

\* \* this has the advantage of being entirely consistent with his own published and express decree: "He that believeth shall be saved; and he that believeth not shall be damned." *This revealed and promulgated decree, we must believe, was according to God's eternal purpose: and if from eternity he determined that believers, and only believers, in Christ, among the fallen race, should be saved, the conclusion is inevitable, that those whom he chose in Christ "before the foundation of the world" were considered, not as men merely, \* \* but as believing men; which harmonizes the doctrine of election with the other doctrines of Scripture instead of placing it, as in the Calvinistic scheme, in opposition to them. For the choice not being of certain men, as such, but of all persons believing, and all men to whom the Gospel is preached being called to believe, every one may place himself in the number of persons so elected. \* \**

But though this argument might be very successfully urged against those who interpret the passage above quoted of personal election, the context bears unequivocal proofs, that it is not of an election, or predestination of this kind of which the Apostles speak; but of the election of believing Jews and Gentiles into the church of God; in other words, of the eternal purpose of God, upon the publication of the Gospel, to constitute his visible church no longer upon the ground of natural descent from Abraham, but upon the foundation of faith in Christ. For upon no other hypothesis can that distinction which the Apostle makes between the Jews who first believed, and the Gentile Ephesians who afterward believed, be at all explained. \* \* "In whom also ye trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth;" the preaching of which truth to them as Gentiles, by the Apostle and his coadjutors, was, in consequence of God "having made known unto them the mystery of his will, that in his dispensation of the fulness of times he might *gather together in one* all things in Christ;" which, in the next chapter,—(a manifest continuance of the same head of discourse,)—is explained to mean the calling in of the Gentiles with the believing Jews, reconciling "both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby." The same subject he pursues in the third chapter, representing this union of believing Jews and Gentiles in one church as the revelation of the mystery which had been hid "from the beginning of the world;" but was now "manifested according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Verses 8—11.) Here, then, we have the true meaning of the election, and predestination of the Ephesians spoken of in the opening of the Epistle: it was their election, as Gentiles, to be, along with the believing Jews, the church of God, his acknowledged people on earth; which election was according to God's "eternal purpose," to change the constitution of his church; to establish it on the