to the powers that be;" and to "pray for those in authority," (the neglect of which duty may be a cause of our disquietment from them, at least it may prove an eclipse of our joyfulness in suffering under them, &c.;) the sum of this kind of duties we have in that standing uncontrollable rule, of "doing to others as we would they should do unto us." On the contrary, there is nothing forbidden but what tends to our hurt; as if it were needful, might be demonstrated by instances innumerable.

4. To this also might be added, the strict injunctions that God hath laid upon the subordinate dispensers of his law; as, namely, "to judge the people with just judgment; not to wrest judgment, nor respect persons," Deut. 16: 18, 19. "yea, he curseth them that pervert judgment," chap. 27: 19, "and will surely reprove them that accept persons," Job, 13: 10, &c. And "shall mortal man be more just than God?" chapter 4: 17. Will he, under such penalties, command men to do thus, and not much more do so himself?

*Arg. V.* Another beam of the righteousness of God, shines forth in his putting the matter of our duty into such a way and method, as renders it more facile, and mostly conduceth to our chief end.

As, 1. "To remember our Creator in the days of our youth," Eccl. 12: 12. For the work of conversion, and turning to God, must needs be much easier then, than when habituated in an evil course: for long impenitency

(besides the provocation it is to God,) estranges the mind more from him: makes the spirit more inflexible, and harder to be wrought upon; it multiplies our work, and subtracts our strength: for one accustomed in evil to learn to do well, and for a black-moor to change his skin, are things of a like possibility: it is a very rare and difficult thing for "a man to be born again when he is old."

2. To watch against, and suppress the first motions of sin, and to avoid whatever might be an occasion, or have tendency towards it. And in order thereto, to "take heed to our spirit." Mal. 2:15. "To keep the heart with all diligence," Prov. 4:23: "To abstain from all appearances of evil," 1 Thess. 5:22. "To hate the garment spotted by the flesh," Jude, ver. 23. "And to make a covenant with our eyes," as Job did, Job, 31:1. For the professed practice of some saints is directive to others, and equivalent to a command. To keep an enemy from rising, is much easier than to quell him when he is up; yea, to nip sin when it is young, is the ready way, not only to keep it low, but to kill it; as the continual plucking off buds from a tree or plant, destroys the root.

3. Not to do any thing, the lawfulness whereof is dubious to us; which, as it is a sin in itself, (as every thing is which is not of faith,) Rom. 14:23, so it tends to obscure to us the true sight of other things, and emboldens to further attempts. Yea, farther, not to mind only the lawfulness of things, but their expediency, 1 Cor. 6:12, the not heeding of which proves often an occasion of sin to others, whereof we cannot be guiltless. So, likewise, to cherish all motions to good; not to quench the Spirit, 1 Thess. 5:19. and to hearken, or listen diligently what the Lord God will speak, Exod. 15:26. who oft-times delivers his mind with "a still and small voice," 1 Kings 19:12. which doubly obligeth our attention.

4. In his pressing, with so much weight and necessity, those great duties of faith, love, patience, self-denial, &c. (1.) Faith, which consists in submitting to the "righteousness of God," taking hold of his strength, and following the conduct of his wisdom: and in order thereto, shewing us our own sinfulness, weakness, and folly, with the vanity of all created bottoms, which have always failed at the greatest need; and so drawing our hearts to lean on himself only,

in whom alone we have righteousness and strength, Isa. 45:24. (2.) Love: this is a powerful, active, candid, and obliging principle: it bears all things; thinks no evil; takes all in good part, 1 Cor. 13:5. makes that both portable and pleasant, which without love, would be both harsh and burdensome. (3.) Patience, and meekness of spirit; these mitigate the dolor of any suffering, and often prevent or allay the storm that is rising. "A soft answer turneth away wrath," Prov. 15:1. Judges 8:3. It also breeds experience; 1. That any afflictions may be borne through him that strengthens us, 2 Cor. 12:9. 2. That afflictions are all for our profit, Heb. 12:10. 3. That we could not well have been without them, 1 Pet. 1:6, 7. 4. It also gives to understand the Lord's meaning in them, which the noise of tumultuous passions would drown in us. And, as a means to work this patience, the Lord sets before us, 1. That there is a cause of every chastening; and that cause is from ourselves; and therefore no cause to complain. 2. That he afflicts not willingly, but only when there is need, and no more than needs must. 3. That he hath many gracious ends in afflicting: as, (1.) To humble for sin committed; as in Joseph's rough dealing with his brethren, Gen. 42:21. (2.) To purge out dross; as in the case of Manasseh, 2 Chron. 33:11. 13. and the whole church, Isa. 27:9. (3.) To prevent sins we should otherwise fall into: thus he kept Paul from being exalted above measure, 2 Cor. 12:7. (4.) To wean us from the world; this he expected from Baruch, Jer. 45:4, 5. and this effect it had upon Asaph, Psal. 73:35. (5.) To exercise our graces; as Abraham's great faith, by his various temptations; and Paul was much under infirmities, that he might "magnify the power of Christ," 2 Cor. 12:9. (6.) By lesser temptations, and deliverances from them, we are fitted for greater, and our faith strengthened, both to bear and to get through them; which greater had they come before, might have overturned us. 4. Self-denial: this is a duty of nearest concernment to us, since we have no enemies so great as self-love, and fleshly lusts to war against our souls. These things considered, will shew that David's conclusion is right and genuine; "Good and upright is the Lord, therefore will he teach sinners in the way," Psal. 25:8. Even reason itself might tell us (to be sure sanctified rea-

son and experience will,) that thus to command and direct, is to lead in the right way; and it highly commends to us the righteousness of God.

*Arg. VI.* The righteousness of God is farther made out, by his affixing rewards and punishments, to good and evil works respectively, according to what is the proper result and natural product of them: "Whatsoever a man sows, that shall he reap," Gal. 6: 7. "Every seed shall have its own body," 1 Cor. 15: 38. "He will give to every one according to his ways, and the fruit of his doings," Isa. 3: 10, 11. Jer. 32: 19. Holiness hath in it a natural tendency to life and peace: it is a tree of life, Prov. 3: 18. Grace and glory grow from the same root: salvation is the end of faith; the flower that grows upon it, 1 Pet. 1: 9. "The work of righteousness is peace, and the effect thereof quietness and assurance for ever," Isa. 32: 17. It is sometimes called, "the way of life," Prov. 12: 28. Sometimes "the fountain and well-spring of life," Prov. 14: 27. And it tendeth to life," Prov. 19: 23. For if the root be holy, the branch cannot be otherwise, Romans, 11: 16.

It is so likewise with sin: death follows sin, not only as a punishment for delinquency, but as its natural offspring, Prov. 23: 29. Original corruption is the root; sin the stalk that grows next upon it; and death the finishing, or full corn in the ear, James, 1: 14, 15. If there be no justice to revenge sin, sin would be vengeance to itself: "Sinners lie in wait for their own blood," Prov. 1: 18. "It is their own wickedness that corrects them," Jer. 2: 19. "The way of sin inclineth to death, and its footsteps to the dead: its steps take hold on hell," Prov. 2: 18. and 5: 5. Unbelief may be an instance for all; as out of which all sins else are derived: this was the root of Adam's apostacy, Gen. 3. of all that people's rebellions in the wilderness, Numb. 14: 11. of the Jews' rejecting the Messiah, John, 19: 7. 12. Faith is that which holds the soul to God, its life and blessedness: unbelief is departing from him, or letting go its hold; the loosing of the knot, upon which the soul falls off of its own accord: and the first step from God sets in a way of death: as a branch breaking off from its stock dies of itself. This was Adam's unbelief: in all men since, it is a refusing to return.

*Arg. VII.* This doctrine is further confirmed, by the general unanimous consent and affirmation of those best able to judge. (1.) They assert it. Job, a man of great wisdom and integrity, "not his like in all the earth," Job 1: 8. and none so sorely afflicted; yet, says Elihu to him, by way of counsel (as what himself would do in like case), "I will ascribe righteousness to my maker," chap. 36: 3. and "surely God will not pervert judgment," chap. 34: 12. "God is known (that is, he is known to be God) by the judgments which he executeth," Psal. 19. 6. "The Lord is upright; there is no unrighteousness in him," Psal. 92: 15. "He loveth righteousness, and hateth iniquity. The sceptre of his kingdom is a right sceptre," Psal. 45: 6, 7. "Righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne," Psal. 97: 2. Deut. 32: 4. That "true and righteous are his judgments," is the voice of those in heaven, Rev. 19: 2. (2.) They submit to it, even then when most provoked by men's injurious dealings with them for his sake; and when the Lord's own hand hath been most severe towards them. "Aaron held his peace," Lev. 10: 3. "It is the Lord," saith Eli, "let him do what seemeth him good," 1 Sam. 3: 18. Hezekiah also, "Good is the word of the Lord," 2 Kings 20: 19. Yea, they have done thus, when by the light of natural reason they could see no reason for it; witness Job; who, when plundered of all, because "he feared God, and eschewed evil," and could justify himself to the height, as to any hypocrisy; yet, says he, "I will make supplication to my judge," Job 9: 15. Look on our Lord and Saviour himself, and see his confession: "Our fathers cried unto thee, and were delivered; but I, though day nor night I am not silent, thou hearest me not." How does he close his complaint? Not, Thou dealest more hardly with me, who less have deserved it; but, "Thou art holy," Psal. 22: 2, 3, 4. Jeremiah, indeed, began to object, because the "way of the wicked prospered, and they were happy that dealt treacherously;" but he presently bethinks himself, withdraws his plea, and yields the cause: "Righteous thou art, O Lord, when I plead with thee," Jer. 12: 1. I might instance the suffrages of wicked men, and of the most obdurate among them, whose consciences, at times, have enforced their confession of this truth; and the testimony of an adversary

proves strongly. Pharaoh subscribes to it: "The Lord is righteous, I and my people are wicked," Exod. 9: 27. As also doth Adoni-bezek, and Saul, Judges 1: 7. 1 Sam. 24: 17. 19. (3.) the saints triumph in the righteousness of God, as well they may, and call upon others to do the like: "The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice," Psal. 93: 97. 99. "O let the nations be glad, and sing for joy; for thou shalt judge the people righteously," Psal. 92: 4. "Let the heavens rejoice, and the earth be glad before the Lord; for he cometh to judge the earth," Psal. 96: 11. 13. &c. And hence it was that Paul, and the rest of them, though the present sense of their sufferings was grievous, yet they gloried in them, and rejoiced greatly in hopes of that glory and "crown of righteousness, which God, as a righteous judge, had prepared for them," 2 Tim. 4. 8.

*Arg. VIII.* The righteousness of God is yet farther illustrated, by the issue and event of his darkest dispensations. "The consumption decreed shall overflow with righteousness," Isa. 10: 22. and nothing else shall be in it. His people, though long under oppression, he brought them forth at last, with the greater substance. His leading them about in the wilderness, as it were in a maze, forty years together; and bringing them back to where they had been many years before; yet proved it to be the right way, Psal. 107: 7. and it was for "their good in the latter end," Deut. 8: 16. David's long persecution by Saul, made him the fitter for the kingdom, and adapted him for the office of principal secretary to the great King; opportunely acquainting him with all the affairs of the heavenly state and council, that are fit to be known upon earth: and by his hand and experience they are confirmed to us; and this among the rest. "Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, and teachest him out of thy law," Psal. 94: 12. We see it also by the end the Lord made with Job; "he brought him forth like gold," and doubled his blessings upon him, Job 43: 12. The basket of good figs were sent into captivity for their good, Jer. 24: 5. Paul's afflictions turned to his salvation, Phil. 1: 19. Even the temptations, sorrows, and sufferings of Christ himself, which were such as never were known by men, were intended, and accordingly did, perfect and enable him for his office of mediator: "Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like

unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted," Heb. 2: 17, 18.

*Arg. IX.* Another great instance and evidence of the righteousness of God appears in the manner of his procedure in reference to the elect. Those precious souls, whom he loved from everlasting, and determined to bring to glory: yet, having sinned, not one of them shall enter there, without satisfaction made to his justice; even those he will not justify, but so as to be just in doing of it, Rom. 8: 3. 3: 26. The mercy-seat being sprinkled with blood, Lev. 16: 14. was evidently a shadow of it; for the glory of God does not consist only in shewing mercy, but to do it in such a manner as not to clash with his justice. It is a part of his name and glory, that "he will by no means clear the guilty," Exod. 34: 7. but who then shall be saved, since "all the world is found guilty before God?" Rom. 3: 19. Yea, there is yet a way to shew mercy (which is ever adorable,) and therein is shewn the manifold wisdom of God, as well as his righteousness, in the contriving a way for "mercy and truth to meet together," Psal. 85: 10. which was done by transferring the guilt of his chosen upon another, who was able to bear it, and to give a more adequate satisfaction to his justice, than they ever could have done by their personal sufferings: this also was typified by the law of the scape-goat: "And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats, one lot for the Lord, and the other lot for the scape-goat. But the goat, on which the lot fell to be the scape-goat, shall be presented alive before the Lord, to make an atonement with him, and to let him go for a scape-goat into the wilderness. And he that let go the goat for the scape-goat, shall wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in water, and afterward come into the camp." Lev. 16: 8. 10. 26.

*Arg. X.* Consider especially that great instance of Christ himself, the first elect, and head of all the family; and the compact made with him; who, though he were a son, "His beloved son, in whom his soul delighted:" yet if he will undertake for sinners, he must stand in their

stead. "All their sins must meet upon him," and he must bear the punishment due unto them, Isa. 53: 4, 5. It was not "possible that cup should pass from him:" no, "though he sought it with strong cries and tears," and that of him who was able to save him from death, who also loved him as his own soul: he was not, he might not be released, until he had paid the utmost mite. For although grace is perfectly free to men, in pardoning and saving of them; yet justice must be satisfied, and Christ was abated nothing. This last unparalleled instance of incomparable justice doth highly illustrate the point in hand, namely, "That our great and sovereign Lord cannot but do right."

#### *Inferences from the Righteousness of God*

*Infer. 1.* May this doctrine prove an eternal blast to the vain and presumptuous confidence of impenitent sinners, who, "because vengeance is not speedily executed, have their hearts fully bent and set in them to do evil," Eccles. 8: 11. Because the Lord (at present) holds his peace, they think he is like themselves, Psal. 50: 21, &c. Let them certainly know, that he is able to deal with them: and, further, that his righteousness obligeth him to vindicate himself: he will by no means clear the guilty, nor be always silent: though slow, yet sure; and strikes home at last, Psal. 2: 9. "He will arise to judgment, and set their sins in order before them," and reckon with them for all the hard speeches which they, ungodly sinners, have uttered against him: the sight whereof shall strike their trembling souls (notwithstanding their stoutness now) with horror and amazement; and make even all their bowels ready to gush out. "He will wound the hairy scalp (the proud and presumptuous head) of every one that goes on in his wickedness," Psal. 68: 21. "A dart shall strike through his liver," Prov. 7: 23. and down with him to hell, the nethermost hell, in a moment. Why then will you "run against the thick bosses of his bucklers?" Job 15, 26. "and set briars and thorns in array against a devouring flame?" Isa. 33: 14. Can dried stubble dwell with "everlasting burnings?" Did "ever any harden himself against God and prosper?" Job 9: 4. No, nor never shall. Where will

his hope be, when God taketh away his soul! Job 27: 8. Therefore take up betimes, leave off, and know that he is God, Psal. 46: 10.

*Infer. 2.* Let this doctrine for ever vindicate the holy and good ways of God (both those he walks in towards us, and those he commands us to walk in towards himself,) from all those senseless imputations of harshness, moroseness, nicety, preciseness, or whatever else the profaneness or ignorance of men can tax them with: for, as it is said, so it is found by the certain and sober experience of all that fear him (and against such experience no reason is to be admitted;) I say, it is a general infallible experiment, that "all the ways of wisdom are pleasantness to him that walks in them," Prov. 3: 17. which argues, that those who think otherwise, are ignorant of them, and therefore not competent judges. It is granted, indeed, that those whose hearts are in these good ways of God, have their steps too often turned aside, and go haltingly in them: but, in truth, the fault is not in the way, but in the men. There is some fracture in their bones, dislocation of joints, or evil tumor; something is out of order, and needs looking to. A cripple will limp in Solomon's porch, on the smoothest pavement, when one that is sound in his limbs will walk with delight on rougher ground. The law, and our hearts, were once at perfect agreement; the discord came in by our free-will deviations, and swerving from our first make. Therefore admit not the least motion that looks but awry on the commands or disposements of God; but justify them to the height, and take shame to yourself, as Paul himself did, "The commandment is holy, but I am carnal," Rom. 7: 12, 14.

*Infer. 3.* If the Lord cannot but do right, then let us all (and every one) take heed of sin, which the holiness and justice of God are so inexorably bent against: he will not pardon without satisfaction. Yea, beware of little sins (little, I mean, in esteem with men, or in comparison of some others.) Your nearness to God will not excuse you; for, you "have I known, [therefore] you will I punish," Amos 3: 2. Even Moses, his servant, for once speaking unadvisedly, was shut out of Canaan, Numb. 20: 10, 12. and though he would fain have gone into that good land, and solicited the Lord much about it, as if he would have

no denial; yet the Lord would not hear him: "Speak no more to me of this matter," Deut. 3: 26. To make light of the least sin, because grace abounds, is to sin against your own soul, and to make the precious blood of Christ a common thing (the least is the price of blood.) Although he love thee, and that so as never to take his loving kindness from thee, yet he will not let thee go altogether unpunished; yea, the Lord may hide from thee the sense of his love, and make thee feel his displeasure, even to the breaking of thy bones, &c. For he must discountenance sin, and that for our good, as well as to vindicate the honor of his righteousness.

*Infer. 4.* You that acknowledge God's uprightness, and profess to be his children, convince the world of the truth of your principles by your practice. Shew yourselves to be his offspring, by your likeness to him: "do justly, love mercy, walk humbly." To "be blameless, and harmless, and without rebuke," Phil. 2: 15. is your best argument to refute the world's calumnies, and to prove yourselves to be the sons of God. Shew it also, by your justifying God, even while "he wraps himself in a cloud," Job 22: 13, 14. "and his footsteps are not known," Psal. 77: 19. He that owns not God's hand in every dispensation, disowns his sovereignty; and he that repines, denies his righteousness: acquit yourself in both.

*Infer. 5.* Then let none stumble at present administrations, nor admit of a sinister or suspicious thought touching this holy Lord God. The reason of his ways may be unknown, but cannot be unjust: he sees through the dark cloud, though you and I cannot. We know "the Lord doth not afflict willingly," Lam. 3: 33. and his people are in heaviness but for a season, and if need be, 1 Pet. 1: 6, then, surely, "it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne chastisement," (that is, my sin procured it for me, and I have no cause to complain;) "I will offend no more," Job 34: 31. Acknowledge his uprightness, and he will be "gracious unto thee," chap. 23: 24. And do it when thou canst not see the reason of his judgments, nor their tendency; taking it still for a rule, "That all the ways of God are perfect: nothing can be put to them, nor any thing taken from them," Eccles. 3: 14. It was a good resolution in Job, that, "though he were righteous, yet would

he not answer God; but make supplication to his judge," Job 9: 15. and though he should slay him, "yet will he trust in him," chap. 13: 15. and this would he do, even while he thought he might maintain his own ways before him.

Be patient, therefore: "the coming of the Lord draweth nigh," James 5: 7. "who will judge the world with righteousness," Psal. 9: 8. Let neither the wicked's prosperity, nor the daily chastenings of his own people, be an offence to thee; go up "into the sanctuary of God," Psal. 73: 17. there thou shalt know the end. It shall not always be carried thus; there will be a reckoning for the good things they had in their life-time; when those that have lived in pleasure, will wish that their souls had been in thy soul's stead, under all its pressures: and it shall be no grief of heart to thee, to remember thy mortal and momentary sufferings, Rom. 8: 18. when thou seest such peaceable fruits of righteousness brought forth thereby, Heb. 12: 18. when thou shalt be wrapt up with holy amazement, and shall say in thine heart, "I lost my children, and was desolate; a captive, and removing to and fro (had no abiding place,) who hath begotten me these?" Isa. 49: 21. chap. 60. Whence came they! what root sprang they from! my light afflictions were not worthy to be compared with this glory! 2 Cor. 4: 17. He will never repent that he sowed in tears, who brings home his sheaves with such joy. But as you go along to this your blessed home, and sweet place of eternal rest, it may be worth the while to ruminate such scriptures as these: "Though a sinner do evil a hundred times, and his days be prolonged (he goes unpunished,) yet surely it shall be well with them that fear God: but it shall not be well with the wicked," Eccles. 8: 12, 13. "Verily, there is a reward for the righteous: Verily, he is a God who judgeth in the earth," Psal. 58: 11. "And his judgment is according to truth," Rom. 2: 2. "and blessed are they that wait for him," Isa. 30: 18.

*Infer. 6.* Lastly, All the objections that are brought against the doctrine of election's absoluteness, personality, and eternity; the peculiarity of redemption; the efficacious predominance of grace in calling; and believers' invincible perseverance in faith and holiness, would all be disbanded, and sent to their own place, were this one truth (which