

# THE WORKS OF JONATHAN EDWARDS VOLUME 4

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# A HISTORY

## OF THE

# WORK OF REDEMPTION.

### GENERAL INTRODUCTION.

For the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool: but my righteousness shall be forever, and my salvation from generation to generation. (<sup>25108</sup>Isaiah 51:8)

THE design of this chapter is to comfort the church under her sufferings, and the persecutions of her enemies, and the argument of consolation insisted on, is the constancy and perpetuity of God's mercy and faithfulness towards her, which shall be manifest in continuing to work salvation for her, protecting her against all assaults of her enemies, and carrying, her safely through all the changes of the world, and finally, crowning her with victory and deliverance.

In the text, this happiness of the church of God is set forth by comparing it with the contrary fate of her enemies that oppress her. And therein we may observe,

**I.** How short-lived the power and prosperity of the church's enemies is: "The moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool," *i.e.* however great their prosperity is, and however great their present glory, they shall by degrees consume and vanish away by a secret curse of God, till they come to nothing; and all their power and glory, and so their persecutions, eternally cease, and they be finally and irrecoverably ruined: as the finest and most glorious apparel will In time wear away, and be consumed by moths and rottenness. We learn who those are that shalt thus consume away, by the foregoing verse, viz. those that are the enemies of God's people: "Hearken unto me, he that know righteousness the people in whose heart is my law, fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be he afraid of their revilings.

**II.** The contrary happy lot and portion of God's church expressed in these words, "My righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation from generation to generation." Who shall have the benefit of this, we also learn by the preceding verse, viz. They that know righteousness, and the people in whole heart is God's law; or, in one word, the church of God. And concerning their happiness, we may obscure, wherein it consists; in its continuance.

**1.** Wherein it CONSISTS, viz. In God's righteousness and salvation towards them. By God's righteousness here, is meant his faithfulness in fulfilling his covenant promises to his church, or his faithfulness towards his church and people, in bestowing the benefits of the covenant of grace upon them. Though these benefits are bestowed of free and sovereign grace, as being altogether undeserved, yet as God has been pleased, by the promises of the covenant of grace, to bind himself to bestow them they are bestowed on the exercise of God's righteousness or Justice. And therefore the apostle says,

"God is not unrighteous, to forget your work and labor of love."  
(~~3000~~ Hebrews 6:10)

And

"If we confess our sins, be is faithful and just to forgive us our  
sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (~~6000~~ 1 John 1:9)

So the word righteousness to here is often used in Scripture for God's covenant faithfulness; as in ~~4000~~ Nehemiah 9:8. "Thou hast performed thy words, for thou art righteous." So we are often to understand righteousness and covenant mercy for the same things; as ~~4200~~ Psalm 24:5. "He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation." ~~4500~~ Psalm 36:10. "Continue thy loving-kindness to them that know thee, and thy righteousness to the upright in heart." And ~~4500~~ Psalm 51:14. "Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation; and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness." ~~2000~~ Daniel 9:16. "O Lord, according to thy righteousness, I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away." — And so in innumerable other places.

The other word here used is salute. Of these two God's righteousness and his salvation, the one is the cause; of which the other is the effect. God's righteousness. or covenant mercy, is the root, of which his salvation is the fruit. Both of them relate to the covenant of grace. The one is God's covenant mercy and faithfulness, the other intends that work of God by which this covenant mercy is accomplished in the fruits of it. For salvation is the sum of all those works of God by which the benefits that are by the covenant of grace are procured and bestowed.

**2.** We may observe its continuance, signified here by two expressions; for ever, and from generation to generation. The latter seems to be explanatory of the former. The phrase forever, is variously used in Scripture.

Sometimes thereby is meant as long as a man lives. It is said that the servant who had his ear bored through with an awl to the door of his master should be his for ever. Sometimes thereby is meant during the continuance of the Jewish state. Of many of the ceremonial and Levitical laws it is said, that they should be statutes for ever. Sometimes it means or long as the world shall stand, or to the end of the generations of men.

Thus, <sup><2000></sup>Ecclesiastes 1:4. "One generation passeth away, and Another cometh; but the earth abideth for ever." Sometimes thereby is meant to all eternity. So it is said "God is blessed for ever," <sup><812></sup>Romans 1:25. And so it is said, <sup><818></sup>John 6:51. "If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever."

— And which of these senses is here to be understood, the next words determine, viz. to the end of the world, or to the end of the generations of men. It is said in the next words, "and my salvation from generation to generation." Indeed the fruits of God's salvation shall remain after the end of the world, as appears by the 6th verse: "Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner, but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished." But the work of salvation itself toward the church shall continue to be wrought till then: till the end of the world God will go on to accomplish deliverance and salvation for the church, from all her enemies; for that is what the prophet is here speaking of. Till the end of the world, till her enemies cease to be, as to any power to molest the church. And this expression from generation, may determine us as to the time which God continues to carry on the

work of salvation for his church, both with respect to the beginning and end. It is from generation to generation, *i.e.* throughout all generations; beginning with the generations of men on the earth and not ending till these generations end. — And therefore we deduce from these words this —

## DOCTRINE.

The work of redemption is a work that God carries on from the fall of man to the end of the world.

THE generations of mankind on the earth which began after the fall, by ordinary generation, are partakers of the corruption of nature that followed from it, and these generations, by which the human race is propagated, shall continue to the end of the world. These two are the limits of the generations of men on the earth the fall of man, and the end of the world, or the day of judgment. The same are the limits of the work of redemption, as to those progressive works of God, by which that redemption is brought about and accomplished, though not as to the fruits of it for they shall be to eternity. The work of redemption and the work of salvation are the same thing. What is sometimes in Scripture called God's saving his people, is in other places called his redeeming them. So Christ is called both the Saviour and the Redeemer of his people.

BEFORE entering on the proposed History of the Work of Redemption, I would explain the terms made use of in the doctrine;—and show what those things are that are designed to be accomplished by this great work of God.

FIRST. I would show in what sense the TERMS of the doctrine are used;—particularly the word redemption;—and, how this is a work of God, carried on from the fall of man to the end of the world.

**I.** The use of the word redemption. — And here it may be observed, that the work of redemption is sometimes understood in a more limited sense, for the purchase of salvation, for the word strictly signifies, a purchase of deliverance. If we take the word in this restrained sense, the work of redemption was not so long in doing; but was begun and finished with Christ's humiliation. It was begun with Christ's incarnation, carried on through his life, and finished with the time of his remaining under the power of death, which ended in his resurrection. And so we say that on

the day of his resurrection Christ finished the work of redemption, *i.e.* then the purchase was finished, and the work itself, and all that appertained to it, was virtually done and finished, but not actually.

But sometimes the work of redemption is taken more largely, as including all that God accomplishes tending to this end, not only the purchase itself, but also all God's works that were properly preparatory to the purchase, and accomplishing the success of it. So that the whole dispensation, as it includes the preparation and purchase, the application and success of Christ's redemption, is here called the work of redemption. All that Christ does in this great affair as Mediator, in any of his offices, either of prophet, priest, or king, either when he was in this world, in his human nature, or before, or since. And it includes not only what Christ the Mediator has done, but also what the Father or the Holy Ghost, have done, as united or confederated in this design of redeeming sinful men or, in one word, all that is wrought in execution of the external covenant of redemption. This is what I call the work of redemption in the doctrine, for it is all but one work, one design. The various dispensations or works that belong to it, are but the several parts of one scheme. It is but one design that is formed, to which all the offices of Christ directly tend, and in which all the persons of the Trinity conspire. All the various dispensations that belong to it are united; and the several wheels are one machine, to answer one end, and produce one effect.

**II.** When I say, this work is carried on from the fall of man to the end of the world; in order to the full understanding of my meaning in it, I would desire two or three things to be observed.

**1.** That it is not meant, that nothing was done in order to it before fall of man. Some things were done before the world was created, yea from eternity. The persons of the Trinity were, as it were, confederated in a design, and a covenant of redemption. In this covenant the Father had appointed the Son, and the Son had undertaken the work; and all things to be accomplished in the work were stipulated and agreed. There were things done at the creation of the world, in order to that work; for the world itself seems to have been created in order to it. The work of creation was in order to God's works of providence. So that if it be inquired, which are greatest, the works of creation or those of providence? I answer, the works

of Providence; because those of providence are the end of his works of creation, as the building of a house, or the forming of a machine, is for its use. But God's main work of providence is this of redemption, as will more fully appear hereafter.

The creation of heaven was in order to the work of redemption, as a habitation for the redeemed,

“Then shall the King say unto them on his right, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” (<sup>4153</sup>Matthew 25:34)

Even the angels were created to be employed in this work. And therefore the apostle calls them,

“ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation,” (<sup>8014</sup>Hebrews 1:14)

As to this lower world, it was doubtless created to be a stage upon which this great and wonderful work of redemption should be transacted: and therefore, as might be shown, in many respects this lower world is wisely fitted in its formation, for such a state of man as he is in since the fall, under a possibility of redemption. So that when it is said, that the work of redemption is carried on from the fall of man to the end of the world, it is not meant, that all that ever has done in order to redemption has been done since the fall. Nor,

**2.** Is it meant that there evils be no remaining fruits of this work after the end of the world. That glory and blessedness that will be the sum of all the fruits, will remain to all the saints for ever. The work of redemption is not a work always doing and never accomplished. The fruits of it are eternal, but the work has an issue. In the issue the end will be obtained, which end will last for ever. As those things which were in order to this work-God's electing love, and the covenant of redemption-never had a beginning; so the fruits of this work never will have an end. And therefore,

**3.** When it is said in the doctrine, that this is a work that God is carrying on from the fall of man to the end of the world, what I mean is, that those things which belong to this work itself, and are parts of the scheme, are all this while accomplishing. There were some things done preparatory to its

beginning and the fruits of it will remain after it is finished. But the work itself was begun immediately upon the fall, and will continue to the end of the world. The various dispensations of God during this space belong to the same work, and to the same design, and leave all one issue, and therefore are all to be reckoned but as several successive motions of one machine, to bring about in the conclusion one great event.

And here also we must distinguish between the parts of redemption itself, and the pure of the work by which that redemption is wrought out. There is a difference between the parts of the benefits, and the parts of the work of God by which those benefits were procured and bestowed. For example, the redemption of Israel out of Egypt, considered as the benefit which they enjoyed, consisted of two parts, viz. their deliverance from their former Egyptian bondage and misery, and their being brought into a more happy state, as the servants of God and heirs of Canaan. But there are many more things which are parts, of that work. To this belongs his calling of Moses, his sending him to Pharaoh, and all the signs and wonders he wrought in Egypt. and his bringing such terrible judgments on the Egyptians, and many other things.

Such is this work by which God effects redemption, and it is carried on from the fall of man to the end of the world, in two respects.

**1.** With respect to the elect wrought on the souls of the redeemed; which is common to all ages. This effect is the application of redemption with respect to the souls of particular persons, in converting, justifying, sanctifying, and glorifying them. By these things they are actually redeemed, and receive the benefit of the work in its effects. And in this sense the work of redemption is carried on in all ages, from the fall of man to the end of the world. The work of God in converting souls, opening blind eyes, unstopping deaf ears, raising; dead souls to life, and rescuing the miserable captives out of the hands of Satan was begun soon after the fall of man, has been carried on in the world ever since to this day, and will be to the end of the world. God has always had such a church in the world. Though oftentimes it has been reduced to a very narrow compass, and to low circumstances, yet it has never wholly failed.

And as God carries on the work of converting the souls of fallen men through all ages, so he goes on to justify them, to blot out all their sins,

and to accept them as righteous in his sight, through the righteousness of Christ. He goes on to adopt and receive them from being the children of Satan, to be his own children; to carry on the work of his grace which he has begun in them, to comfort them with the consolations of his Spirit, and to bestow upon them, when their bodies die, that eternal glory which is the fruit of Christ's purchase. What is said, ~~ROM~~ Romans 8:30. "Whom he did predestinate, them he also called and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified: is applicable to all ages, from the fall to the end of the world. And the way of effecting this, is carried on by repeating continually the same work over again, though in different persons, from age to age. But,

**2.** The work of redemption with respect to the grand design in general, as it respects the universal subject and end, is carried on — not merely by repeating or renewing the same effect in the different subjects of it, but — by many successive works and dispensations of God, all tending to one great effect, united as the several parts of a scheme, and all together making up one great work. Like a temple that is building; first, the workmen are sent forth, then the materials are gathered, the ground is fitted, and the foundation laid; then the superstructure is erected, one part after another, till at length the top-stone is laid, and all is finished. Now the work of redemption in this large sense, may be compared to such a building. God began it immediately after the fall, and will proceed to the end of the world. Then shall the top-stone be brought forth, and all will appear complete and glorious.

This work is carried on in the former respect, as being an effect common to all ages; and in the latter respect—the grand design in general—not only by that which is common to all ages, but by successive works wrought in different ages. All are parts of one great scheme, whereby one work is brought about by various steps, one step in one age, and another in another. It is this last that I shall chiefly insist upon, though not excluding the former; for one necessarily supposes the other.

Having thus explained what I mean by the terms of the doctrine; I now proceed,

SECONDLY, to show what is the design of this great work, or what things are designed to be accomplished by it. In order to see how any design is

carried on, we must first know what it is. To know for instance, how a workman proceeds, and to understand the various steps he takes in order to accomplish a piece of work, we need to be informed what he intends to accomplish; otherwise we may stand try, seeing him do one thing after another, and be quite puzzler, because we see nothing of his scheme. Suppose an architect, with a great number of hands, were building some great palace; and one that was a stranger to such things should stand by, and see some men digging in the earth, others bringing timber, others hewing stones, and the like, he might see that there was a great deal done; but if he knew not the design, it would ill appear to him confusion. And therefore, that the great works and dispensations of God which belong to this great affair of redemption may not appear like confusion to you, I would set before you briefly the main things designed to be accomplished.

**I.** It is to put all God's enemies under his feet, and that his goodness may finally appear triumphant over all evil. Soon after the world was created, evil entered into the world in the fall of the angels and man. Presently after God had made rational creatures, there were enemies who rose up against him from among them; and in the fall of man evil entered into this lower world; where also God's enemies rose up against him. Satan endeavoured to frustrate his design in the creation of his lower world, to destroy his workmanship, to wrest the government of it out of his hands, to usurp the throne. and set up himself as the God of this world, instead of him who made it. To these ends he introduced sin into the world; and having made man God's enemy, he introduced guilt, and death, and the most dreadful misery.

Now one great design of God, in the affair of redemption, was to subdue those enemies: <sup><1COR></sup>1 Corinthians 15:25. "He must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet." Things were originally so planned, that he might disappoint, confound, and triumph over Satan; and that he might be bruised under Christ's feet, <sup><GEN></sup>Genesis 3:15. The promise was given, that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. It was a part of God's original design in this work, to destroy the works of the devil, and confound him in all his purposes:

"For this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that he might  
destroy the works of the devil." (<sup><1JOH></sup>1 John 3:8)

It was a part of his design, to triumph over sin, and over the corruptions of men, and to root them out of the hearts of his people, by conforming them to himself. He designed also, that his grace should triumph over man's guilt, and sin's infinite demerit. Again. it was a part of his design, to triumph over death; and however this is the last enemy that shall be destroyed, yet that shall finally be vanquished and destroyed. Thus God appears glorious above all evil, and triumphant over all his enemies by the work of redemption.

**II.** God's design was perfectly to restore all the ruins of the fall, so far as concerns the elect part of the world, by his Son, and therefore we read of the restitution of all things, <sup><442></sup>Acts 3:21. "Whom the heaven must receive, until the times of the restitution of all things; and of the times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord Jesus." <sup><449></sup>Acts 3:19. "Repent ye therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord."

Man's soul was ruined by the fall; the image of God was defaced, man's nature was corrupted, and he became dead in sin. The design of God was, to restore the soul of man to life and the divine image in conversion, to carry on the change in sanctification, and to perfect it in glory. Man's body was ruined; by the fall it became subject to death. The design of God was, to restore it from this ruin, and not only to deliver it from death in the resurrection, but to deliver it from mortality itself, in making it like unto Christ's glorious body. The world was ruined, as to man as effectually as if it had been reduced to chaos again, all heaven and earth were overthrown. Put the design of God was, to restore all, and as it were to create a new heaven and a new earth: <sup><2547></sup>Isaiah 54:17. "Behold, I create new heavens, and a new earth, and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind." <sup><608></sup>2 Peter 3:13. "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens, and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

The work by which this was to be done, was begun immediately after the fall, and so is carried on till all is finished, when the whole world, heaven and earth, shall be restored. There shall be, as it were, new heavens, and a new earth, in a spiritual sense, at the end of the world. Thus it is represented,

“And I saw a new heaven, and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away.” (Revelation 21:1)

**III.** Another great design of God in the work of redemption, was to gather together in one all things in Christ, in heaven and in earth, *i.e.* all elect creatures; to bring all elect creatures, in heaven and in earth, to an union one to another in one body, under one head, and to unite all together in one body to God the Father. This was begun soon after the fall, and is carried on through all ages, and shall be finished at the end of the world.

**IV.** God designed by this work to perfect and complete the, glory of all the elect by Christ-glory, “such as we hath not seen, nor ear heard, not has ever entered into the heart of man.” He intended to bring them to perfect excellency and beauty in his holy image, which is the proper beauty of spiritual beings; and to advance them to a glorious degree of honour, and raise them to an ineffable height of pleasure and joy. Thus he designed to glorify the whole church of elect men in soul and body, and with them to bring the glory of the elect angels to its highest elevation under one head.

**V.** In all this God designed to accomplish the glory of the blessed Trinity in an eminent degree. God had a design of glorifying himself from eternity, yea, to glorify each person in the Godhead. The end must be considered as first in order of nature, and then the means; and therefore we must conceive, that God having professed this end, had then as it were the means to choose; and the principal mean that he adopted was this great work of redemption. It was his design in this work to glorify his only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ; end by the Son to glorify the Father: John 13:31, 32. “Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God be glorified in him, God also shall glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him.” It was his design that the Son should thus be glorified, and should glorify the Father by what should be accomplished by the Spirit to the glory of the Spirit, that the whole Trinity conjunctly, and each person singly, might be exceedingly glorified. The work that was the appointed means of this, was begun immediately after the fall, and is carried on till, and finished at, the end of the world, when all this intended glory shall be fully accomplished in all things.

HAVING thus explained the terms in the doctrine, and shown what things are to be accomplished by this great work of God, I proceed now to the

proposed history; that is, to show how what was designed by the work of redemption has been accomplished, in the various steps of this work, from the fall of man to the end of the world. In order to this, I would divide this whole space of time into three periods: — the

**1st**, reaching from the fall of man to the incarnation of Christ — the

**2nd**, from Christ's incarnation till his resurrection; or the whole time of Christ's humiliation; — the

**3rd**, from thence to the end of the world.

Some may be ready to think this a very unequal division, and so indeed it is in some respects, because the second period, although so much shorter than either of the other-being but between thirty and forty years, whereas both the other contain thousands—in this affair is more than both the others. — I would therefore proceed to show distinctly how the work of redemption is carried on through each of these periods in their order, under three propositions.

**I.** That from the fall of man to the incarnation of Christ, God was doing those things which were preparatory to his coming, as forerunners and earnest of it.

**II.** That the time from Christ's incarnation to his resurrection, was spent in procuring and purchasing redemption.

**III.** That the space of time from the resurrection of Christ to the end of the world, is all taken up in bringing about or accomplishing the great effect or success of that purpose.

In a particular consideration of these three propositions, the great truth taught in the doctrine may perhaps appear in a clear light.

# PERIOD 1

## FROM THE FALL TO THE INCARNATION.

THE great works God in the world during this whole space of time, were all preparatory. There were many great changes and revolutions in the world, and they were all only the turning of the wheels of Providence to make way for the coming of Christ, and what he was to do in the world. Hither tended especially all God's great works towards his church. The church was under various dispensations of providence, and in very various circumstances, before Christ came; but all these dispensations were to prepare the way for his coming. God wrought salvation for the souls of men through all that space of time, though the number was very small to what it was afterwards; and all this was by way of anticipation. All the souls that were saved before Christ came, were only the earnest of the future harvest.

God wrought many deliverances for his church and people before Christ came; but these were only so many images and forerunners of the great salvation. The church during that space of time enjoyed the light of divine revelation. They had in a degree the light of the gospel. But all these revelations were only so many earnest of the great light that he should bring who came to be the light of the world. That whole space of time was the time of night, wherein the church of God was not indeed wholly without light; but it was like the light of the moon and stars; a dim light in comparison of the light of the sun, and mixed with a great deal of darkness. It had no glory by reason of the glory that excelleth, ~~and~~ 1 Corinthians 3:10. The church had indeed the light of the sun, but it was only as reflected from the moon and stars. The church all that while was a minor.

~~and~~ Colossians 4:1-3. "Now say, that the heir as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; but is under tutors and governors, until the time appointed of the Father. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world."

But here, for the greater clearness and distinctness, shall subdivide this period into parts:

**1st**, From the fall to the flood.

**2nd**, From thence to the calling of Abraham.

**3rd**, From thence to Moses.

**4th**, From thence to David.

**5th**, From David to the Captivity in Babylon.

**6th**, From thence to the incarnation of Christ.

## PART 1

### FROM THE FALL TO THE FLOOD.

THOUGH this period was the most distant from Christ's incarnation; yet then was tints glorious building begun.

**I.** As soon as man fell, Christ entered on his mediatorial work. Then it was that he began to execute the work and office of a mediator. He had undertaken it before the world was made. He stood engaged with the Father to appear as man's mediator, and to take on that office when there should be occasion, from all eternity. But now the time was come. Christ the eternal Son of God clothed himself with the mediatorial character, and therein presented himself before the Father. He immediately stepped in between a holy, infinite, offended Majesty, and offending mankind. He was accepted in his interposition; and so wrath was prevented from going forth in the full execution of that amazing curse that man had brought on himself.

It is manifest that Christ began to exercise the office of mediator between God and man as soon as ever man fell, because mercy began to be exercised towards man immediately. There was mercy in the forbearance of God, that he did not destroy him, as he did the angels when they fell. But there is no mercy exercised toward fallen man but through a mediator. "If God had not in mercy restrained Satan, he would immediately have seized on his prey. Christ began to do the part of an intercessor for man as soon as he fell; for there is no mercy exercised towards man but what is obtained

through Christ's intercession. From that day Christ took on him the care of the church, in the exercise of all his offices. He undertook to teach mankind in the exercise of his prophetic office to intercede for fallen man in his priestly office: and to govern the church and the world as a king. He from that time took upon him the care of defending his elect church from all their enemies. When Satan, the grand enemy, had conquered and overthrown man, the business of resisting and conquering him was committed to Christ. He thenceforward undertook to manage that subtle powerful adversary. He was then appointed the Captain of the Lord's hosts, the Captain of their salvation. Henceforward this lower world, with all its concerns, devolved upon the Son of God: for when man had sinned, God the Father would have no more to do immediately with this world of mankind, that had apostatized from and rebelled against him. He would henceforward act only through a mediator, either in teaching men, or in governing, or bestowing any benefits on there.

And therefore, when we read in sacred history what God did, from time to time, towards his church and people. and how he revealed himself to them, we are to understand it especially of the second person of the Trinity. When we read of God appearing after the fall, in some risible form or outward symbol of his presence, we are ordinarily, if not universally, to understand it of the second parson of the Trinity. <B18 John 1:18. "No man hath seen God at any time the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." He is therefore called "the image of the invisible God," <B15 Colossians 1:15. intimating, that though God the Father be invisible, yet Christ is his image or representation, by which he is seen.

Yea, not only this lower world devolved on Christ, that he might have the care and government of it, and order it agreeably to his design of redemption, but also in some respect the whole universe. The angels from that time are subject to him in his mediatorial office, as is manifest by the scripture history, wherein we have accounts of their acting as ministering spirits in the affairs of the church.

And therefore we may suppose, that immediately on the fall of Adam it was made known in heaven among the angels, that God had a design of redemption with respect to fallen man; that Christ had now taken upon him the office and work of a mediator between God and man; and that

they were to be subservient to him in this office. And as Christ, in this office, has been solemnly installed the King of heaven, and is thenceforward, as God-man the Light, the Sun of heaven, (agreeable to ~~Revelation~~ Revelation 21:23.) so this revelation made in heaven among the angels, was as it were the first dawning of this light there. When Christ ascended into heaven after his passion, and was solemnly enthroned, then this Sun rose in heaven, even the Lamb that is the light of the New Jerusalem.

**II.** Presently upon this the gospel was first revealed on earth. in these words,

“And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.” (~~Genesis~~ Genesis 3:15)

We must suppose, that God’s intention of redeeming fallen man was first signified in heaven before it was signified on earth, because the business of the angels as ministering spirits of the Mediator required it; for as soon as ever Christ had taken on him the work of a mediator, it was requisite that the angels should be ready immediately to be subservient to him in that office so that the light first dawned in heaven; but very soon after the same was signified on earth. In those words of God there was an intimation of another sorely to be appointed for man, after the first surety had failed. This was the first revelation of the covenant of grace; the first dawning of the light of the gospel on earth.

This lower world before the fall enjoyed noon-day light; the light of the knowledge of God, the light of his glory and the light of his favour. But when man fell, all this light was at once extinguished, and the world reduced back again to total darkness; a worse darkness than that which was in the beginning of the world, (~~Genesis~~ Genesis 1:2.) Darkness was upon her face of the deep, a darkness a thousand times more remediless than that. Neither men nor angels could find out any way whereby this darkness might be scattered. It appeared in its blackness when Adam and his wife saw that they were naked, and served fig-leaves; when they heard the voice of the Lord God, walking in the garden, and hid themselves among the trees. When God first called them to an account, and said to Adam, “What is this that thou hast done? Thou hast eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee, that thou shouldst not eat?” Then we may

suppose that their hearts were filled with shame and terror. But these words of God, (~~GEN~~ Genesis 3:15) were the first dawning of gospel light, after this dismal darkness. Before this there was not one glimpse of light, any beam of comfort, or the least hope. It was an obscure yet comprehensive revelation of the gospel; not indeed made to Adam or Eve directly, but contained in what God said to the serpent.

Here was a certain intimation of a merciful design by “the seed of the woman,” which was like the first glimmering of the light in the east when the day first dawns. This intimation of mercy was given, even before sentence was pronounced on either Adam or Eve from tenderness to them, lest they should be overborne with a sentence of condemnation, without having any thing held forth whence they could gather any hope.

One of those great things that were intended to be done by the work of redemption, is more plainly intimated. viz. God subduing his enemies under the feet of his Son. God’s design of this was now first declared. Satan probably had triumphed greatly in the fall of man, as thouell he had defeated the designs of God in his creation. But in these words God gives him a plain intimation, that he should not finally triumph, but that a complete victory and triumph should be obtained over him by the seed of the woman.

This revelation of the gospel was the first shine that Christ did in his prophetic office From the fall of man to the incarnation of Christ, God was doing those things that were preparatory to Christ’s coming to effect redemption, and were forerunners and earnest of it. And one of those things was to foretell and promise it, as he did from age to age, till Christ came. This was the first promise given, the first prediction that ever was made of it.

**III.** Soon after this, the custom of sacrificing was appointed, to be a standing type of the sacrifice of Christ, till he should come, and offer up himself a sacrifice to God. Sacrificing was not a custom first established by the Levitical law, for it had been a part of God’s instituted worship from the beginning. We read of the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, offering sacrifice, and before them Noah, and Abel. And this was by divine appointment: for it was part of God’s worship in his church, which was offered up in faith, and which he accepted. This proves that it was by his

institution; for sacrificing is no part of natural worship. The light of nature doth not teach men to offer up beasts in sacrifice to God; and seeing it was not enjoined by the law of nature, to be acceptable to God, it must be by some positive command or institution; for God has declared his abhorrence of such worship as is taught by the precept of men without his institution. (<sup><29B></sup>Isaiah 29:13.) And such worship as hath not a warrant from divine institution, cannot be offered up in faith, because faith has no foundation where there is no divine appointment. Men have no warrant to hope for God's acceptance, in that which is not of his appointment, and in that to which he hath not promised his acceptance: and therefore it follows, that the custom of offering sacrifices to God was instituted soon after the fall; for the scripture teaches us, that Abel offered "the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof," <sup><00D></sup>Genesis 4:4. and that he was accepted of God in this offering, <sup><58D></sup>Hebrews 11:4. And there is nothing in the story intimate that the institution was first given when Abel offered up that sacrifice to God; but rather that Abel only complied with a custom already established.

It is very probable that sacrifice was instituted immediately after God had revealed the covenant of grace, (<sup><00B></sup>Genesis 3:15.) as the foundation on which the custom of sacrificing was built. That promise was the first stone laid towards this glorious building, the work of redemption, and the next stone, the institution of sacrifices, to be a type of the great sacrifice.

The next thing that we have an account of, after God had pronounced sentence on the serpent, on the woman, and on the man, was, that God made them coats of skins, and clothed them, which, by the generality of divines, are thought to be the skins of beasts slain in sacrifice. For we have no account of any thing else that should be the occasion of man's slaying beasts, except to offer them in sacrifice, till after the flood. Men were not wont to eat the flesh of beasts as their common food till after the flood. The first food of man before the fall, was the fruit of the trees of paradise; and after the fall, his food was the produce of the field:

**"And thou shalt eat the herb of the field."** (<sup><00B></sup>Genesis 3:18)

he first grant that he had to eat flesh, as his common food, was after the flood. <sup><00B></sup>Genesis 9:3. "Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things." So that it is likely

that these skins with which Adam and Eve were clothed; were the skins of their sacrifices. God's clothing them with these was a lively figure of their being clothed with the righteousness of Christ. It was God that gave them this clothing; for it is said, God made them coats of skins, and clothed them. The righteousness with which we are clothed, is of God. It is he only clothes the naked soul.

Our first parents, who were naked, were clothed at the expense of life. Beasts were slain, in order to afford them clothing. So doth Christ, to afford clothing to our naked souls. The tabernacle in the wilderness, which signified the church, was covered with rams skins died red, as though they were dipped in blood, to signify that Christ's righteousness was wrought out through the pains of death, under which he shed his precious blood.

We observed before, that the light that the church enjoyed from the fall of man, till Christ came was like the light which we enjoy in the night; not the light of the sun directly, but as reflected from the moon and other luminaries; which light prefigured Christ, the sun of righteousness that was afterwards to arise. This light they had chiefly two ways; one was by predictions of Christ to come; the other was by types and shadows, whereby his coming and redemption were prefigured. The first thing that was done to prepare the way for Christ in the former of these ways, was in that promise noticed in the forgoing particular; and the first thing of the latter kind, was that institution of sacrifices that we are now upon. As that promise in Genesis 3:15. Was the first dawn of gospel-light after the fall in prophecy; so the institution of sacrifices was the first hint of it in types. The former was done in pursuance of Christ's prophetic office; in the latter, Christ exhibited himself in his priestly office.

The institution of sacrifices was a great thing done towards preparing the way for Christ's coming, and working out redemption. For the sacrifices of the Old Testament were the main of all the Old Testament types Christ and his redemption; and it tended to establish in the minds of God's visible church the necessity of a propitiatory sacrifice, in order to the Deity's being satisfied for sin; and so prepared the way for the reception of the glorious gospel, that reveals the great sacrifice in the visible church, and not only so, but through the world of mankind. For from this institution of sacrifices all nations derived the custom of sacrificing to the

gods, to atone for their sins. No nation however barbarous, was the Christian religion; for no nation except the Jews, could tell how they came by this custom, or to what purpose it was to offer sacrifices to the deities. The light of nature did not teach them any such thing. That did not teach them that the gods were hungry, and fed upon the flesh which they burnt in sacrifice; and yet they all had that they derived it from Noah, who had it from his ancestors on whom God had enjoined it as a type of the great sacrifice of Christ. However, by this means all nations of the world had their minds possessed with this notion, that an atonement or sacrifice for sin was necessary; and way was made for their more readily receiving the great doctrine of the gospel, the atonement and sacrifice of Christ.

**IV.** God soon after the fall began actually to save the souls of men through Christ's redemption. In this, Christ, who had lately taken upon him the work of mediator between God and man, did first begin that work, wherein he appeared in the exercise of his kingly office, as in the sacrifices he was represented in his priestly office, and in the first prediction of redemption by Christ he had appeared in the exercise of his prophetic office. In that prediction the light of Christ's redemption first began to dawn in the prophecies of it; in the institution of sacrifices it first began to dawn in the types of it; in this, viz. his beginning actually to save men, it first began to dawn in the, fruit of it.

It is probable, therefore, that Adam and Eve were the first fruits of Christ's redemption, it is probable by God's manner of treating them, by his comforting them as he did, after their awakenings and tumor. They were awakened, and ashamed with a sense of their guilt, after their eyes were opened, and they saw that they were naked, and sewed fig leaves to cover their nakedness; as the sinner, under the first awakenings, is wont to endeavour to hide the nakedness of his soul, by a fancied righteousness of his own. Then they were further terrified and awakened, by hearing the voice of God as he was coming to condemn them. Their coverings of fig-leaves do not answer the purpose, but notwithstanding these, they ran to hide themselves among the trees of the garden, because they were naked, not daring to trust to their fig leaves to hide their nakedness from God. Then they were further awakened by God's calling of them to a strict account. But while their terrors were raised to such a height, and they stood, as we may suppose, trembling and astonished before their Judge,

without any expedient whence they could gather any hope then, God took care to hold forth some encouragement to keep them from the dreadful effects of despair under their awakenings by giving a hint of a design of mercy by a Savior even before he pronounced sentence against them. And when after this he proceeded to pronounce sentence whereby we may suppose their terrors were further raised. God soon after took care to encourage them and to let them see that he had not wholly cast them off by taking a fatherly care of them in their fallen, naked, and miserable state, by making them coats of skins and clothing them. Which also manifested an acceptance of those sacrifices that they offered to God which were types of what God had promised, when he said, “The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent’s head. This promise, there is reason to think, they believed and embraced. Eve seems plainly to express her hope in and dependence on that promise, in what she says at the birth of Cain, ~~Gen~~ Genesis 4:1. “I have gotten a man from the Lord;” *i.e.* as God has promised, that my seed should bruise the serpent’s head; so now has God given me this pledge and token of it, and I have a seed born. She plainly owns, that this child was from god, and hoped that her promised seed was to be of this, her eldest son; though she was mistaken, as Abraham was with respect to Ishmael, as Isaac was with respect to Esau, and as Samuel was with respect to the first-born of Jesse. And especially does what she said at the birth of Seth, express her hope and dependence on the promise of God; (verse 25) “For God hath appointed me another seed, instead of Abel, whom Cain slew.”

Thus it is exceeding probable if not evident, that as Christ took on him the work of mediator as soon as man fell; so that he now immediately began his work of redemption in its effect, and that he immediately encountered his great enemy the devil, whom he had undertaken to conquer and rescued those two first captives out of his hands; therein baffling him soon after his triumph over them, whereby he had made them his captives. And though he seemed sure of them and all their posterity, Christ the Redeemer soon showed him, that he was mistaken. He let him see it, in delivering those first captives, and so soon gave him an instance of the fulfillment of that threatening, “The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent’s head;” and in this instance a presage of his subduing all his enemies under his feet.

After this we have another instance of redemption in one of their children, righteous Abel, as the Scripture calls him; whose was the first that went to heaven through Christ's redemption. In him we have at least the first recorded instance of the death of a redeemed person. If he was the first, then as the redemption of Christ began to dawn before in the souls of men in their conversion and justification, in him it first began to dawn in glorification; and in him the angels began first to do the Dart of ministering spirits to Christ, in going forth to conduct to glory the souls of the redeemed. And in him the elect angels in heaven had the first opportunity to see so wonderful a thing as the soul of one of the fallen race of mankind, that had been sunk by the fall into such an abyss of sin and misery, brought to heaven, and in the enjoyment of heavenly glory, which was a much greater thing than if they had seen him resumed to the earthly paradise. Thus they saw the glorious effect of Christ's redemption, in the great honour and happiness that was procured for sinful, miserable creatures.

**V.** The next remarkable thing that God did in further carrying on this great redemption, was the first uncommon pouring out of the Spirit, through Christ, in the days of Folios. We read,

“Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord.”

( Genesis 4:26)

The meaning of those words has been considerably controverted among divines. We cannot suppose the meaning is, that then first men performed the duty of prayer. Prayer is a duty of natural religion, and a duty to which a spirit of piety does most naturally lead men. Prayer is the very breath of a spirit of piety, we cannot suppose therefore, that holy men before, for above two hundred years, had lived without prayer. Therefore some divines think, that the meaning is that then men first began to perform public worship, or to call upon the name of the Lord in public assemblies. However, thus much must necessarily be understood by it, viz. that there was something new in the visible church of God with respect to calling upon the name of the Lord; that there was a great addition to the performance of this duty, and that in some respect or other it was carried far beyond what it ever had been before, which must be the consequence of a remarkable pouring out of the Spirit of God.

If it was now first that men were stirred up to meet in assemblies m assist one another in seeking God, so as they never had done before; it argues something extraordinary as the cause, and could be from nothing but the uncommon influences of God's Spirit. We see by experience, that a remarkable pouring out of God's Spirit is always attended with such an effect, viz. a great increase of the performance of the duty of prayer. When the Spirit of God begins to work on men s hearts, it immediately sets them to calling on the name of the Lord. As it was with Paul after the Spirit of God had arrested him; Behold, he prayeth so it has been in all remarkable effusions of the Spirit of God recorded in Scripture, and so it is foretold it will be in the latter days. It is foretold, that the Holy Spirit will be poured out as a spirit of grace and supplication, ~~<3820>~~Zechariah 12:10. See also ~~<3820>~~Zephaniah 3:9. "For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent.

And when it is said, "Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord," no more can be intended by it, than that this was the first remarkable season of this nature that ever was. It was the beginning, or the first, of such a work of God. In this manner such an expression is commonly used in Scripture: so, ~~<0485>~~1 Samuel 14:35. "And Saul built an altar unto the Lord; the same was the first altar that he build onto the Lord." In the Hebrew it is, as you may see in the margin, that altar he began to build unto the Lord.

**"How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation, which first began to be spoken by the Lord?" (~~<3820>~~Hebrews 2:3)**

It may here be observed, that from the fall of man, to our day, the work of redemption in its effect has mainly been carried on by remarkable communications of the Spirit of God. Though there be a more constant influence of God's Spirit always in some degree attending his ordinances; yet the way in which the greatest Things have been done towards carrying on this work, always have been by remarkable effusions, at special seasons of mercy, as may fully appear hereafter in our further prosecution of our subjects And this in the days of Enos, was the first remarkable pouring out of the Spirit of God that ever was. There had been a saving work of God on the hearts of some before; but now God was pleased to bring in a harvest of souls to Christ; so that in this we see that great

building, of which God laid the foundation immediately after the fall of man, carried on further, and built higher, than ever it had been before.

**VI.** The next thing I shall notice, is the eminently holy life of Enoch, who, we have reason to think, was a saint of greater eminency than any that had been before him; so that in this respect the work of redemption was carried OF to a still greater height. With respect to its effect in the visible church in general, we observed above how it was carried higher in the days of Enoch than ever it had been before. Probably Enoch was one of the saints of that harvest; for he lived all the days that he did live on earth, in the days of Enoch. And with respect to the degree to which this work was carried in the soul of a particular person, it was raised to a greater height in Enoch than ever before. His soul, built on Christ, was built up in holiness to a greater height than any preceding instance. He was a wonderful instance of Christ's redemption, and of the efficacy of his grace.

**VII.** In Enoch's time, God more expressly revealed the coming of Christ than he had before done. Jude, verse 14, 15. "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them, of their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." Here Enoch prophesies of the coming of Christ. It does not seem to be confined to any particular coming of Christ, but it has respect in general to Christ's coming in his kingdom, and is fulfilled in a degree in both his first and second coming; and indeed in every remarkable manifestation Christ has made of himself in the world, for the saving of his people, and the destroying of his enemies. It is very parallel in this respect with many other prophecies of the Old Testament, and, in particular, with that great prophecy of Christ's coming in his kingdom, whence the Jews principally took their notion of the kingdom of heaven, ~~and~~ Daniel 7:10. "A fiery stream issued, and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened." And verse 13, 14. "I say, in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of man, came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him appear before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and

languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.” And though it is not unlikely that Enoch might have a more immediate respect in this prophecy to the approaching destruction of the old world by the flood, which was a remarkable resemblance of Christ’s destruction of all his enemies at his second coming, yet it doubtless looked beyond the type to the antitype.

And as this prophecy of Christ’s coming is more express than any preceding it; so it is an instance of the increase of that gospel-light which began to dawn presently after the fall of man; and of that building which is the subject of our Present discourse, being yet further carried on, and built up higher than it had been before.

And here, be the way, I would observe, that the increase of gospel-light, and the progress of the work of redemption, as it respects the church in general, from its erection to the end of the world, is very similar to the progress of the same word and the same light, in a particular soul, from the time of its conversion, till it is perfected and crowned in glory. Sometimes the light shines brighter, and at other times sometimes grace prevails, at other times it seems to languish for a great while together; now corruption prevails, and then grace revives again. But in general grace is growing: from its first infusion, till it is perfected in glory, the kingdom of Christ is building up in the soul. so it is with respect to the great affair in general, as it relates to the universal subject of it, and as it is carried on from its first beginning, till it is perfected at the end of the world.

**VIII.** The next remarkable thing towards carrying on this work, was the translation of Enoch into heaven.

“And Enoch walked with God, and he was not; for God took him.”  
(~~GEN~~ Genesis 5:24.)

Moses, in giving an account of the genealogy of those that were of the line of Noah, does not say concerning Enoch, he lived so long and he died, as he does of the rest; but, he wilt not, for God took him; *i.e.* he translated him; in body and soul carried him to heaven without aging, as it is explained in ~~HEB~~ Hebrews 11:5. “By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death.” By this wonderful work of God, the work of

redemption was carried to a greater height, in several respects, than it had been before.

When showing what God aimed at in the work of redemption, or what were the main things he intended to bring to pass; among other things I mentioned the perfect restoration of the ruins of the fall, with respect to the elect, both in soul and body. Now this translation of Enoch was the first instance of restoration with respect to the body. There had been many instances of restoring, the soul of man by Christ's redemption, but none of redeeming and actually saving the body, till now. All the bodies of the elect are to be saved as well as their souls. At the end of the world, all their bodies shall actually be redeemed; those that then shall have been dead, by a resurrection, and others, that then shall be living, by causing them to undergo a glorious change. There was a number of the bodies of saints raised and glorified, at the resurrection of Christ; and before that there was an instance of a body glorified in Elijah. But the first instance of all was this of Enoch.

By this, the work of redemption was carried on still further; as, this wonderful work of God afforded a great increase of gospel-light to the church, hereby it had a clearer manifestation of a nature state, and of the glorious reward of the saints by heaven. We are told,

“That life and immortality are brought to light by the gospel.”

( 2 Timothy 1:10.)

What was said in the Old Testament of a future state, is very obscure, in comparison with the more full, plain, and abundant revelation given of it in the New. But yet even in those early days, the church of God, in this instance, was favoured with an instance of it set before their eyes, in that one of their brethren was actually taken up in heaven without dying; which we have all reason to think the church of God knew then, as they afterwards knew Elijah's translation. And as this was a clearer manifestation of a future state than the church had enjoyed before, so it was a pledge or earnest of that future glorification of all the saints which God intended through the redemption of Jesus Christ.

**IX.** The next thing that I shall observe, was the upholding of the church of God in that family from which Christ was to proceed during that great and

general defection which preceded the flood. The church of God, in all probability, was small, in comparison with the rest of the world, from the time that mankind began to multiply; or from the time, (~~CHAP~~ Genesis 4:16.) “When Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of God ;” which being interpreted, is the land of banishment. The church seems to have been kept up chiefly in the posterity of Seth: for this was the seed that God appointed instead of Abel whom Cain slew. But we cannot reasonably suppose that Seth’s posterity were one fiftieth part of the world: “ For Adam was one hundred and thirty years old when Seth was born.” But Cain, who seems to have been the leader of those that were not of the church, was Adam’s eldest child, and probably was born soon after the fall, which doubtless was soon after Adam’s creation; so that there was time for Cain to have many sons before Seth was born; besides many other children, that probably Adam and Eve had before this time, agreeably to God’s blessings, “Be fruitful, and multiply and replenish the earth;” and many of these children might have children. The history of Cain before Seth was born, seems to imply, that there were great numbers of men on the earth: ~~CHAP~~ Genesis 4:14, 15. “Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth: and from thy face shall I be hid, and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth; and it shall come to pass, that every one that findeth me shall slay me. And the Lord said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him seven-fold. And the Lord set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him.” And all who existed when Seth was born, must be supposed to stand in equal capacity of multiplying their posterity with him; and therefore, Seth’s posterity were but a small part of the inhabitants of the world.

But after the days of Enos and Enoch, (for Enoch was translated before Enos died,) the church of God greatly diminished, in proportion as multitudes of the line of Seth, born in the church of God, fell away, and joined with the wicked world, principally by means of intermarriages with them: as ~~CHAP~~ Genesis 6:1, 2, 4. “And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose. — There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the

daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men, which were of old men of renown.” By the sons of God here, are doubtless meant the children of the church. It is a denomination often given them in Scripture. They intermarried with the wicked world, and so had their hearts led away from God: and there was a great and continual defection from the church. The church, that used to be a restraint on the wicked world, diminished exceeding, and so wickedness went on without restraint. Satan, that old serpent the devil, that tempted our first parents, and set up himself as the God of this world, rated exceedingly; and every imagination of the thoughts of man’s heart was only evil continually, and the earth was filled with violence. It seemed to be deluged with wickedness then, as it was with water afterwards; and mankind in general were swallowed up in it. And now Satan made a most violent and potent attempt to devour the church of God, and had almost done it. But yet God restored it in the midst of all this flood of wickedness and violence. He kept it up in that line of which Christ was to proceed. He would not suffer it to be destroyed, for a blessing was in it. There was a particular family, a root whence the branch of righteousness was afterwards to shoot forth. And therefore, however the branches were lopped off, and the tree seemed to be destroyed; yet God, in the midst of all, kept alive this root, by his wonderful redeeming power and grace, so that the gates of hell could not prevail against it.

Thus I have shown how God carried on the great affair of redemption; how the building went on during this first period, from the fall of man, till God brought the flood on the earth. And I would observe, that though the Mosaic history during that space be very short, yet it is exceedingly comprehensive and instructive. And it may also be profitable for us here to observe, the efficacy of that purchase of redemption which had such great effects so many ages before Christ actually appeared.

## PART 2

### FROM THE FLOOD TO THE CALLING OF ABRAHAM

I PROCEED now to show how the same work was carried on from the beginning of the flood till the calling of Abraham. For though that mighty,

universal deluge over threw the world: yet it did not overthrow this building of God, the work of redemption. This went on; and instead of being overthrown, continued to be built up, in order to a further preparation for the great Saviour's coming into the world for the redemption for his people.

**I.** The flood itself was a work of God that belonged to this great affair, and tended to promote it. All the mighty works of God from the fall of man to the end are reducible to this work; and if seen in a right view, will appear as parts of it; and so many steps for carrying, it on, and doubtless so great a work, so remarkable and universal a catastrophe, as the deluge was, cannot be excepted. Thereby God removed out of the way the enemies and obstacles that were ready to overthrow it.

Satan seems to have been in a dreadful rage just before the flood, and his rage then doubtless was, as it always has been, chiefly against the church of God to overthrow it, and he had filled the earth with violence and rage against it. He had drawn over almost all the world to be on his side, and they listed under his banner against Christ and his church. We read, that the earth was filled with violence, and doubtless that violence was chiefly against the church, in fulfilment of what was foretold, I will put enmity between thy seed and her seed. Their enmity and violence was so great, and the enemies of the church so numerous, the whole world being against it, that it was come to the last extremity. Noah's reproofs, and his preaching of righteousness, were utterly disregarded. God's Spirit had striven with them a hundred and twenty Years, but all in vain; and the church was reduced to so narrow limits, as to be confined to one family. There was no prospect of any thing else but of their totally swallowing up the church, and that in a very little time; and so wholly destroying that small root that had the blessing in it, whence the Redeemer was to proceed.

And therefore, God's destroying those enemies of the church by the flood belong; to this affair of redemption; for it was one thing that was done in fulfillment of the covenant of grace, as it was revealed to Adam: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head." This was only a destruction of the seed of the

serpent in the midst of their most violent race against the seed of the woman, when in the utmost peril by them.

We read in Scripture of scarce any destruction of nations but that one main reason given for it ii, their enmity and injuries against God's church, and doubtless this was one main reason of the destruction of all nations by the flood. The giants that were in those days, in all likelihood, got themselves renown by their great exploits against heaven, and against Christ and his church, the remaining sons of God that had not corrupted themselves.

We read, that just before the world shall be destroyed by fire, "the nations that are in the four quarters of the earth, shall gather together against the church as the sand of the sea, and shall go up on the breadth of the earth, and compass the camp at the saints about, and the beloved city; and then fire shall come down from God out of heaven, and devour them,"

~~6118~~ Revelation 20:8, 9. And it seems there was that which was very parallel to it, just before the world was destroyed by water. And therefore their destruction was a work of God that did as much belong to the work of redemption, as the destruction of the Egyptians belonged to the redemption of the children of Israel out of Egypt, or as the destruction of Sennacherib's mighty army, that had compassed about Jerusalem to destroy it, belonged to God's redemption of that city from them.

By means of this flood, all the enemies of God's church, against whom that little handful had no strength, were swept off at once. God took their part, appeared for them against their enemies, and drowned those of whom they had been afraid, in the flood of water, as he drowned the enemies of Israel that pursued them in the Red sea.

Indeed God could have taken other methods to deliver his church: he could have converted all the world instead of drowning it, and so he could have taken another method than drowning the Egyptians in the Red sea. But that is no argument, that the method he did take, was not a method to show his redeeming mercy to them.

By the deluge the enemies of God's people were dispossessed of the earth, and the whole earth was given to Noah and his family to possess it in quiet; as God made room for the Israelites in Canaan by casting out their enemies from before them. And God thus taking, the possession of the

enemies of the church, and giving it all to his church, was agreeable to that promise of the covenant of grace: ~~(1873)~~ Psalm 37:9-11. “For evil-doers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth. For yet a little while and the wicked shall not be yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be. But the meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.”

**II.** Another thing belonging, to the same work, was God’s wonderfully preserving that family of which the Redeemer was to proceed, when all the rest of the world was drowned. God’s drowning the world, and saving Noah and his family, were both reducible to this great work. The saving of Noah and his family belonged to it two ways, viz. as from that family the Redeemer was to proceed, and it was the mystical body of Christ that was there saved. The manner of saving those persons, when all the world besides was so overthrown, was very wonderful. It was a wonderful type of the redemption of Christ, of that redemption that is sealed by the baptism of water, and is so spoken of in the New Testament, as ~~(1873)~~ 1 Peter 3:20, 21. “Which sometimes were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water. The like figure whereunto, even baptism, cloth also now save us, (not the putting away of of the flesh, but the answer of a flood conscience towards God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.” That water which washed away the filth of the world, that cleared the world of wicked men, was a type of the blood of Christ, that takes away the sin of the world. That water which delivered Noah and his sons from their enemies, is a type of the blood that delivers God’s church from their sins, their worst enemies. That water which was so plentiful and abundant, that it filled the world, and reached above the tops of the hilliest mountain), was a type of that blood, which is sufficient for the whole world; sufficient to bury the highest mountains of sin. The ark, that was the refuge and hiding-place of the church in this time of storm and flood, was a type of Christ, the true hiding-place of the church from the storms and floods of God’s wrath.

**III.** The next thing I would observe is, the new grant of the earth God made to Noah and his family immediately after the flood, as founded on the covenant of grace. The sacrifice of Christ was represented by Noah’s building an altar to the Lord, and offering a sacrifice of every clean beast,

and every clean fowl. And we have an account of God accepting this sacrifice: and thereupon he blessed Noah, and established his covenant with him, and with his seed, promising to destroy the earth in like manner no more, signifying that it is by the sacrifice of Christ, God's favour is obtained, and his people are in safety from destroying judgments, and obtain the blessing of the Lord. And God now, on occasion of this sacrifice that Noah offered, gives him and his posterity a new grant of the earth; a new power of dominion over the creatures, as founded in that sacrifice, and so founded on the covenant of grace. And so it is to be looked upon as a different grant from that which was made to Adam,

“And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.” (~~GEN~~ Genesis 1:28)

That grant was not founded on the covenant of grace; for it was given to Adam while he was under the covenant of works, and therefore was antiquated when that covenant ceased. Hence it came to pass, that the earth was taken away from mankind by the flood: for the first grant was forfeited; and God had never made another after that, nil after the flood. If the first covenant had not been broken God never would have drowned the world, and so have taken it away from mankind; for then the first grant made to mankind would have stood good. But that being broken, God after a while destroyed the earth, when the wickedness of man was great.

But after the flood, on Noah's offering a sacrifice that represented the sacrifice of Christ, God in smelling a sweet savour, or accepting the sacrifice — as it was a representation of the true sacrifice of Christ, which is a sweet savour indeed to God — gives Noah a new grant of the earth, founded on that covenant of grace which is by the sacrifice of Christ, with a promise annexed, that now the earth should no more be destroyed, till the consummation of all things; (~~GEN~~ Genesis 8:20-22. and chapter 9:1-3, 7.) The reason why such a promise, that God would no more destroy the earth, was added to this grant made to Noah, and not to that made to Adam, was because this was founded on the covenant of grace, of which Christ was the surety, and therefore could not be broken. And therefore it comes to pass now, that though the wickedness of man has dreadfully

raged, and the earth has been filled with violence and wickedness, one age after another, and much more dreadful and aggravated wickedness, being against so much greater light and mercy; especially in these days of the gospel: yet God's patience holds out; God does not destroy the earth: his mercy and forbearance abides according to his promise; and his grant established with Noah and his sons abides firm and good, being founded on the covenant of grace.

**IV.** On this God renews with Noah and his sons the covenant of grace, ~~Gen~~ Genesis 9:9, 10. "And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you, and with every living creature that is with you," etc.; which was the covenant of grace; of which even the brute creation have this benefit, that it shall never be destroyed again until the consummation of all things. By this expression in Scripture, my covenant, is commonly to be understood the covenant of grace. The manner of expression, I will establish my covenant with you, and with, your seed after you, shows plainly, that it was a covenant already in being, and that Noah would understand by that denomination the covenant of grace.

**V.** God's disappointing the design of building the city and tower of Babel belongs to the great work of redemption. For that was undertaken in opposition of this great building of God of which we are speaking. Men's going about to build such a city and tower was an effect of the corruption into which mankind were now fallen. This City and tower was set up in opposition to the City of God, is the god to whom they built it, was their pride. Being sunk into a disposition to forsake the true God, the first idol they set up in his room, was their own fame. And as this city and tower had their foundation laid in the pride and vanity of men, and the haughtiness of their minds, so it was built on a foundation exceedingly contrary to the nature of the kingdom of Christ, and his redeemed city, which has its foundation laid in humility.

Therefore God saw that it tended to frustrate the design of that great building which was founded in Christ's humiliation: and therefore the shine displeased the Lord, and he baffled and confounded the design. God will frustrate and confound all other designs, that are set up in opposition to the great work of redemption.

Isaiah, (chapter 2) representing God setting up the kingdom of Christ in the world, foretells how, in order to it, he will bring down the haughtiness of men, and how the day of the Lord shall be on each high tower, and upon every fenced wall, etc. Christ's kingdom is established, by bringing down every high thing to make way for it, <sup><700></sup>2 Corinthians 10:4, 5. "For the weapons of our warfare are mighty through God, to the pulling down of strong holds, casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God." What is done in a particular soul, to make way for the setting up of Christ's kingdom, is to destroy Babel in that soul.

They intended to have built Babel up to heaven. However, that building of which we speak shall reach to heaven indeed the highest heavens, at the end of the world, when it shall be finished: and therefore God would not suffer the building of his enemies, in opposition to it, to prosper. If they had prospered in building that city and tower, it might have kept the world of wicked men, the enemies of the church, together, as that was their design. They might have remained united in one vast, powerful city; and so have been too powerful for the city of God.

This Babel is the same with the city of Babylon; for Babylon in the original is Babel. But Babylon is always spoken of in Scripture as chiefly opposite to the city of God, as a powerful and terrible enemy, notwithstanding this great check put to the building of it in the beginning. But it probably would have been vastly more powerful, and able to vex if not to destroy the church of God, if it had not been thus checked.

Thus it was in kindness to his church, and in prosecution of the great design of redemption, that God put a stop to the building of the city and tower of Babel.

**VI.** The dispersing of the nations, and dividing the earth among its inhabitants, immediately after God had caused the building of Babel to cease. This was done so as most to suit the great design of redemption. And particularly, God therein had an eye to the future propagation of the gospel among the nations. They were so placed, their habitation so limited, round about the land of Canaan, as most suited that design.

<sup><630></sup>Deuteronomy 32:8. "When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the

people according to the number of the children of Israel.” <sup><417></sup>Acts 17:26, 27. “And hath made of one blood all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him.” The land of Canaan was the most conveniently situated of any place in the world, for the purpose of spreading revealed light among the nations in general. The Roman empire, the chief part of the civilized world, in the apostolic age, was in the countries round about Jerusalem. The devil seeing the advantage of this situation of the nation” for promoting, the great work of redemption, and the disadvantage of it with respect to the interests of his kingdom, afterward led away many nations into the remotest parts of the world, to get them out of the way of the gospel. Thus he led some into America; and others into northern cold regions, that are almost inaccessible.

**VII.** Another thing I would mention in this period, was God’s preserving, the true religion in that line from which Christ was to proceed, when the world in general apostatized to idolatry, and the church was in imminent danger of being swallowed in the general corruption. Although God had lately wrought so wonderfully for the deliverance of his church, and had shown so great mercy towards it, as for its sake even to destroy all the rest of the world; and although he had lately renewed and established his covenant of grace with Noah and his sons; yet so prone is the corrupt heart of man to depart from God, and to sink into the depths of wickedness, darkness, and delusion, that the world soon after the flood fell into gross idolatry; so that before Abraham the distemper was, become almost universal. The earth was become very corrupt at the time of the building of Babel; even God’s people themselves, that line of which Christ was to come. <sup><418></sup>Joshua 24:2. “Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah the father of Abraham, and the father of Nahor; and THEY SERVED OTHER GODS. The other side of the flood means beyond the river Euphrates, where the ancestors of Abraham lived.

We are not to understand, that they were wholly drawn off to idolatry, to forsake the true God. For God is said to be the God of Nahor: <sup><419></sup>Genesis 31:53. “The God of Abraham, and the God of Nahor, the God of their father, judge betwixt us.” But they partook in some measure of the general and almost universal corruption of the times; as Solomon was in a measure

infected with idolatrous corruption; and as the children of Israel in Egypt are said to serve other gods, though there was the true church of God among them; and as there were images kept for a considerable time in the family of Jacob the corruption being brought from Padan-Aram, whence he fetched his wives.

This was the second time that the church was almost brought to nothing by the corruption and general defection of the world from true religion. But still the true religion was kept up in the family from which Christ was to proceed. Which is another instance of God's remarkably preserving his church in a time of a general deluge of wickedness; and wherein, although the god of this world raged, and had almost swallowed up God's church, yet he did not suffer the gates of hell to prevail against it.

## PART 3

### FROM THE CALLING OF ABRAHAM TO MOSES.

I PROCEED now to show how the work of redemption was carried on from the calling at Abraham to Moses. And,

**I.** It pleased God now to separate that person of whom Christ was to come, from the rest of the world, that his church might be upheld in his family and posterity till that time. He called Abraham out of his own country, and from his kindred, to go into a distant country, that God should show him; and brought him first out of Ur of the Chaldees to Charran, and then to the land of Canaan.

It was before observed, that the idolatrous corruption of the world was now become general; mankind were almost wholly overrun with idolatry. God therefore saw it necessary, in order to uphold true religion in the world, that there should be a family separated from all others. It proved to be high time to take this course, lest the church of Christ should wholly be carried away with the apostacy. For Abraham's own country and kindred had most of them fallen off; and without some extraordinary interposition of Providence. in all likelihood, in a generation or two more, the true religion in this line would have been extinct. And therefore God called Abraham, the person in whose family he intended to uphold the true

religion, out of his own country, and from his kindred, to a far dissent country, that his posterity might there remain a people separate from all the rest of she world; that so the true religion might be upheld there, while all mankind besides were swallowed up in heathenism.

The land of the Chaldees, whence Abraham was called, was the country about Babel. Babel, or Babylon, was the chief city of Chaldea. Learned men suppose by what they gather from the most ancient accounts of things, that it was in this land idolatry first began; that Babel and Chaldea were the original and chief seats of the worship of idols, whence it spread into other nations. And therefore the land of the Chaldeans, the country of Babylon, is in Scripture called the land of graven images; <sup>2008</sup>Jeremiah 1:35-38. “A sword is upon the Chaldeans, saith the Lord, and upon the inhabitants of Babylon, and upon her princes, and upon her wise men. — A drought is upon her waters, and they shall be dried up; for it is the land of graven images, and they are mad upon their idols.” God calls Abraham out of this idolatrous country, to a great distance from it. And when he came there, he gave him no inheritance in it, no not so much as to set his foot on; but he remained a stranger and a sojourner, that he and his family might be kept separate from all the world. This was a new thing: God had never taken such a method before. His church had not in this manner been separated from the rest of the world till now; but were wont to dwell with them, without any bar or fence to keep them separate; the mischievous consequence of which had been found once and again. Before the flood, the effect of God’s people living intermingled with the wicked world, without any remarkable wall of separation, was, that the sons of the church joined in marriage with others, and thereby almost all soon became infected, and the church was almost brought to nothing. The method that God then took to fence the church was, to drown the wicked world, and save the church in the ark. Before Abraham was called, the world was become corrupt again. But now God took another method; he did not destroy the wicked world, and save Abraham, and his wife, and Lot, but calls these persons to go and live separate from the rest of the world.

This was a new and great thing, that God did toward the work of redemption. It was about the middle of the space of time between the fall of man and the coming of Christ; about two thousand years before the great Redeemer was to appear. But by this calling of Abraham, the

ancestor of Christ, a foundation was laid for upholding the church in the world, till Christ should come. For the world having become idolatrous, there was a necessity in order to this, that the seed of the woman should be thus separated from it.

And then it was needful that there should be a particular nation separated from the rest of the world, to receive the types and prophecies that were to be given of Christ, to prepare the way for his coming; that to them might be committed the oracles of God; that by them the history of God's great works of creation and providence might be preserved; that Christ might be born of this nation, and that from hence the light of the gospel might shine forth to the rest of the world. These ends could not well be obtained, if God's people, through all these two thousand years, had lived intermixed with the heathen world. So that the calling of Abraham may be looked upon as a kind of new foundation laid for the visible church of God, in a more distinct and regular state. Abraham, being the person in whom this foundation is laid, is represented in Scripture as though he were the father of all the church, the father of all them that believe; a root whence the visible church rose as a tree, distinct from all other plants. Of this tree Christ was the branch of righteousness; and from it, after Christ came, the natural branches were broken off, and the Gentiles were grafted in. So that Abraham still remains the father, the root of the church. It is the same tree which, from that small beginning in Abraham's time, has in these rims of the gospel spread its branches over a great part of the earth, and will fill the whole in due time, and at the end of the world shall be transplanted from an earthly soil into the paradise of God.

**II.** There accompanied this a more particular and full revelation and confirmation of the covenant of grace than ever before. There had been before this two particular and solemn editions or confirmations of this covenant; one, to our first parents, soon after the fall, the other, to Noah and his family, soon after the flood. And now there is a third, at and after the calling of Abraham. It is now revealed to Abraham, not only that Christ should come; but that he should be his seed; anti promised, that all the families of the earth should be blessed in him. And God repeated the promises of this to Abraham. The first promise was when he first called him, then. 12:2. "And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing" The same

promise was renewed after he came into the land of Canaan, (chapter 13:14, etc.) Again after Abraham had returned from the slaughter of the kings, (chapter 15:5, 6.) And a fourth time, after his offering up Isaac (chapter 22:16-18.)

In this renewal of the covenant of grace with Abraham, several particulars concerning it were revealed more fully than before; not only that Christ was to be of Abraham seed, but also, the calling of the Gentiles, that all nations should be brought into the church, all the families of the earth made blessed. And then the great condition of the covenant of grace, which is faith, was now more fully made known. <sup>1815</sup>Genesis 15:5, 6. “And he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.” Which is much noticed in the New Testament, as that for which Abraham was called the father of believers.

And as there was now a further revelation of the covenant of grace, so there was a further confirmation of it by seals and pledges; particularly, circumcision, which was a seal of the covenant of grace, as appears by the first institution of it, Genesis 17 It there appears to be a seal of that covenant by which God promised to make Abraham a father of many nations, (verse 5, 9, 10.) And we are expressly taught, that it was a seal of righteousness of faith, <sup>1816</sup>Romans 4:11. Speaking of Abraham, the apostle says, he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of faith.

Abraham’s family and posterity must he kept separate from the rest of the world, till Christ should come; and this sacrament was the principal wall of separation. Besides, God gave Abraham a remarkable pledge of the fulfilment of the promise he had made him, in his victory over Chedorlaomer and the kinds that were with him. Chedorlaomer seems to have been a great emperor, who reigned over a great part of the world at that day; and though he had his seat at Elam, which was not much, if any thing, short of a thousand miles distant from the land of Canaan, extended his empire so as to reign over many parts of the land of Canaan, as appears by chapter 14:4-7. It is supposed by learned men, that he was a king of the Assyrian empire at that day, which had been before begun by Nimrod at Babel. And as it was the honour of kings in those days to build

cities for the seat of their empire, (~~CHOD~~Genesis 10:10-12.) so it is conjectured, that he had gone forth and built him a City in Elam, and made that his seat; and that those other kings who came with him, were his deputies in the several cities and countries where they reigned' But yet as mighty an empire as he had, and as great an army as he came with, Abraham, only with his trained servants, that were born in his house, conquered and subdued this might emperor, the kings that came with him, and all their army. This he received of God as a please of what he had promised, viz. the victory that Christ his seed should obtain over the nations of the earth, whereby he should possess the gates of his enemies. It is plainly spoken of as such in the 41st of Isaiah. In that chapter is foretold the future glorious victory the church shall obtain over the nations of the world, (verse 1, 10, 15.) This victory of Abraham over such a great emperor and his mighty forces, is spoken of as a pledge and earnest of victory to the church, (verse 2, 3.) "Who raised up the righteous man from the east, called him to his foot, gave the nations before him, and made him rule over kings? He gave them as the dust to his sword, and as driven stubble to his bow. He pursued them, and passed safely; even by the way that he had not gone with his feet."

Another remarkable confirmation Abraham received of the covenant of grace, was when he returned from the slaughter of the kings; when Melchisedec the king of Salem, the priest of the most high God, that great type of Christ, met him and blessed him, and brought forth bread and wine. The bread and wine signified the same blessings of the covenant of grace, that the bread and wine does in the sacrament of the Lord's supper. As Abraham had a seal of the covenant in circumcision that was equivalent to baptism, so non he had a seal of it equivalent to the Lord's supper. And Melehisedec's coming to meet him with such a seal of the covenant of grace, on the occasion of this victory, evinces, that it was a pledge of God's fulfilment of the same covenant. (~~CHOD~~Genesis 14:19, 20.)

Another confirmation of the covenant of grace was the vision he had, in the deep sleep that fell upon him, of the smoking furnace, and burning lamp, that passed between the parts of the sacrifice, (Genesis 15.) The sacrifice signified that of Christ. The smoking furnace that passed through the midst of that sacrifice first, signified the sufferings of Christ. But the

burning lamp that followed, which shone with a clear bright light, signifies the glory that followed Christ's sufferings, and was procured by them.

Another remarkable pledge that God gave Abraham of the fulfilment of the covenant of grace, was his giving of that child of whom Christ was to come, in his old age, (<sup>scribb</sup> Hebrews 11:11, 12. and <sup>scribb</sup> Romans 4:18, etc.) and his delivering Isaac, after he was laid upon the wood of the sacrifice to be slain. This was a confirmation of Abraham's faith in the promise that God had made of Christ, that he should be of Isaac's posterity; and was a representation of the resurrection of Christ. (<sup>scribb</sup> Hebrews 11:17-19.) And because this was given as a confirmation of the covenant of grace, therefore God renewed that covenant with Abraham on this occasion, (<sup>scribb</sup> Genesis 24:15, etc.)

Thus you see how much more fully the covenant of peace was revealed and confirmed in Abraham's time than ever it had been before, by means of which Abraham seems to have had a clear view of Christ the great Redeemer, and the future things that were to be accomplished by him. And therefore Christ informs us, that "Abraham rejoiced to see his day, and he saw it, and was glad," <sup>scribb</sup> John 8:56. So great an advance did it please God now to make in this building, which he had been carrying on from the beginning of the world.

**III.** The next thing is God's preserving the patriarchs for so long a time in the midst of the wicked inhabitants of Canaan, and from all other enemies. The patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, were those of whom Christ was to proceed; and they were now separate from the world, that in them his church might be upheld. Therefore, in preserving them, the great design of redemption was carried on. He preserved them, and kept the inhabitants of the land where they sojourned from destroying them; which was a remarkable dispensation of providence. For the inhabitants of the land were at that day very wicked, though they grew more wicked afterwards. This appears by <sup>scribb</sup> Genesis 15:16. "In the fourth generation they shall come hither again; for the iniquity of the Canaanites is not yet full:" as much as to say though it be very great, yet it is not yet full. And their great wickedness also appears by Abraham and Isaac's aversion to their children marrying any of the daughters of the land. Abraham, when he was old, could not be content till he had made his servant swear that he would

not take a wife for his son of the daughters of the land. And Isaac and Rebecca were content to send away Jacob to so great a distance as Padan-Aram, to take him a wife thence. And when Esau married some of the daughters of the land, we are told, that they were a grief of mind to Issac and Rebecca.

Another argument of their great wickedness, was the instances we have in Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboim, which were some of the cities of Canaan, though they were probably most notoriously wicked; and likely to have the most bitter enmity against these holy met; agreeable to What was declared at first, “I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed.” Their holy lives were a continual condemnation of their wickedness. Besides, it could not be otherwise, but that they must be much in reproving their wickedness, as we find Lot was in Sodom who we are told, vexed his righteous soul with their unlawful deeds, and was to them a preacher of righteousness.

And they were the more exposed to them, being strangers and sojourners in the land, and having as yet no inheritance there. Men are more apt to find fault with strangers, and to be irritated by any thing in them that offends as they were with Lot in Sodom. He very gently reprov'd their wickedness, and they say upon it “This fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a ruler and a judge;” and threatened what they would do to him.

But God wonderfully preserved Abraham and Lot Isaac and Jacob, and their families, amongst them, though they were few in number, and they might quickly have destroyed them: which is taken notice of as a wonderful instance of God’s preserving mercy towards his church, <sup><H&S></sup>Psalm 105:12, etc. “When they were but a few men in number; yea, very few, and strangers in it. When they went from one nation to another, from one kingdom to another people. He suffered no man to do them wrong; yea, he reprov'd kings for their sakes, saying, Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm.”

This preservation was, in some instances especially, very remarkable; when the people of the land were greatly irritated and provoked; as they were by Simeon and Levi’s treatment of the Shechemites, in <sup><H&S></sup>Genesis

34:30 etc. God then strangely presented Jacob and his family, restraining the provoked people by an unusual terror on their minds

“And the terror of God was upon the cities that were round about them, and they did not pursue after the sons of Jacob.”

(~~GEN~~ Genesis 35:5)

And God preserved them. not only from the Canaanites but from all others that intended mischief to them. He presorted Jacob and his company, when pursued by Laban, full of rage, and a disposition to overtake him as an enemy. God met him, rebuked him, and said to him, “Take heed that thou speak not to Jacob either good or bad.” How wonderfully did he also preserve him from Esau his brother. when he came forth with an army, with a full design to cut him off! How did God, in answer to his prayer, when Jacob wrestled with Christ at Penueel. wonderfully turn Esau’s heart, and make him, instead of meeting him as an enemy with slaughter and destruction, to meet him as a friend and brother, doing him no harm!

And thus was this handful, this little root that had the blessing of the Redeemer in it, preserved in the midst of enemies and dancers: which was not unlike to preserving the ark in the midst of the tempestuous deluge.

**IV.** The next thing I would mention is, the awful destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the neighbouring cities. This tended to promote the great work designed two ways: First, as it tended powerfully to restrain the inhabitants of the land from injuring those holy strangers that God had brought to sojourn amongst them: Lot was one of those strangers; he came into the land with Abraham; and Sodom was destroyed for their abusive disregard of Lot, the preacher of righteousness. And their destruction came upon their committing a most injurious and abominable insult on Lot, and the strangers that were come into his house, even those angels, whom they probably took to be some of Lot’s former acquaintance come to visit him. They in a most outrageous manner beset Lot’s house, intending a monstrous abuse and act of violence on those strangers, and threatening to serve Lot worse than them.

But in the midst of this God smote them with blindness; and the next morning the city and the country about it was overthrown in a most

terrible storm of fire and brimstone; which dreadful destruction, as it was in the sight of the rest of the inhabitants of the land, and therefore greatly tended to restrain them from hurting those holy strangers any more; it doubtless struck a dread any terror on their minds, and made them afraid to hurt the., and probably was one principal means to restrain them, and preserve the patriarchs. And when that reason is given, why the inhabitants of the land did not pursue after Jacob, when they were so provoked by the destruction of the Shechemites, viz. that the terror of the Lord was upon them; it is very probable, that this was the terror which was set home upon them. They remembered the amazing destruction of Sodom, and the cities of the plain, that came upon them for their abusive treatment of Lot, and so durst not hurt Jacob and his family, though they were so much provoked to it.

Another way that this awful destruction tended to promote this great affair of redemption, was, that hereby God remarkably exhibited the terrors of his law, to make men sensible of their need of redeeming mercy. The work of redemption never was carried on without this. The law, from the beginning, is made use of as a schoolmaster to bring men to Christ.

But under the Old Testament there was much more need of some extraordinary, visible, and sensible manifestation of God's wrath against sin, than in the days of the gospel; since a future state, and the eternal misery of hell, is more clearly revealed, and since the awful justice of God against the sins of men has been so wonderfully displayed in the sufferings of Christ. And therefore the revelation that God gave of himself in those days, used to be accompanied with much more terror than if is in these days of the gospel. So when God appeared at mount Sinai to give the law, it was with thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud. Some external, awful manifestations of God's wrath against sin were on some accounts especially necessary before the giving of the law: and therefore, before the flood, the terrors of the law handed down by tradition from Adam served for that purpose. Adam lived nine hundred and thirty years himself, to proclaim God's awful threatenings denounced in the covenant made with him, and how dreadful the consequences of the fall were; and others, that conversed with Adam, lived till the flood. And the destruction of the world by the flood served to exhibit the terrors of the law, and manifested the wrath of God against sin ;

in order to make men sensible of the absolute necessity of redeeming mercy. And some that saw the flood were alive in Abraham's time.

But this was now in a great measure forgotten; therefore God was pleased again, in a most amazing manner, to show his wrath against sin, in the destruction of these cities; which was the liveliest image of hell of any thing that ever had been; and therefore the apostle Jude says, "They suffer the vengeance of eternal fire," <sup><1007></sup>Jude 7. God rained storms of fire and brimstone upon them; probably by thick flashes of lightning. The streams of brimstone burnt up all these cities; so that they perished in the flames of divine wrath. By this might be seen the dreadful wrath of God against the ungodliness and unrighteousness of men; which tended to show the necessity of redemption, and so to promote that great work.

**V.** God again renewed and confirmed the covenant of grace to Isaac and Jacob. To Isaac in these words; <sup><1018></sup>Genesis 26:3, 4. "And I will perform the oath which I sware unto Abraham thy father; and I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." And afterwards to Jacob; first, in Isaac blessing him and his seed, wherein he acted and spoke by extraordinary divine direction,

"Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee; be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee: Cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee." (<sup><1079></sup>Genesis 27:29)

And therefore Esau, not included in this blessing, missed of being blessed as an heir of the benefits of the covenant of grace.

This covenant was again renewed and confirmed to Jacob at Bethel, in his vision of the ladder that reached to heaven; which was a symbol of the way of salvation by Christ. The stone that Jacob rested on was a type of Christ, the stone of Israel, which the spiritual Israel rests upon; as is evident, because it was anointed, and made use of as an altar. But we know that Christ is the anointed of God, and is the only true altar. While Jacob was resting on this stone, and saw this ladder, God appears to him as his covenant God, and renews the covenant of grace with him; as in <sup><1084></sup>Genesis 28:14. "And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth; and thou shalt

spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south; and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.”

Jacob had another remarkable confirmation of this covenant at Penuel, where he wrestled with God, and prevailed; where Christ appeared to him in the form of that nature which he was afterwards to receive in a personal union with his divine nature. — And God renewed his covenant with him again, after he left Padan-Aram, and was come up to Bethel, and where he had the vision of the ladder; as you may see in <sup>(OLD)</sup>Genesis 35:10, etc.

Thus the covenant of grace was now renewed much oftener than it had been before. The light of the gospel now began to shine much brighter, as the time of Christ’s appearing drew nearer.

**VI.** The next thing I would observe, is God’s remarkably preserving the family of which Christ was to proceed from perishing by famine, by the instrumentality of Joseph. When there was a seven-years famine approaching God was pleased, by a wonderful providence, to send Joseph into Egypt, there to provide for Jacob and his family, and to, keep the holy seed alive, which otherwise would have perished. Joseph was sent into Egypt for that end, as he observes,

“But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to save much people alive.” (<sup>(OLD)</sup>Genesis 1:20)

How often had this holy root, that had in it the future branch of righteousness, the glorious Redeemer, been in danger of being destroyed! But God wonderfully preserved it.

This salvation of the house of Israel, by the hand of Joseph, was upon some accounts very much a resemblance of the salvation of Christ. The children of Israel were saved by Joseph their kinsman and brother, from perishing by famine; as he that saves the souls of the spiritual Israel from spiritual famine is their near kinsman, and one that is not ashamed to call them brethren. Joseph was a brother they had hated, sold, and as it were killed; for they had designed to kill him. So Christ is one that we naturally hate, and by our wicked lives, have sold for the vain things of the world, and by our sins have slain. Joseph was first in a state of humiliation; he was a servant, as Christ appeared in the form of a servant; and then was

cast into a dungeon, as Christ descended into the grave. When he rose out of the dungeon, he was in a state of great exaltation, at the king's right hand as his deputy, to reign over all his kingdom, to provide food, to preserve life; and being in this state of exaltation, he dispenses food to his brethren, and so gives them life. So Christ was exalted at God's right hand to be a Prince and Saviour to his brethren, received gifts for men, even for the rebellious them that had hated and sold him.

**VII.** After this there was a prophecy of Christ, on some accounts more particular than any before, in Jacob's blessing his son Judah. This was more particular as it showed of whose posterity he was to be. When God called Abraham, it was revealed that he was to be of Abraham's posterity. Before, we have no account of any revelation concerning Christ's pedigree confined to narrower limits than the posterity of Noah: after this it was confined to still narrower limits; for though Abraham had many sons, yet it was revealed, that Christ was to be of Isaac's posterity. And then it was limited still more; a for when Isaac had two sons, it was revealed that Christ was to be of Israel's posterity. And now, though Israel had twelve sons, yet it is revealed that Christ should be of Judah's posterity. Christ is the lion of the tribe of Judah. Respect is chiefly had to his great acts, when it is said here,

“Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies, the father's children shall bow down before thee. Judah is a lion's whelp; from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up?” (~~CHAP~~ Genesis 49:8)

And then this Prediction is more particular concerning the time of Christ's coming, as in verse 10. “The sceptre shall not I depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.” The prophecy here, of the calling of the, Gentiles consequent on Christ's coming, seems to be more plain than any had been before, in the expression, “to him shall the gathering of the people be.” Thus you see how that gospel-light which dawned immediately after the fall of man, gradually increases.

**VIII.** The work of redemption was carried on in this period, in God's wonderfully preserving the children of Israel in Egypt, when the power of

Egypt was engaged utterly to destroy them. They seemed to be wholly in the hands of the Egyptians; they were their servant, and were subject to the power of Pharaoh: and Pharaoh set himself to weaken them with hard bondage. And when he saw that did not do, he set himself to extirpate their race, by commanding that every male child should be drowned. But after all that Pharaoh could do, God wonderfully preserved them; and not only so, but increased them exceedingly; so that, instead of being extirpated, they, greatly multiplied.

**IX.** Here is to be observed, not only the preservation of the nation, but God's wonderfully preserving and upholding his invisible church in that nation, when in danger of being overwhelmed in the idolatry of Egypt. The children of Israel being long among the Egyptians, and servants under them, and so not having advantages to keep God's ordinances among themselves, and maintain any public worship or instruction, whereby the true religion might be upheld, and there being now no written word, they by degrees, in a great measure, lost the true religion, and borrowed the idolatry of Egypt; and the greater part of the people fell away to the worship of their gods. This we learn by <sup>chap</sup>Ezekiel 20:6, 7, 8. and by chapter 23:8.

This now was the third time that God's church was almost swallowed up and carried away with the wickedness of the world; once before the flood; the other time, before the calling of Abraham; and now, the third time, in Egypt. But yet God did not suffer his church to be quite overwhelmed: he still saved it, like the ark in the flood, and as he saved Moses in the midst of the waters, in an ark of bulrushes, where he was in the utmost danger of being swallowed up. The true religion was still kept up with some; and God had still a people among them, even in this miserable, corrupt, and dark time. The parents of Moses were true servants of God, as we may learn by <sup>chap</sup>Hebrews 11:23.

“By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw that he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment.”

I have now shown how the work of redemption was carried on from the calling of Abraham to Moses; in which we have Seen many great things

done towards this work, and a great advancement of this building, beyond what had preceded.

## PART 4

### FROM MOSES TO DAVID.

I PROCEED to the time which reaches from Moses to David.

**I.** The first thing that offers itself is the redemption of the church of God out of Egypt, the most remarkable of all in the Old Testament, the greatest pledge and forerunner of the future redemption by Christ, and much more insisted on in Scripture than any other of those redemptions. And indeed it was the greatest type of Christ's redemption of any providential event whatsoever. This was by Jesus Christ, for it was wrought by him who appeared to Moses in the bush; the person that sent Moses to redeem that people. But that was Christ, as is evident, because he is called the angel of the Lord, ~~CHRIST~~ Exodus 3:2, 3. The bush represented the human nature of Christ, who is called the branch. This bush grew on mount Sinai or Horeb, a word that signifies a dry place, as the human nature of Christ was a root out of a dry ground. The bush burning with fire, represented the sufferings of Christ, in the fire of God's wrath. It burned, and was not consumed; so Christ, though he suffered extremely, yet perished not, but overcame at last, and rose from his sufferings. Because this great mystery of the incarnation and sufferings of Christ was here represented, therefore Moses says, I will turn aside, and behold this great sight. A great sight he might well call it, when there was represented. God manifest in the flesh suffering a dreadful death, and rising from the dead.

This was the glorious Redeemer who redeemed the church out of Egypt, from under the hand of Pharaoh as Christ, by his death and sufferings, redeemed his People from Satan, the spiritual Pharaoh. He redeemed them from hard service and cruel drudgery; so Christ redeems his people from the cruel slavery of sin and Satan. He redeemed them, as it is said, from the iron furnace; so Christ redeems his church from a furnace of fire and everlasting burnings.-He redeemed them with a strong hand and outstretched arm, and great and terrible judgments on their enemies; so

Christ with mighty power triumphs over principalities and powers, and executes terrible judgments on his church's enemies, bruising the serpent's head. He saved them, when others were destroyed, by the sprinkling of the blood of the paschal lamb; so God's church is saved from death by the sprinkling of the blood of Christ, when the rest of the world is destroyed. God brought forth the people sorely against the will of the Egyptians, when they could not bear to let them go; so Christ rescues his people out of the hands of the devil, sorely against his will, when his proud heart cannot hear to be overcome.

In that redemption, Christ did not only redeem the people from the Egyptians, but he redeemed them from the devils, the gods of Egypt; for before, they had been in a state of servitude to the gods of Egypt, as well as to the men. And Christ, the seed of the woman, did now, in a very remarkable manner, fulfil the curse on the serpent, in bruising his head:

“For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast, and against all the gods of Egypt will I execute judgment.”  
(<sup><102></sup>Exodus 12:12)

Hell was as much, nay more engaged in that affair, than Egypt was. The pride and cruelty of Satan, that old serpent, was more concerned in it than Pharaoh's. He did his utmost against the people, and to his utmost opposed their redemption. But it is said, that when God redeemed his people out of Egypt, he “broke the heads of the dragons in the waters, and broke the head of leviathan in pieces, and gave him to be meat for the people inhabiting the wilderness,” <sup><9712></sup>Psalm 74:12-14. God forced their enemies to let them go, that they might serve him; as Zacharias observes with respect to the church under the gospel, <sup><1074></sup>Luke 1:74, 75.

The people of Israel went out with a high hand, and Christ went before them in a pillar of cloud and fire. There was a glorious triumph over earth and hell in that deliverance. When Pharaoh his hosts, and Satan by them, pursued the people, Christ overthrew them in the Red sea; the Lord triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider he cast into the sea, and there they slept their sleep, and never followed the children of Israel any more. The Red sea represented Christ's blood, because the apostle compares the children of Israel's passage through the Red sea to baptism, <sup><1001></sup>

Corinthians 10:1, 2. — But we all know that the water of baptism represents Christ's blood.

Thus Christ, the angel of God's presence, in his love and his pity, redeemed his people, and carried them in the days of old as on eagles wings, so that none of their proud and spiteful enemies, neither Egyptians nor devils, could touch them.

This was quite a new thing that God did towards this great work of redemption. God never had done any thing like it before; <sup>(1845)</sup>Deuteronomy 4:32, 34. This was a great advancement of the work, that had been begun and carried on from the fall of man, a great step taken in Divine Providence towards a preparation for Christ's coming into the world, and working out his great and eternal redemption: for this was the people of whom Christ was to come. And now we may see how that plant flourished which God had planted in Abraham. Though the family of which Christ was to come, had been in a decree separated from the rest of the world before, in the calling of Abraham; yet that separation appeared not to be sufficient. For though by that separation, they were kept, as strangers and sojourners, from being united with other people in the same political societies, yet they remained mixed among them, by which means they had been in danger of wholly losing the true religion, and of being overrun with the idolatry of their neighbours. God now, therefore, by this redemption, separated them as a nation from all others, to subsist by themselves in their own political and ecclesiastical state, without having any concern with the heathen nations, that the church of Christ might be upheld, and might keep the oracles of God; that in them might be kept up those types and prophecies of Christ, and those histories and other divine previous instructions, which were necessary to prepare the way for Christ's coming.

**II.** As this people were separated to be God's peculiar people, so all other people upon the face of the whole earth were wholly rejected and given over to heathenism. This was one thing that God ordered in his providence to prepare the way for Christ's coming, and the great salvation he was to accomplish; for it was only to prepare the way for the more glorious and signal victory and triumph of Christ's power and grace over the wicked and miserable world, and that Christ's salvation of mankind

might become the more sensible. This is the account the Scripture itself gives us of the matter, <sup>(121)</sup>Romans 11:30, 32. The apostle, speaking to the Gentiles that had formerly been heathens, says, “As ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief; even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy. For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all:” *i.e.* It was the will of God, that the whole world, Jews and Gentiles, should be concluded in visible and professed unbelief, that so God’s mercy and Christ’s salvation towards them all might be visible. For the apostle is not speaking only of that unbelief that is natural to all God’s professing people as well as others, but that which appears, and is visible; such as the Jews fell into, when they openly rejected Christ, and ceased to be a professing people. The apostle observes, how that first the Gentiles, even the Gentile nations, were included in a professed unbelief and open opposition to the true religion, before Christ came, to prepare the way for the calling of the Gentiles, which was soon after Christ came, in order that God’s mercy might be the more visible to them; and that the Jews were rejected, and apostatized from the visible church, to prepare the way for the calling of the Jews, which shall be in the latter days. So that It may be seen concerning all nations, Jews and Gentiles, that are redeemed by Christ, from being visibly aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, without hope, and without God in the world.

We cannot certainly determine precisely at what time the apostacy of the Gentile nations from the true God, or their being concluded in visible unbelief, became universal. Their falling away was a gradual thing, as we observed before. It was general in Abraham’s time, but not universal: for then we find Melchizedec, one of the kings of Canaan, was priest of the most high God. And after this the true religion was kept up for a while among some of the rest of Abraham’s posterity, besides the family of Jacob, and also in some of the posterity of Nahor, as we have instances in Job, and his three friends, and Elihu. The land of Uz, where Job lived, was possessed by the posterity of Uz, or Huz, the son of Nahor, Abraham’s brother, of whom we read, <sup>(122)</sup>Genesis 22:21. Ilildad the Shuhite was of the offspring of Shuah, Abraham’s son by Keturah, <sup>(123)</sup>Genesis 25:1, 2. and Elihu the Buzite, was of Buz the son of Nahor, the brother of Abraham.

So the true religion lasted among some other people, besides the Israelites, a while after Abraham. But it did not last long: and it is probable that their total rejection, and giving us to idolatry, was about the time when God separated the children of Israel from Egypt to serve him. For they are often put in mind on that occasion, that God had now separated them to be his peculiar people; or to be distinguished from all other people upon earth, to be his people alone, to be his portion, when others were rejected. This seems to imply, that God now chose them in such a manner, as was accompanied with a visible rejection of all other nations in the world, that God visibly came, and took up his residence with them, forsaking all other nations. As the first calling of the Gentiles, after Christ came, was accompanied with a rejection of the Jews, so the first calling of the Jews to be God's people, when they left Egypt, was accompanied with a rejection of the Gentiles.

Thus all the nations in the world, except the Israelites, and those who embodied themselves with them, were given up to idolatry; and so continued till Christ came, which was about fifteen hundred years. They were concluded so long a time in unbelief, that there might be a thorough proof of the necessity of a Saviour; that it might appear by so long a trial, past all contradiction, that mankind were utterly insufficient to deliver themselves from that gross darkness and misery, and subjection to the devil; that all the wisdom of the heathen philosophers could not deliver them from their darkness, for the greater glory to Jesus Christ, who, when he came, enlightened and delivered them by his glorious gospel. Herein the wonderful wisdom of God appeared, in thus preparing the way for Christ's redemption. This the Scripture teaches us,

“For after that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.” (✠1 Corinthians 1:21)

**III.** The next thing done towards the work of redemption, is God's giving the moral law in so awful a manner at mount Sinai. This was another new step taken in this great affair.

“Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and live?” (✠Deuteronomy 4:33)

And it was a great thing, whether we consider it as a new exhibition of the covenant of works, or given as a rule of life.

The covenant of works was here exhibited as a schoolmaster to lead to Christ, not only for the use of that nation, under the Old Testament, but for the use of God's church throughout all ages of the world. It is an instrument that the great Redeemer makes use of to convince men of their sin, misery, and helpless state, and of God's awful and tremendous majesty and justice as a lawgiver, in order to make men sensible of the necessity of Christ as a Saviour. This work of redemption, in its saving effect on men's souls, in all its progress, is not carried on without the use of this law delivered at Sinai.

It was given in an awful manner, with a terrible voice, exceedingly loud and awful, so that all the people in the camp trembled; and even Moses himself, though so intimate a friend of God, said, "I exceedingly fear and quake." The voice was accompanied with thunders and lightnings, the mountain burning with fire to the midst of heaven, and the earth itself shaking and trembling. This was done in order to make all sensible how great that authority power and justice were, that stood engaged to exact the fulfilment of this later, see it fully executed. Here might he understand, how strictly God would require the fulfilment; and how terrible his wrath would be against every transgressor. Men, being sensible of these things, might thoroughly prove their own hearts, and know how impossible it is for them to obtain salvation by the works of the law, and be assured of their absolute need of a mediator. If we regard the law given at mount Sinai — not as a covenant of works, but — as a rule of life, it is employed by the Redeemers from that time to the end of the world, as a directory to his people, to show them the way in which they must walk, as they would go to heaven: for a way of sincere and universal obedience to this law is the narrow way that leads to life.

**IV.** The next thing observable in this period, was God's giving the typical law, those precepts that did not properly belong to the moral law. Not only those laws which are commonly called ceremonial, which prescribe the ceremonies and circumstances of the Jewish worship, and their ecclesiastical state, but also those that were political, for regulating the Jewish commonwealth, commonly called judicial laws, were many of them

typical. The giving this typical law was another great thing that God did in this period tending to build up the glorious structure of redemption. There had been many typical events of providence before, that represented Christ and his redemption, and some topical ordinances, as particularly those two of sacrifices and circumcision: but now, instead of representing the great Redeemer in a few institutions, God enacts a law full of typical representations of good things to come. By these, that nation were directed every year, month, and day, in their religious actions, and in their conduct, in all that appertained to their ecclesiastical and civil state, to something of Christ; one observance exhibiting one doctrine, or one benefit; another, another; so that the whole nation by this law was, as it were, constituted in a typical state. Thus the gospel was abundantly held forth to that nation; so that there is scarce any doctrine of it, but is particularly taught and exhibited by some observance of this law; though it was in shadows, and under avail, as Moses put avail on his face when it shone. — To this typical law belong all the precepts which relate to building the tabernacle, set up in the wilderness, and all its form, circumstances, and utensils.

**V.** About this time was given to the church the first written word of God. This was another great thing done towards the affair of redemption, a new and glorious advancement of the building; which God has given for the regulation of faith, worship, and practice to the end of the world. This rule grew, and was added to from that time, for many ages, till it was finished, and the canon of Scripture completed by the apostle John. It is not very material, whether the first written word was the ten commandments, written on the tables of stone with the finger of God, or the book of Job; and whether the book of Job was written by Moses, as some suppose, or by Elihu, as others. If it was written by Elihu, it must have been before this period; but yet could not be far from it, as appears by considering Those posterity the persons spoken of in it were, together with Job's great age, before It was written.

The written word of God is the main instrument employed by Christ, in order to carry on his work of redemption in all ages. There was a necessity now of the word of God being committed to writing, for a steady rule to God's church. Before this, the church had the word by tradition, either by immediate tradition from eminent men inspired, that were living, or else by

tradition from former generations, which might be had with tolerable certainty in ages preceding this, by reason of men's long lives. Noah might converse with Adam, and receive traditions from him; and Noah lived till about Abraham's time: and the sons of Jacob lived a considerable time to deliver the revelations made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to their posterity in EGYPT. But the distance from the beginning of things was become now so great, and the lives of men become so short — being brought down to the present standard about the time of Moses — and God having now separated a nation to be a peculiar people, to be the keepers of the oracles of God; God saw it to be a convenient time now to commit his word to writing, to remain henceforward for a steady rule throughout all ages. And therefore, besides the book of Job, Christ wrote the ten commandments on tables of stone, with his own finger. After this, the whole law, as containing the substance of the five books of Moses, was by God's special command committed to writing, which was called "the book of the law," and was laid up in the tabernacle, to be kept there for the use of the church, <sup>Deut.</sup> Deuteronomy 31:24-26.

**VI.** God was pleased now wonderfully to represent the progress of his redeemed church through the world to their eternal inheritance, by the journey of the children of Israel through the wilderness, from Egypt to Canaan. Here all the various steps of the redemption of the church by Christ were represented, from the beginning to its consummation in glory. The state they are redeemed from is represented by Egypt, and their bondage there, which they left. The purchase of their redemption was represented by the sacrifice of the paschal lamb, which was offered up that night in which God slew all the first-born of Egypt. The beginning of the application of the redemption of Christ's church in their conversion, was represented by Israel's going out of Egypt, and passing through the Red sea in so extraordinary and miraculous a manner. The travel of the church through this evil world, and the various changes through which the church passes, was represented by the journey of the Israelites through the wilderness. The manner of their being conducted by Christ, was represented by the Israelites being led by the pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night. The manner of the church's being supported in their progress, supplied with spiritual food, and daily communications from God, was represented by his supplying the children of Israel with

manna from heaven, and water out of the rock. The dangers that the saints must meet with in their course through the world, were represented by the fiery flying serpents in the wilderness. The conflicts the church has with her enemies, were represented by their battle with the Amalekites and others. And innumerable other particulars might be mentioned, which were lively images of what the church and saints meet with in all ages of the world. That these things were typical, is manifest from ~~401~~ 1 Corinthians 10:11.

“Now all these things happened unto them for exsamples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.”

Here the apostle is speaking of those very things which we have now mentioned, and he says expressly, that they happened unto them for types; so it is in the original.

**VII.** Another thing here must not be omitted, which was a great and remarkable dispensation of Providence respecting the whole world of mankind, in this period viz. the shortening of man’s life. It was now brought down from being between nine hundred and a thousand years, to about seventy or eighty. The life of man began to be shortened immediately after the flood. It was brought down the first generation to six hundred years, and the next to between four and five hundred years. So the life of man gradually grew shorter and shorter, till about the time of the great mortality which was in the congregation of Israel, after they had murmured at the report of the spies, and their carcasses fell in the wilderness, whereby all the men of war died. Then the life of man was reduced to its present standard, as Moses observes in that psalm which he wrote on occasion of that mortality:

“The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.”

(~~391~~ Psalm 90:10)

Man’s life being cut so very short, tended to prepare the way for poor, short-lived men, the more joyfully to entertain the glad tidings of everlasting life, brought to light by the gospel; and more readily to embrace

a Saviour, that purchases and offers such a blessing. If men's lives were still commonly about nine hundred years, how much less would be the inducement to regard the proffers of a future life; how much greater the temptation to rest in the things of this world, and to neglect any other life but this! This probably contributed greatly to the wickedness of the antediluvians. But now how much greater motives have men to seek redemption, and a better life than this, by the great Redeemer, since the life of man is not one twelfth part of what it used to be, and men now universally die the age when formerly they used to be but setting out in the world.

**VIII.** The same work was carried on in preserving that people, of whom Christ alas to come, from totally perishing in the wilderness, by a constant miracle of forty years' continuance. I observed before how God preserved those of whom the Redeemer was to proceed in a very wonderful manner; as Noah and his family from the flood; Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, with their families, from the wicked inhabitants of Canaan; and Jacob and his family from perishing by the famine, by Joseph in Egypt. But this preservation of Israel in the wilderness, wads on some accounts more remarkable than any of them; for it was by a continual miracle of so long duration. There was, as may be fairly computed, at first two millions of souls in that congregation. But if miraculous support had been withheld, they must all have perished, in less than a month's time, so that there would not have been one of them left. But yet this vast multitude subsisted for forty years together, in a dry barren wilderness, without sowing, reaping, or tillage. Their bread was daily rained down to them out of heaven, and they were furnished with water out of a rock; and the same clothes with which the, came out of Egypt, lasted all that time. Never was any instance like this, of a nation being so upheld for so long a time together. Thus God upheld his church by a continual miracle, and kept alive that people in whom was the blessing, the great Redeemer of the world.

**IX.** God was pleased, during this time, to give a further revelation of Christ the Redeemer in the predictions of him. Three prophecies deserve particular notice. The first is that of Balaam, <sup>Gen 22</sup> Numbers 24:17-19. "I shall see him but not now; I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the

corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth. And Edom shall be a possession, Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies, and Israel shall do valiantly. Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion, and shall destroy him that remaineth of the city.” This is a plainer prophecy of Christ, especially with regard to his kingly office, than any former one. But we have another, that God gave by Moses, plainer still, especially with regard to his prophetic office, in ~~18:18~~ Deuteronomy 18:18, etc. “I will raise up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his month, and he shall speak unto them all that I command him,” etc. This is a plainer prophecy of Christ than any before. All the preceding prophecies were in figurative, mystical language. The first prophecy was so, That the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent’s head. The promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, That in their seed all the families of the earth should be blessed, were also mystical; and not so particular, because the expression, thy seed, is general, and not plainly limited to any particular person. The prophecy of Jacob in blessing Judah, ~~49:8~~ Genesis 49:8. is in mystical language; and so is that of Balaam, which speaks of Christ under the figurative expression of a star. But this is a plain prophecy, without being veiled at all in any mystical language.

There are several things contained in this prophecy of Christ. Here is his mediatorial office in general, verse 16. Here it is revealed how he should be a person to stand between them and God, a being of such awful majesty, holiness, and justice, that they could not have come to him, and have intercourse with him immediately, without a mediator to stand between them; because, if they came to such a sin-revenging God immediately, they should die; God would prove a consuming fire to them. And here is a particular revelation of Christ with respect to his prophetic office: “I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee,” etc. And further, it is revealed what kind of a prophet he should be; a prophet like unto Moses, who was the head and leader of all the people, and who, under God, had been their redeemer, to bring them out of the house of bondage. He was their shepherd, by whom God led them through the Red sea and the wilderness, was an intercessor for them with God, and was both a prophet and a king in the congregation; for Moses had the power of a king among them. It is said of him, ~~33:5~~ Deuteronomy 33:5. that he was

king in Jeshurum, was the prophet by whom God built up his church, and delivered his instructions of worship. Thus Christ was to be a prophet like unto Moses; so that this is both the plainest and fullest prophecy of Christ that ever had been from the beginning of the world to this time.

The next prophecy respects the calling of the Gentiles, which should be after Christ's coming, <sup><1822></sup>Deuteronomy 32:21. Here is a very plain prophecy of the rejection of the Jews and calling the Gentiles. As they moved God to jealousy, by that which was not God, by casting him off, and taking others, that were no gods, in his room; so God declares that he will move them to jealousy in like manner, by casting them off, and taking others, who had not been his people, in their room. The apostle Paul takes notice of this prophecy, an foretelling the calling of the Gentiles, in <sup><519></sup>Romans 10:19, 20. "But I say, Did not Israel know? First, Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you. But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not I was made manifest to them that asked not after me."

Thus you see how the light of the gospel, which first began to dawn and glimmer immediately after the fall, gradually increases the nearer we come to Christ's time.

**X.** Another thing by which God carried on this work in this time, was a remarkable pouring out of his Spirit on the young generation in the wilderness. The generation that was grown up when they came out of Egypt, from twenty years old and upward, was a very froward and perverse generation. They were tainted with the idolatry and wickedness of Egypt, and were not weaned from it. <sup><330></sup>Ezekiel 20:6-8. Hence they made the golden calf in imitation of the idolatry of Egypt, that was wont to worship a bull or an ox, and therefore cattle are called the abomination of the Egyptians, *i.e.* their idol. With this generation God was exceeding angry, and swore in his wrath, that they should not enter into his rest. But the younger generation, who were under twenty years old when they came out of Egypt, were not so,

"But your little ones, whom ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in; and they shall know the land that ye have despised."

(<sup><446></sup>Numbers 14:31)

This was the generation with whom the covenant was renewed, as we have an account in Deuteronomy, and that entered into the land of Canaan. This generation God was pleased to make a people to his praise, and they were eminent for piety; as appears by many things said about them; particularly, <sup><401></sup>Jeremiah 2:2, 3: “I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of shine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown. Israel was holiness to the Lord, and the first-fruits of his increase.” Here the generation that went after God in the wilderness, is spoken of with very high commendations, as eminent for holiness. Their love to God is distinguished like the love of a bride at her espousals, when they followed him through that dreadful wilderness, after they went back from Kadesh-Barnea,

“Who led thee through the great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no water.” (<sup><405></sup>Deuteronomy 8:15)

Though this generation had a much greater trial, than the generation of their fathers had before they came to Kadesh-Barnea, yet they never murmured against God, as their fathers had done: but their trials had a contrary effect upon them, to awaken, convince, and humble them, and fit them for great mercy. They were awakened by those awful judgments of God inflicted on their fathers, whereby their carcasses fell in the wilderness. God poured out his Spirit with those awakening providences, and their oven travel in the wilderness, and the word preached to them by Moses; whereby they were humbled, and at length multitudes of them were savingly converted; as <sup><402></sup>Deuteronomy 8:2, 3. “And thou shalt remember the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in shine heart, whether thou wouldst keep his commandments, or no. And he humbled thee,” etc. And verse 15. “Who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness,-that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end.” And therefore it is said,

“I did know thee in the wilderness, in the land of great drought.”  
(<sup><403></sup>Hosea 13:5)

God allured them, and brought them into that wilderness, and spoke comfortably to them, as it was foretold that he would do afterwards, ~~2:14~~ Hosea 2:14.

Those terrible judgments that were executed in the congregation after their turning back from Kadesh-Harnea, in the matter of Korah, and the matter of Peor, were chiefly on the old generation, whom God consumed in the wilderness. Those rebellions were chiefly among the elders of the congregation, who were given up to their hearts' lust; and they walked in their own counsels, and God was grieved with their manners forty years in the wilderness.

That this Younger congregation were eminent for piety, appears by all their history. The former generation were wicked, and were followed with curses; but this was holy, and wonderful blessings followed them. God did great things for them; he fought for them, and gave them the possession of Canaan. And it is God's manner, when he hath very great mercies to bestow on a visible people, first, to fit them for such mercies, and then to confer them. So it was here: they believed in God, and by faith overcame Sihon and Og, and the giants of Canaan; and are commended for cleaving to the Lord: ~~23:8~~ Joshua 23:8. Joshua says unto them. "Cleave unto the Lord, as ye have done unto this day." But when Joshua and all that generation were dead, there arose another that knew not the Lord. This pious generation showed a laudable and fervent zeal for God on several occasions; as on occasion of Achan's sin; but especially when they suspected the two tribes and a half had set up an altar in opposition to the altar of burnt-offering. There never was any generation of Israel of which so much good and so little evil is mentioned. It is further observable, that in the time of this generation was the second general circumcision, whereby the reproach of Israel was fully rolled away, and they became pure; and when afterwards they were polluted by Achan, they purged themselves again.

The men of the former generation being dead, and God having sanctified this to himself, he solemnly renewed his covenant with them, as we have a particular account in the 29th chapter of Deuteronomy. We find that such solemn renovations of the covenant commonly accompanied any remarkable pouring out of the Spirit, causing a general reformation: so we

find it was in Hezekiah's and Josiah's times. It is questionable whether there ever was a time of so great a flourishing of religion in the Israelitish church, as in that generation; and as, in the Christian church, religion was in its most flourishing circumstances in the day of its espousals, in the apostles' days, so it seems to have been with the Jewish church in the days of its first establishment in the times of Moses and Joshua.

Thus God, at this time, gloriously advanced the work of redemption, both by his word and Spirit. Hereby the work of redemption was promoted, not only as it was in itself a glorious instance of redemption in its application, but as this as what God used for the orderly establishment of the Israelitish church, when it was first settled in the regular observance of God's ordinances in Canaan: even as the pouring out of the Spirit, in the beginning of the Christian church, was a great means for establishing the Christian church in all succeeding ages.

**XI.** The next thing I would observe, was God's bringing the people of Israel by Joshua, and settling them in that land where Christ was to be born, and which was the great type of the heavenly Canaan, which Christ has purchased. Joshua was of Joseph's posterity, and was an eminent type of Christ, and is therefore called the shepherd, the stone of Israel. <sup><142></sup>Genesis 49:24. Being such a type, he bore the name of Christ. Joshua and Jesus are the same name, the one Hebrew, the other Greek: and therefore, in the New Testament, originally written in Greek, Joshua is called Jesus, <sup><4075></sup>Acts 7:45. "Which also our fathers brought in with Jesus," *i.e.* Joshua; <sup><3008></sup>Hebrews 4:8. "If Jesus had given them rest, he would not have spoken of another day. *i.e.* if Joshua had given them rest.

God wonderfully gave his people possession of this land, conquering its former inhabitants, and the mighty giants, as Christ conquered the devil. He first conquered the great kings on the eastern side of Jordan, Sihon king of the Amorites, and Og king of Bashan; and then divided the river Jordan, as before he had done the Red sea; causing the walls of Jericho to fall down at the sound of the trumpets of the priests. That sound typified the sound of the gospel by the preaching of gospel ministers, the walls of the accursed city Jericho, signifying the walls of Satan's kingdom. After this he wonderfully destroyed the mighty host of the Amorites under the five kings, causing the sun and moon to stand still, to help the people against

their enemies, at the prayer of the typical Jesus; plainly intimating, that God would make the whole course of nature to be subservient to the affair of redemption; and that every thing should give place to the welfare of God's redeemed people.

Thus did Christ show his great love to his elect, that he would make the course of nature to give place to their happiness and prosperity; and showed that the sun and moon, and all things visible and invisible, were theirs by his purchase. At the same time, Christ fought as the captain of their host, and cast down great hailstones upon their enemies, by which more were slain than by the sword of Israel. And after this Christ gave the people a might; victory over a yet greater army in the northern part of the land, gathered together at the waters of Merom as the sand of the sea-shore, <sup><18181></sup>Joshua 11:4.

Thus God gave the people whence Christ was to proceed, the land where he was to be born; where he was to live, preach, and work miracles; to die, and rise again: and whence he was to ascend into heaven, as the land which was a great type of heaven.

**XII.** Another thing that God did towards carrying on this affair, was his actually setting up his stated worship among the people, as it had been before instituted in the wilderness. This worship was appointed at mount Sinai it was to make way for the coming of Christ; and the innumerable ceremonial observances of it were typical of him and his redemption. But there were many parts of their instituted worship that could not be observed in the wilderness, by reason of their unsettled state there. And there were many precepts that respected the land of Canaan, and their places of habitation there; which therefore could not be put in practice, till they came into that land. But now, when this was brought to pass, God set up his tabernacle in the midst of his people, as he had before promised them, <sup><18181></sup>Leviticus 26:11. "I will set my tabernacle amongst you." The tabernacle was set up at Shiloh, <sup><18181></sup>Joshua 18:1. and the priests and the Levites had their offices appointed them, and the cities of refuge, and now the people were in a condition to observe their feasts of the first-fruits, and their feasts of ingathering, and to bring all their tithes and appointed offerings to the Lord; and most parts of God's worship were set up, though there were some things that were not observed till afterwards.

**XIII.** The next thing was God's wonderfully preserving that people, from this time forward, when all the males went up, three times in the year, to the place where God's ark was. The people of Israel were generally surrounded with enemies, who sought all opportunities to destroy them, and dispossess them of their land. Till David's time, there were great members in the land of the remains of the Canaanites, and the other former inhabitants of the land, who were bitter enemies to the people of Israel: and these had, three times in the year, a fair opportunity of overrunning their country, and getting possession of their cities, when only the women, and those who were not able to go up, were left behind. And yet they were remarkably preserved throughout all generations at such seasons, agreeably to the promise,

“Neither shall any man desire thy land, when thou shalt go up to appear before the Lord thy God thrice in the year.”

(Exodus 34:24)

So wonderfully did God order affairs, and influence the hearts of their enemies. They were full of enmity against Israel, desired to dispossess them of their land, and open had so fair an opportunity that the whole country was left naked and empty of fail that could resist them. It would have been only for them to go and take possession; and yet we never read, in all their history, of any their enemies taking these opportunities against them; which could be no less than a continual miracle, which God, for the preservation of his church, kept up for so many generations. It was surely a wonderful dispensation of Divine Providence to maintain and promote God's great design of redemption.

**XIV.** God's preserving his church and the true religion from being wholly extinct in the frequent apostasies of the Israelites in the time of the judges. How prone was that people to forsake the true God, who had done such wonderful things for them, and to fall into idolatry! and how did the land, from time to time, seem to be almost overrun with it! But yet God never suffered his true worship to be totally rooted out: his tabernacle stood, the ark was preserved, the book of the law was kept from being destroyed, God's priesthood was upheld, and he still had a church among the people. Time after thee, when religion seemed to be almost gone, then God granted

a revival, and sent some angel, or raised up some eminent person, to be an instrument of their reformation.

**XV.** God's preserving that nation from being destroyed, although they were so often subdued and brought under the dominion of their enemies. It was a wonder, not only that the true religion was not wholly rooted out, and so the church destroyed that way; but also that the very nation in which that church was; was not utterly destroyed, they were so often brought under the power of their enemies: One while they were subdued by Chushanrishathaim king of Mesopotamia, another while they were brought under the Moabites; now they were sold into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan; then they were under the dominion of the Midianites; now they were sorely distressed by the children of Ammon; and then by the Philistines. But set God, in all these dangers, preserved them, and kept them from being wholly overthrown. From time to time, when it was come to extremity, and God saw that they were upon the very brink of ruin, then he raised up a deliverer, agreeable to

“For the Lord shall judge his people, and repent himself for his servants; when he seeth their power is gone, and there is none shut up or left.” (~~Deut~~ Deuteronomy 32:36)

Those remarkable dispensations of Providence are very elegantly set forth by the psalmist, ~~Psalm~~ Psalm 106:34, etc.-These deliverers were all types of Christ, the great redeemer and deliverer of his church; and some of them very remarkably so; as, Barak, Jephthah, Gideon, and Samson, in very many particulars; and above all in the acts of Samson, as might be shown, were it not that this would take up too much time.

**XVI.** It is observable, that when Christ appeared to manage the affairs of his church in this period, he often appeared in the form of that nature which he took upon him in his incarnation. So he seems to have appeared repeatedly to Moses, and particularly at that time when God spake to him face to face, as a man speaketh to his friend, and he beheld the similitude of the Lord, (~~Num~~ Numbers 12:8.) after he had besought him to show him his glory; which was the most remarkable vision that ever he had of Christ. There was a twofold discovery that Moses had of Christ: one was spiritual, made to his mind, by the word that was proclaimed, “The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in

goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation," <sup><1234></sup>Exodus 34:6, etc. Another was external; which was that which Moses saw, when Christ passed by, and put him in a cleft of the rock. What he saw was doubtless a glorious human form, in which Christ appeared to him, and in all likelihood the form of his glorified human nature, in which he should afterwards appear. He saw not his face; for it is not to be supposed that any man could subsist under a sight of the glory of Christ's human nature as it now appears.

So it was a human form in which Christ appeared to the seventy elders, of which we have an account, <sup><1245></sup>Exodus 24:9, 11. "Then went up Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel. And they saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet, as it were a paved work of sapphire-stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness. And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand: also they saw God, and did eat and drink." So Christ appeared afterwards to Joshua in the form of the human nature, <sup><1653></sup>Joshua 5:13, 14. "And it came to pass when Joshua was by Jericho, he lift up his eyes, and looked, and behold, there stood a man over against him, with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? And he said, Nay, but as captain of the host of the Lord am I now come." And so he appeared to Gideon, <sup><1061></sup>Judges 6:11, etc. and so also to Manoah, <sup><1737></sup>Judges 13:17-21. Here Christ appeared to Manoah in a representation both of his incarnation and death; of his incarnation, in that he appeared in a human form; and of his death and sufferings, represented by the sacrifice of a kid, and by his ascending up in the flame of the sacrifice; intimating, that it was he that was the great sacrifice, that must be offered up to God for a sweet savour, in the fire of his wrath, as that kid was burned and ascended up in the flame. Thus Christ appeared, time After time, in the form of that nature he was afterwards to assume; because he now appeared on the same design and in carry on the same work.

**XVII.** Another thing I would mention, done in this period towards the work of redemption, is the beginning of a succession of prophets, and

erecting a school of the prophets, in Samuel's time. There was something of this spirit of prophecy in Israel after Moses, before Samuel. Joshua and many of the judges had a degree of it. Deborah was a prophetess; and some of the high-priests were inspired with this spirit; particularly Eli. That space of time was not wholly without instances of those that were set apart of God especially to this office, and so were called prophets. Such an one we read of <sup><068></sup>Judges 6:8. "The Lord sent a prophet unto the children of Israel, which said unto them," etc. Such an one he seems to have been of whom we read, <sup><027></sup>1 Samuel 2:27. "And there came a man of God to Eli," etc.

But there was no such order of men upheld in Israel, for any constancy, before Samuel, the want of it is taken notice of in <sup><031></sup>1 Samuel 3:1.

"And the word of the Lord was precious in those days;  
there was no open vision."

But in Samuel there was begun a succession of prophets, maintained continually from that time, at least with very little interruption, till the spirit of prophecy ceased, about Malachi's time: and therefore Samuel is spoken of in the New Testament as the beginning of this succession of prophets,

"And all the prophets from Samuel, and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have foretold of these days." (<sup><024></sup>Acts 3:24)

After Samuel was Nathan, and Gad, Iddo, and Heman, Asaph, and others. And afterwards, in the latter end of Solomon's reign, we read of Ahgah; and in Jeroboam and Rehoboam's time we read of prophets; and so continually one prophet succeeded another till the captivity. In the writings of those prophets who are inserted in the canon of Scripture, we read of prophets as being a constant order of men upheld in the land. And even during the captivity there were prophets still, as Ezekiel and Daniel; and after the captivity, as Zechariah, Haggai, and Malachi.

And because God intended a constant succession of prophets from Samuel's time, therefore in his time was begun a school of the prophets; that is, a school of young men, trained up under some great prophet, who was their master and teacher in the study of divine things, and the practice of holiness, to fit them for this office as God should call them to it. Those

young men were called the sons of the prophets; and oftentimes they are termed prophets These at first were under the tuition of Samuel. Thus we read of Samuel's being appointed over them,

“And when they saw the company of the prophets prophesying,  
and Samuel standing as appointed over them.” (~~1000~~ 1 Samuel 19:20)

The company of prophets of whom we read ~~1005~~ 1 Samuel 10:5. were the same. Afterwards we read of their being under Elijah. Elisha was one of these sons; but he desired to have a double portion of his spirit, as his successor, as the eldest son was wont to have a double portion of the estate of his father; and therefore the sons of the prophets, when they perceived that the spirit of Elijah rested on Elisha, submitted themselves to him, and owned him for their master, as they had done Elijah before him ~~1005~~ 2 Kings 2:15. “And when the sons of the prophets which were to view at Jericho, saw him, they said, The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha. And they bowed themselves to the ground before him.” Elisha being their master, or teacher, he had the care of them; as you may see, ~~1008~~ 2 Kings 4:38. “And Elisha came unto Gilgal, and there was a dearth in the land, and the sons of the prophets were sitting before him: and he said unto his servant, Set on the great pot, and seethe pottage for the sons of the prophets.” In Elijah's and Elisha's time, there were several places where there resided companies of these sons of the prophets; as at Bethel, at Jericho, and at Gilgal, unless that at Gilgal and Jericho were the same: and possibly that which is called the college where the prophetess Huldah resided was another at Jerusalem; see ~~1008~~ 2 Kings 22:14. It is there said of Huldah the prophetess, that she dwell in Jerusalem, in the college. They had houses built, where they used to dwell together, and therefore those at Jericho being multiplied, and finding their house too little for them, desired leave of their master and teacher Elisha, that they might go and hew timber to build a bigger; as you may see, ~~1008~~ 2 Kings 6:1, 2. At some times there were members of these sons of the prophets in Israel; for when Jezebel cut off the prophets of the Lord, it is said, that Obadiah took a hundred of them, and hid them by fifty in a cave, ~~1008~~ 1 Kings 18:4.

These schools of the prophets being set up by Samuel, and afterwards kept up by such as Elijah and Elisha, must be of divine appointment, and accordingly we find, that those sons of the prophets were often favoured

with a degree of inspiration, while they continued under tuition: and God commonly when he called any prophet to the constant exercise of the prophetical office, and to some extraordinary service, took them out of these schools, though not universally. Hence the prophet Amos, speaking of his being called to the prophetical office, says, that he had not been educated in the schools of the prophets, and was not one of the sons of the prophets, <sup><3074></sup>Amos 7:14, 15. But Amos taking notice of it as remarkable, that he should be so called, shows that it was God's ordinary manner to take his prophets out of these schools; for therein he did but bless his own institution.

Now this remarkable dispensation of Providence — God beginning a constant succession of prophets in Samuel's time, which was to last for many ages; and to that end establishing a school of the prophets under Samuel, thenceforward to be continued in Israel — was a step that God took in the great affair of redemption. For the main business of this succession of prophets was, to foreshore Christ, and the glorious redemption he was to accomplish, and so to prepare the way for his coming: as appears by that aforementioned place, <sup><418></sup>Acts 3:24. and <sup><4108></sup>Acts 10:43. "To him give all the prophets witness;" and <sup><418></sup>Acts 3:18. "But those things which God before had showed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer; he hath so fulfilled."

The Old-Testament church was not wholly without light, but had not the light of the sun directly, only as reflected. Now these prophets were the luminaries that reflected the light of the sun; and accordingly they spoke abundantly of Jesus Christ, as appears by what we have of their prophecies in writing. And they made it very much their business, when they studied in their schools or colleges, and elsewhere, to search out the work of redemption; agreeable to what the apostle Peter says of them, <sup><611></sup>Peter 1:10, 11. "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired, and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you; searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ that was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." We are told, that the church of the Redeemer is built on the foundation of the prophets and apostles, the Redeemer himself being the chief corner-stone, <sup><4121></sup>Ephesians 2:20.

This was the first thing of the nature that ever was done in the world; and it was a great thing that God did towards further advancing this great building of redemption. There had been before occasional prophecies of Christ, as was shown; but now the time drawing nearer when the Redeemer should come, it pleased God to appoint a certain order of men, in constant succession, whose main business it should be, to point out Christ and his redemption, and as his forerunners to prepare the way for his coming; and God established schools, wherein multitudes were instructed and trained up to that end,

“I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus; for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” ( ~~660~~ Revelation 19:10.)

## PART 5

### FROM DAVID TO THE BABYLONISH CAPTIVITY.

I COME now to the fifth period of the times of the Old Testament, beginning with David, and extending to the Babylonish captivity; and would now proceed to show how the work of redemption was therein carried on. — And here,

**I.** The first thing to be noticed, is God’s anointing that person who was to be the ancestor of Christ, to be king over his people. The dispensations of Providence through the last period, respect the people whence Christ was to proceed; but now the Scripture leads us to consider God’s providence towards that particular person whence Christ was to descend, viz. David. It pleased God at this time remarkably to select out this person, from all the thousands of Israel, and to put a most honourable mark of distinction upon him, by anointing him to be king over his people. It was only God that could find him out.

His father’s house is spoken of as being little in Israel, and he, was the youngest of all the sons of his father, and was least expected by Samuel to be the man whom God had chosen. God had before, in the former ages of the world, remarkably distinguished the persons from whom Christ was to come; as Seth, and Noah, and Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob. But the last

that we have an account of Gods marking out in any notable manner, the very person of whom Christ was to come, was in Jacob's blessing his son Judah; unless we reckon Nahshon's advancement in the wilderness to be the head of the tribe of Judah. But this distinction of the person of whom Christ was to come, in David, was very honourable; for it was God's anointing him to be king over his people. And there was something further denoted by David's anointing, than was in the anointing of Saul. God anointed Saul to be king personally; but God intended something further by sending Samuel to anoint David, viz. to establish the crown of Israel in him and his family, as long as Israel continued to be a kingdom and not only so, but what was infinitely more still, establishing the crown of his universal church his spiritual Israel, in his seed, to the end of the world, and through eternity.

This was a great dispensation of God, and a great step taken towards a further advancing of the work of redemption, according as the time drew near wherein Christ was to come. David, as he was the ancestor of Christ, so he was, the greatest personal type of Christ of all under the Old Testament. The types of Christ were of three sorts; instituted, providential, and personal. He ordinance of sacrificing was the greatest of the instituted types; the redemption out of Egypt was the greatest of the providential; and David the greatest of the personal ones. Hence Christ is often called David in the prophecies of Scripture; as <sup><362></sup>Ezekiel 34:23, 24. "And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; — My servant David a prince among them;" and so in many other places. He is very often spoken of as the seed and the son of David.

David being the ancestor and great type of Christ, his being solemnly anointed by God to be king over his people, that the kingdom of his church might be continued in his family for ever, may in some respects be looked on as an anointing of Christ himself, Christ was as it were anointed in him; and therefore Christ's anointing and David's anointing are spoken of under one scripture, <sup><362></sup>Psalm 89:20. "I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him." And David's throne and Christ's are spoken of as one: <sup><413></sup>Luke 1:32. "And the Lord shall give him the throne of his father David." <sup><413></sup>Acts 2:30. "David-knowing that God had

sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne.”

Thus God beginning the kingdom of his church in the house of David, was, as it were, a new establishing of the kingdom of Christ; the beginning of it in a state of such visibility as it thenceforward continued in. It was planting the root, whence that branch of righteousness was afterwards to spring up he everlasting king of his church; and therefore this everlasting king is called the branch from the stem of Jesse. <sup>2311</sup>Isaiah 11:1. “And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a bra. rich shall grow out of his roots.” <sup>2315</sup>Jeremiah 23:5. “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise up unto David a righteous branch, and a king shall reign and prosper.” So chapter 33:15. “In those days, and at that time, I will cause the branch of righteousness to grow up unto David, and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land.” So Christ, in the New Testament, is called the root and offspring of David, <sup>626</sup>Revelation 22:16.

It is observable, that God anointed David after Saul to reign in his room. lie took away the crown from him and his family, who was higher in stature than any of his people, and was in their eyes fittest to bear rule; to give it to and, who was low of stature, and in comparison of desirable appearance. So God was pleased to show how Christ, who appeared despicable, without form or comeliness, and was despised and rejected of men, should take the kingdom from the great ones of the earth. And also it is observable, that David was the youngest of Jesse’s sons, as Jacob the younger brother supplanted Esau, and got the birthright and blessing from him; and as Pharez, brother of Christ’s ancestor, supplanted Zarah in the birth; and as Isaac, another of the ancestors of Christ, cast out his elder brother Ishmael: thus was that frequent saying of Christ fulfilled, “The last shall be first, and the first last.”

**II.** The next thing I would observe, is God’s preserving David’s life, by a series of wonderful providences, till Saul’s death. I before took notice of the wonderful preservation of other particular persons who were the ancestors of Christ; as Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob; and have observed how, in their preservation, the work of redemption itself may be looked upon as preserved from being defeated, and the whole church, which is redeemed through him, from being overthrown. But the preservation of

David was rid less remarkable than that of any others already noticed. flow often was there but a step between him and death. The first instance of it we have in his encountering a lion and a bear, when they had caught a lamb out of his flock, which, without miraculous assistance, could at once have rent this young stripling in pieces, as easily as they could the lamb that he delivered from them. So the root and offspring of David was preserved from the roaring lion that goes about seeking whom lie may devour, and conquered him, and rescued the souls of men, that were as lambs in the mouth of this lion. Another remarkable instance was, in preserving him from that mighty giant Goliath, who was strong enough to have torn him to pieces, and given his flesh to the beasts of the field, and to the fowls of the air, as he threatened. But God preserved him, and gave him the victory over Goliath, so that lie cut off his head with his own sword, and thus was made the deliverer of Israel. So Christ slew the spiritual Goliath with his own weapon, the cross, and delivered his represented people. And how remarkably did God preserve David from being slain by Saul, when he first sought his life! He gave him his daughter to be a snare to him, that the hand of the Philistines might be upon him, requiring of him a hundred foreskins of the Philistines, that so his life might be exposed to them. The same divine care was evident in preserving him afterwards, when Saul spake to Jonathan, and to all his servants, to kill David; and in inclining Jonathan, instead of his killing him, as his father commanded, to love him as his own soul, and to be a great instrument of his preservation, even so as to expose his own life to preserve David; though one would have thought that none would have been more willing to have David killed than Jonathan, seeing that he was competitor with him for the crown. Again Saul threw a javelin at him to smite him even to the wall; and sent messengers to his house, to watch, and to kill him, when Michal, Saul's daughter, let him down through a window. He afterwards sent messengers, once and again, to Naioth in Ramah, to take him, and they were remarkably prevented by miraculous impressions of the Spirit of God; and afterwards, when Saul being resolute in the affair, went himself, he also was among the prophets. How wonderfully was David's life preserved at Gath among the Philistines, when he went to Achish the king of Gath, and was there in the hands of the Philistines, who, one would have thought, would have dispatched him at once, he having so much provoked them by his exploits against them. He was again

wonderfully preserved at Keilah, when he had entered into a fenced town, where Saul thought he was sure of him. And how wonderfully was he preserved from Saul, when he pursued and hunted him in the mountains! How remarkably did God deliver him in the wilderness of Maon, when Saul and his army were compassing David, about how was he delivered in the cave of Engedi, when, instead of Saul's killing David, God delivered Saul into his hands in the cave I David cut off his skirt, and might as easily have cut off his head. He was delivered in like manner in the wilderness of Ziph; and afterwards served in the land of the Philistines, though David had fought against the Philistines, and conquered them at Keilah, since he was last among them. This, one would think, would have been sufficient warning to them not to trust him, or let him escape a second time, if ever they had him in their hands again; but yet now, when they had a second opportunity, God wonderfully turned their hearts to befriend and protect, instead of destroying him.

Thus was the precious seed that virtually contained the Redeemer, and all the blessings of his redemption, wonderfully preserved, when hell and earth were conspired to destroy it. How often does David himself take notice of this, with praise and admiration, in the book of Psalms.

**III.** About this time, the written word of God, or the canon of Scripture, was augmented by Samuel. I have before observed, that the canon of Scripture was begun and the first written rule of faith and manners was given to the church, about the time of Moses. Joshua probably enlarged it, and wrote the last chapter of Deuteronomy, and most of the book of Joshua. Others think that Joshua, Judges, Ruth, and part of the first book of Samuel, were written by Samuel. However that was, of this we have good evidence, that Samuel made an addition to the canon of Scripture; for Samuel is manifestly mentioned in the New Testament, as one of the prophets whose writings we have in Scripture,

“Yea and all the prophets from Samuel, and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days.”

(~~4th~~ Acts 3:24)

By that expression, “as many as have spoken,” is meant, as many as have spoken by writing.

And the way that Samuel spake of these times of Christ and the gospel, was by giving the history of those things that typified, and pointed to them, particularly what he wrote concerning David. The Spirit of God moved him to commit those things to writing, chiefly because they pointed to Christ, and the times of the gospel; and, as was said before, this was the main business of all that succession of prophets that began in Samuel. That Samuel added to the Scriptures seems further to appear from <sup>(109)</sup>1 Chronicles 29:29.

“Now the acts of David the king, first and last, behold they are written in the book of Samuel the seer.”

Whether the book of Joshua was written by Samuel or not, yet it is the general opinion of divines, that the books of Judges and Ruth, and part of the first book of Samuel, were penned by him. The book of Ruth was penned for this reason, that though it seemed to treat of private affairs, yet the persons chiefly spoken of were of the family whence David and Christ proceeded, and so pointed to what the apostle Peter observed of Samuel and the other prophets, in the third chapter of Acts. These additions to the canon of the Scripture, the great and main instrument of the application of redemption, are to be considered as a further continuation of that work, and an addition made to that great building.

**IV.** Another thing God did towards this work, at that time, was his inspiring David to show forth Christ and his redemption, in divine songs, which should be for the use of the church, in public worship, throughout all ages. David was himself endued with the spirit of prophecy. He is called a prophet, <sup>(4129)</sup>Acts 2:29, 30. “Let me freely speak to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day; therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath,” etc. So that herein he was a type of Christ, that he was both a prophet and a king.

The oil that was used in anointing David was a type of the Spirit of God; and the type and the antetype were given both together; as we are told,

“Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren; and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward:” (<sup>(1963)</sup>1 Samuel 16:13)

and it is probable, that it now came upon him in its prophetical influences. One way that this Spirit influenced him was by inspiring him to show forth Christ, and the glorious things of his redemption, in divine songs, sweetly expressing the breathings of a pious soul, full of admiration of the glorious things of the Redeemer, inflamed with divine love and elevated praise; and therefore he is called the sweet psalmist of Israel, <sup>117</sup>2 Samuel 23:1. The main subjects of these songs were the glorious things of the gospel; as is evident by the interpretation that is often put upon them, and the use that is made of them in the New Testament: for there is no one book of the Old Testament that is so often quoted in the New, as the book of Psalms. Joyfully did this holy man sing of those great things of Christ's redemption, that had been the hope and expectation of God's church and people from the beginning; and joyfully did others follow him in it, as Asaph, Heman, Ethan, and others; for the book of Psalms was not all penned by David, though the greater part of it was. Hereby the canon of the Scripture was further enlarged by an excellent portion of divine writ.

This was a great advancement that God made in this building; and the light of the gospel, which had been gradually growing, was exceedingly increased by it: for whereas, before there was but here and there a prophecy given of Christ in a great many ages, here Christ is spoken of by his ancestor David abundantly, in multitudes of songs, speaking of his incarnation, life, death, resurrection, ascension into heaven, his satisfaction, intercession; his prophetical, kingly, and priestly office; his glorious benefits in this life and that which is to come; his union with the church, and the blessedness of the church in him; the calling of the Gentiles, the future glory of the church near the end of the world, and Christ's coming to the final judgment. All these things, and many more, concerning Christ and his redemption, are abundantly spoken of in the book of Psalms.

This was also a glorious advancement of the affair of redemption, as hereby gave his church a book of divine songs for their use in that part of their public worship viz. singing his praises, throughout all ages to the end of the world. It is manifest the book of Psalms was given of God for this end. It was used in the church of Israel by God's appointment: this is manifest by the title of many of the Psalms, in which they are inscribed to the chief musician, *i.e.* to the man that was appointed to be the leader of

divine songs in the temple, in the public worship of Israel. So David is called the sweet psalmist of Israel, because he penned psalms for the use of the church of Israel; and accordingly we have an account that they were actually made use of in the church of Israel for that end, even ages after David was dead; as <sup><40B></sup>2 Chronicles 29:30.

“Moreover, Hezekiah the king, and the princes commanded the Levites to sing praises unto the, Lord, with the words of David, and of Asaph the seer.”

And we find that the same are appointed in the New Testament to be made use of in the Christian church, in their worship: <sup><40B></sup>Ephesians 5:19.

“Speaking to yourselves in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.”

<sup><50B></sup>Colossians 3:16. “Admonishing one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. So they have been, and will, to the end of the world, be made use of in the church to celebrate the praises of God. The people of God were wont sometimes to worship God by singing songs to his praise before; as they did. at the Red sea; and they had Moses’s prophetic in the 32d chapter of Deuteronomy, committed to for that end; and Deborah, Barak, and Hannah sung praises to God: but now first did God commit to his church a book of divine songs for their constant use.

**V.** The next thing I would notice, is God’s actually exalting David to the throne Israel, notwithstanding all the opposition made of it. God was determined to do it, and he made everything give place that stood in its way. He removed his sons out of the way; and first set David over the tribe of Judah; then, having removed Ishbosheth, set him over all Israel. Thus did God fulfil his word to David. He took him from the sheep-cote, and made him king over his people Israel, <sup><50B></sup>Psalms 78:70, 71. And now the throne of Israel was established in that family in which it was to continue for ever.

**VI.** Now first it was that God proceeded to choose a particular city out of all the tribes of Israel to place his name. There is several times mention made in the law of Moses, of the children of Israel bringing their oblations to the place which God should choose; as <sup><50B></sup>Deuteronomy 12:5-7. and other places, but God had never proceeded to do it till now. The tabernacle and ark were never fixed, but sometimes in one place, and sometimes in another; but now God proceeded to choose Jerusalem. The city of

Jerusalem was never thoroughly conquered, or taken out of the hands of the Jebusites, till David's time. It is said in <sup><185></sup>Joshua 15:63.

“As for the Jebusites, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the children of Judah could not drive them out: but the Jebusites dwell with the children of Judah at Jerusalem unto this day.”

But now David wholly subdued it, as we have an account in 2 Samuel 5 And now God proceeded to choose that city to lace his name there, as appears by David's bringing up the ark thither soon after; and therefore this is mentioned afterwards as the first time God proceeded to choose a city to that end. <sup><405></sup>2 Chronicles 6:5, 6. and chapter 12:13. Afterwards God proceeded to show David the very place where he would have his temple built, viz. in the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite.

This city of Jerusalem is therefore called the holy city and it was the greatest type of the church of Christ in all the Old Testament. It was redeemed by David, the captain of the hosts of Israel, out of the hands of the Jebusites, to be God's city, the holy place of his rest for ever, where he would dwell. So Christ, the Captain of his people's salvation, redeems his church out of the hands of devils, to be his holy and beloved city. And therefore how often does the Scripture, when speaking of Christ's redemption of his church, call it by the names of Zion and Jerusalem! This was the city that God had appointed to be the place of the first gathering and erecting of the christian church after Christ's resurrection, of that remarkable effusion of the Spirit of God on the apostles and primitive Christians, and the place whence the gospel was to sound forth into all the world; the place of the first Christian church, that was to be, as it were, the mother of all other churches through the world; agreeable to that prophecy <sup><215></sup>Isaiah 2:3, 4. “Out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem: and he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people,” etc. Thus God chose mount Zion whence the gospel was to be sounded forth, as the law had been from mount Sinai.

**VII.** The next thing to be observed here, is God's solemnly renewing the covenant of grace with David, and promising that the Messiah should be of his seed. We have an account of it in the 7th chapter of the second book of Samuel. It was done on occasion of the thoughts David entertained of building God a house. On this occasion God sends Nathan the prophet to

him, with the glorious promises of the covenant of grace. It is especially contained in these words, (verse 16.) And thy house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee; thy throne shall be established for ever.” Which promise has expect to Christ, the seed of David, and is fulfilled in him only: for the kingdom of David has long since ceased, any otherwise than as it is upheld in Christ.

That this covenant, now established with David by Nathan the prophet, was the covenant of grace, is evident by the plain testimony of Scripture, ~~251~~ Isaiah 55:1-3. There we have Christ inviting sinners to come to the waters, etc. And in the 3rd verse, he says, “Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear and your souls shall live; and I will make with you an everlasting covenant, even the sure mercies of David.” Here Christ offers to poor sinners, if they will come to him, to give them an interest in the same everlasting covenant that he had made with David, conveying to them the same sure mercies. But what is that covenant, in which sinners obtain an interest when they come to Christ, but the covenant of grace?

This was the fifth solemn establishment of the covenant of grace with the church after the fall. The covenant of grace revealed and established all along. But there had been particular seasons, wherein God had in a very solemn manner renewed this covenant with his church, giving forth a new edition and establishment of it, revealing it in a new manner. He first was with Adam; the second with Noah; the third with the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; the fourth was in the wilderness by Moses; and now the fifth is made to David.

This establishment of the covenant of grace, David always esteemed the greatest smile of God upon him, the greatest honour put upon him; he prized it, and rejoiced in it above all the other blessings of his reign. You may see how joyfully and thankfully he received it, when Nathan came to him with the glorious message, ~~1078~~ 2 Samuel 7:18, etc. And so David, in his last words, declares this to be all his salvation, and all his desire;

“He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all in desire.”

(~~125~~ 2 Samuel 23:5)

**VIII.** It was by David that God first gave his people Israel the possession of the whole promised land. I have before shown, how God giving possession of the promised land belonged to the covenant of grace. This was done in a great measure by Joshua, but not fully. Joshua did not wholly subdue that part of the promised land that was I strictly called the land of Canaan, and that was divided by lot to the several tribes; but there were great numbers of the old inhabitants left unsubdued, as we read in the books of Joshua and Judges; and there were many left to prove Israel, and to be as thorns in their sides. There were the Jebusites in Jerusalem, and many of the Canaanites, and the whole nation of the Philistines, who all dwelt in that part of the land that was divided by lot, and chiefly in that which belonged to the tribes of Judah and Ephraim.

And thus these remains of the old inhabitants of continued unsubdued till David's time; but he wholly subdued them all. Which is agreeable to what St. Stephen, observes, <sup><4175></sup>Acts 7:45. "Which also our fathers brought in with Jesus (*i.e.* Joshua) into the possession of the Gentiles, whom God drove out before the face of our fathers, unto the days of David." They were till the days of David in driving them out, before they had wholly subdued them. But David entirely brought them tunder. He subdued the Jebusite, the whole nation of the Philistines, and all the rest of the remains of the seven nations of Canaan;

"Now after this it came to pass, that David smote the Philistines, and subdued them, and took Gath and her towns out of the hands of die Philistines." (<sup><1381></sup>1 Chronicles 18:1)

After this, all the remains of the former inhabitants of Canaan were made bond-servants to the Israelites. The it of the Gibeonites became servants before, hewers posterity of wood and drawers of water, for the house of God. But Solomon, David's son and successor, put all the other remains of the seven nations of Canaan to bond-service; at least made them pay a tribute of bond service, <sup><1093></sup>1 Kings 9:20-22. And hence we read of the children of Solomon's servants, after the return from the Babylonish captivity, <sup><1875></sup>Ezra 2:55. and <sup><1019></sup>Nehemiah 11:3. They were the children or posterity of the seven nations of Canaan, that Solomon had subjected to bond-service.

Thus David subdued the whole land of Canaan, strictly so called. But then that was not one half, nor quarter, of the land God had promised to their fathers. The land often promised to their fathers, included all the countries from the river of Egypt to the river Euphrates. These were the bounds of the land promised to Abraham,

“In that same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt, unto the great river, the river Euphrates.” (<sup><0159></sup>Genesis 15:19)

So again God promised at mount Sinai, <sup><0239></sup>Exodus 23:31. “And I will set thy bounds from the Red sea even unto the sea of the Philistines, and from the desert unto the river: for I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand; and thou shalt drive them out before thee.” So again, <sup><0124></sup>Deuteronomy 11:24. “Every place whereon the soles of your feet shall tread, shall be yours: from the wilderness, and Lebanon, from the river, the river Euphrates, even unto the uttermost sea, shall your coast be.” Again the same promise is made to Joshua: <sup><0103></sup>Joshua 1:3, 4. “Every place that the sole of your feet, tread upon have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses; from the wilderness and this Lebanon, even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea, towards the going down of the sun, shall be your coast.” But the land of which Joshua gave the people possession, was but a little part of this land. And the people never had possession of it, till now when God gave it them by David.

This large country did not only include that Canaan which was divided by lot to those who came in with Joshua, but the land of the Moabites and Ammonites, the land of the Amalekites, and the rest of the Edomites, and the country of Zobah. All these nations were subdued and brought under the children of Israel by David. And he put garrisons in the several countries, and they became David’s servants, as we have a particular account in the 8th chapter of 2nd Samuel: and David extended their border to the river Euphrates, as was promised; see the 3rd verse: “And David smote also Hadadezer the son of Rehob, king of Zobah, as he went to recover his border at the river Euphrates.”

And accordingly we read, that Solomon his son reigned over all the region on this side the river, <sup><0104></sup>1 Kings 4:24. “For he had dominion over all the

region on this side the river, from Tiphseh even unto Azzah, over all the kings on this side the riverse” This Artaxerxes king of Persia takes notice of long after: <sup><404></sup>Ezra 4:20. “There have been mighty kings also over Jerusalem, which have ruled over all countries beyond the river; and toll, tribute, and custom was paid unto them.”

So that Joshua, that eminent type of Christ, did but begin the work of giving Israel the possession of the promised land; but left it to be finished by that much greater type and ancestor of Christ, even David, who subdued far more of that land than ever Joshua had done. And in this extent of his and Solomon’s dominion was some resemblance of the great extent of Christ’s kingdom; which is set forth by this very thing, <sup><404></sup>Psalm 72:8. “He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth.” See also <sup><1056></sup>1 Kings 8:56.

**IX.** God by David perfected the Jewish worship, and added to it several new institutions. The law was given by Moses, but yet all the institutions of the Jewish worship were not even by Moses; some were added by divine direction. So this greatest of all personal types of Christ did not only perfect Joshua’s work, in giving Israel the possession of the promised land, but he also finished Moses work in perfecting the instituted worship of Israel. Thus there must be a number of typical prophets, priests, and princes, to complete one figure or shadow of Christ the antetype, he being the substance of all the types and shadows. Of so much more glory was Christ accounted worthy, than Moses, Joshua, David, and Solomon, and all the great prophets, priests, and princes, judges, and saviours of the Old Testament put together.

The ordinances of David are mentioned as of parallel validity with those of Mesa, <sup><404></sup>2 Chronicles 23:18. “Also Jehoiada appointed the offices of the house of the Lord by the hand of the priests the Levites, whom David had distributed in the house of the Lord, to offer the burnt-offerings of the Lord, as it is written in the law of Moses, with rejoicing and with singing, as it was ordained by David. The worship of Israel was perfected by David, by the addition he made to the ceremonial law, (1 Chronicles 43 etc.) consisting in the several orders and courses into which the Levites were divided, and the work and business to which he appointed them, different from what Moses had appointed them to; and also in the

divisions of the priests, the sons of Aaron, into four and twenty courses, assigning to every course their business in the house of the Lord, and their particular stated times of attendance there. He also appointed some of the Levites to a new office, that of singers, particularly ordering and regulating them in that office (1 Chronicles 25.). Others of the Levites he appointed by law to the several services of porters, treasurers, officers, and judges: and these ordinances of David were kept up thenceforth in the church of Israel, as long as the Jewish church lasted. Thus we find the several orders of priests, and the Levites, the porters, and singers, after the captivity. And we find the courses of the priests appointed by David still continuing in the New Testament; Zacharias the father of John the Baptist was a priest of the course of Abia; which is the same with the course of Abijah appointed by David, <sup><1310></sup>1 Chronicles 24:10.

Thus David as well as Moses was made like to Christ the Son of David, in this respect, that by him God gave, in a manner, a new ecclesiastical establishment, and new institutions of worship. David did not only add to the institutions of Moses, but by those additions he abolished some of the old institutions that had been in force till that time; particularly those laws which appointed the business of the Levites, which we have in the 3rd and 4th chapters of Numbers, which very much consisted in their charge of the several parts and utensils of the tabernacle. But those laws were now abolished; and they were no more to carry those things, as they had been used to do. But David appointed them to other work instead of it;

“And also unto the Levites, they shall no more carry the tabernacle, nor any vessels of it for the service thereof:”

(<sup><1320></sup>1 Chronicles 23:26)

a sure evidence that the ceremonial law given by Moses is not perpetual, as the Jews suppose; but might be wholly abolished by Christ: for if David, a type of the Messiah, might abolish the law of Moses in part, much more might the Messiah himself abolish the whole.

David, by God’s appointment, abolished all use of the tabernacle built by Moses, and of which he had the pattern from God, for God now revealed it to David to be his — will, that a temple should be built instead of the tabernacle. This was a great presage of what Christ, the Son of David, would do when he should come, viz. abolish the whole Jewish

ecclesiastical constitution, which was but as a movable tabernacle, to set up the spiritual gospel temple, which was to be far more glorious, of greater extent, and was to last for ever. David had the pattern of all things pertaining to the temple showed him, even in like manner as Moses had the pattern of the tabernacle: and Solomon built the temple according to that pattern which he had from his father David, which he received from God. <sup>(1381)</sup>1 Chronicles 28:11, 12. “Then David gave to Solomon his son the pattern of the porch, and of the houses thereof, and of the treasures thereof, and of the upper chambers thereof, and of the inner parlors thereof, and of the place of the mercy-seat, and the pattern of all that he had by the Spirit, of the courts of the house of the Lord, and of all the chambers round about, of the treasures of the house of God and of the treasures of the dedicated things.” And, verse 19. “All this, said David, the Lord made me understand in writing by his hand upon me, even all the works of this pattern.”

**X.** The canon of Scripture seems at or after the close of David’s reign to be added to by the prophets Nathan and Gad. It appears probable by the Scriptures, that they carried on the history of the two books of Samuel from the place where Samuel left it, and finished them, these seem to be called the book of Samuel the seer,

“Now the acts of David the king, first and last, behold, they are written in the book of Samuel the seer, and in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the Look of Gad the seer.”

(<sup>(1389)</sup>1 Chronicles 29:29)

**XI.** The next thing I would notice, is God’s wonderfully continuing the kingdom of his visible people in the line of Christ’s legal ancestors, as long as they remained an independent kingdom. Thus it was without any interruption worth notice. Indeed the kingdom of all the tribes of Israel was not kept in that line; but the dominion of that part in which the true worship of God was upheld, who were God’s visible people, was always kept in the family of David, as long as there was any such thing as an independent king of Israel; according to his promise to David; and not only in the family of David, but always in that part of David’s posterity whence Christ was legally descended. So that Christ’s legal ancestor was

always on the throne, excepting Jehoahaz, who reigned three months, and Zedekiah; as you may see in Matthew's genealogy of Christ.

Christ was legally descended from the kings of Judah, though not naturally. He was both legally and naturally descended from David. He was naturally descended from Nathan the son of David; for Mary his mother was one of the posterity of David by Nathan, as you may see in Luke's genealogy: but Joseph, the reputed and legal father of Christ, was naturally descended of Solomon and his successors, as we have an account in Matthew's genealogy. Jesus Christ, though he was not the natural son of Joseph, yet by the law and constitution of the Jews, was Joseph's heir; because he was the lawful son of Joseph's lawful wife, conceived while she was his legally espoused wife. The Holy Ghost raised seed to him. A person, by the law Moses, might legal son and heir or another, whose natural son he was not: as sometimes a man raised up seed to his brother. A brother, in some cases, was to build up a brother's house; so the Holy Ghost built up Joseph's house. Joseph being in the direct line of the kings of Judah, of the house of David, he was in this respect the legal heir of the crown of David; and Christ being legally his first-born son, he was his heir; and so Christ, by the law, was the proper heir of the crown of David, and is therefore said to sit upon the throne of his father David. The crown of God's people was wonderfully kept in the line of Christ's legal ancestors. When David was old, and not able any longer to manage the affairs of the kingdom, Adonijah, one of his sons, set up to be king, and seemed to have obtained his purpose. All things for a while seemed fair on his side, and he thought himself strong. But Adonijah was not the ancestor of Joseph, the legal father of Christ; and therefore how wonderfully did Providence work here! What a strange and sudden revolution! All Adonijah's kingdom and glory vanished away as soon as it was begun; and Solomon, the legal ancestor of Christ, was established in the throne.

And after Solomon's death, when Jeroboam had conspired against the family, and Rehoboam carried himself in such a manner that it was a wonder all Israel was not provoked to forsake him, (as ten tribes actually did,) and set up Jeroboam in opposition to him; and though he was a wicked man, and deserved to have been rejected altogether from being king; yet he being the legal ancestor of Christ, God kept the kingdom of the two tribes, in which the true religion was upheld, in his possession. And

though his son Abijam was another wicked prince; yet God still continued the crown in the family, and gave it to Abijam's son, Asa. And afterwards, though many of the kings of Judah were very wicked men, and horribly provoked God, as particularly Jehoram, Ahaziah, Ahaz, Manasseh, and Amon; yet God did not take away the crown from their family, but gave it to their sons, because they were the ancestors of Christ. God's remembering his covenant established with David, is given as the reason why God did thus, notwithstanding their wicked lives; <sup><11534></sup>1 Kings 15:4. speaking of Abijam's wickedness, it is said, "Nevertheless, For David's sake did the Lord his God give him a lamp in Jerusalem, to set up his son after him, and to establish Jerusalem:" so, <sup><14200></sup>2 Chronicles 21:7. speaking of Jehoram's great wickedness, it is said "Howbeit the by Lord would not destroy the house of David, because of the covenant he had made with David, and as he promised to give a light unto him, and to his sons for ever.

The crown of the ten tribes was changed from one family to another. First, Jeroboam took it; but the crown descended only to his son Nadab. Then Baasha, who was of another and it remained in his posterity but his death. And then Zimri, who was not of his posterity, took it; from whom Omri, who was of another family, took it. The crown continued in his family for three successions: and then Jehu, who was of another family, took it. The crown continued in his family for three or four successions; and then Shallum, that was of another family, took it. The crown did not descend at all to his posterity; but Menahem, who was of another family, took it; and it remained in his family but one generation after him. Then Pekah, who was of another family took it: and after him Hoshea, that was still of another family, took it So at a difference was there between the crown of Israel and the crown of Judah; the one was continued ever more in the same family, and with very little interruption, in one right line; the other was continually tossed about from one family to another, as if it were the sport of fortune. The reason was not, because the kings of Judah, at least many of them, were better than the kings of Israel; but the one had the blessing in them; they were the ancestors of Christ, whose right it was to sit on the throne of Israel. But with the kings of Israel it was not so; and therefore Divine Providence exercised a continual care, through all the changes that happened through so many generations, and such a long space

of time, to keep the crown of Judah in one direct line, in fulfilment of the everlasting covenant he had made with David, the mercies of which covenant were sure mercies; but in the other case there was no such covenant, and so no such interposing care of Providence.

And here it must not be omitted, that there was once a very strong conspiracy of the kings of Syria and Israel, in the time of that wicked king of Judah, Ahaz, to dispossess him and his family of the throne of Judah, and to set one of another family; even the son of Tabeal, on it; as ~~2006~~ Isaiah 7:6.

“Let us go up against Judah, and vex it, and let us make a breach therein for us, and set a king in the midst of it, even the son of Tabeal.”

And they seemed very likely to accomplish their purpose. There seemed to be so great a likelihood of it, that the hearts of the people sunk within them; they gave up the cause. It is said, “The heart of Abaz and his people was moved as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind.” And on this occasion God sent the prophet Isaiah to encourage the people, and tell them that it should not come to pass. And because it looked so much like a lost cause to Ahaz and the people, therefore God directs the prophet to give them this sign of it, viz. that Christ should be born of the legal seed of Ahar, as ~~2006~~ Isaiah 7:14.

“Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign: behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.”

This was a good sign, and a great confirmation of the truth of what God promised by Isaiah, viz. that the kings of Syria and Israel should never accomplish their purpose of dispossessing the family of Ahaz of the crown of Judah, and setting up the son of Tabeal; for Christ the Immanuel was to be of them.

**XII.** The building of the temple was a great type of three things, viz. of Christ especially his human nature of the church; and of heaven. The tabernacle seemed rather to represent the church in its movable, changeable state, in this world. But that beautiful, glorious, costly structure, the temple, that succeeded the tabernacle, seems especially to represent the church in its glorified state in heaven. This temple was built according to

the direction and the pattern shown by the Holy Ghost to David, in the place where was the threshing-floor of Oman the Jebusite, in mount Moriah, (<sup><481></sup>2 Chronicles 3:1; the same mountain (and probably in the very same place) where Abraham offered up his son Isaac; for that is said to be in the land of Moriah, (<sup><127></sup>Genesis 22:12. and was called the mountain the Lord, as this of the temple was,

“And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah jireh; as it is said to this day, In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen.”  
(<sup><124></sup>Genesis 22:14)

This was the house where Christ dwelt, till he came to dwell in human nature. That his body was the antetype of this temple, appears from what he says, “Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up,” speaking of the temple, of his body, (<sup><429></sup>John 2:19, 20. This continued to be the house of God, the place of worship for his church, till Christ came; the place that God chose, where all their sacrifices were offered up, till the great sacrifice came. Into this temple the Lord came, even the messenger of the covenant. There he often delivered his heavenly doctrine, and wrought miracles; here his church was gathered by the pouring out of the Spirit, after his ascension.

“And they were continually in the temple,  
praising and blessing God.” (<sup><125></sup>Luke 24:53)

And (<sup><426></sup>Acts 2:46.) respecting the multitudes that were converted by that great effusion of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, it is said, “And they continued daily with one accord in the temple.” And the sacred historian (<sup><452></sup>Acts 5:42.) speaking of the apostles, says, “And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ?” And thence the sound of the gospel went forth, and the church was spread into all the world.

**XIII.** It is here worthy to be observed, that in Solomon’s reign, after the temple was finished, the Jewish church was risen to its highest external glory. The Jewish church, as to its ordinances and constitution, is compared to the moon,

“And there appeared a great wonder in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars.” (~~Rev~~ Revelation 12:1)

This church was like the moon in many other respects, but especially that it waxed and waned like the moon. From its first formation, which was in the covenant made with Abraham, when this moon began to appear, it had been gradually increasing in its glory. This time, wherein the temple was finished and dedicated, was about the middle between the calling of Abraham and the coming of Christ, and now it was full moon. After this the glory of the Jewish church gradually decreased, till Christ came; as I shall have occasion to show more particularly.

Now the church of Israel was in its highest external glory. Now Israel was multiplied exceedingly, so that they seemed to have become like the sand on the sea-shore, ~~1~~ 1 Kings 4:20. Now the kingdom of Israel was firmly established in the right family, the family of which Christ was to come. Now God hid Chosen the city where he would place his name; and had fully given his people the possession of the promised land. They now possessed the dominion of it all, in quietness and peace, even from the river of Egypt, to the great river Euphrates; all those nations which had formerly been their enemies, quietly submitted to them; none pretended to rebel against them. Now the Jewish worship in all its ordinances was fully settled: instead of a movable tabernacle, they had it glorious temple; the most magnificent, beautiful, and costly structure, that ever had been, or has been since. Now the people enjoyed peace and plenty, and sat every man under his vine and fig-tree, eating and drinking and making merry, ~~1~~ 1 Kings 4:20. They were in the highest Pitch of earthly prosperity, silver being as plenty as stones, an the land full of gold and precious stones, and other foreign commodities, which were brought by Solomon’s ships from Ophir and other parts of the world. Now they had a king reigning over them who was the wisest of men, and probably the greatest earthly prince that ever was: their fame was abroad into all the earth, so that they came from the utmost parts of the earth to see their glory and their happiness.

Thus God was pleased, in one of Messiah’s ancestors, remarkably to shadow forth the kingdom of Christ and himself reigning in his glory. David, a man of war, a man who had shed much blood, and whose life was

full of troubles and conflicts, was a more suitable representation of Christ in his state of humiliation, wherein he was conflicting with his enemies. But Solomon, a man of peace, was a representation more especially of Christ exalted triumphing and reigning in his kingdom of peace. And the happy glorious state of the Jewish church at that time, remarkably represented two things: —

1. A glorious state of the church on earth, in the latter ages of the world those days of peace, when nation shall not lift sword against nation, nor learn war any more.
2. The future glorified state of the church in heaven. The earthly Canaan never was so lively a type of the heavenly Canaan as it was then, when the happy people of Israel indeed enjoyed it as a land flowing with milk and honey.

**XIV.** After this the glory of the Jewish church gradually declined more and more till Christ came; yet the work of redemption went on. Whatever failed or declined, God still carried on this work from age to age; this building was advancing higher and higher. It went on, even during the decline of the Jewish church, towards a further preparation of things for the coming of Christ, as well as during its increase; for so wonderfully were things ordered by the infinitely wise Governor of the world, that whatever happened was ordered for good to this general design, and made a means of promoting it. When the Jews flourished, and were in prosperity, he made that to contribute to the promoting of this design; and when they were in adversity, God made this also contribute to the same. While the Jewish church was in its increasing state, the work of redemption was carried on by their increase; and when they came to their declining state, from Solomon's time till Christ, God carried on the work of redemption by that. The very decline itself, was one thing that God employed as a further preparation for Christ's coming.

As the moon, from the time of its full, is approaching nearer and nearer to her conjunction with the sun; so her light is still more and more decreasing, till at length, when the conjunction comes, it is wholly swallowed up in the light of the sun. It was with the Jewish church from the time of its highest glory in Solomon's time. In the latter end of Solomon's reign, the state of things began to darken, by his corrupting himself with idolatry,

which much obscured the glory of this mighty and wise prince; and troubles also began to arise in his kingdom. After his death the kingdom was divided, and ten tribes revolted, and withdrew their subjection from the house of David, apostatizing also from the true worship of God in the temple at Jerusalem, and setting up the golden calves of Bethel and Daniel. And presently after this the number of the ten tribes was greatly diminished in the battle of Jeroboam with Abijan, wherein there fell down slain of Israel five hundred thousand chosen men; which loss the kingdom of Israel probably never in any measure recovered.

The ten tribes finally apostatized from the true God under Jeroboam. The kingdom of Judah was greatly corrupted, and from that time forward more generally in a corrupt state than otherwise. In Ahab's time the kingdom of Israel did not only worship the calves of Bethel and Dan, but the worship of Baal was introduced. Before, they pretended to worship the true God by these images, the calves of Jeroboam; but now Ahab introduced gross idolatry, and the direct worship of false gods in the room of the true God; and soon after, the worship of Baal was introduced into the kingdom of Judah, viz. in Jehoram's reign, by his marrying Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab. After this God began to cut Israel short, by finally destroying and sending into captivity that part which was beyond Jordan, <sup><2K13></sup>2 Kings 10:32, etc. Mien Tiglath-Pileser subdued and enslaved all the northern parts, <sup><2K15></sup>2 Kings 15:29.; and at last all the ten tribes were subdued by Salmaneser, and they were finally carried away captive out of their own land. After this also the kingdom of Judah was carried captive into Babylon, and a great part of the nation never returned those who returned were but a small number, compared with what had been carried captive; and for the most part after this they were dependent on the power of other states.

They were subject one while to the kings of Persia, then to the monarchy of the Grecians and then to the Romans. And before Christ's time, the Jewish church was become exceeding corrupt, overrun with superstition and self-righteousness. And how small a flock was the church of Christ in the days of his incarnation!

God, by this gradual decline of the Jewish state and church from Solomon's time, prepared the way for the coming of Christ several ways.

**1.** The decline of the glory of this legal dispensation, made way for the introduction of the more glorious dispensation of the gospel. The evangelical dispensation was go much more glorious, that the legal — dispensation had no glory in comparison with it. The ancient dispensation, even as it was in Solomon’s time, was but an inferior glory, compared with the spiritual glory of the dispensation introduced by Christ. The church, under the Old Testament, was a child under tutors and governors, and God dealt with it accordingly. Those pompous externals are called by the apostle, weak and beggarly elements. It was fit that those things should diminish as Christ approached; as John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, speaking of Christ, says,

“He must increase, but I must decrease,” (~~John~~ John 3:30.)

It is fit that the twinkling stars should gradually withdraw their glory, when the sun is approaching towards his rising point. The glory of the Jewish dispensation must be gradually diminished, to prepare the way for the more joyful reception of the spiritual glory of the gospel. If the Jewish church, when Christ came, had been in the same external glory that it was in, in the reign of Solomon, men would have their eyes so dazzled with it, that they would not have been likely, joyfully to exchange such great external grandeur, for only the spiritual glory of the despised Jesus.

Again,

**2.** This gradual decline of the glory in the Jewish state, tended to make the glory of God’s power, in the great effects of Christ’s redemption, the more conspicuous. God’s people being so diminished and weakened by one step after another, till Christ came, was very much like the diminishing of Gideon’s army. God told Gideon, that the people with him were too many for the conquest of the Midianites, lest Israel should vaunt itself, saying, “My own hand hath saved me.” And therefore all that were fearful were commanded to return; and there returned twenty and two thousand, and there remained ten thousand. But still they were too many; and then, by trying the people at the water, they were reduced to three hundred men. So the people in Solomon’s time were too many, and mighty, and glorious for Christ; therefore he diminished them; first, by sending off the ten tribes; then he diminished them by the captivity into Babylon; and then they were further diminished by their great and general corruption

when Christ came; so that Christ found very few godly persons among them. With a small handful of disciples, Christ conquered the world. Thus high things were brought down, that Christ might be exalted.

**3.** This prepared the way for Christ's coming, as it made the salvation of those Jews who were saved by Christ to be more sensible and visible. Though the greater part of the Jewish nation was rejected, and the Gentiles called in their room; yet a great many thousands of the Jews were saved by Christ after his resurrection, <sup><4021></sup>Acts 21:20. They being taken from so low a state under temporal calamity in their bondage to the Romans, and from a state of so great superstition and wickedness, it made their redemption the more sensibly and visibly glorious.

**XV.** I would here take notice of the additions which were made to the canon of Scripture in or soon after the reign of Solomon. There were considerable additions made by Solomon himself, who wrote the books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, probably near the close of his reign. His Song of Songs, as it is called, is wholly on the subject we are upon, viz. Christ and his redemption, representing the high and glorious relation, union, and love, that is between Christ and his redeemed church. And the sacred history seems, in Solomon's reign, and some of the next succeeding, to have been enlarged by the prophets Nathan and Ahijah, Shemaiah and Iddo. It is probable that part of the history which we have in the first of Kings, was written by them. (See <sup><4022></sup>2 Chronicles 9:29. 12:15. 13:22.)

**XVI.** God wonderfully upheld his Church and the true religion through this period. It was very wonderful, considering the many and great apostasies of that people to idolatry. When the ten tribes had generally and finally forsaken the true worship, God kept up the true religion in the kingdom of Judah; and when they corrupted themselves, as they very often did exceedingly, and idolatry was ready totally to swallow up rill, yet God kept the lamp alive. When things seemed to be come to an extremity, and religion at its last gasp, he was often pleased to grant blessed revivals by remarkable outpourings of his Spirit, particularly in Heiekiah's and Josiah's time.

**XVII.** God remarkably kept the book of the law from being lost in times of general and long-continued neglect of it. The most remarkable instance of this kind was its preservation in the time of the great apostacy, during

the greatest part of the long reign of Manasseh, which lasted fifty-five ears, and the reign of Amon his son. This while the law was so much neglected, and such a careless and profane management of the affairs of the temple prevailed, that the book which used to be laid up by the side of the ark in the Holy of Holies, was lost for a long time; and nobody knew where it was. But yet God preserved it from being finally lost. In Josiah's time, when they came to repair the temple, it was found buried in rubbish. It had been lost so long that Josiah himself seems to have been much a stranger to it. (See <sup><1278</sup>2 Kings 22:8, etc.)

**XVIII.** God remarkably preserved the tribe of which Christ was to proceed, from being ruined through the many and great dangers of this period. The visible church of Christ from Solomon's reign was mainly in the tribe of Judah. The tribe of Benjamin, which was annexed to them, was but a very small tribe, and that of Judah exceeding large; and as Judah took Benjamin under his protection when he went into Egypt to bring corn, so the tribe of Benjamin seemed to be under the covert of Judah ever after. And though, on occasion of Jeroboam's setting up the calves at Bethel and Dan, the Levites resorted to Judah out of all the tribes of Israel, (<sup><4113</sup>2 Chronicles 11:13.) Yet the were also small, and not reckoned among the tribes many of the ten tribes, it is true, on that occasion, for the sake of worshipping God in the temple, left their inheritances in their several tribes, and settled in Judah, and so were incorporated with them, as we have account in the chapter just quoted, (verse 16.) yet the tribe of Judah was so much the prevailing part, that they were called by one name, Judah. Therefore God said to Solomon,

“I will not rend away all the kingdom: but will give one tribe to thy son, for David my servant's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake, which I have chosen.” (<sup><4113</sup>1 Kings 11:13)

So when the ten tribes were carried captive, it is said, there was none left but the tribe of Judah: <sup><1278</sup>2 Kings 17:18. “Therefore the Lord was very wroth with Israel, and removed them out of his sight: there was none left but the tribe of Judah only.” Whence they were all called Jews, a word derived from Judah.

This was the tribe of which Christ was to come; and in this chiefly did God's visible church consist, from Solomon's time. This people, over

whom the kings who were legal ancestors of Christ, and of the house of David, reigned, was wonderfully preserved from destruction during this period, when they often seemed to be upon the brink of ruin, and just ready to be swallowed up. So it was in Rehoboam's time, when Shishak king of Egypt came against Judah with a vast force. Of this we read in the beginning of the 12th chapter of 2 Chronicles. So it was again in Abijah's time, when Jeroboam set the battle in array against him with eight hundred thousand chosen men; a mighty army! <sup><443B></sup>2 Chronicles 13:3. Then God wrought deliverance to Judah, out of regard to the covenant of grace established with David, as is evident by verse 4 and 5. and the victory they obtained was because the Lord was on their side, as you may see, verse 12. So it was again in Asa's time, when Zerah the Ethiopian came against him with a larger army of a thousand thousand and three hundred chariots, <sup><444B></sup>2 Chronicles 14:9. On this occasion Asa cried to the Lord, and trusted in him, being sensible that it was nothing with him to help those that had no power: (verse 11.) "And Asa cried unto the Lord his God, and said, Lord, it is nothing with thee to help, whether with many or with those that have no power." And accordingly God gave them a glorious victory over this mighty host.

So again it was in Jehoshaphat's time, when the children Of Moab, and the children of Ammon, and the inhabitants of mount Seir, combined together against Judah with a mighty army, a force vastly superior to any that Jehosha what could raise; and Jehoshaphat and his people were greatly afraid: yet they set themselves to seek God on this occasion, and trusted in him; and God told them by one of his prophets, that they need not fear them, nor should they have any occasion to fight in this battle the should only stand still and we the salvation of the Lord. And according to his direction, they only stood still, and sang praises to God; and God made their enemies do the work themselves, by killing one another; and the children of Judah had nothing to do, but to gather the spoil, which was more than they could carry away. (2 Chronicles 20.)

So it was again in Ahaz's time, when Rezin the king of Syria, and Pekah the son of Remaliah, the king of Israel, conspired against Judah, and seemed to be sure of their purpose; of which we have spoken already. So it was again in Hezekiah's time, when Sennacherib, that great king of Assyria, and head of the greatest monarchy then in the world. came up

against all the fenced cities of Judah, after he had conquered most of the neighbouring countries. He sent Rabshakeh, the captain of his host, against Jerusalem, who in a very proud and scornful manner insulted Hezekiah and his people, as being sure of victory; and the people were trembling for fear, like lambs before a lion. Then God sent Isaiah the prophet to comfort them, and assure them that their enemies should not prevail; as a token of which he gave them this sign, viz. that the earth, for two years successively, should bring forth food of itself, from the roots of the old stalks, without their, ploughing or sowing; and then the third ear they should sow and reap, and plant eat the fruit of them, and live on the fruit as they were wont to do before. (See ~~1789~~ 2 Kings 19:29 ) This is mentioned as a type of what is promised in verse 30, 31.

“And the remnant that is Judah, shall yet again take root downward and bear fruit upward. For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and they that escape, out of mount Zion: the zeal of the Lord of hosts shall do this.” The corn springing again after it had been cut off with the sickle, and bringing forth another crop from the roots, represents the church reviving again, and flourishing, like a plant after it had seemingly been cut down past recovery.

When the enemies of the church have done their utmost, and seem to have gained their point; when they have overthrown the church, so that its being is scarcely visible, but is like a living root hid under ground; there is in it a secret life that will cause it to ground; there is flourish again, and to take root downward, and bear fruit upward. This was now fulfilled. The king of Assyria had already carried captive the ten tribes; and Sennacherib had also taken all the fenced cities of Judah, and ranged the country round about, and Jerusalem only remained: and Rabshakeh had in his own imagination already swallowed that up, as he had also in the fearful apprehensions of the Jews themselves. But God wrought a wonderful deliverance; he sent an angel, that in one night smote a hundred fourscore and five thousand in the enemy’s camp.

**XIX.** In the reign of Uzziah, and the following reignst God was leased to raise up a set of eminent prophets, who should commit their prophecies to writing, and leave them for the use of his church in all ages. We before observed, how that God began a constant succession of prophets in Israel

in Samuel's time, and many of these prophets wrote by divine inspiration and so added to the canon of Scripture. But none of them are supposed to have written books of prophecies till now. Several of them wrote histories of the wonderful dispensations of God towards his church. This we have observed already of Samuel, who is supposed to have written Judges and Ruth, and part of the first of Samuel, if not the book of Joshua. And Nathan and Gad seem to have written the rest of the two books of Samuel: and Nathan, with Ahijah and Iddo, wrote the history of Solomon, which is probably that which we have in the first book of Kings. The history of Israel seems to have been further carried on by Iddo and Shemiah: <sup><4025</sup>2 Chronicles 12:15. "Now the acts of Rehoboam, first and last, are they not written in the book of Shemaiah the prophet, and Iddo the seer, concerning genealogies?" And after that the history seems to have been further carried on by the prophet Jehu, the son of Hamini: <sup><4018</sup>2 Chronicles 20:34. "Now the rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat, first and last, behold they are written in the book of Jehu son of Hanani, who is mentioned in the book of the kings of Israel." <sup><4016</sup>1 Kings 16:1, 7. And then it was further continued by the prophet Isaiah: <sup><4010</sup>2 Chronicles 26:22. "Now the rest of the acts of Uzziah, first and last, did Isaiah the prophet the son of Amos write." He probably did it as well in the second book of Kings as in the book of his prophecy. And the history was carried on and finished by other prophets after him.

Thus the prophets, even from Samuel's time, had been adding to the canon of Scripture by their historical writings. But now, in the days of Uzziiah, did God first raise up a set of great prophets, not only to write histories, but to write books of their prophecies. The first of these is thought to be Hosea the son of Beeri, and therefore his prophecy, or the word of the Lord by him, is called the beginning of the word of the Lord; <sup><3010</sup>Hosea 1:2. "The beginning of the word of the Lord by Hosea;" that is, the beginning, or the first part, of the written word of that kind, viz. that which is written in books of prophecy. He prophesied in the days of Uzziiah, Jothani, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam, the son of Joash, king of Israel. There were many other witnesses for God raised up about the same time to commit their prophecies to writing, Isaiah, Amos, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, and probably some others: and so

from that time forward God seemed to continue a succession of writing prophets.

This was a great dispensation of Providence, and a great advance made in the affair of redemption, which will appear, if we consider, that the main business of the prophets was to point out Christ and his redemption. They were all forerunners of the great prophet. The main end why the spirit of prophecy was given them was, that they might give testimony to Jesus Christ, the great Redeemer, who was to come. Therefore, the testimony of Jesus, and the spirit of prophecy, are spoken of as die same thing;

“And I fell at his feet to worship him: and he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” ( ~~Rev~~ Revelation 19:10)

And therefore we find, that the great and main thing that the most of the prophets in their written prophecies insist upon, is Christ and his redemption, and the glorious times of the gospel. And though many other things were spoken of in their prophecies, yet they seem to be only as introductory to their prophecy of these great things. Whatever they predict, them their prophecies commonly terminate.

These prophets, inspired by the Spirit of Christ, wrote chiefly to prepare the way for his coming, and to exhibit the glory that should follow. And in what an exalted strain do they all speak of those things! Many other things they speak of in men’s usual language. But when they enter upon this subject, what a joyful heavenly sublimity is there in their language! Some of them are very particular and full in their predictions of these things, and above all the prophet Isaiah, who is therefore deservedly called the evangelical prophet. He seems to teach the glorious doctrines of the gospel almost as plainly as the apostles did. The apostle Paul therefore takes notice, that the prophet Esaias is very bold, ~~Rev~~ Romans 10:20. *i.e.* according to the meaning of the word in the New Testament, is very plain, he speaks out very plainly and fully; so being very bold is used ~~Rev~~ 2 Corinthians 3:12. we use great boldness of speech, or boldness, as in the margin.

How plainly and fully does the prophet Isaiah described circumstances, the nature and end, of the manner of sufferings and sacrifice of Christ, in the 53rd chapter of his prophecy! There is scarce a chapter in the New Testament itself which is more full upon it. And how much, and in what a glorious strain, does the same prophet speak, from time to time, of the glorious benefits of Christ, the unspeakable blessings which shall redound to his church through his redemption! Jesus Christ, of whom this prophet spoke so much, once appeared to him in the form of the human nature, the nature he should after 6th chapter of his prophecy at the beginning: "I saw also the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple," etc. This was Christ, as we are expressly told in the New Testament. (See ~~John~~ John 12:39-41.)

And if we consider the abundant prophecies of this and the other prophets, what a great increase is there of gospel light! How plentiful are the revelations and prophecies of Christ, compared with what they were in the first period of the Old Testament, from Adam to Noah or to what they were in the second, from Noah to Abraham; or to what they were before Moses, or in the time of Moses, Joshua, and the Judges! This dispensation was also a glorious advance of the work of redemption by the great additions that were made to the canon of scripture. Great part of the Old Testament was written now from the days of Uzziah to the captivity into Babylon. And how excellent are those portions of it! What a precious treasure have those prophets committed to the church of God, tending greatly to confirm the gospel of Christ! and which has been of great comfort and benefit to God's church in all ages since, and doubtless will be to the end of the world.

## PART 6

### FROM THE BABYLONISH CAPTIVITY TO THE COMING OF CHRIST.

I come now to the last subordinate period of the Old Testament, viz. that which begins with the Babylonish captivity, and extends to the coming of Christ, being near six hundred years; and shall endeavour to show how the work of redemption was carried on through this period. But before I enter

upon particulars, I would observe three things wherein this period is distinguished from the preceding ones.

**1.** Though we have no account of a great part of this period in the scripture history, yet the events of it are more the subject of scripture prophecy, than any of the preceding periods. There are two ways wherein the Scriptures give account of the events by which the work of redemption is carried on; one is by history, and another is by prophecy; and in one or the other of these ways we have in the Scriptures an account how the work of redemption is carried on from the beginning to the end. Although the Scriptures do not contain a proper history of the whole, yet the whole chain of great events, by which this affair hath been carried on from the commencement to the finishing of it, is found either in history or prophecy. And it is to be observed, that where the Scripture is wanting in one of these ways, it is made up in the other. Where scripture history fails, there prophecy takes place; so that the account is still carried on, and the chain is not broken, till we come to the very last link of it in the consummation of all things.

And accordingly it is observable of this space of time, that though it is so much less the subject of scripture history, than most of the preceding periods, (there, being above four hundred years of which the Scriptures give us no history,) yet its events are more the subject of prophecy, than those of all the preceding periods put together. Most of those remarkable proof of Daniel, and most of those in Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, against Babylon, Tyrus, Egypt, and many other nations, were fulfill in this period.

Hence the reason why the Scriptures give us no history of so great, a part of this time, is not because the events were not so important, or less worthy of notice, than those of the foregoing periods; for they were great and remarkable. But there are several reasons which may be given for it. One is, that it was the will of God that the spirit of prophecy should cease in this period, (for reasons that may be given hereafter so that there were no prophets to write the history of these times; and therefore God designing this, took care that the great events of this period should not be without mention in his word. It is observable, that the writings, prophets in Israel, were raised up at the latter end of the foregoing period, and at the

beginning of this; for the time was now approaching, when, the spirit of prophecy having ceased, there was to be no inspired history, and therefore no other scripture account but what was given in prophecy.

Another reason may be, for the suspension of inspired history, that God in his providence took care, that there should be authentic and full accounts of the events of this period preserved in profane history. It is very worthy of notice, that with respect to the events of the five preceding subordinate periods, of which the Scriptures give the history, profane history gives us no account, or at least of but very few of them. There are many fabulous and uncertain accounts of things that happened before; but the commencement of authentic profane history is judged to be but about a hundred years before Nebuchadnezzar's time. He learned Greek and Romans used to call the ages before that the fabulous age; but the times after that they called the historical age. And from about that time to the coming of Christ, we have undoubted accounts in profane history of the principal events; accounts that wonderfully agree with the many prophecies that relate to those times.

Thus the great God, who disposes all things, took care to give an historical account of things from the beginning of the world, through all those former ages concerning which profane history is silent; and ceased not till he came to those ages in which profane history related things with some certainty. And concerning those times lie gives us abundant account in prophecy, that by comparing profane history with those prophecies, we might see the agreement.

**2.** This last period of the Old Testament seems to have been remarkably distinguished from all others by great revolutions among the nations of the earth, to make way for the kingdom of Christ. This time now drawing nigh wherein Christ, the great King and Saviour of the world, was to come, great and mighty were the changes that were brought to pass in order to it. The way had been preparing for the coming of Christ from a fallen man, through all the foregoing periods; but now, the time drawing nigh, things began to ripen apace for his coming; and therefore Divine Providence now wrought wonderfully. The greatest revolutions that any history has recorded, since the flood, fell out in this period. Almost all the nations far and near, within the knowledge of the Jews, were overturned again and

again. All lands were in their turn subdued, captivated, and as it were emptied, and turned upside down, and that most of them repeatedly in this period; agreeable to that prophecy,

“Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty, he maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof.” (<sup>2301</sup>Isaiah 24:1)

This began with God’s visible church, in their captivity by the king of Babylon. And then the cup from them went round to all other nations, agreeable to what God revealed to the prophet <sup>2426</sup>Jeremiah 25:15-27. Here special respect seems to be: had to the great revolutions in the times of the Babylonish empire. But after that there were three general overturnings before Christ came, in the succession of the three great monarchies of the world, after the Babylonish empire. The king of BabvIon is represented in Scripture as overturning the world: but after that, the Babylonish empire was overthrown by Cyrus, who founded the Persian empire in the room of it; which was of much greater extent than the Babylonish empire in its greatest glory. Thus the world was overturned the second time. And then, the Persian empire was overthrown by Alexander, and the Grecian set up, which was still of much greater extent than the Persian. And thus there was a general overturning of the world a third time. After that, the Grecian empire was overthrown by the Romans, and the Roman empire was established; which vastly exceeded all the foregoing empires in power and extent of dominion. And so the world was overturned for the fourth time.

These several monarchies, and the great revolutions of the world under them, are abundantly spoken of in the prophecies of Daniel. They are represented in Nebuchadnezzar’s image of gold, silver, brass, and iron, and Daniel’s interpretation off it. (Daniel 2.) in the vision of the four beasts, and the angels interpretation of it, (Daniel 7.) And the succession of the Persian and Grecian monarchies is more particularly represented in the 8th chapter, in Daniel’s vision of the ram and the he-goat, and again in the 11th chapter.

Beside these four general overturnings, the world was kept in a constant tumult between whiles; and indeed in a continual convulsion through this whole period. Before, the face of the earth was comparatively in quietness; though there were many great wars among the nations, yet we read of no

such mighty and universal convulsions and overturnings as there were in this period. The nations of the world, most of them, had long remained on their knees, without being emptied from vessel to vessel, as is said of Moab, Jeremiah 48 “Now these great overturnings were because the time of the great Messiah drew nigh. That they were to prepare the way for Christ’s coming, is evident by Scripture, particularly by <sup><307></sup>Ezekiel 21:27. “I will overturn, overturn, overturn it, and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is, and I will give it him.” The prophet, by repeating the word overturn three times, has respect to three overturnings, as in the <sup><182></sup>Revelation 8:13. The repetition of the word woe three times, signifies three distinct woes; as appears by what follows, 9:12. “One woe is past;” and 11:14. “The second woe is past, and behold the third woe cometh quickly.”

It must be noted, that the prophet Ezekiel prophesied in the time of the Babylonish captivity; and therefore there were three great and general overturnings to come after this prophecy, before Christ came; the first by the Persians, the second by the Grecians, the third by the Romans; and then Christ, whose right it was to take the diadem, and reign, should come. Here these great overturnings are evidently spoken of as preparatory to the coming and kingdom of Christ. But to understand the words aright, we must note the particular expression, “I will overturn, overturn, overturn it,” *i.e.* the crown of Israel, or the supreme temporal dominion over God’s visible people. This God said should be no more, *i.e.* the crown should be taken off, and the diadem removed, as it is said in the foregoing verse. The supreme power over Israel should be no more in the royal line of David, to which it properly belonged, but should be removed away, and given to others, and overturned from one to another: first the supreme power over Israel should be in the hands of the Persians; then it should be overturned, and be in the hands of the Grecians; and then it should be overturned again, and come into the hands of the Romans, and be no more in the line of David, till that very person should come, who was the Son of David, whose proper right it was, and then God would give it to him.

That those great shakings and revolutions of the nations of the world, were all to prepare the way for Christ’s coming, and setting up his kingdom in the world, is further manifest by <sup><306></sup>Haggai 2:6, 7. “For thus saith the Lord of hosts, Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the

earth, and the sea, and the dry land: and I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts.” And again, verse 21-23. It is evident by this, that these great revolutions and shakings of the nations, whereby the thrones of kingdoms and their armies were overthrown, and every one came down by the sword of his brother, were to prepare the way for the coming of him who is the desire of all nations.

The great changes and troubles that have sometimes been in the visible church of Christ, (~~Rev~~ Revelation 12:2.) are compared to the church’s being in travail to bring forth Christ: so these great troubles and mighty revolutions, were, as it were, the world’s being in travail to bring forth the Son of God. The apostle, in the 8th of Romans, represents the whole creation as groaning and travailing in pain together until now, to bring forth the liberty and manifestation of the children of God. — So the world as it were travailed in pain and was in continual convulsions for several hundred years together, to bring forth the first-born child, and the only-begotten Son of God. And those mighty revolutions were as so many pangs and throes in order to it. The world being so long a time kept in a state of war and bloodshed, prepared the way for the coming of the Prince of peace, as it showed the great need the world stood in of such a prince, to deliver the world from its miseries.

It pleased God to order it in his providence, that earthly power and dominion should be raised to its greatest height and appear in its utmost glory, in those four great monarchies that succeeded one another, and that every one should be greater and more glorious than the preceding, before he set up the kingdom of his Son. By this it appeared how much more glorious his spiritual kingdom was than the most glorious temporal kingdom. The strength and glory of Satan’s kingdom in these four mighty monarchies, appeared in its greatest height: for, being the monarchies of the heathen world, the strength of them was the strength of Satan’s kingdom. God suffered Satan’s kingdom to rise to so great a height of power and magnificence before his Son came to overthrow it, in order to prepare the way for the more glorious triumph of his Son. Goliath must have on all his splendid armour when the stripling David comes against him with a sling and a stone, for the greater glory of David’s victory. God suffered one of those great monarchies to subdue another, and erect itself

on the other's ruing, appearing still in greater strength, and the last to be strongest and mightiest of all; that so Christ, in overthrowing that, might as it were overthrow them all at once. The stone cut out of the mountain without hands, is represented as destroying the whole image, the gold, the silver, the brass, the iron, and the clay; so that all became as the chaff of the summer threshing-floor.

These mighty empires were suffered thus to overthrow the world, and destroy one another. And though their power was so great, yet they could not uphold themselves, but fell one after another, and came to nothing; even the last of them, which was the strongest, and had swallowed earth. It pleased God thus to show in them the instability and vanity of all earthly power and greatness; which served as a foil to set forth the glory of the kingdom of his Son, which never shall be destroyed,

“In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.” (Zeph<sup>h</sup> Daniel 2:44)

So greatly does this kingdom differ from all those kingdoms: they vanish away, and are left to other people; but this shall not be so left, but shall stand for ever. God suffered the devil to do his utmost, and to establish his interest, by setting up the greatest, strongest, and most glorious kingdoms in the world, before the despised Jesus overthrew him and his empire. Christ came into the world to bring down the high things of Satan's kingdom, that the hand of the Lord might be on every one that is proud and lofty, and every high tower, and every lofty mountain; as the prophet Isaiah says, chapter 2:12 etc. And therefore these things were suffered to rise very high, that Christ might appear so much the more glorious in being above them. Thus wonderfully did the great and wise Governor of the world prepare the way for erecting of the glorious kingdom of his beloved Son Jesus.

**3.** Another thing for which this last space of time before Christ was particularly remarkable, was the wonderful preservation of the church through all those overturnings. The preservation of the church was on some accounts more remarkable through this period, than through any of the foregoing. It was very wonderful that the church, which now was so

weak, and in so low a state, and mostly subject to the dominion of heathen monarchies, should be preserved for five or six hundred years together, while the world was so often overturned, and the earth was rent in pieces, and made so often empty and waste, and the inhabitants of it came down so often every one by the sword of his brother. I say, it was wonderful that the church in its weak and low state, being but a little handful of men, should be preserved in all these great convulsions; especially considering that the land of Judea, the chief place of the church's residence, lay in the midst of the contending parties, was very much the seat of war amongst them, and was often overrun and subdued. It was sometimes in the hands of one people, and sometimes another, and very much the object of envy and hatred of all heathen nations. It was often almost ruined by them, often great multitudes of its inhabitants being slain, and the land in a great measure depopulated; and those who had them in their power, often intended the utter destruction of the whole nation. Yet they were upheld; they were preserved in their captivity in Babylon, in all the dangers they passed through under the kings of Persia, in the much greater dangers under the empire of the Greeks, and afterwards when the world was trodden down by the Romans.

Their preservation through this period was also peculiarly remarkable, in that we never read of the church suffering persecution in any former period in any measure to such a degree as they did in this, under Antiochus Epiphanes, of which more afterwards. This wonderful preservation of the church through all these overturnings of the world, gives light and confirmation to what we read in the beginning of the 46th psalm: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble—therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar, and be troubled; though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof." Thus I have taken notice of some general things wherein this last period of the Old-Testament times was distinguished. I come now to consider how the work of redemption was carried on in particulars.

**I.** The first thing that here offers, is the captivity of the Jews into Babylon. This was a great dispensation of Providence, an such as never was before. The children of Israel in the time of the judges, had often been brought under their enemies; and many particular persons were carried

captive at other times. But never had there been any such thing as destroying the whole land, the sanctuary and the city of Jerusalem, and all the cities and villages of the land, and carrying the whole body of the people out of their own land into a country many hundred miles distant, and leaving the land of Canaan empty of God's visible people. The ark had once forsaken the tabernacle of Shiloh, and was carried captive into the land of the Philistines: but never had there been any such thing as burning the sanctuary, utterly destroying the ark, carrying away all the sacred vessels and utensils, breaking up all their stated worship in the land, and the land lying waste and empty for so many years together. How lively are those things set forth in the Lamentations of Jeremiah! The work of redemption was promoted by this remarkable dispensation in these following ways.

**1.** It finally cured that nation of their idolatry. The prophet Isaiah, speaking of the setting up of the kingdom of Christ, chapter 2:18 speaks of the abolishing of idolatry as one thing that should be done to this end: "and the idols he shall utterly abolish." When the time was drawing near, that God would abolish heathen idolatry, through the greater part of the known world, as he did by the preaching of the gospel, it pleased him first to abolish heathenish among his own people; which he did by their captivity into Babylon. This was a presage of that abolition of idols, which God was about to bring to pass by Christ through so great a part of the heathen world.

This nation, that was addicted to idolatry for so many ages, notwithstanding all reproofs, warnings, corrections, and all the judgments God inflicted on them for it; were now finally cured. So that however some might fall into this sin afterwards, as they did about the time of Antiochus's persecution, yet the nation, as a nation, never showed any propensity to this sin anymore. This was a remarkable and wonderful change in that people, and what directly promoted the work of redemption, as it was a great advancement of the interest of religion.

**2.** One thing that prepared the way for Christ's coming and for setting up the glorious dispensation of that was the taking away many of those things wherein consisted the glory of the Jewish dispensation. In order to introduce the glorious dispensation of the gospel, the external glory of the

Jewish church must diminished. This the Babylonish captivity did many ways.

First, it removed the temporal dominion of the house of David, *i.e.* the supreme and independent government of themselves. It took away the crown and diadem from the nation. The time now approaching when Christ, the great and everlasting King of his church was to reign, it was time for the typical kings to withdraw. As God said by Ezekiel, chapter 21:26. “He removed the crown and diadem, that it might be no more, till he should come whose right it was.” The Jews henceforward were always dependent on the governing power of other nations, until Christ came, for near six hundred years; except about ninety years, during which space they maintained a sort of independence by continual wars under the dominion of the Maccabees and their posterity.

Again, by the captivity, the try and magnificence of the temple were taken away, and the temple that was built afterwards was nothing in comparison with it. Thus it was meet, that when the time drew nigh that the glorious antetype of the temple should appear, that the typical temple should have its glory withdrawn.

Moreover, they lost by die captivity the two tables of the testimony delivered to Moses, on which God with his own finger wrote the ten commandments on mount Sinai. These seem to have been preserved in the ark till the captivity. — These were in the ark when Solomon placed The ark in the temple,

“There was nothing in the ark, save the two tables of stone, which Moses put There at Horeb.” (~~1~~<sup>100</sup> 1 Kings 8:9)

We have no reason to suppose any other, but that they remained there as long as that temple stood. But the Jews speak of these as finally lost at that time; though the same commandments were preserved in the book of the law. These tables also were withdrawn on the approach of their antetype.

Another thing that was lost was the Urim and Thummim. This is evident by ~~1~~<sup>100</sup> Ezra 2:63.

“And the Tirshatha said unto them, that they should not eat of the most holy things, till there should stand up a priest with Urim and Thummim.”

We have no account that this was ever restored; though the ancient writings of the Jews say the contrary. What this Urim and Thummim was, I shall not now inquire; but only observe, that it was something by which the high priest inquired of God, and received immediate answers from him, or by which God gave forth immediate oracles on particular occasions. This was now: withdrawn, the time approaching when Christ, the antetype of the Urim and Thummim, the great word and oracle of God, was to come.

Another thing that the ancient Jews say was wanting in the second temple, was the Shechinah, or cloud of glory over the mercy-seat. This was promised to be in the tabernacle:

“For I will appear in the cloud the mercy-seat.” (Leviticus 16:2)

And we read elsewhere of the of glory ascending into the tabernacle, Exodus 40:35. and so we do likewise with respect to Solomon’s temple. But we have no account that this cloud of glory was in the second temple. And the ancient accounts of the Jews say, that there was no such thing in the second temple. It was needless in the second temple, considering that God had promised that he would fill this temple with glory another way, viz: by Christ’s coming into it; which was afterwards fulfilled. See Haggai 2:7. “I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts.”

When Moses built the tabernacle and altar in the wilderness, and the first sacrifices were offered on it, fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt-offering, as in Leviticus 9:24. also when Solomon built the temple, and offered the first sacrifices, 2 Chronicles 7:1. And this fire was never to go out, but to be kept alive with the greatest care, as God commanded,

“The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar; it shall never go out.”  
(Leviticus 6:13)

And there is no reason to suppose the fire kindled in Solomon's time ever went out till the temple was destroyed by the Babylonians. But then it was extinguished, and never was restored. We have no account of its being , given on building the second temple, as we have at the building of the tabernacle and first temple. But the Jews, after their return, were forced to make use of their common fire instead of it, according to the ancient tradition of the Jews. Thus the lights of the Old Testament go out on the approach of the glorious Sun of righteousness.

**3.** The captivity into Babylon occasioned the dispersion of the Jews through the greater part of the known world, before the coming of Christ. For the whole nation being carried away far out of their own land, and continuing in a state of captivity for so long a time, they got possessions, built houses, and settled themselves in the land of their captivity, agreeable to the direction that Jeremiah gave them ,(Jeremiah 29.)And therefore when Cyrus gave them liberty to return to the land where they had formerly dwelt many of them never returned; they were not willing to leave their settlements and possessions there to go into a desolate country, many miles distant, which none but the old men among them had ever seen; and therefore they were but a small number that returned, as we see in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. Great numbers tarried behind, though they still retained the same religion with those that returned, so far as it could be practiced in a foreign land. Those messengers that we read of in the 7th chapter of Zechariah, that came to inquire of the priests and prophets in Jerusalem, Sherezer and Regem-melech, are supposed to be messengers sent from the Jews that remained still in Babylon.

Those Jews who remained in that country were soon, by the great changes that happened in the world, dispersed thence into all the adjacent countries. Hence we find, that in Esther's time, which was after the return from the captivity, the Jews were dispersed throughout all parts of the vast Persian empire, which extended from India to Ethiopia; Esthter 3:8. "And Haman said unto kin Ahasuerus, There is a certain people scattered abroad, and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of thy kingdom," etc. And so they continued dispersed till Christ came, and till the apostles went forth to preach the gospel. But yet these dispersed Jews retained their religion. Their captivity, as before observed, thoroughly cured them of their idolatry; and it was their manner, as many of them as

could, to go up to Jerusalem at their great feasts. Hence we read in the 2nd chapter of Acts, that at the great feast of Pentecost, there were Jews abiding at Jerusalem out of every nation under heaven. These had come up from all countries where they were dispersed, to worship at that feast. And hence we find, in their history, that wherever the apostles went preaching through the world, they found Jews. They came to one city, and to another city, and went into the synagogue of the Jews.

Antiochus the Great, about two hundred years before Christ, on a certain occasion, transplanted two thousand families of Jews from the country about Babylon into Asia the Less; and so they and their posterity, many of them, settled in Pontus, Galatia, Phrygia, Pamphylia, and in Ephesus; and from thence settled in Athens, and Corinth, and Rome. Whence came the synagogues in those places in which the apostle Paul reach. — Now, this dispersion of the Jews through the world before Christ came, did many ways prepare the way for his coming, and setting is kingdom in the world.

This was a means of raising a general expectation of the Messiah through the world, about the time that he actually came. For the Jews, wherever they were dispersed, carried the Holy Scriptures with them, and so the prophecies of -the Messiah; and being conversant with the nations among whom they lived, they, by that means, became acquainted with these prophecies, and with the expectations of the Jews concerning their glorious Messiah. Hence, the birth of such a glorious person in Judea, about that time, began to be the general expectation of all nations, as appears by the writings of learned heathens, which are still extant; particularly, who lived in Italy a little before Christ, has a poem about the expectation of a great prince that was to be born, and the happy times of righteousness and peace he was to introduce; some of it very much in the language of the prophet Isaiah.

Another way by which this dispersed state of the Jews prepared the way for Christ was, that it showed the necessity of abolishing the Jewish dispensation, and introducing a new dispensation of the covenant of grace. It showed the necessity of abolishing the ceremonial law, and the old Jewish worship: for, by this means, the observance of that ceremonial law became impracticable even by the Jews themselves. The ceremonial law

was adapted to the state of a people dwelling together in the same land, where was the city which God had chosen; where was the temple, the only place where they might offer sacrifices; and where alone it was lawful for their priests and Levites to officiate, where they were to bring their first-fruits, where were their cities of refuge, and the like. But by this dispersion, many of the Jews lived more than a thousand miles distant, when Christ came; which made the observance of their laws of sacrifices, and the like, impracticable. And though their forefathers might be to blame in not going up to the land of Judea when they were permitted by Cyrus, yet the case was now, as to many of them at least, become impracticable; which showed the necessity of introducing a new dispensation, that should be fitted, not only to one particular land, but to the general circumstances and use of all nations of the world.

Again, this universal dispersion of the Jews contributed to make the fact, concerning Jesus Christ publicly known through the world. For, as observed before, the Jews who lived in other countries, used frequently to go up to Jerusalem at their three great feasts, from year to year; by which means, they could not but become acquainted with the wonderful things that Christ did in that land. We find that the great miracle of raising Lazarus excited the curiosity of those foreign Jews who came up at the feast of the passover to see Jesus; ~~John~~ John 12:19-21. These Greeks were foreign Jews and proselytes, as is evident by their coming to worship at the feast of the passover. The Jews who lived abroad among the Greeks, and spoke their language, were called Greeks, Hellenists, and Grecians, ~~Acts~~ Acts 6:1. These were not Gentile Christians; for this occurred before the calling of the Gentiles.

By the same means the Jews who went up from other countries became acquainted with Christ's crucifixion. Thus the disciples going, to Emmaus say to Christ, whom they did not know, ~~Luke~~ Luke 24:18. "Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which have come to pass there in these days;" plainly intimating, that the things concerning Jesus; were so publicly known to all men, that it was wonderful to find any man unacquainted with them. And so afterwards they became acquainted with the news of his resurrection; and when they returned into their own countries, they carried the news with them, and made these facts public through the world, as before they had made the prophecies of them.

After this, those foreign Jews who came to Jerusalem, took great notice of the pouring out of the Spirit at Pentecost, and the wonderful effects of it; and many of them were converted by it. There were Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Egypt, and the arts of Libya about Cyrene, and the strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians. And so they not only carried back the news of these facts, but Christianity itself, into their own countries with them; which contributed much to the spreading of it through the world.

Again, the dispersion of the Jews opened a door for the introduction of the apostles in all places where they came to preach the gospel. For almost in all places where they came to preach the gospel, they found synagogues of the Jews, where the Holy Scriptures were wont to be read, and the true God worshipped; which, was a great advantage to the apostles in spreading the gospel through the world. For their way was, into whatever city they came, first to go into the synagogue of the Jews, (they being of the same nation,) and there to preach the gospel unto them. And hereby their new doctrine was taken notice of by their Gentile neighbours, whose curiosity excited them to hear what they had to say; which became a fair occasion to the apostles to preach the gospel to them. This is the account we have in the Acts of the Apostles. And these Gentiles had been before, many of them, prepared in some measure, by the knowledge they had of the Jewish religion, of their worship of one their prophecies, and expectation of a Messiah. This knowledge they derived from the Jews, who had long been their neighbours; which opened the door for the gospel to have access to them. And the work of the apostles with them was doubtless much easier, than if they never had heard anything, before of such a person as the apostles preached, or any thing about the worship of one only true God. So many ways did the Babylonish captivity greatly prepare the way for Christ's coming.

**II.** The next particular that I would notice is, the addition made to the canon of Scripture in the time of the captivity, in those two remarkable portions of Scripture, the prophecies of Ezekiel and Daniel. Christ appeared to each of these prophets in the form of that nature which he was afterwards to take upon him. The prophet Ezekiel gives an account of his thus appearing to him repeatedly, as <sup>2003</sup>Ezekiel 1:26. "And above the firmament that was over their heads, was the likeness of a throne, as the

appearance of a sapphire-stone, and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it;” and so chapter 8:1, 2. So Christ appeared to the prophet Daniel <sup>2018</sup> Daniel 8:13, 16. ,There stood before me as the appearance of a man. And I heard a man’s voice between the banks of Ulai, which called, and said, Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision.” There are several things which make it evident, that this was Christ; but I cannot now stand to mention particulars. Christ appeared again as a man to this prophet, <sup>2018</sup> Daniel 10:5, 6. “Then I lift up mine eyes and looked, and behold, a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz: his body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude.” Comparing this vision with that of the apostle John in the 1st chapter of Revelation, makes it manifest that this person was Christ. And the prophet Daniel, in the historical Part of his book, gives an account of a very remarkable appearance of Christ in Nebuchadnezzar’s furnace, with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. <sup>2018</sup> Daniel 3:25. “Lo, I see four MEN loose, — and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.”

Christ not only appeared here in the form of the human nature, but he appeared in a furnace, saying those persons who believed on him from that furnace; by which is represented to us, how Christ, by coming himself into the furnace of God’s wrath, saves ‘those that believe in him from that furnace, so that it has no power on them; and the wrath of God never reaches or touches them, so much as to singe the hair of their head.

These two prophets, in many respects, were more particular concerning the coming of Christ, and his glorious gospel-kingdom, than any of the prophets had been before. They mention those three great overturnings of the world that should be before lie came. Ezekiel is particular in several laces concerning the coming of Christ. The prophet Daniel is more particular in foretelling the time of Christ’s coming than ever any prophet had been before, chapter 9.) he foretold, that it would be seventy weeks, *i.e.* seventy weeks of years, or seventy times seven years, which is four hundred and ninety years, from the decree to rebuild and restore the state of the Jews, till the Messiah should be crucified. This must be reckoned from the commission given to Ezra by Artaxerxes, whereby the very

particular time of Christ's crucifixion was pointed out, which never had been before. (Ezra 7.)

The prophet Ezekiel is very particular in the mystical description of the gospel-church, in his vision of the temple and city, towards the latter part of his prophecy. The prophet Daniel points out the order of particular events that should come to pass relating to the Christian church after Christ was come, as the rise of Antichrist, the continuance of his reign, his fall, and the glory that should follow. — Thus does the gospel-light still increase, the nearer we come to the time of Christ's birth.

**III.** The next particular I would mention is, the destruction of Babylon, and the overthrow of the Chaldean empire by Cyrus. The destruction of Babylon took place on that night in which Belshazzar the king, and the city in general, were drowned in a drunken festival, which they kept in honour of their gods, when Daniel was called to read the hand-writing on the wall, <sup>278</sup>Daniel 5:30. and it was brought about in such a manner, as wonderfully to show the hand of God, and remarkably to fulfill his word by his prophets, which I cannot now stand particularly to relate. Now that great city, which had long been an enemy to the city of God, was destroyed, after it had: stood ever since the first building of Babel, which was about seventeen hundred years. If the check which was beginning, whereby they were prevented from carrying it to that extent and magnificence they intended, promoted the work of redemption much more did this destruction of it.

This was a remarkable instance of God's vengeance on the enemies of his redeemed church; for God brought destruction on Babylon for the injuries they did to God's children, as is often set forth in the prophets. It also promoted the work of redemption, as thereby God's people I who were held captive by them, were set at liberty to return to their own land in order to rebuild Jerusalem; and therefore Cyrus is called God's shepherd, Isaiah 44:and 45:1. And these are over and above those ways wherein the setting up and overthrowing the four monarchies of the world did promote the work of redemption.

**IV.** What next followed was the return of the Jews to their own land, and the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the temple. Cyrus, as soon as he had destroyed the Babylonish, and erected the Persian empire on its ruins,

made decree in favour of the Jews, that they might return to their own land, and rebuild their city and temple. This return of the Jews out of the Babylonish captivity is, next to the redemption out of Egypt, the most remarkable of all the Old Testament redemptions, and most insisted on in Scripture, as a type of the great redemption of Jesus Christ. It was under the hand of one of the legal ancestors of Christ, viz. Zerubbabel, the son of Sbealtiel, whose Babylonish name was Sheshbazzar. He was the governor of the Jews, and their leader in their first return out of captivity; and, together with Joshua the son of Josedek the high-priest, had the chief hand in rebuilding the temple. This redemption was brought about by the hand of Zerubbabel and Joshua the priest, as the redemption out of Egypt was brought about by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

The return out of the captivity was a remarkable dispensation of Providence. it was remarkable, that the earth of a heathen prince, Cyrus, should be so inclined to favour such a design. He not only gave the people liberty to return, and rebuild the city and temple, but gave charge that they should be helped with silver and gold, with goods, and beasts, as we read in ~~ESRA~~ Ezra 1:4. And afterwards God wonderfully inclined the heart of Darius to further the building of the house of God with his own tribute-money, and gave command to their bitter enemies, the Samaritans, who had been striving to hinder them, to help them without fail, by furnishing them with all that they needed in order to it, and to supply them day by day. He made a decree, that whosoever failed of it, timber should be pulled down out of his house, and he hanged thereon, and his house made a dunghill, (Ezra 6.) After this, God inclined the heart of Artaxerxes, another king of Persia, to promote the work of preserving the state of the Jews, by his ample commission to Ezra, (Ezra 7.) he helped them abundantly with silver and gold out of his own bounty, and offered more, as should be needful, out of the king's treasure house, commanding his treasurers beyond the river Euphrates to give more, as should be needed, unto a hundred talents of silver, a hundred measures of wheat, a hundred baths of wine, a hundred baths of oil, and salt, without prescribing how much. He gave leave to establish magistrates in the land; freeing the priests of toll, tribute, custom, and other things, which render this decree by Artaxerxes the most full and ample in the Jews favour of any that had been given for the restoring of Jerusalem; and therefore in Daniel's prophecy, this is

called the decree for restoring and building Jerusalem and hence the seventy weeks are dated.

After this, another favourable commission was granted by the king of Persia to Nehemiah, (chapter 2.) It was remarkable, that the hearts of heathen princes should be so inclined. It was the effect of his power, who hath the hearts of kings in his hands, and turneth them whithersoever he will; and it was a remarkable instance of his favour to his people.

Another remarkable circumstance of this restitution of the state of the Jews to their own land was, that it was accomplished against so much opposition of their bitter indefatigable enemies, the Samaritans, who, for a long time together, with all the malice and craft they could exercise, opposed the Jews in this affair, and sought their destruction. One while they were opposed by Bishlam, Mithridath, Tabeel, Ithhurri, and Shimshai, as in Ezra 4 and then by Tatnai, Shetharboznai, and their companions, as in chapter 5 and afterwards by Sanballat and Tobiah, as we read in the book of Nehemiah.

We have showed before, how the settlement of the people in this land in Joshua's time promoted the work of redemption. On the same accounts does their restitution belong to the same work. The re-settlement of the Jews in the land of Canaan belongs to this work, as it was a necessary means of preserving the Jewish church and dispensation in being, till Christ should come. If it had not been for this restoration of the Jewish church, temple, and worship, the people had remained without any temple, or land of their own, that should be as it were their head quarters, a place of worship, habitation, and resort. The whole constitution, which God had done so much to establish, would have been in danger of utterly failing, long before the six hundred years had expired, which was from about the time of the captivity till Christ. And so all that preparation which God had been making for the coming of Christ, from the time of Abraham, would have been in vain. Now that very temple was built that God would fill with glory by Christ's coming into it, as the prophets Haggai and Zechariah told the Jews in order to encourage them in building it.

**V.** The next particular I would observe, is the addition made to the canon of the Scriptures soon after the captivity by the prophets Haggai and

Zechariah, who were prophets sent to encourage the people in their work of returning the city and temple; and the main argument they use to that end, is the approach of the coming of Christ. Haggai foretold that Christ should be of Zerubbabel's left posterity. This seems to be the last and most particular revelation of the descent of Christ, till the angel Gabriel was sent to reveal it to his mother Mary.

**VI.** The next thing I would take notice of, was the pouring out of the Spirit of God that accompanied the priest after the captivity. That there ministry of Ezra the was such an effusion of the Spirit of God, that accompanied Ezra's ministry, is manifest by many things in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. Presently after Ezra came up from Babylon, with the ample commission which Artaxerxes gave him, whence Daniel's seventy weeks began, he set himself to reform the vices and corruptions he found among the Jews; and his great success in it we have an account of in the 10th chapter of Ezra. So that there appeared a very general and great mourning of the congregation of Israel for their sins, which was accompanied with a solemn covenant that the people entered into with God; and this was followed with a great and general reformation, as we have there an account. And the people about the same time, with great zeal, earnestness, and reverence, gathered themselves together to hear the word of God read by Ezra; and gave diligent attention, while Ezra and the other priests preached to them, by reading and expounding the law, and were greatly affected in the hearing of it. They wept when they heard the words of the law, and set themselves to observe it, and kept the feast of tabernacles, 25 the Scripture observes, after such a manner as it had not kept since the days of Joshua the son of Nun, (Nehemiah After this, having separated themselves from all strangers, they solemnly observed a fast, by hearing the word, confessing their sins, and renewing their covenant with God. And they manifested their sincerity in that transaction, by actually reforming many abuses in religion and morals; is we learn from the 9th and following chapters of Nehemiah.

It is observable, that it has been God's manner, on every, remarkable new establishment of the state of his visible church, to afford a remarkable outpouring of his Spirit. So it was on the first establishment of the church of the Jews at their coming into Canaan under Joshua; so it was now in this second settlement of the church in the time of Ezra; and so it was on

the first establishment of the Christian church after Christ's resurrection; God wisely and graciously laying the foundation of those establishments in a work of the Holy Spirit, for the lasting benefit of his church, thenceforward continued in those establishments. And this pouring out of the Spirit, was a final cure of the nation of that particular sin which just before they especially run into, viz. intermarrying with the Gentiles: for however inclined to it they were before, they ever after showed an aversion to it.

**VII.** Ezra added to the canon of the Scriptures. He wrote the book of Ezra; and he is supposed to have written the two books of Chronicles, at least of compiling them, if he was not the author of the materially, or all the parts, of these writings. That these books were written, or compiled and completed, after the captivity, the things contained in the books themselves make manifest; for the genealogies contained therein, are brought down below the captivity; as <sup><1387></sup>1 Chronicles 3:17, etc. We have there an account of the posterity of Jehoiachin for several successive generations. And there is mention in these books of this captivity into Babylon, as of a thing past, and of things that were done on the return of the Jews after the captivity. (1 Chronicles 9.) The chapter is mostly filled up with an account of things that came to pass after the captivity into Babylon, as you may see by comparing it with what is said in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. And that Ezra was the person who compiled these books, is probable by this, because they conclude with words that we know are the words of Ezra's history. The two last verses are Ezra's words in the history he gives in the two first verses of the book of Ezra.

**VIII.** Ezra is supposed to have collected all the books of which the Holy Scriptures did then consist, and disposed them in their proper order. Ezra is often spoken of as a noted and eminent scribe of the law Of God, and the canon of Scripture in his time was manifestly under his special care. The Jews, from the first accounts we have from them, have always held, that the canon of Scripture, so much of it as was then extant, was collected, and orderly disposed and settled, by Ezra; and that from him they have delivered it down in the order in which he disposed it, till Christ's time; when the Christian church received it from them, and have delivered it down to our times. The truth of this is allowed as undoubted by divines in general.

**IX.** The work of redemption was carried on and promoted in this period, by greatly multiplying the copies of the law, and appointing the constant public reading of them in all the cities of Israel in their synagogues. It is evident, that before the captivity, there were but few copies of the law. The original was laid up beside the ark; and the kings were required to write out a copy of it for their use, and the law was required to be read to the whole congregation of Israel once every seventh year. And we have no account of any other stated public reading of the law before the captivity but this. And it is manifest by several things that might be mentioned, that copies of the law were exceeding rare before the captivity. But after this, the constant reading of the law was set up in every synagogue throughout the land. First, they began with reading the law, and then they proceeded to establish the constant reading of the other books of the Old Testament. And lessons were read out of the Old Testament, as made up of both the law and the other parts of the Scripture then extant, in all the synagogues, which were set up in every city, and wherever the Jews in any considerable number dwelt. Thus we find it was in the time of Christ and the apostles.

“Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath-day.” (Acts 15:21)

This custom is universally supposed, both by Jews and Christians, to be begun by Ezra. There were doubtless public assemblies before the captivity. They used to assemble at the temple at their great feasts, and were directed, when they were at a loss about any thing in the law, to go to the priest for instruction; and they used also to resort to the prophets houses: and we read of synagogues in the land before, Psalm lxxiv. 8. But it is not supposed that they had copies of the law for constant public reading and expounding through the land before. This was one great means of their being preserved from idolatry.

**X.** The next thing I would mention, is God’s remarkably preserving the church and nation of the Jews, when they were in imminent danger of being universally destroyed by Haman, as in the book of Esther. This series of providence was very wonderful in preventing this destruction. Esther was doubtless born for this end, to be the instrument of this remarkable preservation.

**XI.** After this the canon of Scripture was further enlarged in the books of Nehemiah and Esther; the one by Nehemiah himself. Whether the other was written by Nehemiah, or Mordecai, or Malachi, is not of importance for us to know, so long as it is one of those books that were always admitted and received as a part of their canon by the Jews, and was among those books which the Jews called their Scriptures in Christ's time, and as such was approved by him. For Christ often in his speeches to the Jews, manifestly approves and confirms those books, which amongst them went by the name of the Scriptures, as might easily be shown.

**XII.** After this the canon of the Old Testament was completed and sealed by Malachi. The manner of his concluding his prophecy seems to imply, that they were to expect no more prophecies, and no more written revelations from God, till Christ should come. For in the last chapter he prophesies of Christ's coming; verse 2, 3. "But unto you that fear my name, shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth and grow up as calves of the stall. And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be as ashes under the soles of your feet, in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of hosts." Then we read in verse 4. "Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments," *i.e.* Remember and what ye have; keep close to your written rule, as expecting no more additions to it, till the night of the Old Testament is over, and the Sun of righteousness shall at length arise.

**XIII.** Soon after this, the spirit of prophecy ceased among that people till the time of the New Testament. Thus the Old-Testament light, the stars of the long night, began apace to hide their heads, the time of the Sun of righteousness now drawing nigh. We before observed, how the kings of the house of David ceased before the true king and head of the church came; and how the cloud of glory withdrew, before Christ, the brightness of the Father's glory, appeared. And now the spirit of prophecy ceased. The time of the great prophet of God was now so nigh, it was time for their typical prophets to be silent. We have now gone through the time of which we have any historical account in the writings of the Old Testament; and the last thing mentioned, by which the work of redemption was promoted, was ceasing of the spirit of prophecy. — I now proceed to show how the work of redemption was carried on through

the remaining times before Christ. In this we have not that thread of scripture history to guide us that we have had hitherto but have these three things, viz. the prophecies of the Old Testament, human histories, and some occasional evidence of things which happened in those times, in the New Testament. Therefore,

**XIV.** The next particular that I shall mention under this period, is the destruction of the Persian empire, and setting up of the Grecian empire by Alexander. This came to pass about sixty or seventy years after the times wherein the prophet Malachi is supposed to have prophesied, and about three hundred and thirty years before Christ. This was the third revolution that came to pass in this period, and was greater and more remarkable than either of the foregoing. It was very remarkable on account of the suddenness of that conquest which Alexander made, and the greatness of the empire he set up, which much exceeded in extent all the foregoing.

This event is much spoken of in the prophecies of Daniel. This empire is represented by the third kingdom of brass in Daniel's interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, Daniel 2 And in Daniel's vision of the four beasts, it is represented -by the third beast that was like a leopard, that had on his back four wings of a fowl, to represent the swiftness of its conquest, chapter 7 and is more particularly represented by the he-goat in the 8th chapter, that came from the west on the face of the whole earth, and touched not the ground, to represent how swiftly Alexander overran the world. The angel himself expressly interprets this he-goat to signify the king of Grecia, verse 21. "The rough goat is the kind, of Grecia; and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king," *i.e.* Alexander himself.

After Alexander had conquered the world, he soon died; and his dominion did not descend to his posterity, but four of his principal captains divided his empire between them. Now that being broken, and four stood up for it, four kingdoms stand up out of the nation, but not in power; as in the 11th chapter of Daniel. The angel foretelling the Persian empire, proceeds to foretell Alexander, verse 3. 11 And a mighty king shall stand up, that shall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will." Then he foretells, in the 4th verse, the dividing of his kingdom between his four captains: "And when he shall stand up, his kingdom shall be broken, and shall be divided toward the four winds of heaven; and not to his posterity, nor according to

his dominion which he ruled: for his kingdom shall be plucked up, even for others besides those.” Of these four captains, one had Egypt and the neighbouring countries on the south of Judea; and another had Syria and the neighbouring countries north of Judea; and ‘these two are called the kings of the north and of the south. (Daniel 11.)

Now, this setting up of the Grecian empire did greatly prepare the way for Christ’s coming, and for the erection of his kingdom. Besides the ways common to others in this to this revolution, which of redemption; and that language common in the world. To have one common language understood and used through the greater part of the world, must greatly prepare the way for the setting up of Christ’s kingdom. This gave advantage for spreading the gospel through all nations, with vastly greater ease, than if every nation had a distinct language, and did not understand each other. The first preachers of the gospel had that they could preach in any of this particular gift; and they who could not exercise it when they would, but only when the Spirit of God was pleased to this way. And the churches in different parts of the world, as at Jerusalem, Antioch, etc. could not have had that communication of which we have an account in the book of Acts, without a common language. — After the Grecian empire was set up many in all these countries well understood the Greek language; which wonderfully opened the door for mutual communication between those churches which were so far separated one from another.

Again, making a Greek language common through so great a part of the world did wonderfully make way for the kingdom of Christ, because it was the language in which the New Testament was to be originally written. The apostles propagated the gospel through many scores of nations and if those nations could not have understood the Bible any otherwise than as it was translated into so many languages, it would have rendered the spreading, of the gospel vastly more difficult. But by the common to all, they all understood the New Jesus Christ in the language in which the apostles and evangelists originally wrote it. As soon as ever it was written by its original penmen, it immediately lay open to the world in a language that was commonly understood.

**XV.** The next thing I notice is the translating of the Old Testament into the Greek language, which was commonly understood by the Gentiles.

This is commonly called the Septuagint, or the translation of the Seventy; and is supposed to have been made about fifty or sixty years after Alexander's conquests. This is the first translation that ever was made of the Scriptures that we have any credible account of. The canon of the Old Testament had been completed by the prophet Malachi but about a hundred and twenty years before in its original. Hitherto the Scriptures had remained locked up among the Jews in the Hebrew tongue, which was understood by no other nation; but now it was translated into a language that was commonly understood by the nations of the world.

This translation of the Old Testament is still extant, and is of great use. The Jews have many fables about the occasion and manner of this translation; but the truth of the case is supposed to be this, that multitudes of the Jews living in other parts of the world besides Judea, and being born and bred among the Greeks, the Greek became their common language. These not understanding the original Hebrew, they procured the Scriptures to be translated for their use into the Greek language: and so henceforward the Jews, in all countries, except Judea, were wont in their synagogues to make use of this translation instead of the Hebrew.

This translation of the Scriptures into a language so commonly understood through the world, greatly prepared the way for setting up Christ's kingdom in the world. For the apostles commissioned to preach through the world made great use of the scriptures of the Old Testament, and especially of the prophecies concerning Christ that were contained in them. By means of this translation, and by the Jews being scattered every where, they had the Scriptures at hand in a language understood by the Gentiles. Hence they principally made use of this translation in their preaching and writings wherever they went. In all the numerous quotations out of the Old Testament in their writings, they are made almost every where in the very words of the Septuagint. The sense is the same as in the original Hebrew; though the words are different. But yet this makes it evident, that the apostles in their preaching and writings, commonly made use of this translation. And this translation was principally used in Christian churches through most nations of the world, for several hundred years after Christ.

**XVI.** The next thing is the wonderful preservation of the church when it was eminently threatened and persecuted under the Grecian empire. The first time they were threatened was by Alexander himself When besieging the city of Tyre, he sent to the Jews for assistance and supplies his army. Out of a conscientious regard to their bath to the king of Persia, they refused; but he being a man of a very furious spirit, agreeable to the scripture representation of the rough lie-goat, marched against them, with a design to cut them off. When he met the priests going out to him in their priestly garments, God wonderfully turned his heart to spare them, and favour them, as he did the heart of Esau when he met Jacob.

After this, one of the kings of Egypt, a successor of one of Alexander's four captains entertained a design of destroying the nation of the Jews; but was remarkably and wonderfully prevented by a stronger interposition of Heaven for their preservation.

But the most wonderful preservation of them all in this period was under the cruel persecution of Antiochus, Epiphanes, king of Syria, and successor of another of Alexander's four captains. The Jews were at that time subject to the power of Antiochus; and he being enraged against them, long strove to his utmost utterly to destroy them, and root them out; at least all of them that would not forsake their religion, and worship his idols. He did indeed in a great measure waste the country, and depopulate the city of Jerusalem; and profaned the temple, by setting up his idols in some parts of it; and persecuted the people with insatiable cruelty; so that we have no account of any persecution like this before. Many of the particular circumstances of this persecution would be very affecting were there time to insist on them. This cruel persecution began about a hundred and seventy years before Christ. It is spoken of in the prophecy of Daniel, <sup>200</sup>Daniel 8:9, 25. 11:31-38. and in the New Testament, <sup>201</sup>Hebrews 11:36-38. Jewish Antiochus intended not only to extirpate their religion, but, as far as in him lay, the very nation; and particularly laboured to the utmost to destroy all copies of the law. And considering how weak they were, in comparison with a king of such vast dominion, the providence of God appears very wonderful in defeating his design. Many times the Jew's seemed to be on the very brink of ruin, just ready to be wholly swallowed up; and their enemies often thought themselves sure of obtaining their purpose. They once came against the people with a mighty army with a

design of killing all, except the women and children and of selling these for slaves; and so confident were they of obtaining their purpose, and others of purchasing, that above a thousand merchants came with the army, with money in their hands, to buy the slaves that should be sold. But God wonderfully stirred up and assisted one Judas, and others his successors, called the Maccabees, who, with a small handful in comparison vanquished their enemies time after time, and delivered their nation. This also was foretold by Daniel, 11:32. Speaking of Antiochus's persecution, he says, "And such as do wickedly against Se covenant, shall be corrupt by flatteries: but the people that do know their God, shall be strong and do exploits."


God afterwards brought this Antiochus to a fearful, miserable end, by a loathsome disease, under dreadful torments of body and horrors of mind; which was foretold, (<sup>2714</sup> Daniel 11:45.) in these words, "Yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him." After his death, there were attempts still to destroy the church; but God baffled them all.

**XVII.** The next thing is the destruction of the Grecian, and setting up of the Roman, empire. This was the fourth revolution in this period. And though it was brought to pass more gradually than the setting up of the Grecian empire, yet it far exceeded that, and was much the greatest and largest temporal monarchy that ever was in the world; so that the Roman empire was commonly called all the world; as in Luke 2:"And there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed:" *i.e.* all the Roman empire.

This empire is spoken of as much the strongest and greatest of any of the four: (<sup>2715</sup> Daniel 2:40. "And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces, and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces, and bruise." <sup>2716</sup> Daniel 7:7, 19, 23. The time when the Romans first conquered and subdued the land of Judea, was between sixty and seventy years before Christ. Soon after this, the Roman empire was established in its greatest extent; and the world continued subject to it henceforward till Christ came, and many hundred years after.

The nations being thus united under one monarchy when Christ came, and when the apostles went forth to reach the gospel, greatly prepared the

way for the spreading of the gospel, and the setting up of Christ's kingdom in the world. — For the world being thus subject to one government, it opened a general communication, and so opportunity was given for the more swift propagation of the Gospel. Thus we find it in the British dominions the communication is quick from one part to another. There are innumerable difficulties in travelling through different nations that are under different independent governments which there are not in traveling through different parts of the same realm, or different dominions of the same prince. So the world being under one government, that of the Romans, facilitated the apostles' traveling.

**XVIII.** About the same time learning and philosophy were risen to their greatest height in the heathen world. — Almost all the famous philosophers among the heathen, were after the captivity into Babylon. Almost all the wise men of Greece and Rome flourished in this time. What these philosophers in general chiefly professed as their business, was to inquire, wherein man's chief happiness lay, and how to obtain it. They seemed earnestly to busy themselves in this inquiry, and wrote multitudes of books about it, many of which are still extant; but they were exceedingly divided, there having been reckoned several hundreds of different opinions which they had concerning it. Thus they wearied themselves in vain, wandering in the dark, not having the glorious gospel to guide them. God was pleased to stiffer men to do the utmost that they could with human wisdom, and to try the utmost extent of their own understandings in order to find out the way to happiness, before the true light came to enlighten the world. God suffered these great philosophers to try what they could do for six hundred years together and then it proved by the events of so long a time that all they could do was in vain; the world not becoming wiser better, or happier under their instructions, but growing more and more foolish, wicked, and miserable. He suffered this, that it might be seen how far reason and philosophy could go in their highest ascent, that the necessity of a divine teacher might more convincingly appear. God was pleased to make foolish the wisdom of this world to show men the folly of their best wisdom-by the doctrines of his glorious gospel, which were above the reach of all their philosophy. See  1 Corinthians 1:19-21.

After God had showed the vanity of human learning, when set up in the room of the gospel, God was pleased to make it subservient to the purposes of Christ's kingdom, as a handmaid to divine revelation. Thereby the vanity of human wisdom was shown, and the necessity of the gospel appeared; and hereby a handmaid was prepared to the gospel. An instance of this we have in the apostle Paul, who was famed for his much learning, (~~4031~~ Acts 26:24.) being skilled in the learning not only of the Jews, but also of the philosophers. This he improved to subserve the gospel; as he did in disputing with the philosophers at Athens, (~~4072~~ Acts 17:22, etc. By his learning he knew how to accommodate himself in his discourses to learned men, having read their writings; and he cites their own poets. Dionysius, a philosopher, was converted by him, and was made a great instrument of promoting the gospel. And there were many others in that and the following ages, who were eminently useful by their human learning in promoting the interests of Christ's kingdom.

**XIX.** Just before Christ was born, the Roman empire was raised to its greatest height, and also settled in peace. About four and twenty years before Christ, Augustus Caesar, the first Roman emperor, began to rule as emperor of the world. Till then the Roman empire had of a long time been a commonwealth under the government of the senate: but then it became an absolute monarchy. This personage, as he was the first, so he was the greatest of all the Roman emperors: he reigned in the greatest glory. Thus the power of the heathen world, which was Satan's visible kingdom, was raised to its greatest height, after it had been strengthening itself more and more from the days of Solomon, which was about a thousand years. Now ye heathen world was in its greatest glory for strength, wealth, is and learning.

God did two things to prepare the way for Christ's coming, wherein he took a contrary method from that which human wisdom would have taken. He brought his own visible people very low, and made them weak; but the heathen, his enemies, he exalted to the greatest height, its for the more glorious triumph of the cross of Christ. With a small number in their great weakness, he conquered his enemies in their greatest glory. Thus Christ triumphed over principalities and powers in his cross.

Augustus Caesar had been for many years establishing his empire, and subduing his enemies, till the very year that Christ was born: when, all his enemies being subdued, his dominion over the world seemed to be gloriously settled. All was established in peace; in token whereof the Romans shut the temple of Janus, which was an established symbol among them of there being universal peace throughout the empire. And this universal peace, which was begun that very year in which Christ was born, lasted twelve years, even till the year that Christ disputed with the doctors in the temple.

Thus the world, after it had been, as it were, in a continual convulsion for so many hundred years together like the four winds striving together on the tumultuous raging ocean, whence arose those four great monarchies was now established in the greatest height of the fourth and last monarchy, and settled in quietness. Now all things are ready for the birth of Christ. His remarkable universal peace, after so many ages of tumult and war, was a fit prelude for ushering the glorious Prince of peace into the world.

Thus I have gone through the first grand period of the whole space between the fall of man and the end of the world, viz. from the fall to the time of the incarnation of Christ; and have shown the truth of the first proposition, viz. That from the fall of man to the incarnation of Christ, God was doing those things which were preparatory to Christ's coming, and were forerunners of it.

## PART 7.

### IMPROVEMENT OF THE FIRST PERIOD.

BEFORE I proceed to the next period, I would make some few remarks, by way of improvement upon what has been said under this.

**1.** From what has been said, we may strongly, urge that Jesus of Nazareth is indeed the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world; and so that the Christian religion is the true religion, seeing that Christ is the very person so evidently pointed at, in all the great dispensations of Divine Providence from the very fall of man, and was so undoubtedly in so many instances foretold from age to age, and shadowed forth in a vast variety of types and

figures. If we seriously consider the course of things from the beginning, and observe the motions of all the great wheels of providence, we shall discern that they all tend hither. They are all as so many lines, whose course, if it be observed and accurately followed, will be found to centre here. It is so very plain in many things, that it would argue stupidity to deny it. This person, sent from God, came into the world with his commission and authority, to do his work, and to declare his mind. The Governor of the world, in all his great works towards Jews and Gentiles, down to the time of Christ's birth, has declared it. It is a plain and evident truth, that he who was born at Bethlehem, who dwelt at Nazareth and Capernaum, and who was crucified without the gates of Jerusalem, must be the great Messiah. Blessed are all they that believe in and confess him, and miserable are all that deny him. Ibis shows the unreasonableness of the deists, who deny revealed religion, and of the Jews, who deny that this Jesus is the Messiah foretold and promised to their fathers.

Here should any object, that it may be, some cunning men contrived this history and these prophecies, on purpose to prove that he is the Messiah. To such it may be replied, how could such a thing be contrived by cunning men to point to Jesus Christ, long Wore he ever was born? How could they know that any such person would be born? And how could their subtlety help them to foresee and point at an event that was to come to many ages afterwards? For no fact can be more evident, than that the Jews had those writings long before Christ was born: as they have them still in great veneration, in all their dispensations through the world. They would never have received such a contrivance from Christians, to prove Jesus to be the Messiah, whom they always denied; and much less would they have been made to believe that they always had those books in their hands, if they had be an imposition.

**II.** What has been said, affords a strong argument for the divine authority of the books of the Old Testament, from that admirable harmony there is in them, whereby they all point to the same thing. For we may see for what has been said, how all the parts of the Old Testament written by so many different penmen, and in all ages so distant harmonize one with another. All agree centre in the same event; which it was impossible for any of them to know, but by divine revelation.

Now, if the Old Testament was not inspired by God, what account can be given of such an agreement? for if than books were written without any divine direction, then none of these penmen knew that there would come such a person as Jesus Christ into the world; his coming was only a mere figment of their own brain: and if so how happened it, that this figment of theirs came to pass How came a vain imagination of theirs, which they foretold without an manner of ground for their prediction, to be exactly fulfilled? and especially how did they come all to agree in it, all pointing exactly to the same thing, though many of them lived so many hundred years distant one from another? — This admirable consent and agreement in a future event, is therefore a clear and certain evidence of the divine authority of those writings.

**III.** Hence we may learn how weak and ignorant the objection is, against the Old Testament being the word of God, because it consists so much of warlike histories and civil transactions. Here, say some, we have histories of their kings and rulers, their wars with neighbouring nations, and the changes that happened in their mate and government: but other nations used to keep histories of their public affairs, as well as they; why then should we think that these histories which the Jews kept are the word of God, more than those of other people? What has been said, shows the folly and vanity of such an objection. For hereby it appears, that the can of these histories is very different from that of all others. This history alone gives us an amount of the first original of all things; and this alone deduces things down to us in a wonderful series from that original, giving an idea of the grand scheme of Divine Providence, as tending to its great end. And, together the doctrines and prophecies contained in it, book gives a view of the whole series of the great events of Divine Providence, from the origin to the consummation of all things; exhibiting an excellent and glorious account of the wise and holy designs of the supreme Governor in all. — No common history has had such penmen. This history was all written by men who came with evident signs and testimonies of their being prophets of the most high God, immediately inspired.-And though histories, yet containing those great events of providence by which it appears how God, has been carrying on the work of redemption from age to age, they are no less full of divine instruction, and those things that

show forth Christ, and his glorious gospel, than the other parts of the Holy Scriptures.

To object against a book's being divine, merely because it is historical, is a poor fancy; as if that could not be the word of God which gives an account of what is past; or as though it were not reasonable to suppose, that God, in a revelation he should give mankind, would give us any relation of the dispensations of his own providence. If so, it must be because his works are not worthy to be related: or because the scheme of his government, and the series of his dispensations towards his church, and the world he has made, is not worthy that any record should be kept of it.

The objection that it is a common thing for nations and kingdoms to write histories and keep records of their wars and the revolutions that come to pass in their territories, so far from being a weighty objection against the historical part of Scripture, as though it were not the word of God that it is a strong argument in favour of it. For if the light of nature teaches all civilized nations to keep record of the events of their government and the series of their administrations, and to publish histories for the information of others, how much more may we expect that God would give the world a record of the dispensations of his government, which doubtless is infinitely more worthy Of a history for our information? If wise kings have taken care that there should be good histories written of the nations over which they have reigned, shall we think it incredible, that Jesus Christ should take care that his church, which is his nation, his peculiar people, should have in their hands a certain infallible history of their nation, and of his government of them?

If it had not been for the history of the Old Testament, how woefully should we have been left in the dark about many things which the church of God needs to know! How ignorant should we have been of God's dealings towards mankind, and towards his church, from the beginning I We should have been wholly in the dark about the creation of the world, the fall of man, the first rim and continued progress of the dispensations Of grace towards Men mankind. We should have known nothing how God at first set up a church in the world, and how it was preserved; after what manner he governed it from the beginning; how the light of the gospel first

began to dawn in the world; how it increased, and how things were preparing for the coining of Christ.

If we are Christians, we belong to that building of God that has been the subject of our discourse: but if it had not been for the history of the Old Testament, we should never have known what was the first occasion of God's going about this building, how the foundation of it was laid, and how it has gone on from the beginning. The times of the history of the Old Testament are mostly such as no other history includes; and therefore, if God had not taken care to give and preserve an account of these things for us, we should have been wholly without them.

Those that object against the authority of the Old-Testament history, may as well object against Moses's account of the creation; for, in the former, we have a history of a work no less important, viz. the work of redemption. Yea, this is a far greater and more glorious work. If it be inquired which of the two works, that of creation, or that of providence, is greatest! it must be answered, the work of providence; but the work of redemption is the greatest of the works of providence. — And let those who make this objection consider what part of the Old Testament history can be spared, without making a treat breach in that thread or series of events by which this glorious work has been carried on. — This leads me to observe,

**IV.** That, from what has been said, we may see much of the wisdom of God in the composition of the Scriptures of the Old Testament, *i.e.* in the parts of which it consists. Let us briefly take a view of the several parts of it, and of the need there was of them.

It was necessary, for instance, that we should have some account of the creation of the world, of our first parents, and their primitive state; of the fall, of the old world, and its degeneracy; of the universal deluge, and the origin of nations after this destruction of mankind.

It seems necessary, moreover, that there should be some account of the succession of the church of God from the beginning. God suffered all the world to degenerate, and took one nation only to be his people, to preserve the true worship and religion till the Saviour of the world should come. In them the world was gradually prepared for that great light, and

those wonderful things of which he was to be the author. Thus they were a typical nation, that in them God might shadow forth and teach, as under avail, all the future glories of the gospel. It was therefore necessary that we should have some account of this; how it was first effected by the call of Abraham, and by their being bond-slaves in Egypt, and how they were brought to Canaan . It was necessary that we should have some account of the revelation which God made of himself to that people, in giving their law, in the appointment of their typical worship, were in the gospel is availed, and of the formation of their civil and ecclesiastical state.

It seems exceeding necessary that we should have some account of their being, actually brought to Canaan, the country promised them and where they always dwelt; that we should have a history of the successions of the church of Israel, and of those providences towards them, which were most considerable and fullest of gospel mystery; that we should have some account, of the promised external glory of that nation under David and Solomon and a very particular account of David, whose history is so full of the gospel, and in whom began the race of their kings; and that, we should have some account of the building of the temple, which was also full of gospel-mystery.

And it is a matter of great consequence, that we should have some account of Israel's dividing from Judah, and of the ten tribes' captivity and utter rejection, and therefore a brief history of them till that time; that we should have an account of the succession of the kings of Judah, and of the church, till their captivity into Babylon; of their return from captivity, and resettlement in their own land, with the origin of the last state of the church before Christ came.

A little consideration will convince any one, that all these things were necessary, and that none of them could be spared; and in the general, that it was necessary we should have a history of God's church till such times as are within the reach of human histories. It was of vast importance that we should have an inspired history of those times of the Jewish church, wherein there was kept between God and them while he used to dwell among them as it were visibly revealing himself by the Shechinah, by Urim and Thummim, and by prophecy, and so more immediately to order their affairs. And it was necessary that we should have some account of the

great dispensations of God in prophecy, after the finishing of inspired history; for which it was needful that there should number of prophets raised who should foretell the coming of the Son of God, and the nature and glory of his kingdom, as so many harbingers to make way for him, and that their prophecies should remain in the church.

It was also a matter of great consequence that the church should have a book of divine songs by inspiration from God, wherein there should be a lively representation of the true spirit of devotion, of faith, hope, and divine love, of joy, resignation, humility, obedience, repentance, etc. as in the Psalms; also that we should have from God such books of moral instruction!, as we have in Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, relating to the affairs and state of mankind, and the concerns of human life, containing rules of true wisdom and prudence for our conduct in all circumstances; and that we should have particularly a song representing the great love between Christ and his spouse the church, adapted to the disposition and holy affections of a true Christian soul towards Christ and representing his grace and marvellous love to, people, as in Solomon's Song. It is important that we should have a book to teach us how to conduct ourselves under affliction, seeing the church of God here is in a militant state, and God's people through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of heaven. The church is for a long time under trouble, meets with fiery trials, and extreme sufferings, before her time of peace and rest in the latter ages of the world. Therefore God has given us a book most proper in these circumstances, the book of Job; and though written on occasion of the afflictions of a particular saint, it was probably at first given to the church in Egypt under her afflictions there; and is made use of by the apostle to comfort Christians under persecutions,

“Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.”

(James 5:11)

God was also pleased in this book of Job, to give some view of the ancient divinity before the giving of the law.

Thus, from this brief review, I think it appears, that every part of the scriptures of the Old Testament is very useful and necessary and no part of it can be spared without loss to the church. And therefore the wisdom

of God is conspicuous in ordering that the scriptures of the Old Testament should consist of those very books of which they do consist.

Before I dismiss this particular, I would add, that it is very observable, that the history of the Old Testament is large and particular where the great affair of redemption required it; even where there was most done towards this work, most to typify Christ, and to prepare the way for him. Thus it is very particular in the history of Abraham and the other patriarchs; but very short in the account we have of the time which the children of Israel spent in Egypt. It is large in the account of the redemption out of Egypt, and the first settling of the affairs of the Jewish of Egypt and the nation in the time of Moses and Joshua; but much shorter in the times of the judges. So again, it is in the times of David and Solomon, in the history of the ensuing reigns.

Thus the accounts are large and short, just as there is more or less of the affair of redemption to be seen in them.

**V.** From what has been said, we may see, that Christ and his redemption are great subject of the whole Bible. Concerning the New Testament, the matter is plain; and by what has been said, it appears to be so also with respect to the Old Testament. Christ and his redemption is the great subject of the prophecies of the Old Testament, as has been shown. It has also been shown, that he is the great subject of the songs of the Old Testament; and the moral rules and precepts are all given in subordination to him. Christ and his redemption are also the great subject of the history of the Old Testament beginning all along; and even the history of the creation is brought in as an introduction to the history of redemption that immediately follows it. The whole book, both Old Testament and New, is filled up with the gospel; only with this difference, that the Old Testament contains the gospel under a veil, but the New contains it unveiled, so that we may see the glory of the Lord with open face.

**VI.** By what has been said, we may see the usefulness and excellency of the Old Testament. Some are ready to look on the Old Testament as being out of date, and as if we in these days of the gospel have but little to do with it. But this is a very great mistake, arising from want of observing the nature and design of the Old Testament, which, if it were observed, would

appear full of the gospel of Christ, and would in an excellent manner illustrate and confirm the glorious doctrines and promises of the New Testament. Those parts of the Old Testament which are commonly looked upon as containing the least divine instruction, are mines and treasures of gospel-knowledge; and the reason why they are thought to contain so little is, because persons do but superficially read them. The treasures which are hid underneath are not observed. They only look on the top of the ground, and suddenly pass a Judgment that there is nothing there. But they never dig into the mine: if they did, they would find it richly stored with what is more valuable than silver and gold, and would be abundantly requited for their pains.

What has been said, may show us what a precious treasure God has committed into our hands, in that he has given us the Bible. How little do most persons consider what a privilege they enjoy, in the possession of that holy book, the Bible, which they have in their hands, and may converse with as they please. What an excellent book is this, and how far exceeding all human writings! It reveals God to us, and gives us a view of the grand design and glorious scheme of providence from the beginning of the world, either in history or prophecy. It reveals the great Redeemer, his glorious redemption, and the various steps by which God accomplishes it from the first foundation to the top-stone! Shall we prize a history which gives us a clear account of some great earthly prince, or mighty of an Alexander, a Caesar, or a Marlborough? and shall, we not prize the history that God gives us of the glorious kingdom of his Son Jesus Christ, the Prince and Saviour, and of the great transactions of that King of kings and Lord of armies, the Lord mighty in battle; and what he has wrought for the redemption of his chosen people?

**VII.** What has been, said, may make us sensible how much most persons are to blame for their inattentive, unobservant way of reading the Scriptures. How much profitable matter do the Scriptures contain, if it was but observed! The Bible is the most comprehensive book in the world. But what will all this signify to us, if we read it without observing what is the drift of the Holy Ghost in it? The psalmist (~~HEB~~ Psalm 119:18.) begs of God, “That he would enlighten his eyes that he might behold wondrous things out of his law.” The Scriptures are full of wondrous things. Those histories which are too commonly read as if they were only

private concerns of particular persons, such as of Abraham Isaac Jacob, and Joseph of Ruth, Joshua, the Judges David and the Israelitish princes, are amounts of greater things, things of greater importance and more extensive concernment, than they who read them are commonly aware of.

The histories of Scripture are but too commonly read, as if they were written only to entertain men's fancies, when the infinitely great things contained in them are passed over without notice. Whatever treasures the Scriptures contain, we shall be never the better for them if we do not observe them. He that has a Bible, and does not observe what it contains, is like a man who has a box full of silver and gold, and does not know it, nor observe that it is an thing more than a vessel filled with common stones. We will be never the better for his treasure; and so might as well be without it. He who has plenty of the choicest food stored up in his house, and does not know it, will never taste what he has, and will be as likely to starve as if his house were empty.

**VIII.** What has been said, may show us how great a person Jesus Christ is, and how great his errand into the world, seeing there was so much done to prepare the way for his coming. God had been preparing the way for him through all ages of the world from every beginning. If we had notice of a certain stranger being about to come into a country, and should observe that a great preparation was made for him, great things were done, many alterations made in the state of the whole country, many hands employed, persons of great note engage in making the preparation; and all the affairs and concerns of the country ordered so as to be subservient to the design of entertaining that person, it would be natural for us to think, surely this is some extraordinary person, and it is some very great business that he is coming upon. How great a person then must he be, for whose coming the great God of heaven and earth, and Governor of all things, spent four thousand years in preparing the way! Soon after the world was created, and in age to age, he has been doing great things bringing mighty events to pass, accomplishing wonders without number, often overturning the world in order to it. He has been causing every thing in the state of mankind, and all revolutions and changes in the habitable world, from generation to generation, to be subservient to this great design. — Surely this must be some great and extraordinary person, and a great work indeed it must needs be, about which he is coming.

We read, (<sup>4278</sup>Matthew 21:8-10.) when Christ was coming into Jerusalem, and multitudes ran before him, having cut down branches of palm-trees, and strewed them in the way; and others spread their garments in the way crying, “Hosanna to the Son of David,” that the whole city was moved, saying, Who is this? They wondered who that extraordinary person should be, that there should be such preparation made on occasion of his coming into the city. But if we consider, what great things were done in all ages to prepare the way for Christ’s coming, and how the world was often overturned to make way for it, much more may we cry out, Who is this? What great person is this? and say, (as in <sup>4248</sup>Psalms 24:8, 10.) “Who is this King of glory,” that God should show such respect, and put such vast honour upon him? Surely this person is honourable in God’s eyes, and greatly beloved of him; and surely it is it grand errand upon which he is sent.

## PERIOD 2

### FROM CHRIST'S INCARNATION TO HIS REINCARNATION.

HAVING shown how the work of redemption was carried an through the first period, from the fall of man to the incarnation of Christ, I come now to the second period viz. the time of Christ's humiliation, or the space from his incarnation to his resurrection. And this is the most remarkable article of time that ever was or era will be. Though it was but between thirty and forty years, yet more was done in it than had been done from the beginning of the world to that time. We have observed, that all which had been done from the fall to the incarnation of Christ, was only preparatory for what was now done. And it may also be observed, that all which was done before the beginning of time, in the eternal counsels between the persons of the blessed Trinity, chiefly respected this period. We therefore now proceed to consider, the second proposition, viz. That during the time of Christ's humiliation, from his incarnation to — his resurrection, the purchase of redemption was made.

Though many things had been done in the affair of redemption, though millions of sacrifices had been offered; yet nothing was done to purchase redemption before Christ's incarnation. No part of the purchase was made, no part of the price was offered till now. But as Soon as Christ was incarnate, the purchase began. And the whole time of Christ's humiliation, till the morning that he rose from the dead, was taken up in this purchase. Then the purchase was entirely and completely finished. As nothing was done before Christ's incarnation, so nothing was done after his resurrection, to purchase redemption for men. Nor will there ever be any thing more done to all eternity. That very moment when the human nature of Christ ceased to remain under the power of death, the utmost farthing was paid of the price of Salvation for every one of the elect.

But for the more orderly and regular consideration of the great things done by our Redeemer to purchase redemption for us, I would speak of his becoming incarnate to capacitate himself for this purchase; — and of the purchase itself.

## PART 1.

### OF CHRIST'S INCARNATION.

CHRIST became incarnate, or, which is the same thing, became man, to put himself in a capacity for working out our redemption. For though Christ, as God, was infinitely sufficient for the work, yet to his being in an immediate capacity for it, it was needful that he should not only be God, but man. If Christ had remained only in the divine nature, he would not have been in a capacity to have purchased our salvation; not from any imperfection of the divine nature, but by reason of its absolute and infinite perfection: for Christ, merely as God, was not capable either of that obedience or suffering that was in needful. The divine nature is not capable, for it is infinitely above all suffering. Neither is it capable of obedience to that law which was given to man. It is as impossible that one who is only God, should obey the law that was given to man, as it is that he should suffer man's punishment.

And it was necessary not only that Christ should take upon him a created nature, but that he should take upon him our nature. It would not have sufficed for Christ to have become an angel, and to have obeyed and suffered in the angelic nature. But it was necessary that he should become a man, upon three accounts.

**1.** It was needful in order to answer the law, that the very nature to which the law was given, should obey it. Man's law could not be answered, But by being obeyed God insisted upon it, that the law which he to man shall be honoured had given to man shall be honoured, and fulfilled by the nature of otherwise the law could not be answered for men. The words, "Thou shalt not eat thereof," etc. was spoken to the race of mankind, to the human nature; and therefore the human nature must fulfil them.

**2.** It needful to answer the law that the mature that sinned should die. These words, "Thou shalt surely die," respect the human nature. The same nature to which the command was given, was that to which the threatening was directed.

**3.** God saw meet, that the same world which was the stage of man's fall and ruin, should also be the stage of his redemption. We read often of his coming into the world to save sinners, and of God's sending him into the world for this purpose. — It was needful that he should come into this sinful miserable, undone world, in order to restore and save it. For man's recovery, it was needful that he should come down to man, to man's proper habitation and that he should tabernacle with us:

“The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.” (John 1:14.)

Concerning the incarnation of Christ, I would observe these following things.

**I.** The incarnation itself; in which especially two things are to be considered, viz.

**1.** His conception; which was in the womb of one of the race of mankind, whereby he became truly the Son of man, as he was often called. He was one of the posterity of Adam, a child of Abraham, and a son of David, according to God's promise. But his conception was — not in the way of ordinary generation, but by the power of the Holy host. Christ was formed in the womb of the Virgin, of the substance of her body, by the power of the Spirit of God. So that he was the immediate son of the woman, but not the immediate son of any male whatsoever; and so was the seed of the woman, and the son of a virgin, one that had never known man.

**2.** His birth — Though the conception of Christ was supernatural, yet after he was conceived, his human nature was gradually perfected in the womb of the virgin, in a way of natural progress; and so his birth was in the way of nature. But his conception being supernatural, by the power of the Holy Ghost, he was both conceived and born without sin.

**II.** The second thing I would observe concerning the incarnation of Christ, is the fullness of the time in which it was accomplished. It was after things had been preparing for it from the very first fall of mankind, and when all things were ready. It came to pass at a time, which in infinite wisdom was the most fit and proper.

“But when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law.” (✠ Galatians 4:4.)

It was now the most proper time on every account. Any time before the flood would not have been so fit a time. For then the mischief and ruin that the fall brought on mankind, was not so fully seen. The curse did not so fully come on the earth before the flood as it did afterwards: for though the ground was cursed in a great measure before, yet it pleased God that the curse should once, before the restoration by Christ, be executed in an universal destruction, even of the very form of the earth, that the dire effects of the fall might be seen before the recovery. Though mankind were mortal Wore the flood, yet their lives were almost a thousand years in length, a kind of immortality in comparison with what the life of man is now. It pleased God, that the curse, Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return, should have its full accomplishment, and be executed in its greatest degree on mankind, before the Redeemer came to purchase a never-ending life.

It would not have been so fit a time for Christ to come, before Moses; for till then mankind were not so universally apostatized from the true God; they were not fallen universally into heathenish darkness; and so the need of Christ, the light of the world, was not so evident. The woeful consequence of the fall with respect to man's mortality, was not so fully in manifest till then; for man's life was not so shortened as to: reduced to the present standard, till about Moses's time.

It was most fit that the time of the Messiah's coming, should not be till all nations, but the children of Israel, had lain long in heathenish darkness; that the remidilessness of their disease might by long experience be seen, and so the absolute necessity of the heavenly Physician.

Another reason why Christ did not come soon after the flood probably was, that the earth might be full of people, that he might have the more extensive kingdom, that the effects of his light, power, and grace, might be glorified, and that his victory over Satan might be attended with the more glory in the multitude of his conquests. It was also needful that the coming of Christ should be many ages after Moses, that the church might be prepared by the Messiah's being long prefigured, foretold, and expected. It was not proper that Christ should come before the Babylonish captivity,

because Satan's kingdom was not then come to its height. The heathen world before that consisted of lesser kingdoms. But God saw meet that the Messiah should come in the time of one of the four great monarchies. Nor was it proper that he should come in the time of the Babylonish, the Persian, or the Grecian monarchy. It was the will of God that his Son should make his appearance in the world in the time of the Roman, the greatest and strongest monarchy, which was Satan's visible kingdom in the world; that, by overcoming this, he might visibly overcome Satan's kingdom in its greatest strength and glory, and so obtain the more complete triumph over Satan himself.

It was not proper that Christ should come before the Babylonish captivity. For, before that, we have not histories of the state of the heathen world, to give us an idea of the need of a Saviour. Besides, learning did not much flourish, and so there had not been opportunity to show the insufficiency of human learning and wisdom to reform and save mankind. Again, the Jews were not dispersed over the world, as they were afterwards; and so things were not prepared in this respect for the coming of Christ. The necessity of abolishing the Jewish dispensation was not then so rent as it was afterwards, by reason of the dispersion Jews; neither was the way prepared for the propagation of the gospel, as it was afterwards, by the same dispersion. Many other things might be mentioned, by which it would appear, that no other season before that very time in which Christ came, would have been proper for his appearing.

**III.** The next thing that I would observe concerning the incarnation of Christ, is the greatness of this event. Christ's incarnation was a, greater and more wonderful thing than ever had yet come to pass. The creation of the world was a very great thing, but not so great as the incarnation of Christ. It was a great thing for God to make the creature, but not so great as for the Creator himself to become a creature. We have spoken of many great things that were accomplished between the fall of man and the incarnation of Christ: but God becoming man was greater than all. Then the greatest person was born that ever was or ever will be.

**IV.** Next observe, concerning the incarnation of Christ, the remarkable circumstances of it. He was born of a poor virgin; a pious holy person, but poor, as appeared by her offering at her purification:

“And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtle-doves, or two voting pigeons.”  
(<sup><102></sup>Luke 2:24.)

Which refers to (<sup><102></sup>Leviticus 5:7. “And if she be not able to bring a lamb, then she shall bring two turtle-doves or two young pigeons.” And this poor virgin was espoused to a husband who was but a poor man. Though they were both of the royal family of David, which was the most honourable, and Joseph was the rightful heir to the crown; yet the family was reduced to a very low state; which is represented by the tabernacle of David being fallen, (<sup><102></sup>Amos 9:11. “In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof, and I will raise up his ruins, and will build it a in the days of-old.”

He was born in the town of Bethlehem as was foretold: (<sup><102></sup>Micah 5:2.) and there was a very remarkable providence of God to bring about the fulfilment of this prophecy, the taxing of all the world by Augustus Caesar, (Luke 2.) He was born in a very low condition, even in a stable, and laid in a manger.

**V.** Observe the concomitants of this great event. — And,

**1.** The return of the Spirit; which indeed began a little before, but yet was given on occasion of his birth. I have before observed how the spirit of prophecy ceased, not long after Malachi. From about the same time visions and immediate revelations ceased also. But on this occasion, they were granted anew, and the Spirit in these operations returns again. The first revealed instance of its restoration is the vision of Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, (Luke 1.) The next is the vision which the Virgin Mary had, (ibid.) The third is the vision which Joseph had, (Matthew 1.) In the next place, the Spirit was given to Eliza. beth, (<sup><102></sup>Luke 1:41.) Next, it was given to Mary, as appears by her song, (<sup><102></sup>Luke 1:46, etc.) Then to Zacharias again, (ibid. verse 64.) Then it was sent to the shepherds, (<sup><102></sup>Luke 2:9.) Then it was given to Simeon, (<sup><102></sup>Luke 2:25.) Then to Anna, (verse 36.) Then to the wise men in the Mgt. Then to Joseph again, directing him to flee into Egypt; and after that directing his return.

**2.** The next concomitant of Christ's incarnation is, the great notice that was taken of it in heaven, and on earth. now it was noticed by the glorious inhabitants of the heavenly world, appears by their joyful songs on this occasion, heard by the shepherds in the night. This was the greatest event of Providence that ever the angels had beheld. We read of their singing praises when saw the formation of this lower world:

"When the morning-star sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." (~~and~~ Job 38:7)

And so they do, on this much greater occasion, the birth of the Son of God, who is the Creator of the world.

The glorious angels had all along expected this event. They had taken great notice of the prophecies and promises of these things: for we are told, that they desire to look into the affairs of redemption, ~~and~~ 1 Peter 1:12. They had been the ministers of Christ in this affair of redemption, in all the several steps of it from the very fall of man; as in God's dealings with Abraham, with Jacob, and with the Israelites. And doubtless they had long joyfully expected the coming of Christ; but now they see it accomplished, and there they greatly rejoice, and sing praises on this occasion.

Notice was taken of it by Elisabeth and the Virgin Mary before the birth of Christ; not to say by John the Baptist before he was born, when he leaped in his mother's womb as it were for joy, at the voice of the salutation of Mary. Elisabeth and Mary most joyfully praise God together, with Christ and his forerunner in their wombs, and the Holy Spirit in their souls. And afterwards what joyful notice is taken of this event by the shepherds, and by those holy persons, Zacharias, and Simeon and Anna! How do they praise God on the occasion! thus the inhabitants of heaven, and the church on earth, unite in their joy and praise on this occasion.

Great part of the universe takes joyful notice of the incarnation of Christ. Heaven takes notice of it, and the inhabitants sing for joy. This lower world of mankind, both Jews and Gentiles, take notice of it. It pleased God to put honour on his Son, by wonderfully stirring up some of the wisest of the Gentiles to come a long journey to see and worship him at his birth. They were led by a miraculous star, signifying the birth of that

glorious person who is this bright and morning-star, going before, and leading them to the very place where the, young child was. Some think they were instructed by the prophecy of Balsam, who dwelt in the eastern parts, and who foretold Christ's coming as a star that should rise out of Jacob. Or they might be instructed by that general expectation there was of the Messiah's coming about that time, from the prophecies the Jews had of him in their dispersions in all parts of the world.

**3.** the next concomitant of the birth of Christ was his circumcision. But this may more properly be spoken of under another head, and so I will not insist upon it now.

**4.** The next concomitant was his first coming into the second temple, when an infant, on occasion of the purification of the blessed Virgin. We read. <sup><300></sup>Haggai 2:7. "The desire of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house, for temple) with glory. And in <sup><300></sup>Malachi 3:1. "The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant." And now was the first instance of the fulfillment of these prophecies.

**5.** The last concomitant I shall mention is the sceptre's departing from Judah, in the death of Herod the Great. The sceptre had never totally departed from Judah till now. Judah's sceptre was greatly diminished in the revolt of the ten tribes in Jeroboam's time; and the sceptre departed from Israel or Ephraim at the time of the captivity of the ten tribes by Shalmaneser. But it remained in the tribe! of Judah, under the kings of the house of David. And when the tribes of Judah and Benjamin were carried captive by Nebuchadnezzar, the sceptre of Judah ceased for a little while, till the return :in the captivity under Cyrus: and then though they were not an independent government, as they had been before, but owed fealty to the kings of Persia; et their governor was of themselves, who hid the power of life and death, and they were governed by their own laws; and so Judah had a lawgiver from between his feet during the Persian and Grecian monarchies. Towards the latter part of the Grecian monarchy, the people were governed by kings of their own, of the race of the Maccabees, for near a hundred years; and after that they were subdued by the Romans. But yet the Romans suffered them to lie governed by their own laws, and to have a king of their own, Herod the Great, who reigned about forty

years, and governed with proper kingly authority, only, paying homage to the Romans. But presently a Christ was born he died, as we have an account, <sup><129></sup>Matthew 2:19. and Archelaus succeeded him; but was soon put down by the Roman emperor; and then the sceptre departed from Judah. There were no more temporal kings of Judah after that, neither had that people their governors from the midst of themselves, but were ruled by a Roman governor sent among them; and they ceased to have the power of life and death among themselves. Hence the Jews say to Pilate, “It is not lawful for us to put any man to death,” <sup><130></sup>John 18:31. Thus the sceptre departed from Judah when Shiloh came.

## PART 2

### THE PURCHASE OF REDEMPTION.

HAVING thus considered Christ’s coming into the world, and his taking on him our nature, to put himself in a capacity for the purchase of redemption, I come now to show what is intended by the purchase of redemption to make some general observations concerning those things by which this purchase was made and then to consider those things more particularly which Christ did and suffered, by which that purchase was made.

#### SECTION 1

##### *The purchase itself, what?*

By Christ purchasing redemption, two things are intended, his satisfaction, and his merit. All is done by the price that Christ lays down, which does two things: it pays our debt, and so it satisfies; it procures our title to happiness, and so it merits. The satisfaction of Christ is to free us from misery, and the merit; of Christ is to purchase happiness for us.

The word purchase, in this connexion, is taken either more strictly or more lately. It is oftentimes used more strictly, to signify, only the merit of Christ; and sometimes more largely to signify both his satisfaction and merit. Indeed most of the words used in this affair have various signification’s. Thus sometimes divines use merit for the whole price that

Christ offered, both satisfactory, and positively meritorious. And so the word satisfaction is sometimes used, not only for his propitiation, but also for his meritorious obedience. For in some sense, not only suffering the penalty but positively obeying, is needful to satisfy the law. The reason of this various use of these terms seems to be, that satisfaction and merit do not differ so much really as relatively. They both consist in raying a valuable price, a price of infinite value: but only that price, as it respects a debt to be paid, is called satisfaction and as it respects a positive good to be obtained, is called merit. The difference between paying a debt and making a positive purchase is more relative than essential. He who lays down a trice to pay a debt, does in some sense make a purchase: he purchases liberty from the obligation. And he who lays down a price to purchase a good, does as it were make satisfaction: he satisfies the conditional demands of him to whom he pays it. This may suffice concerning what is meant by the purchase of Christ.

## SECTION 2

*Some general observations concerning those things  
by which this purchase was made.*

**1.** AND here observe, That whatever in Christ bad the was by virtue of the suffering or in it; but whatever had the nature of merit, was by virtue of the obedience or righteousness there was in it. The satisfaction of Christ consists in his answering the demands of the law on man, which were consequent on the breach of the law. These were answered by suffering the penalty of the law. The merit of Christ consists in what he did to answer the demands, which were prior to man's breach of the law, or to fulfil what the law demanded before man sinned, which was obedience.

The satisfaction or propitiation of Christ consists either in his suffering evil, or his being subject to abasement. Christ did not only make satisfaction by proper suffering, but by whatever had the nature of humiliation and abasement of circumstances. Thus he made satisfaction by continuing under the power of death, while he lay buried in the grave; thou neither his body nor son properly endued any suffering after he was dead. Whatever Christ was subject to that was the judicial fruit of sin, had the nature of satisfaction for sin. But not only proper suffering, but all

abasement and depression of the state and circumstances of mankind below its primitive honour and dignity, such as his body remaining under death, his body and soul remaining separate, etc. are the judicial fruits of sin. And all at Christ did in his state of humiliation, that had the nature of obedience, moral virtue or goodness, had the nature of merit, in it, and was part of the price with which he purchased happiness for the elect.

**2.** Both Christ's satisfaction for sin, and also his merit happiness by his righteousness, were carried on through the whole time of his humiliation. Christ's satisfaction for sin was not by his last sufferings only, though it was principally by them; but all his sufferings, and all his humiliation, from the first moment of his incarnation to his resurrection, were propitiatory or satisfactory. Christ's satisfaction was chiefly by his death, because his sufferings and humiliation in that was greatest. But all his other sufferings, and all his other humiliation, all along had the nature of satisfaction; the mean circumstances in which he was born; his being born of a poor virgin, in a stable, and laid in a manger; his taking the human nature upon him in its low state, and under those infirmities brought upon it by the fall; his being born in the form of sinful flesh, etc. And so all his sufferings in his infancy and childhood, and all that labour, contempt, reproach, temptation, and difficulty of any kind which he suffered through the whole course of his life, was of a pro propitiatory and satisfactory nature. — And so his purchase of happiness by his righteousness was also carried on through the whole time of his humiliation till his resurrection: not only in that obedience he performed through the course of his life, but also in the obedience he performed in laying down his life.

**3.** It was by the same things that Christ hath satisfied God's justice, and eternal happiness. He did not make satisfaction by some things and then work out righteousness by other different things; but in the same acts by which he wrought out righteousness, he also made satisfaction, but only taken in a different relation. One and the same act of Christ, considered with respect to the obedience there was in it, was part of his righteousness, and purchased heaven: but considered with respect to the self-denial, and difficulty, and humiliation, with which he performed it, had the nature of satisfaction for sin, and procured our pardon. Thus his going about doing good, preaching the gospel, and teaching his good, preaching his disciples, was a part his righteousness, and the purchase of

heaven, as it was done in obedience to the Father; and the same was a part of his satisfaction, as he did it with great labour, trouble, and weariness, and under great temptations exposing himself to reproach and contempt. So his had the nature of satisfaction to God's offended justice considered as his bearing punishment in our stead: but considered as an act of obedience to God, who had given him this command, that he should lay down his life for sinners, it was a part of his righteousness and purchase, and as much the principal part of his righteousness as it was the principal part of his satisfaction. And to instance in his circumcision, what he suffered in it, had the nature of satisfaction: the blood that was shed therein was propitiatory blood; but as it was a conformity to the law of Moses, it was part of his meritorious righteousness. Though it was not properly the human nature being the subject of it and being the act of his person, it was accepted as an act of his obedience as our mediator. — And even his being born in such a low condition, has the nature of satisfaction by reason of the humiliation that was in it; and of righteousness, as it was the act of his person in obedience to the Father, what the will of the human nature did acquiesce in, though there was no act of the will of the human nature prior to it. — These things may suffice to have been observed in general, concerning this purchase Christ made of redemption.

### SECTION 3

*Those things in particular by which the purchase was made. —  
Christ's obedience and righteousness.*

I now proceed to consider the things that passed during the time of Christ's humiliation, and first, with respect to his obedience and righteousness. And this is subject to a threefold distribution. I shall therefore consider his obedience, with respect to the laws which he obeyed—the difference stages of his life in which he performed it and the virtues he exercised in his obedience.

**I.** The first distribution of the acts of Christ's righteousness is with respect to the laws which he obeyed. But here it must be observed in general, that all the precepts which Christ obeyed may be reduced to one law, and that is what the apostle calls the law of works, ~~872~~ Romans 3:27. Every command that Christ obeyed may be reduced to that great and

everlasting law of God that is contained in the covenant of works, that eternal rule of right which God had established between himself and mankind. Christ came into the world to fulfil and answer the covenant of works; that is, the covenant that is to stand for ever as a rule of judgment. The covenant that we had broken, was the covenant that must be fulfilled.

This law of works indeed includes all the laws of God that ever have been given to mankind; for it is a general rule of the law of works, and indeed of the law of nature, that God is to be obeyed, and that he must be submitted to in whatever positive precept he is pleased to give. It is a rule of the law of works, That men should obey their earthly parents: and it is certainly as much a rule of the same law, that we should obey our heavenly Father: and so the law of works requires obedience to all the positive commands of God. It required Adam's obedience to that positive command, Not to eat of the forbidden fruit; and it required obedience of the Jews to all the positive commands of their institution. When God commanded Jonah to arise and go to Nineveh, the law of works required him to obey and so it required Christ's obedience to all the which God gave him.

But more particularly the commands of God which kinds; they were such as he merely as man, or as he was a Jew, or purely a Mediator.

- 1.** He obeyed those commands which he was subject to merely as man. These were the commands of the moral law, which was the same with that which was given at mount Sinai, written in two tables of stone, which are obligatory on mankind of all ages and all nations of the world.
- 2.** He obeyed all those laws he was subject to as he was a Jew. Thus he was subject to the ceremonial law, and was conformed to it. He was conformed to it in his being circumcised the eighth day; and he strictly obeyed it in going up to Jerusalem to the temple three times a year; at least after he was come to the age of twelve years which seems to have been the age when the males began, to go up to the temple. And so Christ constantly attended the service of the temple, and of the synagogues.

To this head of his obedience may be reduced his submission to John's baptism. For it was a special command to the Jews, to go forth to John the Baptist, and be baptized of him; and therefore Christ, being a Jew, was subject to his command: and therefore, when he came to be baptized of

John and John objected, that he had more need to be baptized of him, he gives this reason for it, That it was needful that he should do it, that he might fulfil all righteousness. (See ~~408~~ Matthew 3:13-15.)

**3.** Christ was subject to the mediatorial law; or that which related purely to his mediatorial office. Such were the commands which the Father gave him to teach such doctrines, to preach the gospel, to work such miracles, to call such disciples, to appoint such ordinances, and finally to lay down his life: or he did all these things in obedience to the commands he had received of the Father, as he often tells us, (~~408~~ John 10:18. 14:31.) These commands he was not subject to merely as man; for they did not belong for they belong to other men nor yet was he subject to them as a Jew; for they were no part of the Mosaic law: but they were commands he had received of the Father, that purely respected his mediatorial office.

Christ's righteousness, by which he merited heaven for himself, and all who believe in him, consists principally in his obedience to this mediatorial law: for in fulfilling this law consisted his chief work and business in the world. The history or the evangelists is chiefly taken up in giving an account of his obedience to this law. This part of his obedience was attended with the greatest difficulty; and therefore his obedience in it was most meritorious. What Christ had to do in the world by virtue of his being Mediator, was infinitely more difficult than what he had to do merely as a man, or as a Jew. To his obedience to this mediatorial law belongs his going through his last sufferings, beginning with his agony in the garden, and ending with his resurrection.

As the obedience of the first Adam, wherein his righteousness would have consisted, if he had stood, would have mainly consisted in his obedience to that special law to which he was subject as moral head and surety of mankind, even then command of abstaining from the tree of knowledge of good and evil; so the obedience of the second Adam wherein his righteousness consists, lies mainly in his obedience to that special law to which he was subject as mediator and surety for man.

Before I proceed to the next distribution of Christ's righteousness, I would observe three things concerning his obedience to these laws.

**1.** He performed that obedience to them which was in every respect perfect. It was perfect with respect to the work commanded; and the principle from which he obeyed. It was perfect with respect to the ends he acted for; he never had any by-ends, but aimed perfectly at such as the law of God required. It was perfect with respect to the manner of performance every circumstance of each ad was perfectly conformed to the command. It was perfect with respect to the degree of the performance: he acted wholly up to the rule.-It was perfect with respect to the constancy of obedience, without any interruption; and with respect to perseverance. He held out in perfect obedience to the very end, in all the changes he passed through, and all the trials that were before him.

The meritoriousness of Christ's obedience, depends on the perfection of it. If it had failed in any instance, it could not have been meritorious: for imperfect obedience is not accepted as any obedience at all in the sight of the law of works, to which Christ was subject. That is not accepted as obedience to a law that does not fully answer it.

**2.** Christ's obedience was performed through the greatest trials and temptations that ever any obedience was. His obedience was attended with the greatest difficulties, and most extreme abasement; which was another thing that rendered it more meritorious and thankworthy. To obey another when his commands are easy, is not so worthy, as it is to obey when it cannot be done without great difficulty.

**3.** He performed this obedience with infinite respect to God, and the honour of his law. The obedience he performed was with infinitely greater love to God, and regard to his authority, than that of angels. The angels perform their obedience with a sinless perfection of love; but Christ performed his with infinite love. Though the human nature of Christ was not capable! of love absolutely infinite, Yet Christ's obedience in that nature, is the obedience of his person, as God-man; and therefore there was infinite love manifest in that obedience. And this, together with the infinite dignity of the person who obeyed, rendered his obedience infinitely meritorious.

**II.** The second distribution of the acts of Christ's obedience, is with respect to the different parts of his life; wherein they were performed.

And in this respect they may be divided into those which were performed in private life, and those which were performed in his public ministry.

**1st**, Those acts he performed during his private life. He was perfectly obedient in his childhood. He infinitely differed from other children, who, as soon as they begin to ad, begin to sin and rebel. He was subject to his earthly parents, though he found about his rents, though he was Lord of all, <sup><185></sup>Luke 2:51. and was found about his Father's, business even when a child, <sup><186></sup>Luke 2:42. — He then began to fulfil the mediatorial law, which the Father had given him. He continued his private life for about thirty Years, dwelling at Nazareth in the house of his reputed father Joseph, where he served God in a private capacity and in following a mechanical trade, the business of a carpenter.

**2ndly**, Those acts which he performed during his public ministry which began when he was about thirty years of age, and continued for the three last years and a half of his life. — Most of the evangelic history is taken up in giving an account of what passed during that time. I need all the history of Matthew, except the two first chapters: the whole of Mark; all the gospel of John; and all of Luke, except the two first chapters; excepting also what we find in the evangelists concerning the ministry of John the Baptist. Christ's first appearing in his public ministry, is what is often called his coming in Scripture. Thus John speaks of Christ's coming as future, though he had been born long before.

Concerning the public ministry of Christ, I would observe the following things.

**1.** The forerunner of Christ's coming in his public ministry was John the Baptist. He came preaching repentance for the remission of sins, to make way for Christ's coming, agreeable to the prophecies of him, <sup><208></sup>Isaiah 40:3-5. and <sup><185></sup>Matthew 4:5, 6. It is supposed that John the Baptist began his ministry about three years and a half before Christ; so that John's ministry and Christ's put together, made seven years, which was the last of Daniel's weeks; and this time is intended in <sup><207></sup>Daniel 9:27.

**“He will confirm the covenant with many for one week.”**

Christ came in the midst of this week of years, as Daniel foretold, “And in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease.”

John the Baptist’s ministry consisted principally in preaching, the law, to awaken and convince men of sin, to prepare them for the coming of Christ, and to comfort them, as the law is to prepare the heart for the entertainment of the gospel. A very remarkable outpouring of the Spirit of God attended John’s ministry; and the effect of it was, that Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, were awakened and convinced. They went out to him, and submitted to his baptism, confessing their sins. John was the greatest of all the prophets who came before Christ,

“Among those that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist;” (~~Q111~~ Matthew 11:11.)

*i.e.* he had the most honourable office. he was as the morning-star, which is the harbinger of the approaching day, and forerunner of the rising sun. The other prophets were stars that gave light in the night; but those tars went out on the approach of the gospel-day. Now the coming of Christ being very nigh, the morning-star comes before him, the brightest of all the stars, as John the Baptist was, in the sense mentioned, the greatest of all the prophets. And when Christ came in his public ministry, the light of that morning-star decreased too; as we see, when the sun rises, it diminishes the light of the morning-star. So John the Baptist says of himself, ~~Q110~~ John 3:30. “He must increase, but I must decrease.” And soon after Christ began his public ministry, John the Baptist was put to death; as the morning-star is visible a little while after the sun is risen, yet soon goes out.

**2.** Christ’s entrance on his public ministry was by baptism, followed with the temptation in the wilderness. His baptism was as it were his solemn inauguration, by which he entered on his ministry; and was attended with his being anointed with the Holy Ghost, in a solemn and visible manner, the Holy Ghost descending upon him symbolically, in a visible shape like a dove, attended with a voice from heaven, saying “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” ~~Q110~~ Matthew 3:16, 17. After this he was led by the devil into the wilderness. Satan made a violent attack upon him

at his first entrance on his work; and now he had remarkable trial of his obedience; but he got the victory. He who had such success with the first Adam, had none with the second.

**3.** I would take notice of the work in which Christ was employed during his ministry. And here are three things chiefly to be noticed, viz. his preaching, his working of miracles, and his calling and appointing disciples and ministers of his kingdom.

**(1.)** His preaching the gospel. Great part of the work of his public ministry consisted in this; and much of that obedience by which he purchased salvation for us, was in his speaking those things which the Father commanded him. He more clearly and abundantly revealed the mind and will of God, than ever it had been revealed before. He came from the bosom of the Father, perfectly knew his mind, and was in the best capacity to reveal it. As the sun, as soon as it is risen, begins to shine; so Christ, as soon as he came into his public ministry, began to enlighten the world with his doctrine. As the law was given at mount Sinai, so Christ delivered his evangelical doctrine, (full of blessings, and not curses,) to a multitude on a mountain, <sup><418></sup>Matthew 5:7.

When he preached, he did not teach as the scribes, but as one having authority; so that his hearers were astonished at his doctrine. He did not reveal the mind and will of God in the style of the prophets, as, "Thus saith the Lord;" but in such a style as this, "I say unto you," "Verily, verily, I say unto you." He delivered his doctrines, not only as the doctrines of God the Father, but as his own doctrines. He gave forth commands, not (as the prophets were wont to do) as God's commands, but as his own. He spake in such a style as this, "This is my commandment," <sup><419></sup>John 15:12. "Ye an my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you," *ibid.* 14.

**(2.)** Another thing that Christ was employed in during the course of his ministry was working miracles. Concerning which we may observe, — Their multitude. Besides particular instances, we often have an account of multitudes coming at once with diseases, and his healing them. They were works of mercy. In them was displayed not only his infinite power and greatness, but his infinite mercy and goodness. He went about doing good, healing the sick, restoring sight to the blind,

hearing to the deaf, and the toper use of their limbs to the lame and halt; feeding the hungry, cleansing the leprous, and raising the dead.

They were almost all of them such as had been spoken of as the particular works of God in the Old Testament. So with respect to stilling the sea, <sup><P472></sup>Psalm 107:29. "He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still;" walking on the sea in a storm, <sup><R008></sup>Job 9:8. "Which alone — treadeth upon the waves of the sea; and casting out devils, <sup><P7414></sup>Psalm 74:14. "Thou breakest the head of leviathan in pieces." So as to feeding a multitude in a wilderness: <sup><R008></sup>Deuteronomy 8:16. "Who fed thee in the wilderness with manna;" telling man's thoughts, <sup><T003></sup>Amos 4:13. "Lo, he that declareth unto man what is his thought — the Lord the God of hosts is his name;" and raising the dead, <sup><P6810></sup>Psalm 68:20. "Unto God the Lord belong the issues from death." So as to opening eyes of the blind, <sup><P6810></sup>Psalm 146:8. "The Lord openeth the eyes of the blind;" healing the sick, <sup><P437></sup>Psalm 103:3. "Who healeth all thy diseases;" and lifting up those who are bowed together, <sup><P6810></sup>Psalm 146:8. "The Lord raiseth them that are bowed down."

They were in general such works as were images of the great work which he come to work on man's heart; representing that inward, spiritual cleansing, healing, renovation, and resurrection, of which all his redeemed are the subjects. He wrought then by his own power, and not as the other prophets did. They \*were wont to work all their miracles in the name of the lord; but Christ wrought in his own name. Moses was forbidden to enter into Canaan, because he seemed by his speech to assume to himself the honour of working only one miracle. Nor did Christ work miracles as the apostles did; but by his own authority and will: Thus, saith he, "I will, be thou clean," <sup><M083></sup>Matthew 8:3. And in the same strain he put the question, "Believe ye that I am able to do this?" <sup><M098></sup>Matthew 9:28.

**(3.)** Another thing that Christ did in the course of his ministry, was to call his disciples. He called many disciples, whom he employed as ministers. He sent seventy at one time in this work: but there were twelve that he set as apostles, who were the grand ministers of his kingdom, and it were the twelve foundations of his church. (See <sup><R2114></sup>Revelation 21:14.) These were the main instruments of setting up his kingdom in the world, and therefore shall sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

**4.** I would observe how he finished his ministry. And this was in his dying counsels to his disciples, and all that should be his disciples, which we have recorded particularly in the 14th, 15th, and 16th chapters of John's gospel. In instituting a solemn memorial of his death, the sacrament of the Lord's supper, wherein we have a representation of his body broken, and of his blood shed. — In offering up himself a sacrifice to God in his last sufferings. This act he did as God's minister, as God's it was the greatest act of his public act of his obedience, by which he purchased heaven for believers. The priests of old used to do many other things as God's ministers; but the highest execution of their actually offering sacrifice on the altar. So the greatest thing that Christ did in the execution of his priestly office, and the greatest thing that he ever did, and the greatest thing that ever was done, was the offering up himself a sacrifice to God. Herein he was the antetype of all that had been done by all the priests, in all their sacrifices and offerings, from the beginning of the world

**III.** The third distribution of the acts by which Christ purchased redemption, regards the virtues that he exercised and manifested in them. Christ in doing his work for our redemption, exercised every possible virtue and grace. Indeed there are some particular virtues that sinful man may have, which met not in Christ; not from any defect of virtue, but because his virtue was perfect, and without defect. Such is the virtue of repentance, brokenness of heart for sin, mortification, and denying of lust. Christ had no sin of his own to repent of, nor any lust to deny. But all virtues which do not presuppose sin, were in him in a hither degree than in any mere creature. Every virtue in him was perfect. Virtue itself was given in him than in any other; and it was under greater advantages to shine in him than in any other. Strict virtue shines most when most tried: but never any virtue had such trials as Christ's had.

The virtue that Christ exercised in his work may be divided into three sorts, viz. the virtues which more immediately respect God, which immediately respected himself, and those which immediately respect men.

**1.** Those virtues which more immediately respect God. There appeared in him a holy fear and reverence towards God the Father. Christ had trial of his virtue in of this respect than any other from the honourableness of his person. This, was the temptation of the angels that fell to cast off their

worship of God and reverence of his majesty, that they were beings of such exalted dignity themselves. But Christ was infinitely more worthy and honourable than they; for he was the eternal Son of God, and his person was equal to the person of the Father: and yet, as he had taken on him the office of mediator, and the nature of man, he was full of reverence towards God. He manifested a wonderful love toward God. The angels give great testimonies of their love towards God, in their constancy and agility in doing his will; and many saints have given great testimonies of their love, who, from love to God, endured great labours and sufferings: but none ever such testimonies of love to God as Christ has given, He manifested the most wonderful submission to the will of God. Never was any one's submission so tried as his was. And he manifested the most wonderful spirit of obedience that ever was manifested.

**2.** In this work he most wonderfully manifested those virtues which more immediately respected himself; as humility, patience, and contempt of the world. Christ, though he was the most excellent and honourable, yet was the most humble; yea, he was the most humble of all creatures. No angel or man ever equalled him in humility, though he was the highest in dignity and honourableness. Christ would have been under the greatest temptations to pride, if it had been possible for tiny thing to be a temptation to him. The temptation of the angels that fell was the dignity of their nature, and the honourableness of their circumstances; but Christ was infinitely more honourable than they. The human nature of Christ was so honoured as to be in the same person with the eternal Son of God, who was equal with God; and yet that human nature was not at all lifted up with pride. Nor was the man Christ Jesus at all lifted up with pride with all those wonderful works which he wrought, of healing the sick, curing the blind, lame, and maimed, and raising the dead. And though he knew that God had appointed- him to be the king over heaven and earth, angels and men, as he says,

“All things are delivered unto me or my Father;”

( Matthew 11:27)

though he knew he was such an infinitely honourable person, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God; and though he knew he was the heir of the Father's kingdom: yet such was his humility, that he did not disdain

to be abased and depressed down into lower and viler circumstances and sufferings than ever any other elect creature was; so that he became least of all, and lowest of all. The proper trial and evidence of humility, is stooping or complying with those acts or circumstances, when called to it, which are very low, and contain great abasement. But none ever stooped so low as Christ, if we consider either the infinite height that he stooped from, or the great depth to which he stooped. Such was his humility, that though he knew his infinite worthiness of honour and of being honoured ten thousand times as much as the highest prince on earth, or angel in heaven; yet he did not think it too much when called to it, to be bound as a malefactor, to become the laughing-stock of the vilest of men, to be crowned with thorns, to have a mock robe put upon him, and to be crucified like a slave and male factor, as one of the meanest and worst of vagabonds and miscreants, and an accursed enemy of God and men, who was not fit to live. And this was not for himself, but for some of the meanest and vilest of creatures, even some of those accursed wretches that crucified him. Was not this a wonderful manifestation of humility, when he cheerfully and most freely submitted to this abasement? — And how did his patience shine forth under all the terrible sufferings which he endured; when he was dumb, and opened not his mouth, but went as a lamb to the slaughter!—And what contempt of the glory of this world was there, when he rather chose this meanness, and suffering, than to be invested with the external glories of an earthly prince, as the multitude often solicited him!

**3.** Christ, in a wonderful manner, exercised those virtues which more immediately respect other men. And these may be summed up under two heads, viz. meekness, and love.

Christ's meekness — was his humble calmness of spirit under the provocation's that he met with. The greatness of provocation lies in two things, viz. in the degree of opposition by which the provocation is given; and, secondly, in the degree of the unreasonableness of that opposition, or in its being very causeless, and without reason, and the great degree of obligation to the contrary. Now, if we consider both these things, no man ever met with such provocation's as Christ did, when he was upon earth. How much he was hated, what abuses he suffered from the vilest of men; how great his sufferings, and how spiteful and contemptuous they were in

offering him those abuses! How causeless and unreasonable were these abuses, how undeserving he, was of them, yea how much deserving of the contrary, viz. of love, and honour, and good treatment at their hands! If we consider these things, no Man ever met with a thousandth part of the provocation that Christ met with from men: and yet how meek was he under all I how composed and quiet his spirit! how far from being in a ruffle and tumult! When was reviled, here and as a sheep before her shearers is du not his mouth. No appearance was the spirit: on the contrary, what a spirit of exhibit! so that he fervently and effectually forgiveness, when they were in the highestion that ever they perpetrated, viz. nailing him on the cross:

“Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.”

( Luke 23:34.)

And never did there appear such an instance of lore to men. Christ’s love to men, especially in going through his last sufferings, and offering up his life and soul under those sufferings, which was his greatest act of love, was far beyond all parallel. There have been very remarkable manifestations of love in some of the saints, as in the apostle Paul, the apostle John, and others; but the love to men that Christ showed when on earth, as much exceeded the love of all other men, as the ocean exceeds a small stream.

And it is to be observed, that all the virtues which appeared in Christ shone brightest in the close of his life. under the trials he met with then. Eminent virtue always shows brightest in the fire. Pure gold shows its purity chiefly in the furnace. It was chiefly under those trials which Christ underwent in the close of his life, that his love to God, his honour of God’s majesty, his regard to the honour of his law, his spirit of obedience, his humility, contempt of the world, his patience, meekness, and spirit and forgiveness towards men, appeared. Indeed every thing that Christ did to work out redemption for us appears mainly in the close of his life. Here mainly is his satisfaction for sin, and here chiefly is his merit of eternal life for sinners, and here chiefly appears the brightness of his example, which he hath set us for imitation. — Thus we have taken a brief view of the things whereby the purchase of redemption was made with respect to his righteousness that appeared in them.

## SECTION 4

*Christ's sufferings and humiliation.*

AMONG those things in particular by which the purchase was made. we must reckon the sufferings and humiliation to which Christ was subject, whence arose the satisfaction he made for sin.

**I.** He was subject to uncommon humiliation and suffered in bearing him, but when her travail came upon her, it is said, "there was no room in the inn," ~~and~~ Luke 2:7. She was forced to betake herself to a stable; where Christ was born. And we may conclude, that his mother's circumstances in other respects were proportionably strait and difficult, and that she was destitute of the conveniences necessary for so young an infant which others were wont to have. Besides, he was persecuted in his infancy. They began to seek his life as soon as he was born. Herod, the chief man of the land, was so engaged to kill him, that, in order to it, he killed all the children in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under. And Christ suffered banishment in his infancy, was driven out of his native country into Egypt, and without doubt suffered much by being carried so long a journey, when he was so young, into a strange country.

**II.** Christ was subject to great humiliation in his private life at Nazareth. He there led a servile, obscure life, in a mean, laborious occupation; for he is called not only the carpenter's son, but the carpenter: ~~and~~ Mark 6:3. "Is not this the carpenter, the brother of James and Joses, and Juda, and Simon?" By hard labour he earned his bread before he ate it, and suffered that curse which God pronounced on Adam, ~~and~~ Genesis 3:13. "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread." Let us consider how great a degree of humiliation the glorious Son of God, the Creator of heaven and earth, was subject to in this, that for about years he should live a private obscure life among labouring men, and all this while be overlooked, not taken notice of in the world, more than other common labourers. Christ's humiliation in some respects was greater in private life than in the time ministry. There were many manifestations the word he preached, and the miracles he the first thirty years of his life lie spent among ordinary men, as it were in silence. There was not any thing to make him to be taken notice of more than any ordinary mechanic, only the spotless purity and eminent holiness

of his life; and that was in a great measure hid in obscurity; so that he was little taken notice of till after his baptism.

**III.** Christ was the subject of great humiliation and suffering during his public life, from his baptism till the night wherein he was betrayed.

**1.** He suffered great poverty, so that he had not where to lay his head, (<sup><408></sup>Matthew 8:26. compared with <sup><680></sup>John 18:1, 2: and <sup><217></sup>Luke 21:27. and chapter 22:30.) So that what was spoken of Christ in Cant. 5:2. "My head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night," was literally fulfilled. And through his poverty he doubtless was often tried with hunger, thirst, and cold. <sup><400></sup>Matthew 4:2. 21:18. His mother and natural relations were poor, not able to help him; and he was maintained by the charity of some of his disciples while he lived. So we read in Luke 8: at the beginning, of certain women that followed him, and ministered unto him of their substance. He was so poor that he was not able to pay the demanded tribute, without a miracle. See <sup><472></sup>Matthew 17:27. And when he ate his, last passover, it was not at his own charge, but that of another, as appears by <sup><217></sup>Luke 22:7, etc. And from his poverty he had no grave of his own to be buried in. It was the manner of the Jews, unless they were poor, to prepare themselves a sepulchre while they lived. But Christ had no land of his own, though he was possessor of heaven and earth; and therefore was buried by Joseph of Arimathea's charity, and in his tomb, which he had prepared for himself.

**2.** He suffered great hatred and reproach. He was despised and rejected of men; one of little account, slighted for his low parentage, and his mean city Nazareth. He was reproached as a glutton and drunkard, a friend of publicans and sinners; was called a deceiver of the people sometimes was called a madman, and a Samaritan, and one possessed with a devil. (<sup><472></sup>John 7:20. 8:48. and 10:20.) He was called a blasphemer, and was accounted by many a wizard, or one that wrought miracles by the black art, and by communication with Beelzebub. They excommunicated him, and agreed to excommunicate any man that should own him. (<sup><472></sup>John 9:22.) They wished him dead, and were continually seeking to murder him; sometimes by force, and sometimes by craft. They often took Up stories to stone him, and once led him to the brow of a hill, intending to throw him down the precipice, to dash him in pieces against the rocks.


He was thus hated and reproached by his own visible people:

“He came to his own, and his own received him not.”

( John 1:11)

And he was principally despised and hated by those who were in chief repute, and were their greatest men. Indeed the hatred was general. Into whatever part of the land he went, he met with hatred and contempt; in Capernaum, and Jericho; in Jerusalem, which was the holy city, even when he went to the temple to worship; also in Nazareth, his own city, among his own relations, and his old neighbours.

**3.** He suffered the buffetings of Satan in an uncommon manner. One time in particular, he had a long conflict with the devil, when he was in the wilderness forty days, with wild beasts and devils; and was so exposed to the devil's power, that he was carried about, by him from place to place, while he was otherwise in a, very suffering state. — So much for the humiliation and suffering of Christ's public life, from his baptism to the night wherein he was betrayed.

**IV.** I come now to his last humiliation and sufferings, from the evening of the night wherein he was betrayed to his resurrection. And here was his greatest humiliation and suffering, by which principally be made satisfaction to the justice of God for the sins of men. First, his life was sold by one of his own disciples for thirty pieces of silver; which was the price of the life of a servant,  Exodus 21:32. Then he was in dreadful agony in the garden. There came such a dismal gloom upon his soul, that he began to be sorrowful and very heavy, and said, that his “soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death, and was sore amazed.” So violent was the agony of his soul, as to force the blood through the pores of his skin; so that while his soul was overwhelmed with amazing sorrow, his body was clotted with blood. The disciples, who used to be as his friends and family, at this time above all appeared cold towards, and unconcerned for him, at the same time that his Father's face was hid from him. Judas, to whom Christ had been so very merciful, and who was treated as one of his family or familiar friends, comes and betrays him in the most deceitful, treacherous manner. The officers and soldiers apprehend and bind him; his disciples forsake him, and flee; his own best friends do not stand by him to comfort him in this time of his distress. He is led away as a malefactor

to appear before the priests and scribes, his venomous, mortal enemies, that they might sit as his judges. Now they had got him into their hands, they sat up all night, to have the pleasure of insulting him. But because they aimed at nothing short of his life, they set themselves to find some colour to put him to death, and seek for witnesses against him. When none appeared, they set some to bear false witness; and when their witness did not agree together, they examined him, in hope to catch something out of his own mouth. They hoped he would say, that he was the Son of God, and then they thought they should have enough. But because they see they are not like to obtain this, they adjure him, in the name of God, to say whether he was or not: and when he confessed that he was, then it was a time of rejoicing with them, which they show, by spitting in his face, blindfolding him, and striking him in the face with the palms of their hands and then bidding him prophesy who it was that struck him; thus ridiculing him for pretending to be a prophet. And the very servants have a band in the sport:

“And the servants did strike him with the palms of their hands.”

( Mark 14:65)

During the suffering of the night, Peter, one of the chief of his own disciples, instead of standing by to comfort, appears ashamed to own him, and denies and renounces him with oaths and curses. And after the chief priests and elders had finished the night in so shamefully abusing him, in the morning, (the morning of the most wonderful day that ever was,) they led him away to late, to be condemned to death by him, because they had not the power of life and death in their own hands. He is brought before Pilate's judgment-seat, and there the elders accuse him as a traitor. And when Pilate, upon examining into the matter, declared he found no fault in him, the Jews were but the more fierce and violent to have him condemned. Upon which Pilate, after clearing him, very unjustly brings him upon a second trial and then not finding any thing against him, acquits him again. Pilate treats him as a poor worthless fellow; but is ashamed on so little pretense to condemn him as a traitor.

And then he was sent to Herod to be tried by him, and was brought before his judgment-seat; his enemies followed, and virulently accused him before Herod. Herod does not condemn him as a traitor, or one that would set up

for a king, but looks upon him as Pilate did, as a poor worthless creature, not worthy to be noticed, and makes a mere laugh of the Jews accusing him as dangerous to Caesar, as one setting up to be a king against him; and therefore, in derision, dresses him up in a mock robe, makes sport of him, and sends him back through the streets of Jerusalem to Pilate with the mock robe on.

Then the Jews prefer Barabbas before him, and am instant and violent with loud vociferations to Pilate, to crucify him. So Pilate, after he had cleared him twice, and Herod once, very unrighteously brings him on trial the third time, to try if he could not find something sufficient to crucify him. Christ was stripped and scourged: thus he gave his back to the smiters. After that, though Pilate stilt declared that he found no fault in him; yet so Unjust was he, that for fear of the Jews he delivered Christ to be crucified. But before they execute the sentence, his spiteful and cruel enemies take the pleasure of mocking him again; they get round him, and make a set business of it. They stripped him, put on him a scarlet robe, a reed in his hand, an a crown of thorns on his head. Both Jews and Roman soldiers were united in the transaction; they bow the knee before him, and in derision cry, "Hail, king of the Jews." They spit upon him also, take the reed out of his hand, and smite him on the head. After this they led him away to crucify him, made him carry his own cross, till he sunk under it, his strength being spent; and then they laid it on one Simon a Cyrenian.

At length, being come to mount Calvary, they execute the sentence which Pilate had so unrighteously pronounced. They nail him to his cross by his hands and feet, then raise it erect, and fix one end in the ground, he being still suspended on it by the nails which pierced his hands and feet. Now Christ's sufferings are come to the extremity: now the cup, which he so earnestly prayed might piss from him, is come; he must, he does drink it. In those days crucifixion was the most tormenting kind of death by which any were wont to be executed. There was no death wherein the person experienced so much of mere torment: and hence the Roman word, which signifies torment, is taken from this kind of death.-Besides what our Lord endured in this excruciating corporeal death, he endured vastly more in his soul. Now was that travail of his soul, of which we read in the prophet; now it pleased God to bruise him, and to put him to grief; now he poured out his soul unto death, as in Isaiah liii. And if the mere forethought of this

cup made him sweat blood, how much more dreadful and excruciating must the drinking of it have been! Many martyrs have endured much in their bodies, while their souls have been joyful, and have sung for joy, whereby they have been supported under the sufferings of their outward man, and have triumphed over them. But this was not the case with Christ; he had no such support; but his sufferings were chiefly those of the mind, though the other, were extremely great. In his crucifixion Christ did not sweat blood, as he had done before; not because his agony was now not so great, but his blood had vent another way. But though he did not sweat blood, yet such was the sufferings of his soul, that probably it rent his vitals; when his side was pierced, there came forth blood and water. And so here was a kind of literal fulfilment of that in <sup><1224></sup>Psalm 22:14.

“I am poured out like water; — my heart is like wax, it is melted in the midst of my bowels.”

Now under all these sufferings the Jews still mock him; and wagging their heads say, “Thou that destroyest the temple, any buildest it in three days, save thyself; if thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.” And even the chief priest scribes, and elders, joined in the cry, saying, “He saved others, himself he cannot save.” And probably the devil at the same time tormented him to the utmost of his power; and hence it is said, <sup><1225></sup>Luke 22:53. “This is your hour, and the power of darkness.”

Under these sufferings, Christ, having cried out once and again with a loud voice, at last said, IT IS FINISHED, (<sup><1226></sup>John 19:30.) “and bowed the head, and gave up the ghost.” And thus was finished the greatest and most wonderful thing that ever was done. Now the angels beheld the most wonderful sight that ever they saw. Now was accomplished the main thing that had been pointed at by the various institutions of the ceremonial law, by all the typical dispensations, and by all the sacrifices from the beginning of the world.

Christ being thus brought under the power of death, continued under it till the morning of next day but one. Then was finished that great work, the purchase of our redemption, for which such great preparation had been made horn the beginning of the world. Then was finished all that was required in order to satisfy the threatenings of the law, and all that was necessary in order to satisfy divine justice; then the utmost that vindictive

justice demanded, even the whole debt, was paid. Then was finished the whole of the purchase of eternal And now there is no need of any thing more to be done towards a purchase of salvation for sinners; nor has ever any thing been done since, nor will any thing more be done for ever and ever.

## PART 3

### IMPROVEMENT OF THE SECOND PERIOD.

IN surveying the history of redemption, we have now shown how this work was carried on through the two former of the three main periods into which this whole space of time was divided, viz. from the fall to the incarnation of Christ, and from thence to the end of the time of Christ's humiliation. In the first of these periods, we have particularly explained how God prepared the way for Christ's appearing and purchasing redemption; and in the second period, how that purchase was made and finished. I would now make some improvement of what has been said on both these subjects considered conjunctly.

### SECTION 1

#### *An use of reproof.*

I BEGIN with an use of reproof; a reproof of unbelief, of self-righteousness., and of a careless neglect of the salvation of Christ.

**1.** How greatly do these things reprove those who do not believe in, but reject, the Lord Jesus Christ! *i.e.* all those who do not heartily receive him. Persons may receive him in profession outwardly, and may wish that had some of those benefits that Christ has purchased, and yet their hearts not receive him. They may be hearty in nothing that they do towards Christ; they may have no high esteem of, nor any sincere respect to, Christ; they may never have opened the door of their heart to him, but have kept him shut out all their days, ever since the salvation has been offered to them. Though their hearts have been opened to others, their door flung wide open to them, with free admittance at all times; though they have been embraced, and the thrones of their hearts have been allowed them; yet

Christ has always been shut out, and they have been deaf to all his calls. They never could find an inclination of heart to receive him, nor would they ever trust in him.

Let me now call upon such to consider how great is their sin, in thus rejecting Jews Christ. You slight the glorious person, for whose coming God made such great preparation in such a series of wonderful providence's from the beginning of the world, and whom, after all things were made ready, God sent into the world, bringing to pass a thing unknown, viz. the union of the divine nature with the human in one person. You have been guilty of slighting that great Saviour, who, after such preparation, actually accomplished the purchase of redemption; and who, after he had spent three or four and thirty years in poverty, labour, and contempt, in purchasing redemption, at last finished the purchase by closing his life under such extreme sufferings as you have heard; and so by his death, and continuing for a time under the power of death, completed the whole. This is the person you reject and despise. You make light of glory of his person and of all the glorious love of God the Father, in sending him into the world, and all his wonderful love appearing in the whole of this affair. That precious stone which God hath laid in Zion for a foundation in such a manner, and by such wonderful works as you have heard, is a stone and at nought by you.

Sinners sometimes are ready to wonder why unbelief should be looked upon as a great sin; but if you consider what you have heard, how can you wonder? If this Saviour is so great, and this work so great, and such great things have been done in order to it; truly there is no cause of wonder that the rejection of this Saviour is so provoking to God. It brings greater guilt than the sins of the worst of heathens, who never heard of those things, nor have had this Saviour offered to them.

**II.** What has been said, affords matter of reproof to those who, instead of believing in Christ, trust in themselves for salvation. Is it not a common thing with men to take it upon themselves to do that great work which Christ came into the world to do? to trust in their prayers, their good conversations, the pains they take in religion, the reformation of their lives, and their self-denial, in order to recommend them to God, to make some atonement for their past sins? Let such consider three things:

**1.** How great a thing that is which you take upon you. It is to do the work of the great Saviour of the world. — Though you are poor, worthless, vile, and polluted, yet you arrogantly take upon you that very work or which the only-begotten Son of God became man; and in order to which God employed four thousand years in all the great dispensations of his providence, aiming chiefly to make way for Christ's coming to do this work. This is the work that you foolishly think yourself sufficient for; as though your prayers, and other performances, were excellent enough for this purpose. Consider how vain is the thought which you entertain of yourself, how must such arrogance appear in the sight of Christ, whom it cost so much. It was not to be obtained even by him, so great and glorious a person, at a cheaper rate than his going through a sea of blood, and passing through the midst of the furnace of God's wrath. And how vain must your arrogance appear in the sight of God, when he sees you imagining yourself sufficient, and your worthless, polluted performance excellent enough, for the accomplishing of that work of his own Son, to prepare the way for which he was employed in ordering all the great affairs of the world for so many ages!

**2.** It there be ground for you to trust, as you do, in your own righteousness, then all that Christ did to purchase salvation, and all that God did from the fall of man to prepare the way for it, is in vain. Your self-righteousness charges God with the greatest folly, as though he has done all things in vain, to bring about an accomplishment of what you alone, with your poor polluted prayers, and the little pains you take in religion, are sufficient to accomplish for yourself. For if you can appease God's anger, and commend yourself to him by these means, then you have no need of Christ;

“If righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.”

(  Galatians 2:21)

If you can do this by your prayers and good works, Christ might have spared his pains; he might have spared his blood; he might have kept within the bosom of his Father, without coming down into this evil world to be despised reproached, and persecuted to death. God needed not to have busied himself, as he did for four thousand years, causing so many changes in the state of the world ill that while, in order to bring about that

which you can accomplish in a few days, only with the trouble of a few religious performances. Consider, what greater folly could you have devised to charge upon God than this, that all those things were done so needlessly; when, instead of all this, he might only have called you forth, and committed the business to you, which you think You can do so easily. Alas! how blind are natural men! and especially how vain are the thoughts which they have of themselves! How ignorant of their own littleness and pollution! What great things do they assume to themselves!

**3.** You that trust to your own ‘righteousness, arrogate to yourselves the honour of the greatest thing that ever God himself did. You seem not only sufficient to perform divine works, but such is your pride and vanity, that You are not content without faking upon you to do the very greatest work that ever God himself wrought. You see by what has been said, how God has subordinated all his other works to this of redemption. God’s works of providence are greater than those of creation; and all his works of providence, from the beginning of the generations of men, were in order to make way for the purchasing of redemption. To take on yourself to work out redemption, is a greater thing than if you had taken it upon you to create a world. What a figure you would make if you should seriously go about to create a world: or decking yourself with majesty, should pretend to speak the word of power, and call an universe out of nothing, intending to go on in order, and say, “Let there be light; Let them be a firmament,” etc. But then consider, that in attempting to work out redemption for yourself. you attempt a greater thing than this, and are serious in it, and will not dissuaded from it. You strive in it, are full of the thought that you are sufficient for it, and big with hopes of accomplishing it.

You take upon you to do the very greatest and most difficult part of this work, viz. to purchase redemption. Christ can accomplish other parts of this work without cost; but this part cost him his life, as well as innumerable pains and labours. Yet this is that part which self-righteous persons go about to accomplish for themselves. If all the angels in heaven had been sufficient for this work, would God have set himself to effect such things as he did in order to it? and would he ever have sent his own Son, the Creator of the angels, into the world, to have done and suffered such things!

What self-righteous persons take to themselves, is the same work that Christ was entered in when he was in his stony and bloody sweat and-when he died on the cross, which was the greatest thing that ever the eyes of angels beheld. Great as it is, they imagine they can do the same that Christ accomplished by it. Their self-righteousness does in effect charge Christ's offering up himself in these sufferings, as the greatest instance of folly that ever men or angels saw, instead of being the most glorious display of the divine wisdom and grace. Yea, self-righteousness makes ail that Christ did through the whole course of his life. all that he said and suffered, and his incarnation itself, and not only so, but all that God had been doing in the great dispensations of his providence from the beginning of the world to that time, as nothing but a scene of the most wild, extreme, and transcendent folly.

Is it any wonder, then, that a self-righteous spirit is so represented in Scripture, and spoken of, as that which is most fatal to the souls of men? And is it any wonder, that Christ is represented in Scripture as being so provoked with the Pharisees and others, who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and were proud of their goodness, and thought that their own performances were a valuable price of God's favour and love?

Let persons hence be warned against a self-righteous spirit. You that are seeking salvation, and taking pains in religion, take heed to yourselves that you do not trust in what you do. Harbour no such thoughts, that God now, seeing how much you are reformed, how you are sometimes affected, will be pacified towards you, and will not be so angry for your former sins; that you "I gain on him by such things, and draw his heart to Am you mercy. if you entertain the thought, that God is obliged to do it, and does not act justly if he refuse to regard your prayers and pains; if you quarrel with God, and complain of him for not doing it, is shows what your opinion is of your own righteousness viz. that it is a valuable price of salvation, and ought to be accepted of God as such. Such complaining God, and quarrelling with him, for not taking more notice of your righteousness, plainly shows that on am guilty of arrogance, thinking yourself sufficient to offer the price of your own salvation

**III.** What has been said on this subject, affords matter of reproof to those who carelessly neglect the salvation of Christ. These live a senseless

business of religion and their own souls, not taking any course to get an interest in Christ, or what he has done and suffered, or any in that glorious salvation he has purchased. They have their minds taken up about the ionic of the world, or the vanities and pleasures of youth, and make light of what they bear of Christ's salvation, to that degree that they do not at present so much as seek after it. Let me him apply myself to you in some expostulatory interrogations.

**1.** Shall so many prophets, and kings, and righteous men, have their minds so much taken up with the prospect, that the purchase of salvation was to be wrought out in ages long after their death and will you neglect it when actually accomplished? You have heard what great account the church in all ago made of the future redemption of Christ; how joyfully they expected it, how they spoke of it, how they studied and searched into these things., how they sung joyful and had their hearts greatly engaged about it, though they did not expect that it would be accomplished till after their death, <sup>1</sup>1 Peter 1:10-12. How much did Isiah and Daniel, and other prophets, speak concerning this redemption! And how much were their hearts engaged, and their attention and study fixed upon it! How was David's mind taken up in this subject! He declared that it was all his salvation, and all his desire; <sup>2</sup>2 Samuel 23:5. How did he employ his voice and harp in celebrating it, and the glorious display of divine grace therein exhibited! and all this although they beheld it not as yet accomplished, but saw that it was to be brought to pan so long a time after their day.-And before this, how did Abraham and the other patriarchs rejoice in the prospect of Christ's day, and the redemption which he was to purchase! And even the saints before the flood were affected and elated in the expectation of this glorious event, though it was then so long future, and it was so very faintly and obscurely revealed to them.

**2.** Now these things are declared to you as actually fulfilled. The church now has seen accomplished all those great things which they so joyfully prophesied of; and you are abundantly shown how those things were accomplished:

“Verily I say unto you, that many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen;

and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.”  
 (Matthew 13:17)

And yet, when these things are thus abundantly set before you as already accomplished, how light do you make of them! How unconcerned am you about them, following other things, and not so much as feeling any interest in them! Indeed our sin is extremely aggravated in the sight of God. God has put you under great advantages for your eternal salvation, far greater than those of old enjoyed. He has put you under a more glorious dispensation; has given you a more clear revelation of Christ and his salvation; and yet you neglect all these advantages, and on in a careless course of life, as though nothing had been done, no such proposals and offers had been made you.

**2.** Have the angels been so engaged about, this salvation which is by Christ ever since the fall of man, though they were not immediately concerned in it, and will you who need it, and have it offered to you, be so careless about it? You have heard how the angels at first were subjected to Christ as mediator, and how they have all along been ministering spirits to him in this affair. In all the great dispensation which you have borne of from the beginning of the world, they have been active and as a flame of fire in this affair, being most diligently employed as ministering spirits to minister to Christ in this affair of man's redemption. And when Christ came, how engaged were their minds! They came to Zacharias, to inform him of the coming of Christ's forerunner. — They came to the Virgin Mary, to inform her of the approaching birth of Christ. They came to Joseph, to warn him of the danger which threatened the new-born Saviour, and to point out to him the means of safety. And how were their minds engaged at the time of the birth of Christ! The whole multitude of the heavenly hosts sang praises upon the occasion, saying, “Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will towards men.” And afterwards, from time to time, they ministered to Christ when on earth; at the time of his temptation, of his agony in the end, at his resurrection, and at his ascension. All these things show, that they were greatly engaged in this affair; and the Scripture informs us, that they pray into these things:

“Which things the angels desire to look into.” (1 Peter 1:12)

And how are they represented in the Revelation as being employed in heaven in singing praises to him that sitteth on the throne, and to the lamb! Now, shall these take so much notice of this redemption, and of the purchaser, who need it not for themselves, and have no immediate concern or interest in it, or offer of it; and will you, to whom it is offered, and who are in such extreme necessity of it, neglect and take no notice of it?

**3.** Did Christ labour so hard, and suffer so much to procure this salvation, and is it not worth the while for you to be at some labour in seeking it? Did our salvation lie with such weight on the mind of Christ, as to induce him to become man, to suffer even death itself, in order to procure it? And is it not worth the while for you, who need this salvation, and must perish eternally without it to take earnest pains to obtain an interest in it after it is procured, and all things are ready?

**4.** Shall the great God be so concerned about this salvation, as often to overturn the world to make way for it; and when all is done, is it not worth your seeking after? What great, what wonderful things has he done; removing and setting up kings, raising up a great number of prophets, separating a distinct people from the rest of the world, overturning nations and kingdoms, and often the state of the world; and so has continued bringing about one change and revolution after another for forty centuries in succession, to make way for the procuring of this salvation! And when at the close of these ages, the great Saviour comes, passing through a long series of reproach and suffering, and then suffering all the waves and billows of God's wrath for men's sins, insomuch that they overwhelmed his soul; after all these things done to procure salvation for sinners, is it not worthy of your being so much concerned about it, but that it should be thrown by, and made nothing of, in comparison of worldly gain, gay clothing or youthful diversions, and other such trifling things?

O! that you who live negligent of this salvation, would consider what you do! What you have heard from this subject, may show you what reason there is in that exclamation of the apostle, ~~ROM~~ Hebrews 2:3. "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" And in ~~ACTS~~ Acts 13:41. "Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish; for I work a work in your days, a work which you shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you." God looks on you as great enemies of the cross of Christ, as adversaries and

despisers of all the glory of this greatwork. And if God has made such account of the glory of salvation as to destroy many nations, in order to prepare the way for the glory of his Son in this affair; how little account will he make of the lives and souls of ten thousand such opposers and despisers as you, who continue impenitent, when your welfare stands in the way of that glory! Why sure you shall be dashed to pieces as a potter's vessel, and trodden down as the mire of the streets. God may, through wonderful patience, bear with hardened careless sinners for a while; but he will not long bear with such despisers of his dear Son, and his great salvation, the glory of which he has had so much at heart, before he will utterly consume without remedy or mercy.

## SECTION 2

### *An use of encouragement.*

I WILL conclude with a second use, of encouragement to burdened souls to put their trust in Christ for salvation. To all such as are not careless and negligent, but make seeking an interest in Christ their main business, being sensible in some measure of their necessity, and afraid of sensible the wrath to come; to such, what has been said on this subject holds forth great matter of encouragement, to venture their souls on the Lord Jesus Christ. And as motives proper to excite you so to do, let me lead you to consider two things in particular.


**1.** The completeness of the purchase which has been made. You have heard, that this work of purchasing salvation was wholly finished during the time of Christ's humiliation. When Christ rose from the dead, and was exalted from that abasement to which he submitted for our salvation, the purchase of eternal life was completely made, so that there was no need of any thing more to be done in order to it. But now the servants were sent forth with a message,

“Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto tee marriage.”

( Matthew 22:4)

Therefore, are your sins many and great? Here is enough done by Christ to procure their pardon. There is no need of any righteousness of yours to

obtain your pardon and justification: no, you may come freely, without money and without Price. Since therefore there is such a free and gracious Invitation given you, come, come naked as you are; come as a poor condemned criminal; come and cast yourself down at Christ's feet, as one justly condemned, and utterly helpless. Here is a complete salvation wrought out by Christ, and through him offered to you. Come, therefore, accept of it, and be saved.

**2.** For Christ to reject one that thus comes to him, would be to frustrate all those great things which God brought to pass from the fall of man to the incarnation of Christ. It would also frustrate all that Christ did and suffered while on earth; yea, it would frustrate the incarnation itself. All the great things done were for that end, that those might be saved who should come to Christ. Therefore may be sure Christ will not be backward in saving those who come to him, and trust in him; for he has no desire to frustrate himself in his own work. Neither will God the Father refuse you; for he has no desire to frustrate himself in all that he did for so many hundreds and thousands of years, to prepare the way for the salvation of sinners by Christ. Come, therefore, hearken to the sweet and earnest calls of Christ to your soul. Do as he invites and as he commands you,  Matthew 11:28-30. "Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

## PERIOD 3

### FROM CHRIST'S RESURRECTION TO THE END OF THE WORLD.

IN discoursing on this subject, we have already shown how the work of redemption was carried on through the two first of the THREE PERIODS into which we divided the whole space of time from the fall to the end of the world.

We are now come to the third and last period, beginning with Christ's resurrection; and would show, that the space of time from the end of Christ's humiliation to the end of the world is all taken up in bringing about the great effect or success of Christ's purchase.

#### SECTION 1

##### *Scriptural representations of this period.*

NOT but that there were great effects and glorious success of Christ's purchase of redemption before, even from the beginning of the generations of men. But all that success which; as before, was only preparatory by way of anticipation, as some few fruits are gathered before the harvest. There was no more success before Christ came, than God saw needful to prepare the way for his coming. The time of the successor effect of Christ's redemption is after the purchase has been made, as the proper time for the world to enjoy the light of the sun is the daytime, after the sun is risen, though we may have some small matter of it reflected from the moon and planets before. And even the success of Christ's redemption while he himself was on earth, was very small in comparison of what it was after.

But, Christ having finished that greatest and most difficult of all works, now is come the time for obtaining the end, the glorious effect of it. Having gone through the whole course of his sufferings and humiliation, Christ is never to suffer any more. But now is the time for him to obtain the joy that was set before him. Having made his soul an offering for sin, now is

the time for him to see his seed to have a portion with the great, and to divide the spoil with the strong.

One design of Christ in what he did in his humiliation, was to lay a foundation for the overthrow of Satan's kingdom; and now is come the time to effect it, as Christ, a little before his crucifixion, said,

“Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out.” ( ~~John~~ John 12:31)

Another design was, to gather together in one all things in Christ. Now is come the time for this also: ~~John~~ John 12:32. “And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me;” which is agreeable to Jacob's prophecy of Christ, that “when Shiloh should come, to him should the gathering of the people be,” ~~Gen~~ Genesis 49:10. Another design is the salvation of the elect. Now when his sufferings are finished, and his humiliation perfected, the time is come for that also. ~~Heb~~ Hebrews 5:8, 9. “Though he was a Son, yet learned obedience by the things which he suffered: and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.”

Another design was, to accomplish by these things great glory to the persons of the Trinity. ~~John~~ John 17:1. “Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee.” Another design was the glory of the saints. ~~John~~ John 17:11. “As thou hast given him power over all flesh that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.” And all the dispensations of God's providence henceforward, even to the final consummation of all things, are to give Christ his reward, and fulfil his end in what he did and suffered upon earth, and to fulfil the joy that was set before him.

Before I enter on the consideration of any particular things accomplished in this period, I would briefly observe how the times of this period are represented in Scripture.

**1.** The times of this period, for the most part, are in the Old Testament called the latter days. We often, in the prophets of the Old Testament, read of things that should come to pass in the latter days, and sometimes in the last days, evidently referring to gospel times. They are called the latter days, and the last days; because this is the last period of the series of God's providences on earth, the last period of the great work of

redemption; which is as it were the sum of God's works of providence; the last dispensation of the covenant of grace on earth.

**II.** The whole time of this period is sometimes in Scripture called the end of the world, ~~1~~ 1 Corinthians 10:11. "Now all these things happened unto them for exsamples; and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." And the apostle, ~~9:26~~ Hebrews 9:26. in this expression of the end of the world, means the whole of the gospel-day, from the birth of Christ to the day of judgment: "But now once in the end of the world, hath he appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."

This space of time may well be called the end of the world; for this whole time is taken up in bringing things to their great end and issue. Before, things were in a kind of preparatory state; but now they are in a finishing state. An end is now brought to the former carnal state of things, which by degrees vanishes, and a spiritual state begins to be established more and more. Particularly, an end is brought to the former state of the church, which may be called its worldly state, in which it was subject to carnal ordinances, and the rudiments of the world. The end is brought to the Jewish commonwealth, in the destruction of their city and country. After that, an end is brought to the old heathen empire in Constantine's time. The next step is the finishing of Satan's visible kingdom in the world, upon the fall of Antichrist, and the calling of the Jews. And last will come the destruction of the outward frame of the world itself, at the conclusion of the day of judgment. Heaven and earth began to shake, in order to a dissolution, according to the prophecy of Haggai, before Christ came, that so only those things which cannot be shaken may remain, *i.e.* that those things which are to come to an end may terminate, and only those things may remain which are to remain eternally.

In the first place, the carnal ordinances of the Jewish worship came to an end, in order to make way for the establishment of that spiritual worship, which is to endure to all eternity:

"Jesus saith unto the woman, Believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father." (~~4:21~~ John 4:21)

Verse 23. “But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.” This is one instance of the temporary world coming to an end, and the eternal world beginning. And then, the outward temple and the city Jerusalem came to an end, to give place to the setting up of the spiritual temple and city, which are to last for ever. Another instance of removing those things which are ready to vanish away, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain, is the bringing to an end the old heathen empire, to make way for the empire of Christ, which shall last to all eternity. After that, upon the fall of Antichrist, an end is put to Satan’s visible kingdom on earth, to establish Christ’s kingdom, which is an eternal kingdom; as the prophet Daniel says, chapter 7:27. “And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him;” which is another instance of the ending of the temporary world, and the beginning of the eternal one. And then, lastly, the very frame of this corruptible world shall come to an end, to make way for the church to dwell in another dwelling-place, which shall last to eternity.

Because the world is thus coming to an end by various steps and degrees, the apostle perhaps uses this expression, that (not the end but) the ends of the world are come on us; as though the world has several endings one after another. The gospel-dispensation is a finishing state: it is all spent in finishing things off which before had been preparing, or abolishing things which before had stood.

It is all spent as it were in summing things and bringing them to their issues, and their proper fulfillment. Now all the old types are fulfilled, and the predictions of all the prophets from the beginning of the world shall be accomplished in this period.

**III.** That state of things which is attained in the events of this period is called a new heaven and a new earth: <sup>23617</sup>Isaiah 45:17, 18. “For behold, I create new heavens, and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be you glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing and her people a joy.” And chapter <sup>23622</sup>66:22. “For as the new heavens and the new

earth which shall remain before me; so shall your seed and your name remain.” See also chapter <sup>2816</sup>51:16. As the former state of things, or the old world, by one step after another, is through this period coming to an end; so the new state of things, or the new world, which is a spiritual world, is beginning and setting up. In consequence of each of the old state of these finishings of the state of things, there is the beginning of a new and eternal state. So that which accompanied the destruction of the literal Jerusalem, was an establishing of the spiritual. So with respect to the destruction of the old heathen empire, and all the other endings of the old state of things; till at length the very outward frame of the world itself shall come to an end; and the church shall dwell in heaven, which will be a new habitation. Then shall the utmost be accomplished that is meant by the new heavens and the new earth. (See <sup>4619</sup>Revelation 21:1.) The end of God’s creating the world, was to prepare a kingdom for his Son, (for he is appointed heir of the world,) which should remain to all eternity. So far as the kingdom (if Christ is set up in the world, so far is the world brought to its end, and the eternal state of things set up-so far are all the great changes and revolutions of the world brought to their everlasting issue, and all things come to their ultimate period-so far are the waters of the long channel of divine providence, which has so many branches, and so many windings, emptied into their proper ocean, which they have been seeking from the beginning of their course, and so are come to their rest. So far as Christ’s kingdom is established in the world, so far are things wound up and settled in their everlasting state, and a period put to the course of things in this changeable world; so far are the first heavens and the first earth come to an end; and the new heavens and the new earth, the everlasting heavens and earth, established in their room. This leads me to observe,

**IV.** That the state of things which is attained by the events of this period, is what is so often called the kingdom of heaven, or the kingdom of God. We very often read in the New Testament of the kingdom of heaven. John the Baptist preached, that the kingdom of heaven was at hand; and so did Christ and his disciples after him; referring to something that the Jews in those days expected, and called by that name. They seem to have taken their expectation and the name chiefly from that prophecy of Daniel in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream. <sup>2724</sup>Daniel 2:44. “In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom;” together with chapter 7:13, 14.

Now this kingdom of heaven is that evangelical state of things in the church, and in the world, wherein consists the success of Christ's redemption in this period. There had been often great kingdoms set up before; as the Babylonish, the Persian, the Grecian, and the Roman monarchies. But Christ came to set up the last, which is not an earthly kingdom, but a heavenly, <sup><493></sup>John 18:36. "My kingdom is not of this world." This is the kingdom of which Christ speaks, <sup><477></sup>Luke 22:29. "My Father hath appointed to me a kingdom." This kingdom began soon after Christ's resurrection, and is accomplished in various steps from that time to the end of the world. Sometimes by the kingdom of heaven, is meant not only that spiritual state of the church which began soon after Christ resurrection; but also that more perfect state which shall obtain after the downfall of Antichrist; and sometimes that glorious and blessed state to which the church shall be received at the day of judgment. So <sup><457></sup>1 Corinthians 15:50. "This I say, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." — Under this head I would observe several things particularly, for the clearer understanding of what the Scripture says concerning this period.

**1.** The setting up of the kingdom of Christ is chiefly accomplished by four successive great events, each of which is in Scripture called Christ's coming in his kingdom. The first is Christ's appearing in those wonderful dispensations of providence in the apostles' days, in setting up his kingdom, and destroying its enemies, which ended in the destruction of Jerusalem. This is called Christ's coming in his kingdom,

"Verily I say unto you, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom." (<sup><463></sup>Matthew 16:28)

(And Matthew 24.) The second is that which was accomplished in Constantine's time, in the destruction of the heathen Roman empire. This is represented as Christ's coming, and is compared to his coming to judgment, (Revelation 6 at the latter end.) The third is that which is to be accomplished at the destruction of Antichrist. This also is represented as Christ's coming in his kingdom in the 7th and in other places. The fourth and last judgment, which is the event principally signified in scripture by Christ's coming in his kingdom.

**2.** Each of the three former is a lively image, or type, of the fourth and last, viz. Christ's coming to the final judgment, as the principal dispensations of providence before were types of his first coming. As Christ's last coming to judgment is the resurrection of the dead, so is each of the three forgoing with a spiritual resurrection. That the coming of Christ which ended in the destruction of Jerusalem was preceded by a glorious spiritual resurrection of souls in the calling of the Gentiles through the preaching of the gospel. Christ's coming in Constantine's time, was accompanied with a glorious spiritual resurrection of the greater part of the known world in a restoration of it to a visible church state, from a state of heathenism. Christ's coming at the destruction of Antichrist, will be attended with a spiritual resurrection of the church after it had been long as it were dead, in the times of Antichrist. This is called the first resurrection in the 20th chapter of Revelation.

Again, as Christ in the last judgment will gloriously manifest himself coming in the glory of his Father, so in each of the three foregoing events Christ gloriously manifested himself in sending Judgments upon his enemies, and in showing favour to his church. As the last coming of Christ will be attended with a literal gathering together of the elect from the four winds of heaven, so were each of the preceding attended with a spiritual gathering in of the elect. As this gathering together of the elect will be effected by God's angels with a great sound of a trumpet; (~~4~~ Matthew 24:31.) so were each of the preceding spiritual ingatherings effected by the trumpet 4 e gospel, sounded by the ministers of Christ. As there shall precede the last appearance of Christ, a time of great degeneracy and wickedness, so this has been, or will be, the case with each of the other appearances. Before each of them is a time of great opposition to the church: Wore the first, by the Jews; before the second, in Constantine's time, by the heathen; Wore the third, by Antichrist; and before the last, by Gog and Magog, as described in the Revelation.

By each of these comings of Christ, God works a glorious deliverance for his church. The first, which ended in the destruction of Jerusalem, was attended with bringing advancement of the church in from persecution, the countenance of civil authority and her triumph over heathen persecutors. shall be at the downfall of Antichrist, will with an advancement of the church in glorious prevalence of truth, liberty, peace, and joy, which we so

often read of in the prophetical parts of Scripture. The lost will be attended with the advancement of the church to consummate glory in heaven.

Each of these comings of Christ is accompanied with a terrible destruction of the wicked, and the enemies of the church: the first, with the destruction of the persecuting Jews, which was amazingly terrible; the second, with dreadful Judgments on the heathen persecutors of the church; the third, with the awful destruction of Antichrist, the most cruel and bitter enemy that ever the church had; the fourth, with divine wrath and vengeance on all the ungodly. — Further, there is in each of these comings of Christ an ending of the old, and a beginning of new, heavens and a new earth; or an end of a temporal state of things, and a heavens and a new earth; or an end of a temporal state of things, and a beginning of an eternal state.

**3.** I would observe, that each of those four great dispensations which are represented as Christ's coming in his kingdom, are but so many steps and degrees of the accomplishment of one event. They are not the setting up of so many distinct kingdoms of Christ; but only several degrees of the accomplishment of that one event prophesied of, <sup>2013</sup> Daniel 7:13,14. "And I saw in the night-visions, and behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And them was given him dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." This is what the Jews expected, and called "the coming of the kingdom of heaven;" and what John the Baptist and Christ had respect to, when they said, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." This great event is accomplished by several steps.

**4.** When Christ came with the preaching of the apostles, to set up his kingdom in the world, which dispensation ended With the destruction of Jerusalem, then it was accomplished in a glorious degree; when the heathen empire was destroy in Constantine's time, it was fulfilled in a farther degree; when Antichrist shall be destroyed, it will be accomplished in a yet higher degree; but when the end of the world is come, then will it be accomplished in its not perfect degree of all. And bemuse those four great

events are but images one of another, and the three former but types of the last, and since they are all only several states of the accomplishment of the same thing; hence we had them all from time to time prophesied of under one, as in the prophecies of Daniel, and in the 24th chapter of Matthew, where some things seem more applicable to one of them, and others to another.

Thus it appears, that as there are several steps of the accomplishment of the kingdom of Christ, so in each one of the event is accomplished in a further degree than in the foregoing. That in the time of Constantine was a greater and further accomplishment of the kingdom of Christ, than that which ended in the destruction of Jerusalem; that which shall be at the fall of Antichrist, Will be a further accomplishment of the same thing, than that which took place in the time of Constantine; and so on with regard to each; so that the kingdom of Christ is gradually prevailing and growing by these several great steps of its fulfilment, from the time of Christ's resurrection to the end of the world.

**5.** The great providences or God between these four events, are to make way for the kingdom and glory of Christ in the great event following. Those dispensations of providence towards the church and the world, before the destruction of the heathen empire in the time of Constantine, seem all to have been to make way for the glory of Christ, and the happiness of the church in that event. And so the great prove after that, till the destruction of Antichrist, and the beginning of the glorious times of the church which follow, seem all calculated to prepare the way for the greater glory of Christ and his church in that event; and the following ones to the end of the world seem to be for the greater manifestation of Christ's glory at the consummation of all things. — Thus I thought it needful to observe those things in general concerning this last period, before I take notice of particular providences by which the work of redemption is carried on through this period, in their order.

Before I proceed, I will briefly answer an INQUIRY, viz. Why the setting up of Christ's kingdom after his humiliation, should be so gradual, since God could easily have finished it at once? — Though it would be presumption in us to pretend to declare all the ends of God in this, yet

doubtless much of his wisdom may be seen in it; and particularly in these two things.

**1.** In this way the glory of God's wisdom is more visible to the observation of creatures. If it had been done at once, or in a very short time, there would not have been such opportunities for creatures to perceive and observe the particular steps of divine wisdom, as when the work is gradually accomplished, and one effect is held forth to observation after another. It is wisely determined of God, to accomplish his great design by a wonderful and long series of events, that the glory of his wisdom may be displayed, in the whole series, of events, that the glory of his perfection may be seen, in particular successive manifestations. If all that glory which appears in these events had been manifested at once, it would have been too much for us; it would have overpowered our sight and capacities.

**2.** Satan is more gloriously triumphed over — God could easily by act of almighty power, at once have crushed, Satan. But by giving him time to use his utmost subtlety to hinder the success of what Christ had done and suffered, he is not defeated merely by surprise, but has large opportunity to ply his utmost power and subtlety again and again, to strengthen his own interest all that he can by the work of many ages. Thus God destroys and confounds him, and sets a Christ's kingdom time after time, in spite of all his stable machination, and great works, and by every step advances it still higher and higher, till at length it is fully set up, and Satan perfectly and eternally vanquished. — I now proceed to take notice of the Particular events, whereby, from the end of Christ's humiliation to the end of the world, the success of Christ's purchase has been or shall be accomplished.

## SECTION 2

*How Christ was capacitated for effecting his purpose.*

As the incarnation of Christ was necessary in order to his being in a near capacity for the purchase of redemption; so his resurrection and ascension were requisite in order to the success of his purchase.

**1.** His resurrection. It was necessary in order to Christ's obtaining the end and effect of his purchase of redemption, that he should rise from the dead

— For God the Father had committed the whole affair of redemption to his Son, that he should not only purchase it as priest, but actually bring it about as king; and that he should do this as Godlyman. God the Father would -have nothing to do with fallen man in a way of mercy but by a mediator. But in order that Christ might accomplish the success of his own purchase as God-man, it was necessary that he should rise from the dead. Therefore Christ, after he had finished this purchase by death, rises from the dead, to fulfil the end of his purchase. This matter God the Father had committed unto him, that he might, as Lord of all, manage all to his own purposes:

“For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.”

(Romans 14:9.)

Indeed Christ’s resurrection (and so his ascension) was part of the success of what Christ did and suffered in his humiliation. For though Christ did not properly purchase redemption for himself, yet he purchased, eternal life and glory for himself as a reward of what he did and suffered:

Philippians 2:8, 9. “He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him.” And it may be looked upon as part of the success of Christ’s purchase, since he did not rise as a private person, but as the head of the elect church; so that they did, as it were, all rise with him. Christ was justified in his resurrection, *i.e.* God acquitted and discharged him hereby, as having done and suffered enough for the sins of all the elect: Romans 4:25. “Who was delivered for our offenses, and raised again for our justification.” And God put him in possession of eternal life, as the head of the church, as a sure earnest that they should follow. For when Christ rose from the dead, that was the beginning of eternal life in him. His life before his death was a mortal life, a temporal life; but after his resurrection it was an eternal life: Romans 6:9. “Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.”


Revelation 1:18. “I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive forevermore, Amen.” — But he was put in possession of this eternal life, as the head of the body; so that the whole church, as it were, rises in him. And now he who lately so much, is to suffer no more for ever but has entered into eternal glory.



This resurrection of Christ is the most joyful event that ever came to pass; because hereby Christ rested from the great and difficult work of purchasing redemption, and received God's testimony, that it was finished. The death of Christ was the greatest and most wonderful event that ever came to pass; but that has a great deal in it that is sorrowful. But the resurrection of Christ, that sorrow is turned into joy. The Head of the church, in that great

### SECTION 3

#### *Established means of success.*

CONSIDER those dispensations of Providence, by which the means of this success were established after Christ's resurrection.

**I.** The abolishing the Jewish dispensation. This indeed was gradually done, but it began from the time of Christ's resurrection, in which the abolition of it is founded. For the Jewish dispensation was not fitted for the practice of the world in general, or for a church of God dwelling in all parts of the world: nor would it have been practicable by them. It would have been impossible for men living in all parts of the world to go to Jerusalem three times a year, as was prescribed in that constitution. When therefore God had a design of enlarging his church, as he did after Christ's resurrection, it was necessary that this dispensation should be abolished. If it had been continued, it would have been a great block and hindrance to the enlargement of the church. Besides, their ceremonial law, by reason of its burdensomeness, and great peculiarity of some of its rites, was a wall of partition between the Jews and Gentiles, and would have kept the Gentiles from complying with the true religion. This wall therefore was broken down to make way for the more extensive success of the gospel; as  Ephesians 2:14, 15.

**II.** The next thing in order of time seems to be the appointment of the Christian sabbath. For though this was gradually established in the christian church, yet those things by which the revelation of God's mind and will was made, began on the day of Christ's resurrection his appearing then to his disciples,  John 20:19. And afterwards, his appearing was from time to time on that day rather than any other,  John 20:26. This appointment was confirmed by his sending down the Holy Spirit so

remarkably on that day, <sup><401></sup>Acts 2:1. and afterwards by directing, that the public worship of Christians should be on that day, which may be concluded from. <sup><401></sup>Acts 20:7. <sup><401></sup>1 Corinthians 16:1, 2. and <sup><401></sup>Revelation 1:10. And so the day of the week appointed to be the day of the churches holy rejoicing to the end of the world, and the day of their stated public worship. And this is a very great and principal means of the success which the gospel has had in the world.

**III.** The next thing was Christ's appointment of the gospel-ministry, by commissioning and sending forth his apostles to teach and baptize all nations. Of these things we have an account in <sup><403></sup>Matthew 28:19, 20. "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." There were threatnings done by this one commission of Christ to his apostles, viz.

**1.** The appointment of the office of the gospel-ministry. — For this commission which Christ gives to his apostles, in the most essential parts of it, belongs to all ministers; and the apostles, by virtue of it, were ministers or elders of the church.

**2.** Something peculiar in this commission, viz. to go forth from one nation to (Another, preaching the gospel in all the world. The apostles had something above what belonged to their ordinary character as ministers; they had an extraordinary power of teaching and ruling, which extended to all the churches; and not only all the churches which then were, but all that should be to the end of the world by their ministry. And so the apostles were, in subordination to Christ, made foundations of the christian church. See <sup><401></sup>Ephesians 2:20. and <sup><401></sup>Revelation 21:14.

**3.** Here is an appointment of Christian baptism. This ordinance indeed had a beginning before; John the Baptist and Christ baptized. But now especially by this institution is it established as an ordinance to be upheld in the christian church to the end of the world.—The ordinance of the Lord's supper had been established before just before Christ's crucifixion.

**IV.** The next thing to be observed, is the enduing the apostles, and others, with extraordinary and miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost; such as the gift

of tongues, the gift of healing of prophecy, etc. The Spirit of God was poured out in great abundance in this respect; so that not only ministers but very great part of the Christians through the world were both old and young; not only officers, and more honourable persons, but the meaner some of people, servants, and handmaids, agreeable to Joel's prophecy, <sup><JOEL></sup> Joel 2:28, 29. of which prophecy the apostle Peter takes notice, that it is accomplished in this dispensation, <sup><ACTS></sup> Acts 2:11. How wonderful a dispensation was this! Under the Old Testament but few had such honours put upon them, by God. Moses indeed wished that all the Lord's people were prophets, <sup><NUM></sup> Numbers 11:29. whereas Joshua thought it much that Eldad and Medad prophesied. But now we find the wish of Moses fulfilled. And this continued in a very considerable degree to the end of the apostolic age, or the first hundred years after the birth of Christ, which is therefore called the age of miracles.

This was a great means of the success of the gospel, and of establishing the christian church, not only in that age, but in all ages to the end of the world. For Christianity being established through so great a part of the known world by miracles, it was after that more easily continued by tradition; and by means of these extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, the apostles and others were enabled to write the New Testament, to be an infallible and perpetual rule of faith and manners to the church. And these miracles recorded in those writings are a standing proof of the truth of Christianity to all ages.

**V.** The next thing is the revealing of those glorious doctrines fully and plainly, which had under the Old Testament been obscurely revealed. The doctrine of Christ's satisfaction and righteousness, his ascension and glory, and the way of salvation, were under the Old Testament in a great measure hid under the vail of types and shadows, and more obscure revelations, as Moses put a vail on his face to hide the shining of it; but now the vail of the temple is rent from the top to the bottom. Christ, the antetype of Moses, shines; his face is without a vail; <sup><2COR></sup> 2 Corinthians 3:12, 13, and 18. Now these glorious mysteries, which were in a great measure kept secret from the foundation of the world, are clearly revealed. <sup><EPH></sup> Ephesians 3:35. <sup><ROM></sup> Romans 16:25. "According to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made

manifest;" and, <sup><50B></sup>Colossians 1:26. "Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and generations, but now is made manifest to his saints."

Thus the Sun of righteousness, after it is risen, begins to shine forth clearly, and not by a dim reflection as before. — Christ, before his death, revealed many things more clearly than ever they had been in the Old Testament: but the great mysteries of Christ's redemption, reconciliation by his death, and justification by his righteousness, were not so plainly revealed before Christ's resurrection. Christ gave this reason for it, that he would not put new wine into old bottles; and it was gradually done even after his resurrection. In all likelihood, Christ much more clearly instructed them personally after his resurrection, and before his ascension; as we read that he continued with them forty days, speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom, <sup><40B></sup>Acts 1:3. and that "he opened their understandings, that they might understand the scriptures," <sup><42B></sup>Luke 24:45. But the clear revelation of these things was principally after the pouring out of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, agreeable to Christ's promise, <sup><60B></sup>John 16:12, 13. "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when the spirit of truth is come, he shall guide you into all truth. Ibis clear revelation of the mysteries of the gospel, as they are delivered, we have chiefly through the hands of the apostle Paul, by whose writings a child may come to know more of the doctrines gospel in many respects, than the greatest prophets knew under the darkness of the Old Testament.

Thus we see how the light of the gospel, which began after the fall, and gradually increased to dawn immediately at through all the ages of the Old Testament, is now come to the light of perfect day, as the brightness of the sun shining forth in his unvailed glory.

**VI.** The next thing that I would observe, is the appointment of the office of deacons in the christian church, which we have an account of in the 6th chapter of the Acts to take care for the outward supply of the members of Christ's church, and the exercise of that great christian virtue charity.

**VII.** The calling, qualifying, and sending the apostle Paul. This was begun in his conversion as he was going to Damascus, and was one of the greatest means of the success of Christ's redemption that followed: for this success was more by the labours, preaching, and writings of this apostle,

than all the other apostles put together. For, as he says, <sup><4650></sup>1 Corinthians 15:10. he laboured more abundantly than they all. As he was the apostle of the Gentiles, so it was mainly by his ministry that the Gentiles were called and the gospel spread through the world. and the other nations of Europe, have the gospel among them chiefly through his means; and he was more employed by the Holy Ghost in revealing the glorious doctrines of the gospel by his writings, for the use of the church in all ages, than all the other apostles taken together.

**VIII.** The next thing I would observe, is the institution of ecclesiastical councils, for deciding controversies, and ordering the affairs of the church of Christ, of which we have an account in the 15th chapter of Acts.

**IX.** The last thing I shall mention under this head, is the committing the New Testament to writing. Ibis was all written after the resurrection of Christ by the apostles themselves, except the gospels of Mark and Luke and the book of the Acts. he that wrote the gospel of Mark, is supposed to be the son of Mary, in whose house they were praying for Peter, when be, brought out of prison by the angel, came and knocked at the door; of which we read,

“And when he had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark, where many were gathered together, praying.” (<sup><4420></sup>Acts 12:12.)

He was the companion of the apostles Barnabas and Paul: <sup><4457></sup>Acts 15:37. 11 And Barniibas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark.” — He was Bamabas’s sister’s son, and seems some time to have been a companion of the apostle Paul: <sup><5040></sup>Colossians 4:10. “Aristarchus, my fellow-prisoner, saluteth you, and Marcus, sister’s son to Barnabas; touching whom ye received commandment: if he come unto you, receive him.” The apostles seem to have made great account of him as appears by those places, and also by <sup><4425></sup>Acts 12:25. “And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, and took with them John, whose surname was Mark;” and <sup><4435></sup>Acts 13:5. “And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews; and they had also John to their minister;” and <sup><5041></sup>2 Timothy 4:11. “Only Luke is with me; take Mark and bring him with thee; for he is profitable to me for the ministry.”



He who wrote the gospel of Luke and the book of Acts, was a great companion of the apostle Paul. Beside the last-mentioned place, he speaks of himself as accompanying Paul in his travels, and therefore speaks in the first person plural; We went to such a place; We set sail, etc. He was greatly beloved by the apostle Paul: he is that beloved physician spoken of, <sup>5044</sup>Colossians 4:14. The apostle ranks Mark and Luke among his fellow-labourers, Philemon 24. “Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellow-labourers.”





The books of the New Testament are either historical, doctrinal, or prophetical. The historical books are the writings of the four evangelists, giving us the history of Christ, his purchase of redemption, his resurrection and ascension; and the Acts of the Apostles, giving an account of the eat things by which the christian church was first established and propagated. The doctrinal books are the epistles; most of which we have from the great apostle Paul. And we have one prophetical book, which takes place after the end of the history of the whole Bible, and gives an account of the great events which were to come to pass, by which the work of redemption was to be carried on to the end of the world.

All these books are supposed to have been written before the destruction of Jerusalem, excepting those which were written by the apostle John, who lived the longest of all the apostles and who wrote after the destruction of Jerusalem, as it; supposed. To this beloved disciple it was that Christ revealed those wonderful things which! were to come to pan in his church to the end of time; and he was the person who put the finishing hand to the nation of Scripture, and sealed the whole of it. So that now the canon of Scripture, that great and standing written, rule, which was begun about Mose’s time is completed and settled, and a curse denounced against him that adds any thing to it, or diminishes any thing from it. And so all the stated means of grace were finished in the apostolical age, or before the death of the a apostle John, and are to remain unaltered to the day of judgment. Thus far we have considered those things by which the means of grace were given and established in the christian church.

## SECTION 4

*How the success was carried on.*

FROM Christ's resurrection till the fall of Antichrist, is the appointed day of Zion's troubles. During this space Of time, some part or other of the church is under persecution; and great pad of the time, the whole church, or at least the generality of God's people, have been persecuted. For the first three hundred years after Christ, the church was for the most part in a state of great affliction the object of reproach and persecution; first by the Jews, and then by the heathen. — After this, from the beginning of Constantine's time, the church had rest and prosperity for a little while; which is represented in Revelation 7 at the beginning, by the angel's holding the four winds for a little while. But presently after, the church again suffered persecution from the Arians. After that Antichrist rose, the church was driven away into the wilderness, was kept down in obscurity, contempt, and suffering, for a long time before the Reformation by Luther and others. And since the Reformation, the church's persecutions have been beyond all that ever were before. And though some of God's church sometimes have had rest, yet to this day, for, the most part, the true church is very much kept under by its enemies, and some parts of it under grievous persecution. And so we may expect it will continue till the fall of Antichrist. Then will come the appointed day of the church's prosperity on earth, the set time in which God will favour Zion, the time when the saints shall not be kept under by wicked men, but wherein they shall reign, as it is said,  Revelation 5:10. "And the kingdom shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most-High,"  Daniel 7:27.

The suffering state of the church is in Scripture represented as a state of the church's travail, ( John 16:20,21. and  Revelation 12:1, 2.) striving to bring forth that glory and prosperity which shall be after the fall of Antichrist, and then shall she bring forth her child. This is a long time of the church's trouble and affliction, though it be but for a little season, in comparison of the eternal prosperity of the church. Hence under the long continuance of this affliction, she cries out, ( Revelation 6:10.) "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" And we are told, that 6. white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also, and their brethren that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled." So,  Daniel 12:6. "How long shall it be to the end of these wonders."

It is to be observed, that during the time of these sufferings of the church, the main instrument of their sufferings has been the Roman government. Rome therefore in the New Testament is called Babylon; because, as of old the troubles of the city of Jerusalem were mainly from that adverse city Babylon, so the troubles of the christian church, the spiritual Jerusalem, during the long time of its tribulation, are mainly from Rome. Before the time of Constantine, the troubles of the christian church were from heathen Rome: since that time, its troubles have been mainly from antichristian Rome. And as of old, the captivity of the Jews ceased on the destruction of Babylon, so the time of the trouble of the christian church will cease with the destruction of the church of Rome, that spiritual Babylon.

## PART 1.

### **THE SUCCESS OF REDEMPTION FROM THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST TO THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM.**

I WOULD now show, how the success of Christ's purchase of redemption was carried on from Christ's resurrection to the destruction of Jerusalem. In speaking of this I would,

1. take notice of the success itself; and,
2. the opposition made against it by its enemies; and,
3. the terrible judgments of God on those enemies.

**I.** I would observe the success itself. Soon after Christ had entered into the holy of holies with his own blood, then began a glorious success of what he had done and suffered. — Having undermined the foundation of Satan's kingdom, it began to fall space. Swiftly did it hasten to ruin, which might well be compared to Satan's falling like lightning from heaven. Satan before had exalted his throne very high in this world, even to the very stars of heaven, reigning with great glory in his heathen Roman empire; but never before had he such a downfall as he had soon after Christ's ascension. He had, we may suppose, been very lately triumphing in a supposed victory having brought about the death of Christ, which he

doubtless gloried in as the greatest feat that ever he did; and probably imagined he had totally defeated God's design by him. But he was quickly made sensible, that he had only been ruining his own kingdom, when he saw it tumbling so fast so won after, as a consequence of the death of Christ. For Christ, having ascended, and received the Holy Spirit, poured it forth abundantly for the conversion of thousands and millions of souls.

Never had Christ's kingdom been so set up in the world. There probably were more souls converted in the age of the apostles, than had been before from the beginning of the world till that time. Thus God so soon begins gloriously. to accomplish his promise to his Son, wherein he had promised, That he should see his seed, and that the pleasure of the Lord should prosper in his hand, if he would make his soul an offering for sin. And,

**1.** Here is to be observed the success which the gospel had among the Jews; for God first began with them. He being about to reject the main body of that people, first calls in his elect from among them. It was so in former great and dreadful judgments of God on that nation; the bulk of them were destroyed, and only a remnant saved, or reformed. The bulk of the ten tribes was rejected, when they left the true worship of God under Jeroboam, and afterwards more fully in Ahab's time; but yet there was a remnant of them reserved. Many left their possessions in these tribes, and settled in the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. And afterwards there were seven thousand in Ahab's time, who had not bowed the knee to Baal. From the captivity into Babylon, only a remnant of them ever returned to their own land. So now the greater part of the people were rejected entirely, but some few were saved. And therefore this Holy Ghost compares this reservation of a number that were converted by the preaching of the apostles, to those former remnants: ⲙⲁⲓⲁⲛ Romans 9:27. "Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved." — See ⲙⲁⲓⲁⲛ Isaiah 10:22.

The glorious success of the gospel among the Jews after Christ's ascension, began by the pouring out of the Spirit upon the day of Pentecost. (Acts 2.) So wonderful was this effusion, and so remarkable and swift the effect of it, that we read of three thousand who were

converted to the christian faith in one day, <sup><40B1></sup>Acts 2:41. and probably the greater part of these were savingly converted. And after this, we read of God's adding to the church daily such as should be saved, (verse 47.) Soon after, we read that the number of them were about five thousand. Thus were not only a multitude converted, but the church was then eminent in piety, as appears by <sup><40B6></sup>Acts 2:46, 47, 4:32. Thus the christian church was first formed from the nation of Israel; and therefore, when the Gentiles were called, they were added to the christian church of Israel, as the proselytes of old were to the Mosaic church of Israel. They were only grafted on the stock of Abraham, and were not a distinct tree; for they were all still the seed. of Abraham and Israel; as Ruth the Moabitess, and Uriah the Hittite and other proselytes of old, were the same people, an ranked as the seed of Israel.

The christian church began at Jerusalem, and from ,thence was propagated to all nations: so that this church of Jerusalem was the mother of all other churches in the World; agreeable to the prophecy, <sup><20B3></sup>Isaiah 2:3, 4. "Out of so Zion go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem: and he shall judge among the nations, and rebuke many people." So that the whole church of God is still his spiritual Jerusalem.

After this, we read of many thousands of Jews in Jerusalem that believed, <sup><40B1></sup>Acts 21:20. And we read of multitudes of Jews who were converted in other cities of Judea, and in other parts of the world. For it was the manner of the apostles to go first into the synagogues of the Jews, and preach the gospel to them, and many in one Place and another believed; as in Damascus, Antioch, and many other places.

In this pouring out of the Spirit, at the Pentecost, began that first great dispensation which is called Christ's coming in his kingdom. Christ's coming thus in a spiritual manner for the glorious erection of his kingdom in the world is represented as his coming down from heaven, whither, he had ascended, <sup><40B3></sup>John 14:18. "I will not leave you comfortless; I will come unto you." And verse 28. "Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you." And thus the apostles began to see the kingdom of heaven come with power, as he promised them, <sup><40B1></sup>Mark 9:1.

**2.** After the success of the gospel had been so gloriously began among the Jews, the Spirit of God was next wonderfully poured out on the

Samaritans; who were the posterity of those whom the king of Assyria, removed from different parts of his dominions, and settled in the land which had been inhabited by the ten tribes, whom he carried captive. These had received the five books of Moses, and practiced most of the Mosaic rites, and so were a sort of mongrel Jews. We do not find them reckoned as Gentiles in the New Testament: for the calling of the Gentiles is spoken of as a new thing after this, beginning with the conversion of Cornelius. But yet it was an instance of making those a people who were no people: for they had corrupted the religion of Moses and did not go up to Jerusalem to worship. They had another temple of their own in mount Gerizim; which is the mountain of which the woman of Samaria speaks, when she says, Our fathers worshipped in this mountain. Christ there does not approve of their separation from the Jews; but says, that they worshipped they knew not what, and that salvation is of the Jews. But now salvation is brought from the Jews to them by the preaching of Philip, (excepting that before Christ had some success among them,) with whose preaching there was a glorious pouring of the Spirit of God in the city Samaria; where we are told, that “the people believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of Christ, and were baptized, both men and women; and that there was great joy in that city,” ~~408~~ Acts 8:8-12.

Thus Christ had a glorious harvest in Samaria; according to what he said to his disciples at Jacob’s well, three or four years before, on occasion of the people of Samaria appearing at a distance in the fields coming to the place where he was. ~~409~~ John 4:35, 36. The disposition which the people of Samaria showed towards Christ and his gospel, showed that they were ripe for the harvest; and now the harvest is come by Philip’s preaching. There used to be a most bitter enmity between the Jews and Samaritans; but now, by their conversion, the christian Jews and Samaritans are all happily united for in Christ Jesus is neither Jew nor Samaritan, but Christ is all in all. This was a glorious instance of the wolf dwelling with the lamb, and the leopard lying down with the kid.

**3.** The next thing to be observed is the calling the Gentiles. This was a great and glorious dispensation, much Spoken of in the Old Testament, and by the apostles, as a most glorious event, This was begun in the conversion of Cornelius and his family greatly to the admiration of Peter, who was used as instrument of it, and of those who were with him, Acts

10:and 11:The next instance was the conversion of great numbers of Gentiles in Cyprus, Cyrene and Antioch, by the disciples who were scattered a by the persecution which arose about Stephen, ~~44119~~ Acts 11:19-21. And presently upon this the disciples began to be called Christians first at Antioch, (Verse 26.)

After this vast multitudes of Gentiles were converted in different of the world, chiefly by the ministry of the apostle Paul, multitudes flocked into the church of Christ in a great number of cities where the apostle came. So the number of Gentile members of the christian church soon far exceeded that of its Jewish members; yea, in law than ten years time after Paul was sent forth from Antioch to preach to the Gentiles, it was said of him and his companions, that they had tamed the world upside down: ~~44119~~ Acts 17:6. "These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also." But the most remarkable instance, seems to be that in Ephesus, which was a very great city, Acts 19:There was also a very extraordinary ingathering of souls at Corinth, one of the greatest cities in all Greece. And after this many were converted in Rome, the chief city of all the world; and I the gospel was propagated into all parts of the Roman empire. Thus the gospel-sun which had lately risen on the Jews, now rose upon, and began to enlighten, the heathen world, after they had continued in gross heathenish darkness for so many ages.

This was a great and new thing, such as never had been before. All nations but the Jews, and a few who had occasionally joined them, had bee rejected from about the time of Moses. The Gentile had been covered with the thick darkness of idolatry; but now at the joyful sound of the gospel, they began in all Pam to forsake their idols, and to cast them to the moles and to the bats. They now learned to worship the true God, and to trust in his Son Jesus Christ. God owned them for his people; and those who had so long been afar off, were made nigh by the blood of Christ. Men, from being heathenish and brutish, became the children of God; were called out of Satan's kingdom of darkness, and brought into God's marvellous light. In almost all countries throughout the known world there were christian assemblies, and joyful praises were sung to the true God, and Jesus Christ the glorious Redeemer. Now that great building which God began soon after the fall of man, rises gloriously in a new manner now Daniel's prophecies concerning the last should succeed the four heathenish in be

fulfilled; now the stone cut out of the mountain without hands, began to smite the image on its feet, and to it in pieces, and to make great advances towards filling earth; and now God gathers together his elect the four winds of heaven, by the preaching of the apostles and other ministers, (the angels of the christian church sent forth with the great sound of the gospel-trumpet,) before the destruction of Jerusalem, agreeable to what Christ foretold, <sup>488</sup>Matthew 24:31.

**II.** I would proceed now, in the second place, to take notice of the opposition which was made to this success of Christ's purchase by the enemies of it.-Satan, who lately was so ready to triumph and exult, as though he had gained the victory in putting Christ to death, now finding himself fallen into the pit which he had digged and finding his kingdom failing so fast, and seeing Christ's kingdom make such amazing progress, was filled with the greatest confusion and astonishment: and hell seemed to effectually alarmed to make the most violent opposition against it. And, first, the devil stirred up the Jews, who had before crucified Christ, to persecute the church: for it is observable, that the persecution which the church suffered during this period, was mostly from the Jews. Thus we read in the Acts, when the Holy Ghost was poured out at Pentecost, how the Jews mocked, and said, These men are full of new wine; and how the scribes and Pharisees, and the captain of the temple, were alarmed, and bestirred themselves to oppose and persecute the apostles. They first apprehended and threatened them, and afterwards imprisoned and beat diem; and breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, they stoned Stephen in a tumultuous rage; and were not content to persecute those that they could find in Judea, but sent abroad to Damascus and other places, to persecute all that they could find every where. Herod, who was chief among them, stretched forth his hands to vex the church, and killed James with the sword, and proceeded to take Peter also, and cast him into prison.

So in other countries we find, that almost wherever the apostles came, the Jews opposed the gospel in a most malignant manner contradicting and blaspheming. How many things did the blessed apostle Paul suffer at their hands! how violent and blood-thirsty did they show themselves towards him, when he came to bring alms to his nation! In this persecution and cruelty was fulfilled that saying of Christ,

“Behold, I send you prophets, and wise men, and scribes; and some of them ye shall kill and crucify, and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city.”  
(<sup>4134</sup>Matthew 23:34.)

**III.** I proceed to take notice of the judgments which were executed on those enemies of Christ, the persecuting Jews.

**1.** The bulk of the people were given up to judicial blindness of mind and hardness of heart. Christ denounced such a woe upon them in the days of his flesh; <sup>4134</sup>Matthew 13:14, 15 — This curse was also denounced on them by the apostle Paul, <sup>4135</sup>Acts 28:25, 26, 27. and under this curse, this judicial blindness and hardness, they remain to this very day, having been subject to it for about seventeen hundred years, being the most awful instance of such a judgment, and monument of God’s terrible vengeance, of any people. That they should continue from generation to generation so obstinately to reject Christ, so that it is a very rare thing that any one of them is converted to the christian faith — though their own Scriptures of the Old Testament, which they acknowledge, are so full of plain testimonies against them-is a remarkable evidence of their being dreadfully left of God.

**2.** They were rejected from being any longer God’s visible people. They were broken on from the stock of Abraham, and since that have no more been reputed his seed, than the Ishmaelites or Edomites, who are as much his natural seed as they. The greater part of the two tribes were now cast off, as the ten tribes had been before, and another people were taken in their room, agreeable to the predictions of their own prophets; <sup>4132</sup>Deuteronomy 32:21. “They have moved me to jealousy with that which is not God; they have provoked me to anger with their vanities; and I will move them to jealousy with those which are not a people, I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation;” and <sup>4131</sup>Isaiah 65:1. “I am sought of them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not.” — They were visibly rejected by God’s directing his apostles to turn away from them, and let them alone; <sup>4136</sup>Acts 13:46, 47. “Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from You, and

judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles: for so hath the Lord commanded its.” And so ~~4886~~ Acts 18:6. and 28:28.

Thus far we have had the scripture history to guide us: henceforward we shall have the guidance only of scripture prophecy, and human histories.

**3.** The third and last judgment of God on those enemies of the success of the gospel which I shall mention, is the terrible destruction of their city and country by the Romans. — They had great warnings and many means used with them before this destruction. First, John the Baptist warned them, and told them, that the axe was laid at the root of the tree; and that every tree which should not bring forth good fruit, should be hewn down, and cast into the fire. Then Christ warned them very particularly, and told them of their approaching destruction, at the thoughts of which he wept over them. And then the apostles after Christ’s ascension abundantly warned them. But they proved obstinate, and went on in their opposition to Christ and his church, and in their bitter persecuting practices. Their so persecuting the apostle Paul, of which we have an account towards the end of the Acts of the Apostles, is supposed to have been not more than seven or eight years before their destruction.

After this, God was pleased to give them one more very remarkable warning by the apostle Paul, in his epistle to the Hebrews, written, it is supposed, about four years before their destruction; wherein the plainest and clearest arguments are set before them from their own law, and from their prophets, for whom they professed such a regard, to prove that Christ Jesus must be the Son of God, that all their law: typified him, and that the Jewish dispensation must needs have ceased. For though the epistle was more immediately directed to the christian Hebrews, yet the matter of the epistle plainly shows that the apostle intended it for the use and conviction of the unbelieving Jews. And in this epistle he mentions particularly the approaching destruction, chapter 10:25. “So much the more, as ye see the day approaching;” and in verse 27. he speaks of the approaching judgment and fiery indignation which should devour the adversaries.

But the generality of them, refusing to receive conviction, God soon destroyed with such terrible circumstances, as the destruction of the

country or city since the foundation of the world can parallel; agreeable to what Christ foretold,

“For then shall be tribulation, such as was not from the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.” (<sup>400</sup>Matthew 24:21.)

The first destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians was very terrible, as it is in a most affecting manner described by the prophet Jeremiah, in his Lamentations; but that was nothing to the dreadful in and wrath which they suffered in this destruction. God as Christ foretold, brought on them all the righteous blood that had been shed from the foundation the world. Thus the enemies of Christ are made his footstool after his ascension, agreeable to God’s promise in <sup>401</sup>Psalms 110. and he rules them with a rod of iron. The briars and thorns set themselves against him in battle: but he went through them; he burned them together.

This destruction of Jerusalem was in all respects agreeable to what Christ had foretold of it, Matthew 24 as appears by the account which Josephus gives of it, who was then present, who had a share in the calamity, and who wrote the history of their destruction. Many circumstances resembled the destruction of the wicked at the day of judgment; by his account, it was accompanied with many fearful sights in the heavens, and with a separation of the righteous from the wicked. Their city and temple burnt, and razed to the ground; and the ground on which the city stood was ploughed, so that one stone was not left upon another, <sup>402</sup>Matthew 24:2.

The people had ceased for the most part to be an independent government after the Babylonish captivity; but the sceptre entirely departed from Judah on the death of Archelaus, when Judea was made a Roman province. After this, they were cast off from being the people of God; but now their very city and land are utterly destroyed, and they carried away from it; and so have continued in their dispersions through the world for now above sixteen hundred years.

Thus there was a final end put to the Old Testament world: all was finished with a kind of day of judgment, in which the people of God were saved, and his enemies terribly destroyed. — Thus does he who was so

lately mocked, who was so lately mocked, despised, and spit upon by these Jews, and whose followers they so malignantly persecuted, appear gloriously exalted over his enemies.

## PART 2

### THE SUCCESS OF REDEMPTION FROM THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM, TO THE TIME OF CONSTANTINE.

JERUSALEM was destroyed about the year of our Lord sixty-eight, and so before that generation passed away which was contemporary with Christ. The destruction of the heathen empire under Constantine, was about two hundred and sixty yon after this. In showing how “success of the gospel was carried on through this time, I would,

1. Take notice of the opposition made against it by the Roman empire.
2. How the work of the gospel went on notwithstanding all that opposition.
3. The peculiar circumstances of tribulation and distress that the church was in just before their deliverance by Constantine; and
4. The great revolution in Constantine’s time.

**I.** I would briefly show what opposition was made against the gospel, and the kingdom of Christ, by the Roman empire. This opposition was mainly after the destruction of Jerusalem, though it began before; but that which was before the destruction of Jerusalem, was mainly by the Jews. When Jerusalem was destroyed, the Jews were much incapacitated for troubling the church; there, before the devil turns his hand elsewhere, and uses other instruments. The opposition which was made in the Roman empire against the kingdom of Christ was chiefly of two kinds.

**1.** They employed all their learning, philosophy, by, and wit, in opposing it. Christ came into the world in an age wherein learning and philosophy were at their height in the Roman empire. The gospel, which held forth a crucified Saviour, was not at all agreeable to the notions of the philosophers. The christian scheme of trusting in such a crucified

Redeemer, appeared foolish and ridiculous to them. Greece was a country the most famous for learning of any in the Roman empire; but the apostle observes, that the doctrine of crucified appeared foolishness to the Greeks, <sup><41023></sup>1 Corinthians 1:23. and therefore the wise men and opposed the gospel with all the wit they had. We have a specimen of their manner of opposing, in their treatment of the apostle Paul at Athens, which was, and had been for man ages, the chief seat of philosophers in all the whole world. We read in <sup><41028></sup>Acts 12:18. that the philosophers the Epicureans and Stoics encountered philosophers saying, what will this, babble, say? He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods.” Thus they were wont to deride and ridicule Christianity; and after the destruction of Jerusalem, several philosophers published books against it. The chief of these were Celsus and Porphyry, who wrote with a great deal of virulence and contempt, much after the manner of the deists of die present age. As great enemies and despisers as they were of the Christian religion, they never denied the facts recorded of Christ and his apostles in the New Testament, particularly the miracles which they wrought, but allowed them. They lived too near the times of these miracles to deny them; for they were so publicly done, and so lately, that neither Jews nor heathens in those days appeared to deny them; but they ascribed them to the power of magic.

**2.** The authority of the Roman empire employed all their strength, time after time, to persecute, and if possible to root out, Christianity. This they did in ten general successive persecutions. We have heretofore observed that Christ came into the world when the strength of heathen dominion and authority was the greatest under the Roman monarchy. All the strength of this monarchy was employed for a long time to oppose and persecute the christian church, and if possible to destroy it, in ten successive attempts, which are called the ten heathen persecutions.

The first of these, which was the persecution under Nero, was a little before the destruction of Jerusalem, in which the apostle Peter was crucified, and the apostle Paul beheaded, soon after he wrote his second epistle to Timothy. When he wrote that epistle, he was a prisoner at Rome under Nero, and says, chapter 4:6, 7. “I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have (ought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.” There were many thousands of other Christians slain in that persecution. The other nine persecutions

were all after the destruction of Jerusalem. Some of these were very terrible indeed, and far exceeded the first persecution under Nero. One emperor after another set himself with the utmost rage to root out the christian church from the earth, that there should not be so much as the name of Christian left in the world. Thousands, yea millions, were put to cruel deaths in them for they spared neither sex nor age.

In the second general persecution, (under Domitian,) that which was next after the destruction of Jerusalem, the apostle John was banished to the isle of Patmos, where he had those visions which he has recorded in the Revelation. Under that persecution it was reckoned, that about forty thousand suffered martyrdom; which yet wait nothing to what were put to dam under some succeeding persecutions. Ten thousand suffered that one kind of cruel death, crucifixion. in the third persecution under the emperor Adrian. Under the fourth penetration, which began about the year of Christ we hundred and sixty-two, many suffered martyrdom in England, the land of our fathers, where Christianity had been planted it is supposed, in the days of the apostles. And in the later persecutions, the Roman emperors being vexed at the frustration of their predecessors, who were not able to extirpate Christianity, or hinder its progress, were enraged to be the more violent in their attempts.

Thus a great pan of the first three hundred years after Christ was spent in violent and cruel persecutions of the church by the Roman powers. Satan was very unwilling to quit his hold of so great and distinguished a part of the world, as the countries contained in the Roman empire, of which he had had the quiet possession for so many ages: and therefore, when he saw it going so fast out of his he bestirred himself to his utmost. All hell was to oppose it with its utmost power.

Satan thus exerting himself by the power of the heathen Roman empire, is called the great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, fighting against the woman clothed with the sun. (Revelation 12.) And this terrible conflict between the church of Christ, and the powers of the heathen empire before Constantine, is represented (verse 7) by the war between Michael and his angels, and the dragon and his angels. "And there was war in heaven; Michael and his angels fought, and the dragon fought and his angels."

**II.** I would take notice what success the gospel had in the world before the time of Constantine, notwithstanding all this opposition. — Though the learning and power of the Roman empire were so great and both were employed to the utmost against Christianity; yet all was in vain. They could neither root it out, nor stop its progress. In spite of all, the kingdom of Christ wonderfully prevailed, and Satan's heathen kingdom mouldered and consumed away before it, agreeable to the text, "The moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool." And it was very observable that, for the most part, the more they persecuted the church, the more it increased; insomuch that it became a common saying, The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church—Herein the church of Christ proved to be like a palm-tree; of which it is remarked, that the greater weight is hung to its branches, the more it grows and flourishes. On this account probably the church is compared to a palm-tree, Cant. 7:7. "This thy statute is like to a palm-tree." Justin Martyr, an eminent father in the christian church, says, that in his days there was no part of mankind, whether Greeks or barbarians, or by what name soever they were called, even the most rude and unpolished nations, where prayers and Thanksgivings were not made to the great Creator of the world, through the name of the crucified Jesus. Terullian, another eminent father in the christian church, who lived in the beginning of the following age, testifies, that in his days the christian religion had extended itself to the utmost bounds of the then known world, in which he reckons Britain; and thence demonstrates, that the kingdom of Christ was then more extensive than any of the four great monarchies. He moreover says, that though the Christians were strangers of no long standing, yet they had filled all places of the Roman dominions, their cities, islands, castles, corporations, councils, armies, tribes, the palace, senate, and courts of judicature; only they had left to the heathen their temples. He adds, that if they should all agree to retire out of the Roman empire, the world would be amazed at the solitude and desolation that would ensue upon it, there would be so few left; and that the Christians were enough to be able easily to defend themselves, if they were disposed to rise up in arms against the heathen magistrates. — And Pliny, a heathen who lived in those days, says, that multitudes, of each sex, of every age and quality, would become Christians. This superstition, says and overrun not the city only, but

towns countries, the temples and sacrifices are generally desolate and forsaken.

And it was remarked -by both heathen and christian writers in those days, that the famous heathen oracles in their temples-where princes and others for many past ages had been wont to inquire and receive answers, answers with an audible voice from their gods, which were indeed answers from the devil — were now struck dumb, and gave no man answers: and particularly the oracle at Delphos the most famous in the whole world, which both Greeks and Romans used to consult, began to can to give any answers, even from the birth of Christ. The false deity who was worshipped, and who used to give answers from his oracle in that temple, being once inquired of, why he did not now give answers as he was wont to do? made this reply, (as several heathen historians who lived about those times relate,) There is a Hebrew boy, who is king of the gods, who has commended me to leave this house, and began to hell, and therefore you are to expect no more answers. And many heathen writers who lived about that time, speak much of the oracles being silenced, at which they wondered, not knowing what the cause should be. Plutarch wrote a particular treatise about it, which is still extant. And Porphyry who opposed the christian religion, has these words, “Is no wonder if the city for these many years has been overrun with sickness; Esculapuis, and the rest of the gods having withdrawn their converse with men: for since Jesus began to be worshipped, no man has received any public help or benefit by the gods.” “Thus did the kingdom of Satan.”

**III.** I now proceed to take notice of the peculiar circumstances of tribulation and distress just before Constantine the Great came to the throne. distress they suffered under the tenth heathen persecution, which, a it was the last, so it was by far the heaviest and most severe. The church before this after the ceasing of the ninth persecution, had enjoyed a time of quietness for about forty years together; but abusing their liberty, they began to grow cold and lifeless in religion, and contentions prevailed among them; by which they offended God to suffer this dreadful trial to come upon them. And Satan having lost ground so much, notwithstanding all his attempts, now seemed to bestir himself with more than ordinary rage. Those who were then in authority set themselves with the utmost violence to root out Christianity, by burning all Bibles, and destroying all

Christians; and therefore they did not stand to try or convict them in a formal process, but fell upon them wherever they could. Sometimes they set fire to houses where multitudes were assembled, burning them altogether; at other times they slaughtered such multitudes their persecutors were quite spent with the labour of killing and tormenting them; and in some populous places, so many were slain together, that the blood ran like torrents. It is related, that seventeen thousand martyrs were slain in one month's time; and that during the continuance of this persecution in the province of Egypt alone, no less than one hundred and forty-four thousand Christians died by the violence of their persecutors, besides seven hundred thousand that died through the fatigues of banishment, or the public works to which they were condemned.

This persecution lasted for ten years together, and as it exceeded all the foregoing persecutions, in the number of martyrs, so it exceeded them in the and multitude of inventions of torture and cruelty. Some authors who lived at that time, say, they were innumerable, and exceed all account and expression. This persecution in particular was very severe in England, and is that which was foretold in ~~and~~ Revelation 6:9, 10. "And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them were slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" And at the end of the ten years, during which this persecution continued, the heathen persecutors thought they had finished their work, and boasted that they had utterly destroyed the name and superstition of the Christians. Thus it was just before the break of day. They were brought to greatest extremity before God appeared for their glorious deliverance, as the bondage of the Israelites in Egypt was the most severe and cruel just before their deliverance by the hand of Moses. Their enemies thought they had swallowed them up, and sealed their destruction, as Pharaoh and his host thought when they had hemmed in the children of Israel at the Red sea.

**IV.** I come now, in the fourth place, to the great revolution by Constantine, which was in many respects like Christ's appearing in the clouds of heaven to save his people, and judge the world. The people of Rome belong weary the government of those tyrants to whom they had lately been subject, sent to Constantine, who was then in the city of New

York in England, to come and take the throne. He was encouraged it is said, by a vision of a pillar of light in the heavens, in the form of a cross in the sight of his whole army, with this inscription. In this overcome; and the following by Christ's appearing to him in a dream with the cross in his hand, who directed him to make a cross like that to be his royal standard, that his army might fight under that banner and assured him that he should overcome. Accordingly he overcame his enemies, took possession of the imperial throne, embraced the christian religion, and was the first christian empire that ever reigned. He came to the throne about three hundred and twenty years after Christ. There are several things which I would take notice of which attended at immediately followed, Constantine's coming to the throne.

**1.** The christian church was thereby wholly delivered from persecution. Now the day of her deliverance came after inch a dark night of affliction: weeping had continued for a night, but now deliverance and joy came in the morning. Now God appeared to judge his people, and repented himself for his servants, when he saw their power was gone, and that there was none shut up or left. Christians had no persecutions now to fear. Their persecutors now were all put down, and their rulers were some of them Christians like themselves.

**2.** God now to execute terrible judgments on their enemies. Remarkable are the accounts which history gives of the fearful ends to which the heathen emperors, princes, generals, captains, and other great men were brought, who had exerted themselves in persecuting the Christian; dying miserably, one after another, under exquisite torments of body, and horrors of conscience, with a most visible hand of God upon them. So that what now came to pass might very greatly be compared to their hiding themselves in the dens and rocks of the mountains.

**3.** Heathenism now was in a great measure abolished throughout the Roman empire. Images were now destroyed, and heathen temples pulled down. Images of gold and silver were melted down, and coined into money. Some of the chief of their idols, which were curiously wrought, were brought to Constantine, there drawn with ropes up and down the streets for the people to behold and laugh at. The heathen priests were dispersed and banished.

**4.** The christian church was brought into a state of great peace and prosperity. Now all heathen magistrates were put down, and only Christians were advanced to places of authority all over the empire. They had now christian presidents, christian governors, christian judges and officers, instead of their old heathenish ones. Constantine set himself to put honour upon christian bishops or ministers, and to build and adorn churches; and now large and beautiful christian churches were erected in all parts of the world, instead of the old heathen temples.

This revolution was the greatest change in the face of things that ever came to pass in the world since the flood. Satan, the prince of darkness, that king and god of the heathen world, was cast out. The roaring lion was conquered by the Lamb of God, in the strongest dominion that he ever had. This was a remarkable accomplishment of <sup>2401</sup>Jeremiah 10:11. “The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these chief part of the world was now brought utterly to cut off their gods and their old religion, to which they had been accustomed much longer than any of their histories give an account of. They had been accustomed to worship the gods so long, that they knew not any beginning of it. It was formerly spoken of as a thing unknown for a nation to change their gods, <sup>2400</sup>Jeremiah 2:10, 11. but now the greater pan of the nations of the known world were brought to cast off all their former gods. That multitude of gods which they worshipped, were all forsaken. Thousands of them were cast away for the worship of the true God, and Christ the only Saviour: and there was a most remarkable fulfilment of <sup>2407</sup>Isaiah 2:17, 18. “And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low: and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day. And the idols he shall utterly abolish.” And since that, those gods which were once so famous in do world, as Jupiter, and Saturn, and Minerva, and Juno, etc. am only heard of as things of old. They have had no temples, no altars, no worshippers, for many hundred years.

Now is come the end of the old heathen world in its principal part, the Roman empire. And this great revolution with that terrible destruction of the great men who had been persecutors, is compared. (Revelation vi.) to the end of the world, and Christ coming to judgment; and is most immediately signified under the sixth seal, which followed upon the souls

under the altar crying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? This vision of the sixth seal, by the general consent of expositors, has respect to this downfall of the heathen Roman empire; though it has a more remote respect to the day of judgment or which this was a type. The day of judgment cannot be what is immediately intended; use we have an account of many events which were to come to pass after those of the sixth seal.

What came to pass now is also represented by the devil's being cast out of heaven to the earth. In his great strength and glory, over that mighty Roman empire, he had exalted his throne up to heaven. But now he fell like lightning from heaven, and his kingdom was confined to the meaner and more barbarous nations, or to the lower parts of the world. This is the event foretold, <sup>(671)</sup> Revelation 12:9, etc. "And the old dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cut out with him," etc. Satan had formerly tempted Christ, and promised to give him the glory of the kingdoms of the world, but give it to him even against his fulfilment of that promise which

"Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors, and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." (<sup>(672)</sup> Isaiah 53:12.)

This was a great fulfilment of prophecies concerning the glorious time of the gospel and particularly those of Daniel. Now it pleased the Lord God of heaven to set up a kingdom on the ruins of Satan's kingdom; and such honour does the Father put upon Christ for the disgrace he suffered when on earth.

From what has been said of the success of the gospel from Christ's ascension to the time of Constantine, we may deduce a strong argument for the truth of the christian religion, and that the gospel of Jesus Christ is really from God. Particularly,

**1.** We may gather from what has been said, that it is the gospel, and that only, which has actually been the means of bringing the world to the

knowledge of the true God. That those are no gods whom the heathen worshipped, and that there is but one only God, is what, now since the gospel has so taught us, we can see to be truth by our own reason. It is plainly agreeable to the light of nature; and it can be easily shown by reason to be demonstrably true. The very deists themselves acknowledge, that it can be demonstrated, that there is one God, and but one, who has made and governs the world. But now it is evident that it is the gospel, and that only, which has actually been the means of bringing men to the knowledge of this truth. It was not the instructions of philosophers; they tried in vain: The world by wisdom knew not God. Till the gospel and the Holy Scriptures came abroad, all the world lay in God, and in the greatest darkness with embracing the absurdest opinions and all civilized nations now acknowledge light of nature, their own team,, and all the wisdom of the learned man, signified nothing till the Scriptures came. But when these came abroad, they were successful to bring the world to an acknowledgment of the one only true God, and to worship and serve him.

And hence it is, that all that part of the world which Dow acknowledges one only true God-Christians, Jews, Mehomatans, and even deists- originally came to own him. It is owing to this that they are not in general at this day left in heathenish darkness. They have it all, either immediately from the Scriptures, or by tradition from their fathers who had it first from the Scriptures. And doubtful thou who now despise the Scriptures, and boast of the strength of their own reason, as being sufficient to lead into the knowledge of the one true God, if the gospel had never come abroad in the world to enlighten their forefathers, would have been as sottish and brutish idolaters as the world in general was before the gospel came abroad. The Mahometans, who own but one true God, at first borrowed the notion from the Scriptures: for the first Mahometans had been educated in the christian religion, and apostatized from it. And this is evident, that the Scriptures were designed of God to be the proper means to bring the world to the knowledge of himself, rather than human reason, or any thing else. For it is unreasonable to suppose, that the gospel, and that only which God never designed as the proper mean for obtaining this effect, should actually obtain it; and that after human reason, which he designed as the proper mean, had been tried for a great many ages without

any effect. If the Scriptures be not the word of God, then they are nothing but darkness and delusion, yea, the greatest delusion that ever was.

Now, is it reasonable to suppose, that God in his providence would make use falsehood and delusion, to bring the world to the knowledge of himself, and that no part of it should be brought to the knowledge of him any other way?

**2.** The gospel prevailing as it did against such powerful opposition, plainly shows the hand of God. The Roman government, that so violently set itself to hinder the success of the gospel, and to subdue the church of Christ, was the most powerful that ever wall in the world; and not only no, but they seemed to have the church in their hands. The Christians who were under their command, never took up arms to defend themselves; they armed themselves with nothing but patience, and such like spiritual weapons and yet this mighty power could not conquer but on the contrary Christianity conquered them. The Roman empire had subdued many mighty and potent kingdoms they subdued the Grecian monarchy, though it made the utmost resistance. and yet they could not conquer the church which was in their lands; but, an the contrary, were subdued and finally triumphed over by the church.

**3.** No other sufficient cause can possibly be assigned for, this propagation of the gospel, but only his own power. There was certainly some reason. Here was a great and wonderful effect; and this effect was not without some cause. — Now, what other cause can be devised but only the divine power! It was not the outward strength of the instruments which were employed in it. At first, the gospel was preached only by a few fishermen, who were Without power and worldly interest to support theta. It was not their craft and policy that produced this wonderful effect; for they were poor illiterate men. It was the notions and not the agreeableness of the story they had to tell to the notions and principles of mankind. We was no pleasant fable: a crucified God and Saviour was to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness. It was not the agreeableness of their doctrines to the dispositions of men: for nothing is more contrary to the corruption's of men than the pure doctrines of the gospel. This effect therefore can have proceeded from no other cause then the power and agency of God: and if the power of God was thus exercised

to cause the gospel to prevail, then the gospel is his word; for surely God does not use his almighty power to promote a mere imposture and delusion.

**4.** This success is agreeable to what Christ and his apostles foretold. — <sup><168</sup>Matthew 16:18. “Upon this rock will I build my church: and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” <sup><172</sup>John 12:24. “Verily verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into ground, and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much much fruit.” And verse 31, 32. “Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.” <sup><168</sup>John 16:8. “When he (the Comforter) is come, he will reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, -because the prince of this world is judged.”

So the apostle Paul, in 1 Corinthians chapter 1:21-28. declares, how that after the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe; and that God chose the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and weak things of the world, to confound the which are mighty; and ban things of the world, and things which am despised and thing which are not, to bring to are. — If any man foretells a thing, very come to pass, from causes which can be foreseen it is no great argument of a revelation from God: but when a thing is foretold which is very unlikely ever to come to pass, is entirely contrary to the common course of things, and yet it does come to pass just agreeable to the prediction, this is a strong argument that the prediction was from God. Thus the consideration of the manner of the propagation and success of the gospel during the time which has been spoken of, affords great evidence that the Scriptures are the word of God.

## PART 3

### **THE SUCCESS OF REDEMPTION FROM THE TIME OF CONSTANTINE TO THE RISE OF ANTICHRIST.**

I AM now to show how the success of Christ’s redemption is carried on from the overthrow of the heathen Roman empire in the time of

Constantine the Great, till the rise of Antichrist. And in order to a more clear view of the great works of God in accomplishing the success of Christ's redemption, and our seeing the glory of them, it will be necessary, as in the foregoing periods, to consider not only the success itself, but the opposition made to it.

**I.** The opposition. Satan, the great red dragon, after so sore a Michael and his angels for the greater part of three hundred years, was at last entirely routed and vanquished; so that lie was cast down, as it were, from heaven to the earth. Yet he does not give over his opposition to the woman, the church of Christ, concerning which all this conflict had been; but is still in a rage, renews his attempts, and has recourse to new devices against the church. The serpent, after he is cast out of heaven to the earth, casts out of his mouth water as a food, to cause the woman to be carried away of the flood. The opposition that he made to the church of Christ before the rise of Antichrist, was principally of two sorts. It was either by corrupting the church of Christ with heresies, or by new endeavours to restore paganism.

**1.** After the destruction of the heathen Roman empire, Satan infested the church with heresies. Though there had been so glorious a work of God in delivering the church from her heathen persecutors, and overthrowing the heathen empire; yet the days of the church's travail not being ended, and the set time of her prosperity not yet come, (as being what was to succeed the fall of Antichrist, therefore the peace and prosperity which the church enjoyed in Constantine's time, was but very short. It was a respite, which gave the church a time of peace and silence, as it were for half an hour, wherein the four angels held the four winds from blowing till the servants of God should be sealed in their foreheads. But the church soon began to be greatly infested with heresies; the two principal, and those which did most infest the church, were Arian and Pelagian.

The Arians began soon aft Constantine came to the throne. They denied the doctrine of the Trinity, the divinity of Christ and the Holy Ghost, and maintained, that they were but mere creatures. This heresy increased more and more in the church, and which threatened to overthrow all, and entirely to carry away the church, insomuch that before the close of the fourth century, the greater part of the christian church were become Arians. Some emperors, the successors of Constantine, were Arians; so

that being the prevailing party, and having the civil authority on their side they raised a great persecution against the true church of Christ; so that this heresy might well become to a flood out of the mouth of the serpent, which threatened to overthrow all, and quite carry away the woman.

The Pelagian heresy arose in the beginning of the next century. It began by one Pelagius, who was born in Britain: his British name was Morgan. He denied original sin and the influence of the Spirit of God in conversion, and held the power of free will, and many other things of like tendency; and this heresy did for a while greatly infest the church. Pelagius's principal antagonist who wrote in defence of the orthodox faith, was St. Augustin.

**2.** The other kind of opposition which Satan made against the church, was in his endeavours to restore paganism. His first attempt was by Julian the apostate. Julian was nephew to Constantine the Great. When Constantine died and left his empire to three sons; and after their death, Julian the apostate reigned in their stead. He had been a professed Christian; but he fell from Christianity, and turned pagan; and therefore is called the apostate. When he came to the throne, he used his utmost endeavours to overthrow the christian church, and set up paganism again in the empire. He put down the christian magistrates, and set up heathens in their room. He rebuilt the heathen temples, set up the heathen worship, and became a most notorious persecutor of the Christians. He used to call Christ, by, way of reproach, the Galilean. He was killed with a lance in his wars with the Persians. When he saw that he was mortally wounded, he took a handful of his blood, and threw it towards heaven, crying out, "Thou hast overcome, O Galilean." He is commonly thought by divines to have committed the unpardonable sin.

Another way that Satan attempted to restore paganism in the Roman empire, was by the invasions and conquest of heathen nations. For in this space of time, the Goths and Vandals, and other barbarous nations from the north, invaded the empire, and obtained great conquests. They even overran the empire, and in the fifth century took the city of Rome, and finally conquered and took possession of the western half of the empire, and divided it amongst them. It was divided into ten kingdoms, with which began the ten horns of the beast; for we are told, that the ten horns are ten kings, who should rise in the latter part of the Roman empire: these are

also represented. by the ten toes of Nebuchadnezzar's image. The invasion and conquests of these heathen nation! are supposed to be foretold in the 8th chapter of Revelation, in what came to pass under the sounding of the four first trumpets. Now by their means heathenism was again for a while restored after it had been rooted out. — So much for the opposition of Satan against the success of the gospel during this space before the rise of Antichrist. I proceed,

**II.** To show what success there was of the gospel in this space, notwithstanding this opposition.

**1.** I would observe, that the opposition of Satan in those things was baffled. Though the dragon cast out of his mouth such a flood after the woman to carry her away, yet he could not obtain his design; but the earth helped the woman, and opened her mouth, and swallowed tip the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth. These heresies, which for a while so much prevailed, after a while dwindled away, and orthodoxy was spin restored.

**2.** The gospel, during this space of time, was further propagated amongst many barbarous nations in the contines of the Roman empire. In the time of Constantine there was a considerable propagation of the gospel in the East Indies, chiefly by the ministry of one Frumentius. Great numbers of the Liberians were converted to Christianity by a Christian woman of eminent piety, whom they had taken captive. And some account is given of several other barbarous nations who were not within the Roman empire, that great numbers of them were brought to receive the gospel by the teaching and example of captives whom they had and in war. About the year of Christ three hundred and seventy-two, the gospel was propagated among the barbarous inhabitants of Arabia; and among some of the northern nations; particularly, a prince of the Goths about this time became Christian, and a great number of his people with him. Towards the latter end of this century, the gospel was also further propagated among the Persians; and also the Scythians, a barbarous people, whom the apostle mentions, <sup>SCYTHI</sup> Colossians 3:11. "Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free."

And after this, about the year four hundred and thirty, there was a remarkable conversion of the Burgundians to the christian faith. Now the

gospel began to be propagated in Ireland; and the Irish, who till now heathen, began to receive the Christian faith. About the same time it was further propagated among some barbarous people in Scotland, and in some other places. In the next century, Zathus, a heathen king, who ruled over the Colchians, was brought to renounce his heathenism, and to embrace the Christian religion. Several other barbarous nations are recorded to have renounced heathenism and embraced Christianity about this time, that I cannot stand to mention. — Thus I have briefly considered die principal events of Providence which concern the success of the gospel of Christ from Constantine to the rise of Antichrist.

## PART 4

### THE SUCCESS OF REDEMPTION FROM THE RISE OF ANTICHRIST TO THE REFORMATION.

I COME now to the darkest and most dismal day that ever the Christian church saw, and probably the darkest that ever it will see; from the rise of Antichrist till the Reformation by Luther and others. The true church in this space was for many hundred years in a state of great obscurity; like the woman in the wilderness, she was almost hid from sight and observation. In speaking of the events of this space of time, I would,


1. Take notice of the great machinations and works of Satan against the kingdom of Christ,
  2. How the church of Christ was upheld during this time.
1. I would take notice of the great machinations and works of Satan against the kingdom of Christ during this time. Satan had done great things against the Christian church before, but had been baffled once and again. Michael and his angels had obtained a glorious victory flow terrible was his opposition during the continuance of he heathen empire, and how glorious was Christ's victory and triumph over him in the time of Constantine! It pleased God now to prepare the way for a Yet more glorious victory over him, he is suffered to renew his strength, and to do the utmost that his power and subtlety can effect. He has a long time to lay his schemes, to establish his interest, and make his matters strong. God suffers him to

carry his designs a great length indeed, almost to the swallowing up of his church, and to exercise a high, proud, and almost uncontrolled dominion in the world, a long time before Christ-finally conquers, and utterly ruins his visible kingdom. This he will do in the time of the destruction of Antichrist: thus gloriously triumphing over Satan, after he has done to the utmost of his power and subtlety; after he has lifted himself highest of all, and dealt most proudly.

The two great works of the devil, in this space of time, against the kingdom of Christ, are his creating his AntiChristian and Mahometan kingdoms, which both together comprehend the ancient Roman empire, the kingdom of Antichrist the Western, and the Mahometan kingdom the Eastern, empire. As the Scriptures in the book of Revelation represent it, it is in the destruction of these that the glorious victory of Christ, at the introduction of the glorious times of the church, will mainly consist. And here let us briefly observe how Satan erects and maintains these two great kingdoms of his in opposition to the kingdom of Christ.

**1.** With respect to the kingdom of Antichrist! This seems to be the masterpiece of all the contrivances of the devil against the kingdom of Christ, and is evidently so spoken of in Scripture. Antichrist is that man of sin, (~~2~~<sup>1</sup> 2 Thessalonians 2:3.) emphatically, as though he were so eminently. He is called Antichrist, which signifies the opponent or adversary of Christ, not because he is the only opponent of Christ, for the apostle John observes, that in his days there were many Antichrists. But yet this is called the Antichrist, as though there were none but he, because he was so eminently, and above all others. So this contrivance of the devil; is called the mystery of iniquity, (~~2~~<sup>1</sup> 2 Thessalonians 2:7. We find no enemy of Christ one half so much spoken of in the prophecies of Revelation as this, and the destruction of no enemy is spoken of as so glorious, and so happy for the church.

This is a contrivance to turn the ministry of the Christian church into a ministry of the devil, and the angels of the churches into fallen angels. In the tyranny, superstition, idolatry, and persecution, which he sets up; he contrives to make an image of ancient paganism, and more than to restore what was lost by the overthrow of Paganism in the time of Constantine. By these means, the head of the beast, which was wounded unto death in

Constantine, has his deadly wound healed in Antichrist,  Revelation 13:3. And the dragon, that formerly reigned in the heathen Roman empire, being cast out thence, after the beast with seven heads and ten horns rises up out of the sea, gives him his power, and seat, and great authority; and all the world wonders after the beast.

I am far from pretending to determine the time when the reign of Antichrist began, which is a point that has been so much controverted among divines and expositors. It is certain that the twelve hundred and sixty days, or years, which are so often in Scripture mentioned as the time of the continuance of Antichrist's reign, did not commence before the year of Christ four hundred and seventy-nine; because if they did, they would have ended, and Antichrist would have Mien before now. The rise of Antichrist was gradual. The christian church corrupted itself in many things presently after Constantine's time; growing more and more superstitions in its worship, and by degrees bringing in many ceremonies into the worship of God, till at length they brought in the worship of saints, and set up images in their churches. The clergy in general, and especially the bishop of Rome, assumed more and more authority to himself. In the primitive times, he was only a minister of a congregation, then a standing moderator of a presbytery, then a diocesan bishop, then a metropolitan, which is equivalent to an archbishop, then a patriarch. Afterwards he claimed the power of universal bishop over the whole Christian church, wherein he was opposed for a while, but afterwards was confirmed in it by the civil power of the emperor in the year six hundred and six. After that he claimed the power of a temporal prince, and so was wont to carry two swords, to signify that both the temporal and spiritual sword was his. He claimed more and more authority, till at length, as Christ's vicegerent on earth, he claimed the very same power that Christ would have done, if he was present on earth reigning on his throne; or the same power that belongs to God, and was used to be called God on earth; to be submitted to by all the princes of Christendom. He claimed power to crown princes, and to degrade them at his pleasure, and this power was owned: yea, kings and emperors used to kiss his feet. The emperors received their crowns at his hands; and princes were wont to dread the displeasure of the pope, as they would dread a thunderbolt from heaven. If the pops was pleased to excommunicate a prince, all his subjects were at

once freed from their allegiance to him, and obliged not to own him any more, on pain of excommunication, and not only so, but any man might kill him wherever him. Further, the pope was believed to have power to damn men at pleasure, for whoever died under his excommunication, was looked upon as certainly damned. Several emperors were actually deposed, and ejected, and died miserably by his means, and if the people of any state or kingdom did not please him, he had power to lay that state or kingdom under an interdict which was a sentence pronounced by the pope against that state or kingdom, whereby all sacred administrations among them could have no validity. There could be no valid baptisms, or sacraments, or prayers, or preaching, or pardons, till that interdict was taken off, so that that people remained, in their apprehension, in a miserable, damnable state, and therefore dreaded it as they would a storm of fire and brimstone from heaven. And in order to execute his wrath on a prince or people with whom he was displeased, other princes must also be put to a great deal of trouble and expense.

And as the pope and his clergy robbed the people of their ecclesiastical and civil liberties and privileges, so they also robbed them of their estates, drained all christendom of their money. They engrossed most of their riches into their own coffers, by vast revenues, besides pay for pardons and indulgences, baptisms and extreme unctions, deliverance out of purgatory, and a hundred other things. — See how well this agrees with the prophecies, <sup>2</sup> Thessalonians 2:3, 4. <sup>2072</sup> Daniel 7:20, 21. <sup>6610</sup> Revelation 13:6, 7. and chapter 17:3,4.

During this time also superstition and ignorance more and more prevailed. The if Holy Scriptures by degrees were taken out of the hands of the laity, the better to promote the unscriptural and wicked designs of the pope and the clergy; and instead of promoting knowledge among the people, they industriously promoted ignorance. It was a received maxim among them, That ignorance is the mother of devotion: and so great was the darkness of those times, that learning. was almost extinct in the world. The very priests themselves, most of them, were barbarously ignorant as to any commendable reaming, or any other knowledge, than their hellish craft in oppressing and tyrannizing over the souls of the people. The superstition and wickedness of the church of Rome, kept growing worse and worse till the very time of the Reformation, and the whole Christianity world were

led away into this great defection, excepting the remains of the Christian church in the Eastern empire that had not been utterly overthrown by the Turks. The Greek church, and some others, were also sunk into great darkness and gross superstition, excepting also those few that were the people of God, who are represented by the woman in the wilderness, and God's two witnesses, of which more hereafter.—This is one of those two great kingdoms which the devil in this period erected in opposition to the kingdom of Christ, and was the greatest and chief.

**2.** The Mahometan kingdom is another of mighty power and vast extent, set up by Satan against the kingdom of Christ. He set this up in the Eastern empire, as he did that of Antichrist in the Western.

Mahomet was born in the year of Christ five hundred and seventy, in Arabia. When he was about forty years of age, he began to boast that he was the great prophet of God and proceeded to teach his new-invented religion, of which he was to be worshipped as the head next under God. He published his Alcoran, which he pretended he received from the angel Gabriel; and being a subtle crafty man, possessed of considerable wealth, and living among a people who were very ignorant, and greatly divided in their opinions on religious matters, he by subtlety and fair promises of a sensual paradise, gained a number to be his followers. He set up for their prince, and propagated his religion by the sword, and made it meritorious of paradise to fight for him. By such means his party grew, and went on fighting till they conquered and brought over the neighbouring countries, and so his party gradually increased till they overran a great part of the world. First, the Saracens were some of his followers, who were a people of Arabia, where Mahomet lived, and who about the year seven hundred, dreadfully wasted the Roman empire. — They overran a great many countries belonging to the empire. and continued their conquests a long time. These are supposed to be meant by the locusts mentioned in the 9th chapter of Revelation.

And then the Turks, who were originally different from the Saracens, became followers of Mahomet, and conquered all the Eastern empire. They began their empire about the year of Christ twelve hundred and ninety-six; began to invade Europe in the year thirteen hundred; took Constantinople, and so became masters of all the Eastern empire, in the

year fourteen hundred and fifty-three. And thus all the cities and countries where storm those famous churches of which we read in the New Testament, as Jerusalem, Antioch, Ephesus, Corinth, etc. now became subject to the Turks. These are supposed to be prophesied of by the horsemen in the 9th chapter of Revelation, beginning with the 15th verse. And the remains of the Christians in those parts of the world, who are mostly of the Greek church, are in miserable slavery under these Turks are treated with a great deal of barbarity and cruelty, and are become mostly very ignorant and superstitious.

Thus I have shown what great works of Satan were wrought during this space of time in opposition to the kingdom of Christ.


**II.** I come now to show how the church of Christ was upheld through this dark time.

**1.** It is to be observed, that towards the former part of this space of time, some of the nations of Christendom held out a lone time before they complied with the corruption's and usurpations of the church of Rome. Though all the world wondered after the beast, yet all nations did not fall in at once. Many of the principal corruptions of the church of Rome were brought in with a great deal of struggle and opposition; and particularly, when the pope gave out, that he was universal bishop, many churches greatly opposed him in it; and it was a long time before they would yield to his exorbitant claims. And so, when the worship of images was first brought into the churches, there were many who greatly opposed it, and long held out against it. And so with respect to other corruptions of the church of Rome. Those who dwelt nearer to the city of Rome complied sooner; but some that were more remote, were a long time before they could be induced to put their necks under the yoke: and particularly a great part of the churches in England, Scotland, and France, retained the ancient purity of doctrine and worship much longer than many others who were nearer the chief seat of Antichrist.

**2.** In every age of this dark time, there appeared particular persons in all parts of Christendom, who bore a testimony against the corruptions and tyranny of the church of Rome. There is no one age of Antichrist, even in the darkest times, but ecclesiastical historians mention many by name who manifested an abhorrence of the pope, and his idolatrous worship, and

pleaded for the ancient purity of doctrine and worship. God was pleased to maintain an uninterrupted succession of many witnesses through the whole time, in Germany, France, Britain, and other countries; private persons and ministers, some magistrates and persons of great distinction. — And there were numbers in every age who were persecuted and put to death for this testimony.

**3.** Besides these particular persons dispersed, there was a certain People called the Waldeneses, who lived separate from all the rest of the world, and constantly bore a testimony against the church of Rome through all this dark time The place where they dwelt was the Vaudois, or the five valleys of Piedmont, a very mountainous country, between Italy and France; it was compassed about with those exceeding high mountains, the Alps, which were almost impassable, and therefore the valleys were almost inaccessible. There this people lived for many ages, in a state of a separation from all the world, having very little to do with any other people And there they served God in the ancient purity of his worship, and never submitted to the church of Rome. This probably was the place especially meant in the 12th chapter of Revelation, 6th verse, as prepared of God for the woman, that they should feed her there during the reign of Antichrist.

Some of the popish writers themselves own, that this people never submitted to the church of Rome. One of the popish writers, speaking of the Waldenses, says, The heresy of the Waldenses is the oldest heresy in the world. It is supposed that they first betook themselves to this place among the mountains, to hide themselves from the severity of the heathen persecutions which existed before Constantine the Great. And thus the woman fled into the wilderness from the face of the serpent,  Revelation 12:6, 14. “And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place: where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.” The people being settled there, their posterity continued from age to age: and being, as it were, by natural walls, as well as by God’s grace, separated horn the rest of the world, they never partook of the overflowing corruption.

These especially were those virgins who were not defiled, when other churches prostituted themselves; but they kept themselves pure for Christ alone. They followed the Lamb, their spiritual husband, whithersoever he went: they followed him into this hideous wilderness, ~~664~~ Revelation 14:4, 5. — Their doctrine and worship appear to be the same with the Protestant doctrine and worship; and by the confession of popish writers, they were a people remarkable for the strictness of their lives, for charity and other christian virtues. They lived in external poverty in this hideous country; but they chose this rather than comply with the great corruptions of the rest of the world.

Living in so secret a place, it was a long time before they were noticed. But at last, falling under observation, the Romanists went out in mighty armies against them, fell upon them with insatiable cruelty, barbarously massacring and putting to death men, women, and children, with all imaginable tortures. Their enemies continued persecuting them with but little intermission for several hundred years; by which means many were driven out of the valleys of Piedmont. These fled into all parts of Europe, carrying with them their doctrine, to which many were brought over. Their persecutors could not by all their cruelties extirpate the church of God; so fulfilling his word, “that the gates of hell should not prevail against it.”

**4.** Towards the latter part of this dark time, several noted divines openly appeared to defend the truth, and bear testimony against the corruptions of the church of Rome. — The first and principal of these was a certain English divine, John Wickliff, who appeared about one hundred and forty years before the Reformation, he strenuously opposed the popish religion, taught the same doctrine that the Reformers afterwards did, and had many followers in England. He was hotly persecuted in his lifetime, yet died in peace, but after he was buried, his bones were dug up by his persecutors, and bums. His followers remained in considerable numbers in England till the Reformation; they were cruelly persecuted, and multitudes were put to death for their religion.

Wickliff had many disciples, not only in England, but in other parts of Europe, whither his books were carried and particularly in Bohemia, among whom were two eminent divines, John Huss and Jerom, a divine of

Prague, the chief city of Bohemia. These strenuously Opposed the church of Rome, and had many who adhered to them. They were both burnt by the papists, for their doctrine and their followers in Bohemia were cruelly persecuted, but never extirpated all the Reformation.

## PART 5

### THE SUCCESS OF REDEMPTION FROM THE REFORMATION TO THE PRESENT TIME.

THUS having gone through the dark time of the church, I come now to consider that part which begins with the Reformation, and reaches to the present time. And here I would,

- 1, Speak of the Reformation itself;
2. The opposition which the devil has made to the Reformed church;
3. What success there has lately been of the gospel in one place and another;
4. What the state of things is now in the world with regard to the church of Christ, and the success of his purchase.

**I.** The first thing to be taken notice of is the Reformation itself: This was begun in Germany, about the Year fifteen hundred and fifteen, by the preaching of Martin Luther, who being stirred in his spirit to see the horrid practices of the popish clergy — and having set himself diligently to inquire after truth by the study of the Holy Scriptures, and the writings of the ancient father of the church — very openly and boldly decried the corruptions and usurpations of the Romish church in his preaching and writings. He had soon a great number who fell in with him; among whom was the Elector of Saxony, the sovereign prince of the country to which he belonged. This greatly alarmed the church of Rome, it rallied all its force to oppose him and his doctrine, and fierce wan and persecutions were raised against it. But yet it went on by the labours of Luther and Mehachthon in Germany Zuinglius in Switzerland, and other eminent divines, who were

contemporary with Luther; particularly Calvin, who appeared after the beginning of the Reformation, but was one of the most eminent reformers.

Many of the princes of Germany soon fell in with the Reformed religion, and many other states and kingdoms in Europe, as England, Scotland, Sweden, Denmark Norway, great part of France, Poland, Lithuania, Switzerland, and the Low Countries. So that it is thought, that heretofore about half Christendom were of the Protestant religion, though since, the papists have gained ground: so that the Protestant's now have not so great a proportion.

Thus God began gloriously to revive his church again, and advance the kingdom of his Son, after such a dismal night of darkness from the rise of Antichrist to that time. There had been many endeavours used by the witnesses for the truth for a reformation before. But now, when God's appointed time was come, his work went on with a swift and wonderful progress; and Antichrist, who had been rising higher and higher from his beginning till that time, was swiftly and suddenly brought down; he fell half way towards utter ruin, and never has been able to rise again to his former height. A certain late expositor, (Mr. Lowman,) who explains the five first vials in the 16th chapter of Revelation with greater probability perhaps than any who went before him, explains the fifth vial, which was poured out on the seat of the beast, of what came to pass in the Reformation; having explained the four preceding vials of certain great judgments which God brought on the popish dominions before the Reformation. It is said, ~~Revelation~~ Revelation 16:10. that "the fifth angel poured out his vial on the seat of the beast;" in the original, it is the throne of the beast, "and his kingdom was full of darkness, and they gnawed their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds." He poured out his vial upon the throne of the beast, *i.e.* on the authority sold dominion of the pope: so the word throne is often used in Scripture; so ~~1 Kings~~ 1 Kings 1:37. "As the Lord hath been with my lord the king, even so be he with Solomon, and make his throne greater than the throne of my Lord King David," *i.e.* make his dominion and authority greater, and his kingdom more glorious.

But now, in the Reformation, the vials of God's wrath were poured out on the throne of the beast, till it was terribly shaken and diminished. The pope's authority and dominion was so greatly diminished, both as to extent and degree, that he lost about half his dominions, besides that authority, even in popish dominions, which he had before. He is not regarded, and his power is dreaded in no measure as it was wont to be. The powers of Europe have learned not to put their necks under the pope's feet. He is as a lion that has lost his teeth, in comparison of what he was once. And when the pope and his clergy, enraged to see their authority so diminished at the Reformation, laid their heads together, and joined their forces to destroy the Reformation; their policy, which was wont to serve them so well, failed. They found their kingdom full of darkness, so that they could do nothing, any more than the Egyptians, who rose not from their seats for three days. The Reformed church was defended as Lot and the angels were in Sodom, by smiting the Sodomites with darkness or blindness, so that they could not find the door. God then fulfilled that in ~~Job~~ Job 5:11, etc. "To set up on high those that be low; that those which mourn may be exalted to safety. He disappointeth the devices of the crafty, so that their hands cannot perform their enterprise. He taketh the wise in their own craftiness; and the counsel of the froward is carried headlong. They meet with darkness in the day-time, and grope in the noon-day as in the night. But he saveth the poor from the sword, from their mouth, and from the hand of the mighty."-Those proud enemies of God's people being so disappointed, and finding themselves so unable to uphold their own dominion and authority, were made as it were to gnaw their tongues for pain, or to bite them for mere rage.

**II.** I proceed to show what opposition has been made by Satan and his adherents, to this success of Christ's purchase by the Reformation observing as we go along, how far they have been baffled, and how far they have been successful.

The opposition which Satan has made against the Reformed religion has been principally of the following kinds viz. that which was made, 1. by a general council of the church of Rome; 2. by secret plots and devices, 3. by open wars and invasions; 4. by cruel oppression and persecution, and, 5. by bringing in corrupt opinions.

**1.** The first opposition that I shall notice is that which was made by the clergy of the church of Rome in a general council. This was the famous council of Trent, which the pope called a little while after the Reformation. In that council, there met together six cardinals, thirty-two archbishops, two hundred and twenty-eight bishops, besides innumerable others of the Romish clergy. This council, in all their sittings, including the times of intermission, was held for twenty-five years together. Their main business all this while was to concert measures for establishing the church of Rome against the reformers and for destroying the Reformation. But it proved that they were not able to perform their enterprise. The Reformed church, notwithstanding their great council, remained, and still remains. So that the council of the froward is carried headlong: their kingdom is full of darkness, and they weary themselves to find the door.

Thus the church of Rome, instead of repenting of their deeds, when such clear light was held forth to them by Luther and other servants of God, persisted, by general agreement in council, in their vile corruptions and wickedness, and obstinate opposition to the kingdom of Christ. The doctrines and practices of the church of Rome, which were chiefly condemned by the Reformed, were confirmed by the decrees of their council; and the corruptions, in many respect, were carried higher than ever before. They uttered blasphemous reproaches and curses against the Reformed religion, and all the Reformed church was excommunicated and anathematized by them. According to the prophecy, they blasphemed God. Thus God hardened their hearts, [i. e: left them to do so,] intending to destroy them.

**2.** The papists have often endeavoured to overthrow the Reformation by secret plots and conspiracies. There were many plots against the life of Luther. The papists were contriving to dispatch him out of their way; and he, being a very bold man, often very much exposed himself in the cause of Christ: but yet they were wonderfully prevented from hurting him, and he at last died in his bed in peace. There have been innumerable schemes secretly laid for the overthrow of the Protestant religion; one of the most considerable, and which seemed to be the most likely to have taken effect, was that in the time of King James II. of England. There was at that time a strong conspiracy between the king of England and Lewis XIV: of France, who were both papists, to extirpate the Northern heresy, as they called

the Protestant religion, not only out of England, but out of all Europe; and they had laid their schemes so, that they seemed to be almost sure of their purpose. They looked upon it, that if the Reformed religion were suppressed in the British realms, and in the Netherlands which were the strongest and chief defence of the Protestant interest, they should have easy work with the rest. And just as their matters seemed to be come to a head, and their enterprise ripe for execution, God in his providence, suddenly dashed all their schemes in pieces by the Revolution, at the comma in of King William and Queen Mary, by which all their designs were at an end. Now the Protestant interest was more strongly established, by the crown of England being transferred to the Protestant house of Hanover, and a papist being, by the constitution of the nation, for ever rendered incapable of wearing the crown of England. Thus they groped in darkness at noon-day as in the night, and their hands could not perform their enterprise, and their kingdom was full of darkness, and they gnawed their tongues for pain.

After this, there was a deep design laid to bring the same thing to pass in the latter end of Queen Anne's reign, by the bringing in of the popish Pretender; which was no less suddenly and totally baffled by Divine Providence; as all the plots against the Reformation by bringing in the Pretender have been.

**3.** The Reformation has often been opposed by open wars and invasions. The emperor of Germany declared war with the duke of Saxony, and the principal men who favoured and received Luther's doctrine. But they could not obtain their end; they could not suppress the Reformation For the same end, some time after, the king of Spain maintained a long war with Holland and the Low Countries But those cruel wars issued greatly to the disadvantage of the Romish church, as they occasioned the setting up of one of the most powerful Protestant states in Europe. The design of the Spanish invasion of England in Queen Elizabeth's time, was to suppress and root out the Reformed religion; and therefore they brought in their fleet all manner of instruments of cruelty wherewith to torture the Protestant who would not renounce the Protestant religion. But their design was totally baffled, and their mighty fleet in a great measure ruined.

**4.** Satan has opposed the Reformation with cruel persreutions. The persecutions with which the protestants have been harassed by the church of Rome, have in many respects been far beyond any of the heathen persecutions. So that Antichrist has proved the greatest and most cruel enemy to the church of Christ that ever was in the world, in this, as well as in all other respect; agreeable to the description given of the church of Rome,

“And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.” (~~Rev~~ Revelation 17:6)

And, chapter 18:24. “And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all them that were slain upon the earth.”

The heathen persecutions had been very dreadful: but now persecution by the church of Rome was improved, and studied, and cultivated, as an art or science. Such ways of afflicting and tormenting were found out, as are beyond the invention of ordinary men, or men unstudied in those things: and beyond the invention of all former age And that persecution might be managed the more effectually, there were certain societies of men established in various parts of the popish domimons, whose business it should be to study, and improve, and practice persecution in its highest perfection, viz. the courts of inquisition. The particular histories of the Romish persecution, and their courts of inquisition, will give that idea which a few words cannot express.

When the Reformation began, the beast with seven beats and ten horns began to rage in a dreadful manner. The church of Rome renewed its persecution of the poor Waldenses, and great multitudes of them were cruelly tortured and put to death. Soon after the Reformation, there were terrible persecutions in various parts of Germany, and especially in Bohemia, which lasted for thirty years together; in which so much blood was shed for the sake of religion, that a certain writer compares it to the plenty of waters of the great rivers of Germany. The countries of Poland, Lithuania, and Hungary, were in like manner deterred with Protestant blood.

By means of these and other cruel persecutions, the Protestant religion was in a great measure suppressed in Bohemia, the Palatinate, and

Hungary, which before were Protestant countries. Thus was fulfilled what was fore told of the little horn, <sup>(212)</sup> Daniel 7:20, 21. “-and of the ten horns that were in his head, and of the other which came up, and before whom three fell, even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spoke very great shins whose look was more stout than his fellows. I beheld and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them.” And what was foretold of the beast having seven heads and ten horns,

“And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to over come them; and power was given him over all kindreds and tongues, and nations.” (<sup>(213)</sup> Revelation 13:7)

Holland and the other Low Countries were for many years a scene of nothing but the most affecting and amazing cruelties, being deluged with the blood of Protestants. under the merciless hands of the Spaniards, to whom they were then in subjection. But in this persecution the devil in a great measure failed of his purpose, as it issued in a great part of the Netherlands casting off the Spanish yoke, and setting up a wealthy and powerful protestant state, to the great defence of the Protestant cause ever since.

France is also another country, which since the Reformation, in some respects, perhaps more than any other, has been a scene of dreadful cruelties suffered by the Protestant. After many cruelties had been exercised towards the Protestants in that kingdom, there was begun a persecution of them in the year fifteen hundred and seventy-one, in the reign of Charles IX. king of France. It began with a cruel massacre, wherein seventy thousand Protestants were slain in a few days, as the king boasted: and in all this persecution, he slew, as is supposed, three hundred thousand martyrs. And it is reckoned, that about this time, within thirty years, there were martyred in this kingdom, for the protestant religion, thirty-nine princes, one hundred and forty-eight counts, two hundred and thirty-four barons, one hundred and forty-seven thousand five hundred and eighteen gentlemen, and seven hundred and sixty thousand common people.

But all these persecutions were, for exquisite cruelty, far exceeded by those which followed in the reign of Lewis XIV. which indeed are supposed to exceed all others and being long continued, by reason of the

long feign of that king, they almost wholly extirpated the protestant religion out of that kingdom, where had flourished a multitude of famous protestant churches all over the kingdom. Thus it was given to the beast to make war with the saints, and to overcome them.

There was also a terrible persecution in England in Queen Mary's time, wherein great numbers in all parts of the kingdom were burnt alive. And after this, though the protestant religion has been for the most part established by law in England, yet there have been very severe persecutions by the high-churchmen, who symbolize in many things with the papists. Such was that which occasioned our forefathers to flee from their native country, and to come and settle in this land, which was then a hideous howling wilderness. And these persecutions were continued with little intermission till King William came to the throne.

Scotland has also been the scene, for many years together, of cruelties and blood by the hands of high-churchmen, such as came very little short of the popish persecution in Queen Mary's days, and in many things much exceeded it, which continued till they were delivered by King William.

Ireland also has been as it were overwhelmed with protestant blood. In the days of King Charles I. of England, above two hundred thousand Protestants were cruelly murdered in that kingdom in a few days, the papists, by a secret agreement, rising at an appointed time, intending to kill every protestant in the kingdom at once.

Besides these, there have been very cruel persecutions in Italy, and Spain, and other places, which I shall not stand to relate. — Thus did the devil, and his great minister Antichrist, rage with such violence and cruelty against the church of Christ I and thus did the whore of Babylon make herself drunk with the blood of the saints and martyrs of Jesus! By these persecutions the protestant church has been much diminished. have they not been able to prevail; but still the protestant church is upheld and Christ fulfils his promise, that “the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

**5.** The last kind of opposition that Satan has made to the Reformation is by corrupt opinions. The first opposition of this kind was by the sect of the Anabaptists, which began about four or five years after the

Reformation itself. This sect, as it first appeared in Germany, were vastly more extravagant than the present Anabaptists are in England. They held a great many exceeding corrupt opinions. One tenet of theirs was, that there ought to be no civil authority, and that it was lawful to rebel against it. And on this principle, they refused to submit to magistrates, or any human laws, and gathered together in vast armies, to defend themselves against their civil rulers, and put all Germany into an uproar, and so kept it for some time.

The next opposition of this kind to the Reformation was that which was made by enthusiasts. Those are called enthusiasts who falsely pretend to be inspired by the Holy Ghost as the prophet were. These began in Germany about ten years after Luther began the Reformation; and there arose various sects of them who were exceeding wild and extravagant. The followers of these are the Quakers in England, and other parts of the British dominions.

The next to these were the Socinians, who had their beginning chiefly in Poland, by the teaching of Lalius Socinus and Faustus Socinus. They held, that Christ was a mere man, and denied Christ's satisfaction and most of the fundamental doctrines of the christian religion. Their heresy has since been greatly propagated among protestants in Poland, Germany, Holland, England, and other places.

After these arose the Arminians. They take their name from a Dutchman, whose name was Jacobus Van Harmin, which, turned into Latin, is called Jacobus Arminius; and from his name the whole sect are called Arminians. This Jacobus Arminius was first a minister at Amsterdam, and then a professor of divinity in the university of Leyden. He had many followers in Holland. There was upon this a synod of all the reformed churches called together, who met at Dort in Holland. The synod of Dort condemned them; but yet they spread and prevailed. They began to prevail in England in the reign of Charles I. especially in the church of England. The church of England divines before that were almost universally Calvinists: but since that, Arminianism has gradually more and more prevailed, till they are become almost universally Arminians. And not only so, but Arminianism has greatly prevailed among the dissenters, and has spread greatly in New England, as well as Old.

Since this, Arianism has been revived. Arianism, a little after Constantine's time, almost swallowed up the Christian world, like a flood out of the mouth of the serpent which threatened to swallow up the woman. And of late years, this heresy has been revived in England, and greatly prevails there, both in the church of England, and among dissenters. These hold, that Christ is but a mere creature, though they grant that he is the greatest of all creature."

Another thing which has of late exceedingly prevailed among Protestants, and especially in England, is deism. The deists wholly cast off the Christian religion, and are professed infidels. Indeed they own the being of God but deny any revealed religion, or any word of God at all; and say that God has given mankind no other light to walk by but their own reason. With these opinions our nation, which is the principal nation of the Reformation, is very much overrun, and they prevail more and more. Thus much concerning the opposition that Satan has made against the Reformation.

**III.** I proceed to show what face the gospel has had in these later times of the Reformed church. This success may be reduced to three heads: 1. Reformation in doctrine and worship in countries called Christian; 2. Propagation of the gospel among the heathen; 3. Revival of religion in the power and practice of it.

**1.** As to the first, viz. reformation in doctrine, the most considerable success of late has been in the empire of Muscovy, which is a country of vast extent. The people I of this country, so many of them as call themselves Christians, professed to be of the Greek church; but were barbarously ignorant, and very superstitious, till of late years. Their late emperor, Peter the Great, set himself to reform his dominions, took great pains to bring them out of their darkness, and to have them instructed in religion. To that end, he set up schools of learning, ordered the Bible to be printed in the language of the country, made a law that every family should keep the Holy Scriptures in their houses, that every person should be able to read the same, and that no person should be allowed to marry till they were able to read the Scriptures. He also reformed the churches of his country of many of their superstitions, whereby the religion professed and practiced in Muscovy is much nearer to that of the protestants than

formerly it used to be. This emperor gave great encouragement to the exercise of the protestant religion in his dominions. And since that, Muscovy is become a land of light, in comparison of what it was fifty years past.

2. As to the second kind of success which the gospel has lately had, viz. its propagation among the heathen, I would take notice of three things.

(1.) The propagation of the gospel among the heathen here in America. This American continent, which is a very great part of the world, and, together with its neighbouring seas adjoining, takes up one side of the globe, was wholly unknown to all Christian nations till these latter times. It was not known that there was any such part of the world, though it was very full of people: and therefore the devil had this part of the world as it were secure to himself, out of the reach of the light of the gospel, and so out of the way of molestation in his dominion over them. Here the many nations of Indians worshipped him as God from age to age, while the gospel was confined to the opposite side of the globe. It is probably supposed, from some remaining accounts, that the occasion of first peopling America was this; that the devil, being alarmed and surprised by the wonderful success of the gospel the first three hundred years after Christ, and by the downfall of the heathen empire in the time of Constantine-and seeing the gospel spread so fast, and fearing that his heathenish kingdom would be wholly overthrown through the world-led away a people from the other continent into America, that they might be quite out of the reach of the gospel, that here he might quietly possess them, and reign over them as their god.- Many writers intimate, that some of the Indian nations, when the Europeans first came into America, had a tradition among them, that their god first led them into this continent, and went before them in an ark.

However, it is certain that the devil did here quietly enjoy his dominion over the poor Indians for many ages. But in later times God has sent the gospel into these parts, and now the Christian church is set up here in New England, and in other parts of America, where before had been nothing but the grossest heathenish darkness. Great part of America is now full of Bibles, and full of at least the form of the worship of the true

God and Jesus Christ where the name of Christ before had not been heard of for many ages, if at all. And though there has been but a small propagation of the gospel among the heathen here in comparison of what were to be wished for; yet there has been something worthy of notice. — There was something remarkable in New England, both at first and of late, and in other parts of America among many Indians, of an inclination to be instructed in the Christian religion.

However small the propagation of the gospel among the heathen here in America has been hitherto; yet I think we may well look upon the discover of so great a part of the world, and bringing the gospel into it, as one thing by which Divine Providence is preparing the way for the future glorious times of the church, when Satan's kingdom shall be overthrown, throughout the whole habitable globe, on even side, and on all its continents. When those times come, then doubtless the gospel shall have glorious success, and all the inhabitants of this new-discovered world shall become subjects of the kingdom of Christ, as well as all the other ends of the earth. In all probability, Providence has so ordered it, that the mariner's compass (which is an invention of later times, men are enabled to sail over the widest ocean, when before they durst not venture far from land) should prove a preparation for what God intends to bring to pass in the glorious times of the church, viz. the sending forth the gospel wherever any of the children of men dwell, how far soever off, and however separated by wide oceans from those parts of the world which are already Christianized.

(2.) There has of late years been a very considerable propagation of the gospel among the heathen in the dominions of Muscovy. I have already observed the reformation which has lately been among those who are called Christian. there: but I now speak of the heathen. Great part of the vast dominions of the emperor of Muscovy are gross heathens. The greater part of Great Tartary, a heathen country, has in later times been brought under the Muscovite government; and there have been of late great numbers who have renounced their heathenism, and have embraced the Christian religion.

(3.) There has been lately a very considerable propagation of the Christian religion among the heathen in the East Indies, particularly,

many in Malabar have been brought over to the Christian protestant religion, chiefly by the labours of certain missionaries sent thither to instruct them by the king of Denmark, who have brought over many heathens to the Christian faith, and have set up schools among them, and a printing-press to print Bibles and other books for their instruction, in their own language, with great success.

**3.** The last kind of success which I shall notice, is the revivals of the power and practice of religion. And here I shall take notice of but two instances.

**(1.)** There has been not long since a remarkable revival of the power and practice of religion in Germany, through the endeavours of an eminent divine there, *Lust Herman Frank*, professor of divinity at Halle in Saxony. Being a person of eminent charity, the great work that God wrought by him, began with his setting on foot a charitable design. It began only with his placing an almsbox at his study-door, into which some poor mites were thrown, whereby books were bought for the instruction of the poor. And God was pleased so wonderfully to smile on his design, and so to pour out a spirit of charity on that occasion, that he was enabled in a little time to erect public schools for the instruction of poor children, and an orphan-house for their supply and instruction. — At last, near five hundred children were maintained and instructed in learning and piety by the charity of others; and the number continued to increase more and more for many years. This was accompanied with a wonderful reformation and revival of religion, and a spirit of piety, in the city and university of Halle; and thus it continued. Which also had great influence in many other places in Germany. Their example seemed remarkably to stir up multitudes to their imitation.

**(2.)** Another thing, which it would be ungrateful in us not to notice, is that remarkable pouring out of the Spirit of God which has been of late in this part of New England, of which we, in this town, have had such a share. But it is needless for me particularly to describe it, seeing you have so lately been eye-witnesses of it, and I hope multitudes are sensible of the benefit. Thus I have mentioned the more remarkable instances of the success which the gospel has lately had in the world.

**IV.** I Proceed now to the last thing proposed to be considered, relating to the success of Christ's redemption during this space, viz. what is the present state of things now in the world, with regard to the church of Christ, and the success of his purchase. And this I would do, by showing how things are now compared with the first times of the Reformation.- And,

**1.** I would show wherein the state of things is altered for the worse; and,

**2.** How it is altered for the better.

**1.** I would show wherein the state of things is altered from what it was in the beginning of the Reformation, for the worse; and it is so especially in these three respects.

**(1.)** The reformed church is much diminished. The Reformation, in former times, was supposed to take place through one half of Christendom, excepting the Greek church; or that there were as many Protestants as papists. But now it is not so, the protestant church is much diminished. Heretofore there have been multitudes of Protestants in France, many famous protestant churches were planted all over that country, who used to meet together in synods, and maintain a very regular discipline. The protestant church of France was a great part of the glory of the Reformation. But now it is far otherwise: this church is all broken and scattered, and there are now but very few protestant assemblies in all that kingdom. The protestant interest is also greatly diminished in Germany. There were formerly several sovereign protestant princes, whose successors are now papists, as, particularly the Elector Palatine, and the Elector of Saxony. The kingdom of Bohemia was formerly a protestant kingdom but is now in the hands of the papists. Hungary was formerly a protestant country, but the Protestants there have been greatly reduced, and in a great measure subdued, by persecutions. And the protestant interest has no way of late remarkably gained ground of the church of Rome.

**(2.)** Another thing wherein the state of things is altered for the worse compared with the former times of the Reformation, is the prevailing of licentiousness in principles and opinions. — There is not now that

spirit of orthodoxy which then prevailed: there is very little appearance of zeal for the mysterious and spiritual doctrines of Christianity; and they never were so held in contempt, as they are in the present age; and especially in England, the principal kingdom of the Reformation. In this kingdom, those principles on which the power of godliness depends, are in a great measure exploded, and Arianism, Socinianism, Arminianism) and Deism, prevail, and carry almost all before them. History gives no account of any age wherein there was so great an infidel apostacy of those who had been brought up under the light of the gospel; never was there such a disavowal of all revealed religion; never any age wherein there was so much scoffing at and ridiculing the gospel of Christ by those who have been brought up under the gospel-light.

**(3.)** Another thing wherein things are altered for the worse, is, that there is much less of the prevalence of the power of godliness, than there was at the beginning of the Reformation. A glorious out-pouring of the Spirit of God accompanied the first Reformation, not only to convert multitudes in so short a time from popery to the true religion, but to turn many to God and true godliness. But now there is an exceeding great decay of vital piety, Yea it seems to be despised, called enthusiasm, and fanaticism. These who are truly religious, are commonly looked upon to be beside their right mind, and vice and profaneness dreadfully prevail, like a flood which threatens to bear down all before it. — But I proceed now to show,

**2.** In what respects things are altered for the latter from what they were in the first Reformation.

**(1.)** The power and influence of the pope is much diminished. Although, since the former times of the Reformation, he has gained ground in extent of dominion; yet he has lost in degree of influence. The vial which in the beginning of the Reformation was poured out on the throne of the beast, to the great diminishing of his power and authority in the world, has continued running ever since. The pope, soon after the Reformation, became less regarded by the princes of Europe than he had been before; and so he has been since less and less. Many of the popish princes themselves seem now to regard him very

little more than they think will serve their own designs; of which there have been several remarkable proofs and instances of late.

**(2.)** There is far less persecution now than there was in the first times of the Reformation. Some parts of the protestant church are at this day under persecution, and so probably will be till the day of the church's suffering and travail is at an end, which will not be till the fall of Antichrist. But it is now in no measure as it was heretofore. There does not seem to be the same Spirit of persecution prevailing, it is become more out of fashion even among the popish princes. The wickedness of the enemies of Christ, and the opposition against his cause, seem to run in another channel. The humour now is to despise and laugh at all religion; and there seems to be a spirit of indifferency about it. However, so far the state of things is better than it has been, that there is so much less of persecution.

**3.** There is a great increase of learning. In the dark times of popery, before the Reformation, learning was so far decayed, that the world seemed to be overrun with barbarous ignorance. Their very priests were many of them grossly ignorant. Learning began to revive with the Reformation, owing very much to the art of printing which was invented a little before this period. Since then, learning has increased more and more, and at this day is undoubtedly raised to a vastly greater height than ever it was before: and though no good use is made of it by the greater part of learned men, yet the increase of learning in itself is a thing to be rejoiced in, because it is a good, and, if duly applied, an excellent handmaid to divinity. It is a talent which, if God gives men a heart, affords them great advantage to do great things for the advancement of the kingdom of Christ, and the good of the souls of men. That learning and knowledge should greatly increase before the glorious times seems to be foretold, <sup>270</sup>Daniel 12:4. "But thou, O Daniel shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." And however little now learning is applied to the advancement of religion; yet we may hope that the days are approaching wherein God will make great use of it for the advancement of the kingdom of Christ.

God in his providence now seems to be acting over again the same part which he did a little before Christ came. When Christ came into the world,

learning greatly prevailed, and yet wickedness never prevailed more than then. God was pleased to suffer human learning to come to such a height before he sent forth the gospel into the world, that the world might see the insufficiency of all their own wisdom for the obtaining the knowledge of God, without the gospel of Christ, and the teaching of his Spirit. When, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God it pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe. And when the gospel came to prevail first without the help of man's wisdom, then God was pleased to make use of learning as a handmaid. So now, rearing is at a great height in the world, far beyond what it was in the age when Christ appeared; and now the world, by their learning and wisdom, do not know God and they seem to wander in darkness, are miserably deluded, stumble and fall in matters of religion, as in midnight darkness. Trusting to their learning, they grope in the day-time as in the night. Learned men are exceedingly divided in their opinions concerning the matters of religion, running into all manner of corrupt opinions, pernicious and foolish errors. They scorn to submit their reason to divine revelation, to believe any thing that is above their comprehension; and so being wise in their own eyes, they become fools, and even vain in their imaginations; they turn the truth of God into a lie, and their foolish hearts are darkened. See ~~102~~ Romans 1:21, etc.

But yet when God has sufficiently shown men the insufficiency of human wisdom and learning for the purposes of religion, and when the appointed time comes for that glorious outpouring of the Spirit of God, when he will himself by his own immediate influence enlighten men's minds, then may we hope that God will make use of the great increase of learning as a handmaid of religion, as a means of the glorious advancement of the kingdom of his Son. Then shall human learning be subservient to the understanding of the Scriptures, and to a clear explanation and a glorious defense of the doctrines of Christianity. And there is no doubt, that God in his providence has of late given the world the art of printing, and such a great increase of learning, to prepare for what he designs to accomplish for his church in the approaching days of its prosperity. And thus the wealth of the wicked is laid up for the just, ~~103~~ Proverbs 13:22.

## PART 6

### IMPROVEMENT OF PAST EVENTS.


HAVING now shown how the work of redemption has been carried on from the fall of man to the present time, before I proceed any further, I would make some APPLICATION.

**I.** From what has been said, we may see great evidence of the truth of the Christian religion, and that the Scriptures are the word of God. There are three arguments of this, which may be drawn from what has been said.

**1.** It may be argued from that violent and inveterate apposition there has always appeared of the wickedness of the world against this religion. The religion that the church of God has professed from the first, has always been the same. Though the dispensations have been altered, yet the religion which the church has professed has always, as to its essentials, been the same. The church of God, from the beginning, has been one society. The Christian church is manifestly the same society continued that was before Christ came; grafted on the same root, built on the same foundation. The revelation on which both have depended, is essentially the same: for as the Christian church is built on the Holy Scriptures, so was the Jewish church. Though now the Scriptures are enlarged by the addition of the New Testament, still it is essentially the same revelation with that which was given in the Old Testament. Only the subjects of divine revelation are now more clearly revealed in the New Testament than they were in the Old. The sum of both the Old Testament and New, is Christ and his redemption. The ground-work of the religion of the church of God, both before and since Christ has appeared, is the same great scheme of redemption by the Son of God. The church that was before the Israelitish church, was still the same society, and it was essentially the same religion that was professed and practiced in it. Thus it was from Noah to Abraham, and thus it was before the flood, for this also was built on the foundation of those revelations of Christ which were given to Adam, and Enoch. So that the church of God has always been built on those divine revelations, and were always essentially the same, and they are summarily

comprehended in the Holy Scriptures. Ever since Moses's time the church has been built on the Scriptures themselves.

So that the opposition which has been made to the church of God in all ages, has always been against the same religion, and the same revelation. Now therefore the violent and perpetual opposition that has ever been made by the corruption and wickedness of mankind against this church, is a strong argument of the truth of this religion, and this revelation, upon which this church has always been built. Contraries are well argued one from another. We may well and safely argue, that a thing is good, according to the degree of opposition in which it stands to evil, or the degree in which evil opposes it, and is an enemy to it. Now it is evident by the things which you have heard concerning the church of Christ, and that holy religion of Jesus Christ which it has professed, that the wickedness of the world has had a perpetual hatred to it, and has made most violent opposition against it.

That the church of God has always met with great opposition in the world, none can deny. This is plain by profane history as far as that reaches, and before that divine history gives us the same account. The church of God, its religion and worship, began to be opposed in the time of Cain and Abel, and was so when the earth was filled with violence in Noah's time. After this, how was the church opposed in Egypt! and how was Israel always hated by the nations round about, agreeable to  Jeremiah 12:9.

“Mine heritage is unto me as a speckled bird,  
the birds round about are against her.”

And after the Babylonish captivity, how was this church persecuted by Antiochus Epiphanes and others! How was Christ persecuted when he was on earth! and how were the apostles and other Christians persecuted by the Jews, before the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans! How violent were that people against the church I and how dreadful was the opposition of the heathen world against the Christian church after this before Constantine! How great was their spite against the true religion I And since that, how yet more violent, and spiteful, and cruel, has been the opposition of Antichrist against the church!

There is no other such instance of opposition. History gives no account of any other body of men that have been so hated, and so maliciously and insatiably pursued and persecuted, nor any thing like it. No other religion ever was so maligned age after age. The nations of other professions have enjoyed their religions in peace and quietness, however they have differed from their neighbours. One nation has worshipped one sort of gods, and others another without molesting or disturbing one another about it. All the spite and opposition has been against this religion, which the church of Christ has professed. All other religions have seemed to show an implacable enmity to this; and men have seemed to have, from one age to another, such a spite against it, that they have seemed as though they could never satisfy their cruelty. They put their inventions upon the rack to find out torments that should be cruel enough; and Yet, after all, never seemed to be satisfied. Their thirst has never been satisfied with blood.

So that it is out of doubt, that this religion, and these Scriptures, have always been malignantly opposed in the world. The only question that remains is, what it is that has made this opposition? whether or not it has been good or bad? whether it be the wickedness and corruption of the world, or not, that has done this? But of this there can be no greater doubt than that of the other, if we consider how causeless this cruelty has always been, who the opposers have been, and the manner in which they have opposed. The opposition has chiefly been from heathenism and popery; which are the fruits of the blindness, corruption, and wickedness of men, as the very deists themselves confess. The light of nature shows, that the religion of heathens, consisting in the worship of idols and sacrificing their children to them, and in obscene and abominable rites and ceremonies, is wickedness. And the superstitions, idolatries, and usurpations of the church of Rome, are no less contrary to the light of nature. By this appears, that this opposition which has been made against the church of God, has been made by wicked men. And with regard to the opposition of the Jews in Christ's and the apostles' time, it was in a most corrupt time of that nation, when the people were generally become exceeding wicked, as some of the Jewish writers themselves, Josephus and others, who lived about that time, expressly declare. And that it has been mere wickedness that has made this opposition, is manifest from the manner of opposition, the extreme violence, injustice, and cruelty, with

which the church of God has been treated. It seems to show the hand of malignant infernal spirits.

Now what reason can be assigned, why the corruption and wickedness of the world should so implacably set itself against this religion of Jesus Christ, and against the Scriptures, but only that they are contrary to wickedness and consequently are good and holy? Why should the enemies of Christ, for so many thousand years together, manifest such a mortal hatred of this religion, but only that it is the cause of God? If the Scriptures be nor the word of God, and the religion of the church of Christ be not the true religion, then it must follow, that it is a most wicked religion, nothing but a pack of lies and abominable delusions, invented by the enemies of God. And if so, it is not likely that the enemies of God, and the wickedness of the world, would have maintained such a perpetual and implacable enmity against it.

**2.** It is a great argument that the Christian church and its religion is from God, that it has been upheld hitherto through all opposition and dangers. That the church of God and the true religion, which has been so continually and violently opposed, with so many endeavors to overthrow it — and which has so often been brought to the brink of ruin, through the greatest part of six thousand years- has yet been upheld, utmost remarkably shows the hand of God in favour of the church. If duly considered, it will appear one of the greatest wonders and miracles that ever came to pass. There is nothing like it upon the face of the earth. There is no other society of men that has stood as the church has. As to the old world before the flood, that was overthrown a deluge of waters; but yet the church of God was preserved. Satan's visible kingdom on earth was then once entirely overthrown, but the visible kingdom of Christ never has been overthrown. All those ancient human kingdoms and monarchies of which we read, are long since come to an end; the Moabites, the Ammonites, the Edomites, etc. The great empire of proud Babylon was overthrown by the Persians; then the Persian empire was overthrown by the Greeks; after this the Grecian empire was overthrown by the Romans; and, finally the Roman empire fell a sacrifice to various barbarous nations. Here is a remarkable fulfilment of the text, "The moth has eaten them up like a garment, and the worm has eaten them like wool; but God's church remains."

Never were there so many and so potent endeavours to destroy any thing else, as there has been to destroy the church. Other kingdoms and societies of men, which have appeared to be ten times as strong as the church, have been destroyed with a hundredth part of the opposition which the church of God has met with: which shows, that it is God who has been its protector. For it is most plain, that it has not upheld itself by its own strength. For the most part, it has been a very weak society. The children of Israel were but a handful of people, in comparison of the many who often sought their overthrow. So in Christ's time, and in the beginning of the Christian church, they were but a remnant: whereas the whole multitude of the Jewish nation were against them. And so in the beginning of the Gentile church, they were but a small number in comparison with the heathen, who sought their overthrow. In the dark times of Antichrist, before the Reformation, they were but a handful; and yet their enemies could not overthrow them. And commonly, the enemies of the church have not only had the greatest member on their side, but they have had the strength in other respects. They have commonly had all the civil authority on their side. So in Egypt, the civil authority was for the Egyptians, and the church were only their slaves, and in their hands; and yet they could not overthrow them. And so it was in the time of Antiochus Euiphanes, and Julian the apostate, the authority was all on the side of the persecutors, and the church was under their dominion; yet all their cruelty could not extirpate it. And for a great many ages, the civil authority was all on the side of Antichrist, and the church seemed to be in their hands.

And not only has the strength of its enemies been greater than that of the church, but ordinarily the church has not used what strength they have had in their own defense, but have committed themselves wholly to God. In the time of the Jewish persecutions before the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, and of the heathen persecutions before Constantine, the Christians did not pretend to make any forcible resistance to their heathen persecutors. So it has been for the most part under the popish persecutions; and yet they have never been able to overthrow the church of God; but it stands to this very day.

And this is still the more exceeding wonderful, if we consider how often the church has been brought to the brink of ruin, and the case seemed to be desperate. In the time of the old world when wickedness so prevailed as

that but one family was left, yet God wonderfully appeared, and overthrew the wicked world with a flood, and preserved his church. At the Red sea, when Pharaoh and his host thought they were quite sure of their prey, God appeared, destroyed them, and delivered his church. Under the tenth and last heathen persecution, their persecutors boasted that now they had done the business for the Christians, and overthrown the Christian church, yet in the midst of their triumph, the Christian church rises out of the dust and prevails, and the heathen empire totally falls before it. So when the Christian church seemed ready to be swallowed up by the Arian heresy, when Antichrist rose and prevailed, and all the world wondered after the beast; when the church for many hundred years was reduced to a small number, and the power of the world was engaged to destroy those little remnants, yet they could never fully accomplish their design, and at last God wonderfully revived his church by the Reformation, made it to stand as it were on its feet in the sight of its enemies, and raised it out of their reach. And when the popish powers plotted the overthrow of the Reformed church, and seemed just about to bring their matters to a conclusion, then God wonderfully appeared for the deliverance of his church, as at the Revolution by King William. Presently after the darkest times, God has made his church most gloriously to flourish.

If such a preservation of the church of God, from the beginning of the world hitherto, attended with such circumstances, is not sufficient to show a divine hand in favour of it, what can be devised that would be sufficient? But if this be from the divine hand, then God owns the church, and owns that revelation and those Scriptures on which she is built, and so it will follow, that their religion is the true religion, or God's religion, and that the Scriptures, which they make their rule, are his word.

**3.** We may draw this further argument for the divine authority of the Scriptures from what has been said viz. that God has fulfilled those things which are foretold in the Scriptures — I have already observed in general, as I went along, how the prophecies of Scripture were fulfilled: I shall now single out but two instances of the fulfilment of scripture prophecy.

**(1.)** One is in preserving his church from being ruined. I have just now shown what an evidence this is of the divine authority of the

Scriptures in itself considered, I now speak of it as a fulfillment of scripture prophecy. This is abundantly foretold and promised in the Scriptures; particularly in the text. There it is foretold, that other things shall fail, other kingdoms and monarchies, which set themselves in opposition, should come to nothing: "The moth should eat them up like a garment, and the worm should eat them like wool." It is here foretold, that God's covenant mercy to his church should continue for ever, and so it hath hitherto proved, though the church has passed through so many dangers. The same is promised, Isaiah liv. 17. "No weapon that is formed against thee, shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment, thou shalt condemn." And again, ~~384~~ Isaiah 49:14-16. "But Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me. Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands, thy walls are continually before me." The same is promised in ~~380~~ Isaiah 59:21. 43:1, 2. and ~~380~~ Zechariah 12:2, 3. So Christ promised the same, when he says, "On this rock will I build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Now if this be not from God, and the Scriptures be not the word of God, and the church of Christ built on the foundation of this word be not of God, how could the persons who foretold this, know it? for if the church were not of God, it was a very unlikely thing ever to come to pass. For they foretold great opposition and dangers, that other kingdoms should come to nought, and that the church should often be almost swallowed up, and yet that the church should remain. Now how could they foresee so unlikely a thing but by divine inspiration?

**(2.)** The other remarkable instance is, the fulfillment of scripture prophecy, concerning Antichrist. The way that this Antichrist should arise, is foretold, viz. by the falling away of the Christian church into a corrupt state: 2 Thessalonians 2:3. "For that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition." — And it is prophesied, that this man of sin should set himself up in the temple or visible church of God, pretending to be vested with divine power, as head of the church, (verse 4.) And all this is exactly come to pass in the church of Rome.

Again, it is intimated, that the rise of Antichrist should be gradual, (verse 7.) “For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth, will let, until he be taken out of the way.” This also came to pass—Again, it is prophesied of this mighty enemy of the Christian church, that he should be a great prince or monarch of the Roman empire: so he is represented in Daniel as a horn of the fourth beast, or fourth monarch, as the angel himself explains it, (Daniel 7.) This also came to pass. — Yea it is prophesied, that the seat of this pretended vicar of God, and head of the church, should be the city of Rome itself It is said expressly, that the spiritual whore, or false church, should have her seat on seven mountains or hills, <sup>(6679)</sup>Revelation 17:9. “The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth:” and (verse 18.) “The woman which thou sawest, is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth;” which it is certain was at that time the city of Rome. This prophecy also has come to pass.


Further, it was prophesied, that this Antichrist should reign over peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues, <sup>(6675)</sup>Revelation 17:15. and that all the world should wonder after the beast, <sup>(6638)</sup>Revelation 13:3. This also was verified in the church of Rome. It was foretold that this Antichrist should be remarkable for the sin of pride, pretending to great things, and assuming very much to himself; (<sup>(5104)</sup>2 Thessalonians 2:4.) “That he should exalt himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped.” So <sup>(6636)</sup>Revelation 13:5. “And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things, and blasphemies.” <sup>(2008)</sup>Daniel 7:8, 20. the little horn is said to have a mouth speaking great things and his look to be more stout than his fellows. This also was verified in the pope, and the church of Rome. — It was also prophesied, that Antichrist should be an exceeding cruel persecutor, <sup>(2024)</sup>Daniel 7:21. The same horn “made war with the saints, and prevailed against them:” <sup>(6637)</sup>Revelation 13:7. “And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them.” <sup>(6676)</sup>Revelation 17:6. “And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.” This also came to pass in the church of Rome. — It was foretold, that Antichrist should excel in craft and policy: <sup>(2008)</sup>Daniel 7:8. “In this born were eyes like the eyes of a man.” And verse 20. “Even of that horn that had eyes.” This also marks the church of Rome.—It was foretold, that the kings of Christendom should be subject to antichrist:

ⲙⲉⲛⲧⲉ Revelation 17:12,13. “And the ten horns which thou sawest, are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet, but received power as kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.” This also came to pass with respect to the Romish church.-It was foretold, that he should perform pretended miracles and lying wonders: ⲙⲉⲛⲧⲉ 2 Thessalonians 2:9. “Whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and king wonders.”

ⲙⲉⲛⲧⲉ Revelation 13:13, 14. “And he doth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth, in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth, by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast.” This also designates the church of Rome. Fire coming down from heaven, seems to have reference to their excommunications. which were dreaded like fire from heaven.-It was foretold that he should forbid to marry and to abstain from meats: ⲙⲉⲛⲧⲉ 1 Timothy 4:3. “Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving.” This also is exactly fulfilled in the church of Rome. — It was foretold that he should be very rich, and arrive at a great degree of earthly splendour and glory: ⲙⲉⲛⲧⲉ Revelation 17:4. “And the woman was arrayed in purple, and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones, and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand.” And so chapter 18:7,12,13, 16. What can more expressly describe the church of Rome?-It was foretold, that he should forbid any to buy or sell, but those that had his mark: ⲙⲉⲛⲧⲉ Revelation 13:17. “And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.” This also is fulfilled in the church of Rome-It was foretold that he should sell the souls of men, ⲙⲉⲛⲧⲉ Revelation 18:13. where, in enumerating the articles of his merchandise, the souls of men are specifically mentioned as one. Is not this also exactly fulfilled in the same church? — It was foretold, that Antichrist would not suffer the bodies of God’s people to be buried: Rev 11:8, 9. “And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, and they-shall not suffer their dead bodies put in graves.” flow literally has this come to pass with respect to the church of Rome!-I might mention many other things which were foretold of Antichrist, and show that they were fulfilled most exactly in the pope and the church of Rome. How strong an argument is this, that the Scriptures are the word of God!

**II.** From what has been said, we may learn what the spirit of true Christians is, viz. a spirit of suffering. Seeing God has so ordered it in his providence, that his church should for so long a time be in a suffering state, yea, often in a state of extreme suffering, we may conclude, that the spirit of the true church is a suffering spirit, otherwise God never would have ordered for it so much suffering for doubtless God accommodates the state and circumstances of the church to the spirit that he has given her. No wonder therefore that Christ so much inculcated upon his disciples, that they must deny themselves and take up their cross, if they would follow him.

And what spirit has the church shown and exercised under her sufferings? She has actually, under those terrible persecutions through which she has passed, rather chosen to undergo those dreadful torments, and to sell all for the pearl of great price, to suffer all that her bitterest enemies could inflict, than to renounce Christ and his religion. History affords a great number of remarkable instances, sets in view a great cloud of witnesses. This abundantly confirms the necessity of possessing a spirit to sell all for Christ, to renounce our own ease, our own worldly profit, our honour, and our all, for him, and for the gospel.

Let us inquire whether we are of such a spirit. How does it prove upon trial? Does it prove in fact that we are willing to deny ourselves, and renounce our own worldly interest and to pass through the trials to which we are called in providence? Alas, how small are our trials, compared with those of many of our fellow — Christians in former ages! And I would on this occasion apply that in  Jeremiah 12:5.

**“If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee,  
then how canst thou contend with horses?”**

If you have not been able to endure the light trials to which you have been called, how would you be able to endure the far greater trials to which the church has been called in former ages? Every true Christian has the spirit of a martyr, and would suffer as a martyr, if he were called to it in providence.

**III.** Hence we learn what great reason we have assuredly to expect the fulfilment of what yet remains to be fulfilled of things foretold in

Scripture. The Scriptures foretell many great things yet to be fulfilled before the end of the world; but what great difficulties seem to be in the way! We seem at present to be very far from such a state as is foretold in the Scriptures, but yet we have abundant reason to expect, that these things, however seemingly difficult will be accomplished in their season. We see the faithfulness of God to his promises hitherto; how true he has been to his church, and how he has remembered his mercy from generation to generation. We may say concerning what God has done hitherto for his church, as Joshua said to the children of Israel,

“That not one thing hath failed of all that the Lord our God hath spoken concerning his church,” (~~Joshua~~ Joshua 23:14.)

but all things are hitherto come to pass agreeable to the divine prediction. This should strengthen our faith in those promises, and encourage us, and stir us up to earnest prayer to God for the accomplishment of the great and glorious things which yet remain to be fulfilled.

## PART 7

### THE SUCCESS OF REDEMPTION FROM THE PRESENT TIME TO THE FALL OF ANTICHRIST.

I COME now to show how the success of Christ’s redemption will be carried on from the present time, till Antichrist is fallen, and Satan’s visible kingdom on earth is destroyed. — With respect to this space of time, we have nothing to guide us but the prophecies of Scripture.

Through most of the time from the fall of man to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, we had scripture history to guide us, and from thence to the present time we had prophecy, together with the accomplishment of it in providence, as related in human histories. But henceforward we have prophecy alone to guide us. And here I would pass by those things that are only conjectured, or that are surmised by some from those prophecies which are doubtful in their interpretation, and shall insist only on those things which are more evident.

We know not what particular events are to come to pass before that glorious work of God's Spirit begins, by which Satan's kingdom is to be overthrown. By the consent of most divines, there are but few things, if any at all, foretold to be accomplished before the beginning of that glorious work of God. But some think that the slaying of the witnesses, (~~and~~ Revelation 11:7, 8.) is not yet accomplished; and there is a difference of opinion with respect to the pouring out of the seven vials, (Revelation 16) how many are already, or how many remain to be poured out. A late expositor, indeed, whom I have before mentioned, seems to make it evident, that all are already poured out but two, viz. the sixth on the river Euphrates, and the seventh into the air. I will not now stand to inquire, what is intended by the pouring out of the sixth vial on the river Euphrates, that the way of the kings of the east may be prepared, but would only say that it seems to be something immediately preparatory to the destruction of spiritual Babylon, as the drying up of the river Euphrates, which ran through the midst of old Babylon, was what prepared the way of the kings of the Medes and Persians, (the kings of the east,) to come in under the vails, and destroy that city.

But whatever this be, it does not appear that it is anything which shall be accomplished before that work of God's Spirit is begun by which as it goes on, Satan's visible kingdom on earth shall be utterly overthrown. And therefore I would proceed directly to consider what the Scripture reveals concerning the work of God itself, by which he will bring about this great event, as being the next thing to be accomplished that we are certain of from the prophecies of Scripture.

**I.** I would observe some things in general concerning it.

**1.** We have all reason to conclude from the Scriptures, that just before this work of God begins, it will be a very dark time with respect to the interests of religion in his world. It has been so before preceding glorious revivals of religion: when Christ came, it was an exceeding degenerate time among the Jews; and so it was a very dark time before the Reformation. And not only so, but it seems to be foretold in Scripture, that it shall be a time of but little religion, when Christ shall come to set up his kingdom in the world. Thus when Christ spake of his coming, to encourage his elect, who cry to him day and night, in ~~and~~ Luke 18:8. he adds, "Nevertheless,

when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earthy?" Which seems to denote a great prevalence of infidelity just before Christ's coming to avenge his suffering church. Though Christ's coming at the last judgment is not here to be excluded, yet there seems to be a special respect to his coming to deliver his church from their long-continued suffering, persecuted state, which is accomplished only at his coming at the destruction of Antichrist. Then will be accomplished the following passages, <sup>(1830)</sup>Revelation 6:10. "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" and <sup>(1830)</sup>Revelation 18:20. "Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles, and prophets, for God hath avenged you on her."

It is now a very dark time with respect to the interests of religion, wherein there is but a little faith, and a great prevailing of infidelity on the earth. There is now a remarkable fulfilment of that in 2 Peter 3. "Knowing this, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts." And so Jude 17, 18. "But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; how that they told you there should be mockers in the last time who should walk after their own ungodly lusts." Whether the times shall be any darker still, or how much darker, before the beginning of this glorious work of God, we cannot tell.

**2.** There is no reason from the word of God to think any other, than that this great work of God will be wrought, though very swiftly, yet gradually. As the children of Israel were gradually brought out of the Babylonish captivity first one company, and then another, and Gradually rebuilt their city and temple; and as the heathen Roman empire was destroyed by a gradual, though a very swift, prevalence of the gospel; so, though there are many things which seem to hold forth that the work of God would be exceeding swift, — and many great and wonderful events should very suddenly be brought to pass, and some great parts of Satan's visible kingdom should have a very sudden fall, — yet all will not be accomplished at once, as by some great miracle, like the resurrection of the dead. But this work will be accomplished by means, by the preaching of the gospel, and the use of the ordinary means of grace, and so shall be gradually brought to pass. Some shall be converted, and be the means of others conversion. God's Spirit shall be poured out first to raise up

instruments, and then those Instruments shall be used with success. And doubtless one nation shall be enlightened and converted, and one false religion and false way of worship exploded, after another. By the representation in <sup><278></sup>Daniel 2:3, 4. the stone cut out of the mountain without hands, gradually grows. So Christ teaches us, that the kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed, <sup><413></sup>Matthew 13:31, 32. and like leaven hid in three measures of meal, verse 33. The same representation we have in <sup><400></sup>Mark 4:26, 27, 28. and in the vision of the waters of the sanctuary, Ezekiel 47:— The Scriptures hold forth, that there should be several successive great and glorious events by which this glorious work should be accomplished. The angel speaking to the prophet Daniel of those glorious times, mentions two glorious periods, at the end of which glorious things shall be accomplished:

“And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days” (<sup><272></sup>Daniel 12:11.)

But then he adds in the next verse, “Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days;” intimating, that something very glorious should be accomplished at the end of the former period, but something much more glorious at the end of the latter.

**II.** I now proceed to show how this glorious work shall be accomplished.

**1.** The Spirit of God shall be gloriously poured out for the wonderful revival and propagation of religion. This great work shall be accomplished, not by the authority of princes, nor by the wisdom of learned men, but by God’s holy Spirit: <sup><300></sup>Zechariah 4:6, 7. “Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts. Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain, and he shall bring forth the head-stone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it.” So the prophet Ezekiel, speaking of this great work of God, says, chapter 29:29. “Neither will I hide my face any more from them, for I have poured out my Spirit on the house of Israel, saith the Lord God.” We know not where this pouring out of the Spirit shall begin, or whether in many places at once, or whether, what hath already taken place, be not some forerunner and beginning of this pouring out of the Spirit of God, when it is begun, shall soon bring great multitudes to forsake that vice and wickedness

which now so generally prevails; and shall cause that vital religion, which is now so despised and laughed at in the world, to revive. The work of conversion shall break forth, and go on in such a manner as never has been hitherto; agreeable to <sup>234B</sup>Isaiah 44:3, 4, 5. — God, by pouring out his Holy Spirit, will furnish men to be glorious instruments of carrying on this work; will fill them with knowledge and wisdom, and fervent zeal for the promoting the kingdom of Christ, and the salvation of souls, and propagating the gospel in the world. The gospel shall begin to be preached with abundantly greatness and power than had heretofore been. This great work of God shall be brought to pass by the preaching of the gospel, as is represented in <sup>234C</sup>Revelation 14:6, 7, 8. that before Babylon falls, gospel shall be powerfully preached and propagated in the world.

This was typified of old by the sounding of the silver trumpets in Israel in the beginning of their Jubilee: <sup>234D</sup>Leviticus 25:9. “Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month, on the day of atonement shall Ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land. The glorious times which are approaching, are the church’s jubilee, which shall be introduced by the sounding of the silver trumpet of the gospel, as is foretold in <sup>234E</sup>Isaiah 27:13. “And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcaste of the land of Egypt, and shall worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem.” And there shall be a glorious pouring out of the Spirit with this clear and powerful preaching of the gospel, to make it successful for reviving those holy doctrines of religion which are now chiefly ridiculed in the world, and turning many from heresy, from popery, and from other false religions; and also for turning many from their vice and profaneness, and for bringing vast multitudes savingly home to Christ.

The work of conversion shall go on in a wonderful manner, and spread more and more. Many shall flow together to the goodness of the Lord, one multitude after another continually, as in <sup>234F</sup>Isaiah 60:4, 5. “Lift up thine eyes round about, and see; all they gather themselves together, they come to thee; thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side. Then thou shalt see and flow together.” And so verse 8. “Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?” And as the gospel shall be preached to every tongue, and kindred, and nation, and

people, before the kill of Antichrist, so we may suppose, that it will be gloriously successful to bring in multitudes from every nation: and shall spread more and more with wonderful swiftness. (See ~~2nd~~ Isaiah 66:7-9.)

**2.** This pouring out of the Spirit of God will not affect the overthrow of Satan's visible kingdom, till there has first been a violent and mighty opposition made. In this the Scripture is plain, that when Christ is thus gloriously coming forth, when the destruction of Antichrist is ready at hand, and Satan's kingdom begins to totter, the powers of the kingdom of darkness will rise up, and mightily exert themselves. Thus after the pouring out of the sixth vial, which was to dry up the river Euphrates, to prepare the way for the destruction of spiritual Babylon, (Revelation 16) the powers of hell will be mightily alarmed, and will stir up themselves to oppose the kingdom of Christ, before the seventh vial shall be poured out, which shall Rive them a final and complete overthrow. The beloved disciple informs us (verse 13,14.) that "three unclean spirits like frogs shall go forth unto the kings of the earth, to gather them together to the battle of the great day of God almighty." This seems to be the last and greatest effort of Satan to save his kingdom from being overthrown though perhaps he may make as great towards the end of the world to regain It.

When the Spirit begins to be so gloriously poured forth, when the devil sees such multitudes flocking to Christ in one nation and another, when the foundations and pillars of his kingdom are ready to come to swift and sudden destruction, all hell will be greatly alarmed. Satan has ever had a dread of having his kingdom overthrown, and has been doing great works to prevent it, especially since the day of Constantine the Great. To this end he set up those mighty kingdoms of Antichrist and Mahomet, and brought in all the heresies, superstitions, and corrupt opinions in the world. But when he sees all begin to fall, it will rouse him exceedingly. If Satan of old dreaded being cast out of the Roman empire, how much more does he dread being cast out of the whole world!

It seems, in his last great opposition, all the forces of Antichrist, and Mahometanism, and heathenism, will be united, all the forces of Satan's visible kingdom through the whole world of mankind. And therefore it is said, that "spirits of devils shall go forth unto the kings of the earth, and of the whole world, to gather them together to the battle of the great day of

God Almighty.” And these spirits are said to come out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast, out of the mouth of the false prophet; *i.e.* there shall be the spirit of Popery; the spirit of Mahometanism, and the spirit of heathenism all united. By the beast is meant Antichrist; by the dragon, in this book, is commonly meant the devil, as he reigns over his heather kingdom: by the false prophet, is sometimes meant the pope and his clergy; but here an eye seems to be had to Mahomet, whom his followers call the great prophet of God. This will be as it were the dying struggles of the old serpent; a battle wherein he will fight as one that is almost desperate.

We know not particularly in what manner this opposition shall be made. It is represented as a battle; it is called the battle of the great day of God Almighty. There will be some way or other a mighty struggle between Satan’s kingdom and the church, and probably in all ways of opposition that can be; and doubtless great opposition by external force. The princes of the world who are on lie devil’s side shall join hand in hand; for it is said, “The kings of the earth are gathered together to battle,” ~~Revelation~~ Revelation 19:19. And probably there will be great opposition by subtle disputers and carnal reasoning, persecution, virulent reproaches, craft, and subtlety. The devil now doubtless will ply his skill, as well as strength, to the utmost; and those who belong to his kingdom, will every where be stirred up, and engaged to make an united violent opposition against this holy religion, which they see prevailing so mightily in the world. — But,

**3.** Christ and his church shall in this battle obtain a complete and entire victory over their enemies. They shall be totally routed and overthrown in this their last effort. When the powers of hell and earth are thus gathered together against Christ, and his armies shall come forth against them by his word and Spirit, in how august and glorious a manner is this advance of Christ with his church described, ~~Revelation~~ Revelation 19:11, etc. And to represent how great the victory they should obtain, and how mighty the overthrow of their enemies, it is said, (verse 17, 18.) that “all the fowls of heaven are called together, to eat the great supper given them, of the flesh of kings, and captains, and mighty men,” etc. and then, in the following verses, we have distinct account of the victory and overthrow.

In this victory, the seventh vial shall be poured out. It is said, ~~in~~ Revelation 16:16. of the great army that should be gathered together against Christ: “And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue, Armageddon;” then it is said, “And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done.” Now the business is done for Satan and his adherents. When this victory is obtained, all is in effect done. Satan’s last and greatest opposition is conquered; all his measures are defeated; the pillars of his kingdom broken asunder, and will fall of course. The devil is utterly baffled and confounded, and knows not what else to do. He now sees his antichristian, Mahometan, and heathenish kingdoms through the world, all tumbling down. He and his most powerful instruments are taken captive. Now that is in effect done, for which the church of God had been so long waiting and hoping, and so earnestly crying, to God, saying, “How long, O Lord, holy and true.”

The angel who set his right foot on the sea, and his left foot on the earth, lift up his hand to heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever am! ever, etc. that when the seventh angel should come to sound, the time should be no longer.-And now the time is come; now the seventh trumpet sounds, and the seventh vial is poured out, both together; intimating, that now all is finished as to the overthrow of satan’s visible kingdom on earth. This victory shall be by far the greatest that ever was obtained over Satan and his adherents. By this blow, with which the stone cut out of the mountain without hands shall strike the image of gold, and silver, and brass, and iron, and clay, it shall all be broken to pieces. This will be a finishing blow to the image, so that it shall become as the chaff of the summer threshing-floor.

In this victory will be a most glorious display of divine power. Christ shall therein appear in the character of King of kings, and Lord of lords, as in ~~in~~ Revelation 19:16. Now Christ shall dash his enemies, even the strongest and proudest of them, in pieces; as a potter’s vessel shall they be broken to shivers. Then shall strength be shown out of weakness, and Christ shall cause his church to thresh the mountains, as in ~~in~~ Isaiah 12:15. — “Behold, I will make thee a new sharp threshing-instrument having teeth: thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and shalt make the hills as chaff.” And then shall be fulfilled ~~in~~ Isaiah 42:13-15.

**III.** Consequent on this victory, Satan's visible kingdom on earth shall be destroyed. When Satan is conquered in this last battle, the church of Christ will have easy work of it, as when Joshua and the children of Israel had obtained that great victory over the five kings of the Amorites. When God sent great hail-stones on their enemies, they had easy work of subduing the cities and country to which they belonged. So it was also after the other great battle that Joshua had with a great multitude at the waters of Merom. After this glorious victory of Christ and his church over their enemies, the chief powers of Satan's kingdom. they shall destroy that kingdom in all those cities and countries to which they belonged. After this the word of God shall have a speedy and swift progress through the earth, as it is said, that on the pouring out of the seventh vial, "the cities of the nations fell, and every island fled away, and the mountains were not found," ~~Revelation~~ Revelation 16:19, 20.-When once the stone cut out of the mountain without hands had broken the image in pieces, it was easy to abolish all the remains of it. The very wind will carry it away as the chaff of the summer threshing-floor. Because Satan's visible kingdom on earth shall now be destroyed, therefore it is said, that the seventh vial by which this shall be done. shall be poured out into the air; which is represented by Scripture as the special seat of his kingdom; for he is called "the prince of the power of the air," ~~Ephesians~~ Ephesians 2:2. Now is come the time for punishing leviathan, that piercing serpent, of which we read in ~~Isaiah~~ Isaiah 27:1.

*"In that day the Lord with his sore and great and strong sword,  
shall punish leviathan the Piercin serpent, even leviathan, that  
crooked serpent, and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea."*

Concerning this overthrow of Satan's visible kingdom on earth, I would show wherein it will chiefly consist, with its extent and universality.

**1.** I would show wherein this over throw of Satan's kingdom will chiefly consist. I shall mention the particular shines in which it will consist, without pretending to determine in what order they shall come to pass, or which shall be accomplished first, or whether they shall be accomplished together.

**(1.)** Heresies, infidelity, and superstition, among those who have been brought up under the light of the gospel will then be abolished, and

particularly deism, which is now so bold and confident in infidelity, shall be driven away, and vanish to nothing. All shall agree in the same great and important doctrines of the gospel,

“And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one.” (~~349~~ Zechariah 14:9.)

Then shall he abolished all superstitions modes of worship, and all shall cordially agree in worshipping God in his own way: ~~2639~~ Jeremiah 32:39.

“And I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them.”

**(2.)** The kingdom of Antichrist shall be utterly overthrown. This dominion has been much brought down already by the vial poured out on his throne in the Reformation, hut then it shall be utterly destroyed. Then shall be proclaimed, “Babylon is fallen, is fallen.” When the seventh angel sounds, “the time, times, and half a time, shall be out, and the time shall be no longer.” Then shall be accomplished concerning Antichrist the shines which are written (Revelation 18) of the spiritual Babylon, the idolatrous Roman government, that has for so many ages been the great enemy of the christian church, first under heathenism, then under popery.-That proud city which lifted herself up to heaven, in her pride and haughtiness; that cruel, bloody city, shall come down to the ground. Then shall that be fulfilled,

“For be bringeth down them that dwell on high, the lofty city he layeth it low, he layeth it low, even to the ground, he bringeth it even to the dust.” (~~2306~~ Isaiah 26:5)

She shall be thrown down with violence, like a great millstone cast into the sea, and shall be found no more at all, and shall become a habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. Now shall she be stripped of all her glory, and riches, and ornaments, and shall be cast out as an abominable branch, and shall be trodden down as the mire of the streets. All her policy and craft, in which she so abounded, shall not save her All the strength and wisdom of this great whore shall fail her, and there shall be none to help her. The kings of the earth, who Wore gave their power and strength to the beast, shall now

hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire, ~~4716~~ Revelation 17:16.

**(3.)** Satan's Mahometan kingdom shall be utterly overthrown. The locusts and horsemen in the 9th of Revelation, have their appointed and limited time set them there and the false prophet shall be taken and destroyed. And then-though Mahometanism has been so vastly propagated in the world, and is upheld by such a great empire -this smoke, which has ascended out of the bottomless pit, shall be utterly scattered before the light of that glorious day, and the Mahometan empire shall fall at the sound of the great trumpet which shall then be blown.

**(4.)** Jewish infidelity shall then be overthrown. However obstinate they have been now for above seventeen hundred years in their rejection of Christ, and however rare have been the instances of individual conversions, ever since the destruction of Jerusalem-but they have, against the plain teachings of their own prophets, continued to approve of the cruelty of their forefathers in crucifying Christ yet, when this day comes, the thick veil that blinds their eyes shall be removed, ~~4716~~ 2 Corinthians 3:16. and divine grace shall melt and renew their hard hearts, "and they shall look on him whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness as one that is in bitterness for his first-born"

~~4716~~ Zechariah 12:10, etc. And then shall the house of Israel be saved: the Jews in all their dispersions shall cast away their old infidelity and shall have their hearts wonderfully changed, and abhor themselves for their past unbelief and obstinacy. They shall flow together to the blessed Jesus, penitently, humbly, and joyfully owning him as their glorious King and only Saviour, and shall with all their hearts, as with one heart and voice, declare his praises unto other nations.

Nothing is more certainly foretold than this national conversion of the Jews, in Romans 11. There are also many passages of the Old Testament which cannot be interpreted in any other sense, which I cannot now stand to mention. Besides the prophecies of the calling of the Jews, we have a remarkable providential seal of the fulfilment of this great event, by a kind of continual miracle, viz. their being preserved a distinct nation in such a

dispersed condition for above sixteen hundred years. The world affords nothing else like it. There is undoubtedly a remarkable hand of providence in it. When they shall be called, that ancient people, who alone were God's people for so lone a time, shall be his people again, never to be rejected more. They shall then be gathered into one fold together with the Gentiles; and so also shall the remains of the ten tribes, wherever they be, and though they have been rejected much longer than the Jews, be brought in with their brethren. The prophecies of Hosea especially seem to hold this forth, that in the future glorious times of the church, both Judah and Ephraim, or Judah and the ten tribes, shall be brought in together, and shall be united as one people, as they formerly were under David and Solomon, (<sup><24011></sup>Hosea 1:11; etc. — Though we do not know the time in which this conversion of Israel will come to pass; yet thus much we may determine by Scripture, that it will be before the glory of the Gentile part of the church shall be fully accomplished; because it is said, that their coming in shall be life from the dead to the Gentiles, (<sup><5112></sup>Romans 11:12, 15.)

**(5.)** Then shall also Satan's heathenism kingdom be overthrown. Gross heathenism now possesses a great part of the earth, and there are supposed to be more heathens now in the world, than of all other professions taken together. But then the heathen nations shall be enlightened with the glories gospel. There will be a wonderful spirit of pity towards them, and zeal for their instruction and conversion put into multitudes, and many shall go forth and carry the gospel unto them. Then shall the joyful sound be heard among them, and the Sun of righteousness shall arise with his glorious light shining on those vast regions of the earth that have been covered with heathenish darkness for many thousand years. Many of them doubtless ever since the times of Moses and Abraham, have lain thus in a miserable condition, under the cruel tyranny of the devil, who has all this while blinded and befooled them, domineered over them, and made a prey of them. Now the glad tidings of the gospel shall sound there, and they shall be brought out of darkness into marvellous light.

It is promised, that heathenism shall thus be deathbed in many places. God has said, That the gods that have not made these heavens and this earth, shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens,

<sup><24011></sup>Jeremiah 10:11. and that he will utterly abolish idols, <sup><24018></sup>Isaiah 2:18. —

Then shall the many nations of Africa, who now seem to be in a stale but little above the beasts, and in many respects much below them, be visited with glorious light, and delivered from all their darkness, and shall become a civil, christian understanding, and holy people.-Then shall the vast continent of America, which now in great part is covered with barbarous ignorance and cruelty, be every where covered with glorious gospel-light and christian love and instead of worshipping the devil as now they do, they shall serve God, and. praises shall be sung every where to the Lord Jesus Christ, the blessed Saviour of the world. So we may expect it will be in that great and populous part of the world, the Fast Indies, which are now mostly inhabited by the worshippers of the devil. Then the kingdom of Christ will be established in those continents which have been more lately discovered towards the north and south poles, where men differ very little from the wild beasts, except in impiety. The same will be the case with respect to those countries which have never yet been discovered. Thus will be gloriously fulfilled <sup>2381</sup>Isaiah 35:1. “The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them: and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.” (See also verse 6, 7.)

**2.** Having thus shown wherein this overthrow of Satan’s kingdom will consist, I come now to observe its universal extent. The visible kingdom of Satan shall be overthrown, and the kingdom of Christ set up on the ruins of it, every where throughout the whole habitable clothe. Now shall the promise made to Abraham be fulfilled, That in him and art his seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed and Christ now shall become the desire of all nations agreeable to <sup>2382</sup>Haggai 2:7. Now the kingdom of Christ shall in the most strict and literal sense be extended to all nations, and the whole earth. There are many passages of Scripture that can be understood in no other sense. What can be more universal than <sup>2383</sup>Isaiah 11:9. “For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.” As much as to say, As there is no part of the channel or cavity of the sea, but what is covered with water, so there shall be no part of the world of mankind but what shall be covered with the knowledge of God. So it is foretold in <sup>2384</sup>Isaiah 14:22. that all the ends of the earth shall look to Christ, and be saved. And to show that the words are to be understood in the most universal sense, it is said in the next verse, “I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not

return, that unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.”-So the most universal expression is used,

“And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most high God.” (<sup>2072</sup>Daniel 7:27.)

When the devil was cast out of the Roman empire because that was the highest and principal part of the world, and the other nations that were left were low and mean in comparison, it was represented as Satan’s being cast out of heaven to the earth, (<sup>6619</sup>Revelation 12:9., but it is represented that he shall be cast out of the earth too, and shut up in hell. Romans 20:1,2, 3. This is the greatest revolution by far that ever came to pass: therefore it is said in (<sup>6667</sup>Revelation 16:17, 18. that on the pouring out of the seventh vial, “there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon earth, so mighty an earthquake and so great.” And this is the third great dispensation of Providence which is in Scripture compared to Christ’s coming to judgment, (<sup>6665</sup>Revelation 16:15. There, after the sixth vial and after the devil’s armies were gathered together to their great battle, and just before Christ’s glorious victory over them, it is said, “Behold I come quickly blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments.” So it is called Christ’s coming, (<sup>6618</sup>2 Thessalonians 2:8. Speaking of Antichrist it is said, “And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming.” See also (<sup>2073</sup>Daniel 7:13, 14. where Christ’s coming to set up his kingdom on earth, and to destroy Antichrist, is called coming with clouds of heaven. And this is more like Christ’s last coming to Judgment, than any of the preceding dispensations which are so called. The dispensation is so much greater and more universal, and so more like the day of judgment, which respects the whole world. The great spiritual resurrection of the church of God accompanying it, resembles the general resurrection at the end of the world more than any other. (See (<sup>6616</sup>Revelation 20:4.)

Terrible judgments and fearful destruction shall now be executed on God’s enemies. There will doubtless at the introducing of this dispensation be a visible and awful hand of God against blasphemers, deists, obstinate heretics, and other enemies of Christ, terribly destroying them, with

remarkable tokens of wrath and vengeance. More especially will this dispensation be attended with terrible judgments on Antichrist; the cruel persecutors who belong to the church of Rome, shall in a most awful manner be destroyed; which is compares to a casting of Antichrist into the burning flame, <sup>271</sup>Daniel 7:11. and to casting him alive into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, <sup>272</sup>Revelation 19:20.

Then shall this cruel persecuting church suffer those judgments from God, which shall be far more dreadful than her persecutions of the saints, agreeable to <sup>273</sup>Revelation 18:6, 7. — The judgments which God shall execute on the enemies of the church, are so great, that they are compared to God's sending great hail-stones from heaven upon them, every one of the weight of a talent, as it is said on the pouring out of the seventh vial, <sup>274</sup>Revelation 16:21. And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God, because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great." And now shall he that treading of the wine-press spoken of, <sup>275</sup>Revelation 14:19, 20.

This shall put an end to the church's suffering state, and shall be attended with their glorious and joyful praises. The church's afflicted state has been continued, excepting some short intermissions, from the resurrection of Christ to this time; but now shall a final end be put to her suffering stale. Indeed after this, near the end of the world, the church shall be greatly threatened; but it is said, it shall be but for a little season, <sup>276</sup>Revelation 20:3. for as the times of the church's rest have been hut short, before the long day of her afflictions ale at an end; so whatever affliction she may suffer after this, will be very short. In every other respect, the day of the church's afflictions and persecution shall now come to a filial end. The Scriptures, in many places, speak of this time as the end of the suffering state of the church. So <sup>277</sup>Isaiah 51:22. "Behold, I have taken out of thine hand the cup of trembling, even the dregs of the cup of my fury, thou shalt no more drink it again." Then shall be proclaimed to the church, <sup>278</sup>Isaiah 40:1, 2. "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her inquiry is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins", Also <sup>279</sup>Isaiah 54:8, 9. and 60:20.

belong to this time. “The Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended.” And so <sup><2818></sup>Zephaniah 3:15.

“The Lord hath taken away thy judgments, he hath cast out shine enemy: the king of Israel, even the Lord, is in the midst of thee: thou shalt not see evil any more.”

The time before this, had been the church’s sowing-time, wherein she sowed in tears and in blood, but now is her harvest, wherein she will come again rejoicing, bringing her sheaves with her. Now the time of travail of the woman clothed with the sun is at an end; now she hath brought forth her son: for this glorious setting up of the kingdom of Christ through the world, is what the church had been in travail for, with such terrible pangs, for so many ages: <sup><2817></sup>Isaiah 36:17. “Like as a woman with child that draweth new the time of her delivery, is in pain, and crieth out in her pangs; so have we been in thy sight, O Lord.” (See <sup><2818></sup>Isaiah 60:20. and 61:10, 11.) And now the church shall forget her sorrow, since a man-child is born into the world: now succeed her joyful praise and triumph. Her praises shall then go up to God from all parts of the earth; (as <sup><2819></sup>Isaiah 42:10-12.) and praise shall not only fill the earth, but also heaven. The church on earth, and the church hi heaven, shall both gloriously rejoice and praise God, as with one heart, on that occasion. Without doubt it will be a time of very distinguished joy and praise among the holy prophets and apostles, and the other saints in beaver:

<sup><2820></sup>Revelation 18:20. “Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets, for God hath avenged you on her.” See how universal these praises will be in <sup><2821></sup>Isaiah 44:23.

“Sing, O ye heavens, for the Lord hath done it: shout, ye lower parts of the earth: break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein: for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel.”

See what joyful praises are sung to God on this occasion by the universal church in heaven and earth, in the beginning of the I9th chapter of Revelation.

The dispensation is above all preceding ones like Christ’s coming to Judgment, in that it so puts an end to the former state of the world, and

introduces the everlasting kingdom of Christ. Now Satan's visible kingdom shall be overthrown, after it had stood ever since the building of Babel; the old heavens and the old earth shall in a greater measure pass away, and the new heavens and new earth be set up in a far more glorious manner, than ever before. — Thus I have shown how the success of Christ's purchase has been carried on through the times of the afflicted state of the Christian church, from Christ's resurrection till Antichrist is fallen, and Satan's visible kingdom on earth is overthrown.

## PART 8

### **THE SUCCESS OF REDEMPTION THROUGH THAT SPACE WHEREIN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH SHALL, FOR THE MOST PART, BE IN A STATE OF PEACE AND PROSPERITY.**

IN order to describe this part, I would speak, first, of the prosperous state of the church through the greatest part of this period; and, secondly, of the great apostasy there shall be towards the close of it.

**I.** I would speak of the prosperous state of the church through the greater part of this period. And in the general, I would observe two things,

**1.** That this is most properly the time of the kingdom of heaven upon earth. Though the kingdom of heaven was on a degree set up soon after Christ's resurrection, and in a further degree in the time of Constantine, and though the Christian church in all ages of it is called the kingdom of heaven; yet this is the principal time of the kingdom of heaven upon earth, the time principally intended by the prophecies of Daniel whence the Jews took the name of the kingdom of heaven.

**2.** Now is the principal fulfillment of all the prophecies of the Old Testament which speak of the glorious times of the gospel in the latter days. Though there has been a glorious fulfillment of those prophecies already, in the times of the apostles, and of Constantine; yet the expressions are too high to suit any other time entirely, but that which is to succeed the fall of Antichrist. This is most properly the glorious day of the gospel. Other times are only forerunners and preparatory to this: those were the seed-time, but this is the harvest. But more particularly,

(1.) It will be a time of great light and knowledge. The present, are days of darkness, in comparison of those days. — The light of that glorious time shall be so great, that it is represented as though there should then be no night, but only day; no evening nor darkness. So <sup><3446></sup>Zechariah 14:6, 7. “And it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark. But it shall be one day, which shall be known to the Lord, not day, nor night; but it shall come to pass, that at evening-time it shall be light.” — It is further represented, as though God would then give such light to his church, that it should so much exceed the glory of the light of the sun and moon, that they should be ashamed:

“Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously.” (<sup><2923></sup>Isaiah 24:23.)

There is a kind of vail now cast over the greater part of the world, which keeps them in darkness; but then this vail shall be destroyed: <sup><2931></sup>Isaiah 25:7. “And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations.” Then all countries and nations, even those which are now most ignorant, shall be full of light and knowledge. Great knowledge shall prevail every where. It may be hoped, that then many of the Negroes and Indians will be divines, and that excellent books will be published in Africa, in Ethiopia, in Tartary, and other now the most barbarous countries, and not only learned men, but others of more ordinary education, shall then be very knowing in religion: <sup><2919></sup>Isaiah 32:3, 4. “The eyes of them that see, shall not be dim; and the ears of them that hear, shall hearken. The heart also of the rash shall understand knowledge.” Knowledge then shall be very universal among all sorts of persons, <sup><2924></sup>Jeremiah 31:34. “And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them.”

There shall then be a wonderful unravelling of the difficulties in the doctrines of religion, and clearing up of seeming inconsistencies: “So crooked things shall be made straight, and rough places shall be made plain, and darkness shall become light before God’s people.” Difficulties in Scripture shall then be cleared up, and wonderful things shall be discovered

in the word of God, which were never discovered before. The great discovery of those things in religion which had been before kept hid seems to be compared to removing the vail, and discovering the ark of the testimony to the people, which before used to be kept in the secret part of the temple, and was never seen by them. Thus at the sounding of the seventh Angel, when it is proclaimed, “that the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ,” it is added, that “the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament.” So great shall be the increase of knowledge in this time, that heaven shall be as it were opened to the church of God on earth.

**(2.)** It shall be a time of great holiness. Now vital religion shall every where prevail and reign. Religion shall not be an empty profession, as it now mostly is, but holiness of heart and life shall abundantly prevail. Those times shall be an exception from what Christ says of the ordinary state of the church, that there shall be but Jew saved, for now holiness shall become general: ~~2410~~ Isaiah 60:21. “The people also shall be all righteous.” Not that there will be none remaining in a Christless condition; but that visible wickedness shall be suppressed every where, and true holiness shall become general, though not universal. It shall be a wonderful time, not only for the multitude of godly men, but for eminency of grace: Isaiah lxxv.20. “There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old, but the simmer being an hundred years old, shall be accursed.” ~~2410~~ Zechariah 12:8. “He that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David, and the house of David shall be as God, hast the angel of the Lord before them.” And holiness shall then be as it were inscribed on every thing, on all men’s common business and employments, and the common utensils of life: all shall be dedicated to God, and applied to holy purposes: every thing shall then be done to the glory of God: ~~2410~~ Isaiah 23:18. “And her merchandise and her hire shall be holiness to the Lord.” (And so ~~2410~~ Zechariah 14:20, 21.) — And as God’s people then shall be eminent in holiness of heart, so they shall be also in holiness of life and practice.

**(3.)** It shall be a time wherein religion shall in every respect be uppermost in the world. It shall be had in great esteem and honour.

The saints have hitherto for the most part been kept under, and wicked men have governed. But now they until be uppermost The kingdom shall be given into the hands of the saints of the “most high God,”

<sup><2027></sup>Daniel 7:27. And “they shall reign on earth,” <sup><650></sup>Revelation 5:10.

They shall live and “reign with Christ a thousand years,” <sup><610></sup>Revelation 20:4. In that day, such persons as are eminent for true piety and religion, shall be chiefly promoted to places of trust and authority.

Vital religion shall then take possession of kings’ palaces and thrones; and those who are in highest advancement shall be holy men: <sup><2402></sup>Isaiah 49:23.

“And kings shall be thy nursing-fathers, and their queens thy nursing-mothers.” Kings shall employ all their power, and glory, and riches, for the advancement of the honour and glory of Christ, and the good of his church: <sup><2616></sup>Isaiah 60:16. “Thou shalt also suck the milk of the Gentiles, and shalt suck the breasts of kings.” And the great men of the world, and the rich merchants, and others who have great wealth and influence, shall devote all to Christ and his church: <sup><1412></sup>Psalms 14:12. “The daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift, even the rich among the people shall entreat thy favour.”

**(4.)** Those will be times of great peace and love. There shall then be universal peace and a good understanding among the nations of the world, instead of confusion, wars, and bloodshed.

“And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plough-shares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.”

(<sup><2104></sup>Isaiah 2:4)

It is represented as if all instrument of war should be destroyed, having become useless: <sup><0409></sup>Psalms 46:9. “He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth: he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder, he burneth the chariot in the fire.” (See also <sup><3010></sup>Zechariah 9:10.) Then shall all nations dwell quietly and safely, without fear of any enemy. <sup><2318></sup>Isaiah 32:18. “And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting-places.” (Also <sup><3810></sup>Zechariah 8:10,11.)

Then shall malice, and envy, and wrath, and revenge, be suppressed every where; and peace and love shall prevail between one man and another;

which is most elegantly set forth in <sup><23108</sup>Isaiah 11:6-10. Then shall there be peace and love between rulers and ruled. Rulers shall love their people, and with all their might seek their best good; and the people shall love their rulers, shall joyfully submit to them, and give them that honour which is their due. So shall there be happy love between ministers and their people: <sup>Mall</sup> 4:6. “And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers.” Then shall flourish in an eminent manner those christian virtues of meekness, forgiveness, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, and brotherly-kindness, those excellent fruits of the Spirit. Men, in their temper and disposition, shall then be like the Lamb of God, the lovely Jesus. The body shall be conformed to the head.

Then shall all the world be united in one amiable society. All nations, in all parts of the world, on every side of the globe, shall then be knit together in sweet harmony. All parts of God’s church shall assist and promote the spiritual good of one another. A communication shall then be upheld between all parts of the world to that end; and the art of navigation, which is now applied so much to favour men’s covetousness and pride and is used so much by wicked debauched men, shall then be consecrated to God, and applied to holy uses. (See <sup><23018</sup>Isaiah 60:5-9.) And then men will be abundant in expressing their love one to another, not only in words, but in deeds of charity, <sup><23018</sup>Isaiah 32:5. “The vile person shall be no more called liberal, nor the churl said to be bountiful,” but (verse 8.) “the liberal deviseth liberal things, and by liberal things shall he stand.”

**(5.)** It will be a time of excellent order in the church of Christ. The true government and discipline of the church will then be settled and put into practice. All the world shall then be as one church, one orderly, regular, beautiful society. And as the body shall be one, so the members shall be in beautiful proportion to each other. Then shall that be verified in <sup><23018</sup>Psalms 122:3. “Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together.”

**(6.)** The church of God shall then be beautiful and glorious on these accounts, yea, it will appear in the perfection of beauty: <sup><23018</sup>Isaiah 60:1. “Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.” <sup><23018</sup>Isaiah 61:10. “He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as

a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.” On these accounts, the church will then be the greatest image of heaven itself.

**(7.)** That will be a time of the greatest temporal prosperity. Such a spiritual state as we have just described has a natural tendency to health and long life, and that this will actually be the case, is evident by <sup><380></sup>Zechariah 13:4. “Thus saith the Lord of hosts, there shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, and every man with his staff in his hand for very age.” It has also a natural tendency to procure ease, quietness, pleasantness, and cheerfulness of mind, also wealth and a great increase of children, as is intimated in <sup><380></sup>Zechariah 8:5. “And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof.” — But further, the temporal prosperity of the people of God will also be promoted by a remarkable blessing from heaven: <sup><380></sup>Isaiah 65:21. “They shall build houses, and inhabit them, and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them.” And in <sup><380></sup>Micah 4:4. “But they shall sit every man under his vine, and under his fig-tree, and none shall make them afraid.” <sup><380></sup>Zechariah 7:12. “For the seed shall be prosperous, the vine shall give her fruit, and the ground shall give her increase, and the heavens shall give their dew, and I will cause the remnant of this people to possess all these things.” (See also <sup><380></sup>Jeremiah 31:12, 13. and <sup><380></sup>Amos 9:13.) Yea then they shall receive all manner of tokens of God’s presence, acceptance, and favour: <sup><380></sup>Jeremiah 33:9. “And it shall be to me a name of joy, a praise and an honour before all the nations of the earth, which shall hear all the good that I do unto them: and they shall fear and tremble for all the goodness and for the prosperity that I procure unto it.” Even the days of Solomon were but an image of those days, as to the temporal prosperity which shall be obtained in them.

**(8.)** It will also be a time of great rejoicing: <sup><380></sup>Isaiah 35:10. “And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.” Chapter 55:12. “For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you.” Chapter 66:11. “That ye may suck, and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations: that ye may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory.” Chapter 12:3.

“With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.” That will be the church’s glorious wedding-day with Christ upon earth:

☞ Revelation 19:7. “Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.” Verse 9. “Blessed are they which are called to the marriage-supper of the Lamb.”

The Scriptures every where represent this prosperity to be of long continuance. The former intervals of rest and prosperity, as we before observed, are represented to be but short; but the representations of this state are quite different:

“And I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand year.”

☞ Revelation 20:4)

“Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man went through thee, I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations.” ☞ Isaiah 60:15)

This may suffice as to the prosperous state of the church through the greater part of the period from the destruction of Satan’s visible kingdom in the world to Christ’s appearing in the cloud of heaven to judgment.

**II.** I now come to speak of the great apostasy there should be towards the close of this period, and how the church should, for a short time, be threatened by her enemies. And this I shall do under three particulars.

**1.** A little before the end of the world, a great part of the world shall fall away from Christ and his church. It is said, ☞ Revelation 20:3. that Satan should be cast into the bottomless pit, and shut up, and have a seal set upon him that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years should be fulfilled; and that afterward he must be loosed out of his prison for a little season. Accordingly we are told, (verse 7, 8.) that when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison and go forth to deceive the nations, which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog. This intimates that the apostasy would be very general. The nations of the four parts of the earth shall be deceived; and the number of those who shall now turn enemies to Christ shall be vastly great, as the army of Gog and Magog is represented in Ezekiel It is said,


(~~Rev~~ Revelation 20:8.) that the number of them is as the sand of the sea, and that they went up on the breadth of the earth, as if they were an army large enough to reach from one side of the earth to the other.

Thus after a happy and glorious sensor, such a long day of light and holiness, of love and peace, and joy, it shall again be a dark time. Satan shall begin to set up his dominion again in the world; and this world shall again become a scene of darkness and wickedness. The bottomless pit shall be opened, and devils shall come up again out of it, and a dreadful smoke shall ascend to darker the world. And the church of Christ, instead of extending to the utmost bounds of the world, as it did Wore shall be reduced to narrow limits. The world of mankind being continued so long in a state of great prosperity shall now begin to abuse their prosperity, to serve their lust and corruption. This we learn from ~~Rev~~ Luke 17:26, etc.

**2.** Those apostates shall make great opposition to the church of God. The church shall be threatened with a sudden and entire overthrow by them. It is said, Satan shall gather them together to battle, as the sand on the sea. shore; and they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city. So that this beloved city shall seem just ready to be swallowed up by them: for her enemies shall not only threaten her, but shall actually have gathered together against her and not only so, but shall have besieged her, shall have compassed her about on every side.-However, there is nothing in the prophecy which seems to bold forth, that the church had actually fallen into their hands, as it had fallen into the hands of Antichrist, to whom it was given to make war with the saints, and to overcome them. God will never suffer this to take place after the kill d Antichrist, for then the day of her mourning shall be ended, alarmingly threatened with utter and sudden destruction.

**3.** Now the state of things will seem most remarkably to call for Christ's immediate appearance to judgment. For then the world shall be filled with the most aggravated wickedness. For much the greater part of the world shall have become visibly wicked and open enemies to Christ, and their wickedness shall be dreadfully aggravated by their apostasy. Before the fall of Antichrist, most of the world was full of visibly wicked men. But the grease' part of these are poor heathens, who never enjoyed the light of the gospel; and others are those that have been bred up in the Mahometan

or popish darkness. But these have apostatized from the christian church, the visible kingdom of Christ, in which they enjoyed the Heat light and privileges of glorious times, which shall be incomparably greater than the light and privileges which the church of God enjoys now. This apostasy will be most like the apostasy of the devils of any that ever had before been: for the devils apostatized, and turned enemies to Christ, though they the light of heaven; and these, will apostate, and turn enemies to him, though they have enjoyed the light and privileges of the glorious times of the church. That such should turn open and avowed enemies to Christ, and should seek the ruin of his church, will cry aloud for such immediate vengeance as was executed on the devils when they fell.

The wickedness of the world will remarkably call for Christ's immediate appearing in flaming fire to take vengeance on them, because of the way in which they shall manifest their wickedness. This will be by scoffing and blaspheming Christ and his holy religion; and particularly, they will scoff at the notion of Christ's coming to judgment, of which the church shall be in expectation. For now doubtless will be the greatest fulfillment of  2 Peter 3:3, 4. "Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." They shall be in no expectation of the coming of Christ to Judgment and shall laugh at the notion. They shall trample all such things under foot, and shall give up themselves to their lusts, or to eat and drink, and wallow in sensual delights, as though they were to be here for ever. They shall despise the warnings the church shall give them of the coming of Christ to judgment, as the people of the old world despised what Noah told them of the approaching flood, and as the people of Sodom did when Lot said to them, The Lord will destroy the city. Their wickedness on this account will cry aloud to heaven for Christ's appearing in flaming fire to take vengeance of his enemies; and because they shall exercise their wickedness in a wicked design and violent attempt against the holy city of God, wherein, for so long a time, so much of the religion of Christ had been seen.

And the great number of the wicked is another thing which shall especially call for Christ's coming: for the world then will doubtless be exceeding full of people, having continued so long in so great a state of prosperity,

without such terrible desolating extremities, as wars, pestilence's, and the like, to diminish them. And the major part of this world, which shall be so populous, will be wicked contemptuous apostates from God.

Undoubtedly the world then will be by far fuller of wickedness than ever it was before from its foundation. And if the wickedness of the old world, when men began to multiply on the earth, called for the destruction of the world by a deluge of water, this wickedness will as much call for its destruction by a deluge of fire.

Again, the circumstances of the church at that day will also eminency call for the immediate appearing of Christ, as they will be compassed about by their blasphemous murderous enemies, Just ready to be swallowed up by them. And it will be a most distressing time with the church, excepting the comfort they will have in the hope of deliverance from God: for all other help will seem to fail. The case will be come to the last extremity, and there will be an immediate need that Christ should come to their deliverance. And though the church shall be so eminently threatened, yet so wilt Providence order it, that it shall be preserved till Christ shall appear in his immediate presence, coming in the glory of his Father with all his holy angels. And then will come the time when all The elect shall be gathered in. That work of conversion which has been carried on from the beginning of the church after the fall through all chose ages, shall be carried on no more. There never shall another soul be converted. Every one of those many millions' whose names were written in the book of life before the foundation of the world, shall be brought in; not one soul shall be lost. And the mystical body of Christ, which has been growing since it first began in the days of Adam, will be complete as to the number of parts, having every one of its members. In this respect, the work of redemption will now be finished. And now the end for which the means of grace have been instituted shall he obtained. — All that effect which was intended, shall now be accomplished.

## PART 9

### THE GENERAL JUDGMENT.

THUS I have shown how the success of Christ's redemption has been accomplished during the continuance of the Christian church under the means of grace. We have seen what great revolutions there have been, and are to be, during this space of time, how the great wheels of Providence have gone round for the accomplishment of that kind of success of Christ's purchase, which consists in the bestowment of grace on the elect. In the prosecution of the subject, we are come to the time when all the wheel; have gone round the course of things in this state of it is finished, and all things are ripe for Christ's coming to judgment.


The success of Christ's purchase is of two kinds, consisting either in grace or glory. The success consisting in the former of these, is to be seen in those works of God which are wrought during those ages that the church is continued under the means of grace; and the success, is consisting in the latter, will chiefly be accomplished at the day of judgment. — Having already shown how the former kind of success has been accomplished, I come now to the latter; viz. that kind of success which is accomplished in the bestowment of glory on the church at the day of judgment.—And here I would mention two or three things in general, concerning this kind of success of Christ's purchase.

**1.** How great the success of Christ's purchase is, appears chiefly in this very thing. The success of Christ's purchase summarily consists in the salvation of the elect. But this bestowment of glory is eminently called their salvation: <sup><800></sup>Hebrews 9:28. "to them that look for him, shall he appear the second time, without sin unto salvation." So it is called redemption. being eminently that wherein the redemption of the church consists. So in <sup><800></sup>Ephesians 4:30. "Sealed unto the day of redemption;" and <sup><800></sup>Luke 21:28. and <sup><800></sup>Ephesians 1:14. "Redemption of the purchased possession."

**2.** All that precedes this, while the church IS under the means of grace, is only to make way for the success which is to be accomplished in the

bestowment of glory. The means of grace, and God's grace itself, is bestowed on the elect to make them meet for glory.

**3.** All those glorious things which were brought to pass for the church while under the means of grace, are but images and shadows of this. So were those glorious things which were accomplished for the church in the days of Constantine the Great, and so is all that glory which is to succeed the fall of Antichrist. However great, it is all but a shadow of what will be bestowed at the day of judgment. But I hasten more particularly to show how this kind of success will be accomplished.

**I.** Christ will appear in the glory of his Father, with all his holy angels, coming in the clouds of heaven. When the world is thus revelling in their wickedness, and compassing the holy city, just ready to destroy it, then shall the glorious Redeemer make his appearance. He through whom this redemption has all along been carried on, shall appear in the sight of the world the light of his glory shall break forth, the whole world shall immediately have notice of it, and they shall lift up their eyes and behold this wonderful sight. Every eye shall see him, ( Revelation 1:7.) Christ shall appear coming in his human nature, in that same body (now glorified) which was brought forth in a stable, and laid in a manger, which afterwards was so cruelly used and nailed to the cross.

Men shall now lift up their eyes, and see him coming in such majesty and glory as now is to us utterly inconceivable. The glory of the sun in a clear firmament, will be but darkness in comparison of it and all the glorious angels and archangels shall attend him: thousand thousands ministering to him, and ten thousand times ten thousand round about him. — How different a person will he then appear from what he did at his first coming, when he was as a root out of a dry ground, a poor, despised, afflicted man! How different now is his appearance, in the midst of those glorious angels, principalities, and powers, in heavenly places, attending him as his ordinary servants, from what it was when in the midst of a ring of soldiers, with his mock robe and his crown of thorns, buffeted and spit upon, or hanging on the cross between two thieves, with a multitude of his enemies triumphing over him!

This will be a most unexpected sight to the wicked world: it will come as a cry at midnight: they shall be taken in the midst of their wickedness, and it

Will give them a dreadful alarm. It will at once break up their revels, their eating, and drinking, and carousing. It will put in quick end to the design of the great army that will when be compassing the camp of the saints: it will make them let drop their weapons out of their hands. The world, which will then be very full of people, most of whom will be wicked men, will then be filled with glorious shrieking and crying; for all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him, (~~Rev~~ Revelation 1:7.) And where shall they hide themselves? How will the sight of that awful majesty terrify them when taken in the midst of their wickedness! Then they shall see who he is, what kind of a person he is, whom they have mocked and scoffed at, and whose church they have been endeavouring to overthrow. This sight will change their voice. The voice of their laughter and singing, while they are marrying and giving in marriage, and the voice of their scoffing, shall be changed into hideous, hellish yelling. Their countenances shall be changed from a show of carnal mirth, haughty pride, and contempt of God's people; they shall put on ghastly terror and amazement; and trembling and chattering of teeth shall seize upon them.


But with respect to the saints, it shall be a joyful and most glorious sight to them: for this sight will at once deliver them from all fear of their enemies, who were before compassing them about, just ready to swallow them up. Deliverance shall come in their extremity: the glorious captain of their salvation shall appear for them, at a time when no other help appeared. Then shall they lift up their heads, and their redemption shall be drawing nigh, (~~Luk~~ Luke 21:28.) Christ will appear with infinite majesty, yet at the same time they shall see infinite love in his countenance. And thus to see their Redeemer coming in the clouds of heaven, will fill their hearts full of gladness. Their countenances also shall be changed, not as the countenances of the wicked, but from being sorrowful, to be exceedingly joyful and triumphant. And now the work of redemption will be finished in another sense, viz. that the whole church shall be completely and eternally freed from all persecution and molestation from wicked men and devils.

**II.** The last trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised, and the living changed. God sent forth his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, to gather together his elect from the four corners of the earth in a mystical sense, before the destruction of Jerusalem; *i.e.* he sent forth the apostles,

and others, to preach the gospel all over the world. And so in a mystical sense the great trumpet was blown at the beginning of the glorious times of the church. But now the great trumpet is blown in a more literal sense, with a mighty sound which shakes the earth. There will be a great signal given by a mighty sound made, which is called the voice of the archangel, as being the angel of greatest strength,

“For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout,  
with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God.”

( 1 Thessalonians 4:16)

On the sound of the great trumpet, the dead shall be raised every where. Now the number of the dead is very great. How many has death cut down since the world has stood. But then the number will be much greater, the world shall have stood longer, and through most of the remaining time it will doubtless be much fuller of inhabitants than ever it has been. All these shall now rise from the dead. The graves shall be opened in all parts of the world, and the sea shall give up the innumerable dead that are in it,  
( Revelation 20:13.)

And now all the inhabitants that ever shall have been upon the face of the earth, shall all appear upon earth at once. Among these will be Adam and Eve, the first parents of mankind, Abel, and Seth, and Methuselah, and all the saints who were their contemporaries; Noah and Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the prophets of Israel and holy confessors. Among them will appear all the holy apostles of Jesus Christ, and all the saints of their times; all the holy martyrs who fell under furious persecutions. There will be found all who belonged to the church in its wilderness-state, during the dark times of Antichrist, and all who have suffered under his persecuting cruelty with all the saints of past and the present time, and that shall be to the end of the world. — Now also all the enemies of the church in all the ages shall appear again, and the wicked heathens, and Jews, and Mahometans, and papists. Sinners of all sorts, demure hypocrites, profane sensualists, heretics, deists, and all cruel persecutors, and all who shall have died in sin, shall come together.

And at the same time that the dead are raised, the living shall be changed. The bodies of the wicked who shall then be living, shall be so charred as to fit them for eternal torment, and the bodies of all the living saints shall be

changed to be like unto Christ's glorious body ~~1~~ 1 Corinthians 15:51, 52, 53.-The bodies of the saints shall be so changed as to render them for ever incapable of pain, or affliction or uneasiness, and all that dullness and heaviness and all that deformity, which their bodies had before, shall be put off, and they shall put on strength and beauty, activity and incorruptible unfading glory. And in such glory shall the bodies of all the risen saints appear.

And now the work of redemption shall be finished in another respect, viz. that all the elect shall now be actually redeemed troth in soul and body. Before this, the work of redemption, as to its actual success, was but incomplete; for only the souls of the redeemed were actually saved and glorified, excepting in some few instances: but now all the bodies of the saints shall be saved and glorified together; all the elect shall be glorified in the whole man, the soul and body in union.

**III.** Now shaft the saints be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and all wicked men and devils shall be arraigned before the judgment-seat. When the dead saints are raised, then the whole church, consisting of all the elect through all ages, will stand together on the earth, at least all excepting those few whose bodies were glorified before, and then they shall all mount up as with wings to meet Christ. It seems that Christ, when he comes to judgment, will not come quite to the ground, but his throne will be fixed in the airy region, whence he may be seen by all that vast multitude that shall be gathered before him. The saints therefore shall ascend up to their Saviour. Thus the apostle tells us, that when the dead in Christ are raised, and the living changed, then hose who are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we be ever with the Lord, ~~1~~ 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17. What a wonderful sight will that be, when all the many millions of saints are thus mounting up.

Then shall the work of redemption be finished in another respect: then shall the whole church be perfectly and for ever delivered from this present evil world, shall take their everlasting leave of this earth, where they have been strangers, and which has been for the most part a scene of trouble and sorrow: where the devil has reigned as god, and has greatly molested them, and which has been such a scene of wickedness and

abomination, where Christ their Lord has been cruelly used; and where they have been so hated, reproached, and persecuted. They shall leave it, and shall never set foot on it again. And there shall be an everlasting separation made between them and wicked men. Before, they were mixed together, and it was impossible in many instances to determine their characters; but now all shall become visible; both saints and sinners shall appear in their true characters and forms. — Then shall all the church be seen ascending to the right hand of Christ. About a mighty cloud of them will there be!

And then also the work of redemption will be finished in another respect, viz. that then the church shall all be withered together. They all belonged to one society before, but yet were greatly separated with respect to the place of their habitation. Some were in heaven, and some on earth, and those who were on earth were separated, many of them by wide oceans, and vast continents. But now they shall all be gathered together, never to be separated any more. And not only shall all the of the church now be gathered together, but all shall be gathered unto their Head, into his immediate glorious presence, never to be separated from him any more.

At the same time, all wicked men and devils shall be brought before the judgment seat of Christ. These shall be gathered to the left hand of Christ, and as it seems, will still remain upon the earth, and shall not be caught up into the air, as the saints shall be. The devil, that old serpent, shall now be dragged up out of hell. He, that first procured the fall and misery of mankind; and has so set himself against their redemption and has all along shown himself such an inveterate enemy to the Redeemer — shall never more have anything to do with the church of God, nor be suffered in the least to afflict or molest any member of it for ever. Instead of that, now he must be judged and received of his deeds. Now is come the time which he has always dreaded, the time wherein he must be judged, and receive his full punishment. He who by his temptation maliciously procured Christ's crucifixion, and triumphed as though he had obtained the victory, even he shall see the consequences of that death which he procured. Now he must stand before that same Jesus, to be judged, condemned, and eternally destroyed by him. If Satan the prince of hell, trembles at the thought of it thousand of years beforehand, how much more will he tremble, proud and stubborn as he is, when he comes to stand at Christ's bar!

Then shall he also stand at the bar of the saints, whom he has so hated, afflicted, and molested: for the saints shall judge him with Christ: <sup>408</sup>1 Corinthians 6:3. “Know ye not that we shall judge angels?” Now shall he be as it were subdued under the church’s feet, agreeable to <sup>409</sup>Romans 16:20.-Satan, when he first tempted our first parents to sin deceitfully and lyingly told them, that they should be as gods: but little did he think that they should indeed be so far as gods, as to be assessors with God to judge him. Much less did he think, that one of that nature which he then tempted, one of the posterity of those very persons whom he tempted should actually be united to God; that as God he should judge the world, and that he himself must stand trembling and astonished before his judgment-seat. But thus all the devils in hell, who have so opposed Christ and his kingdom, shall now at last stand in utmost amazement and horror before Christ and his church, who shall appear to condemn them.

Now also shall all Christ’s other enemies be brought to appear before him. Now shall proud scribes and Pharisees, who had such a malignant hatred of Christ while in his state of humiliation, and who persecuted him to death, be made to come. Now those before whose judgment-seat Christ once stood, as a malefactor at their bar-and those who mocked him, buffeted him, and spit in his face-shall see Christ in his awful glory, as forewarned <sup>410</sup>Matthew 26:64, 65. Then Christ was before their judgment-seat; but now it is their turn to stand before his judgment-seat with inconceivable horror and amazement, with ghastly countenances, quaking limbs, chattering teeth, and knees smiting one against another.

Now also all the cruel enemies and persecutors of the church that have been in all ages, shall come in sight together. Pharaoh and the Egyptians, Antiochus, Epiphanes, the malignant scribes and Pharisees, the persecuting heathen emperors, Julian the apostate, the truer persecuting popes and papists, Gog and Magog, shall all appear at once before the judgment-seat of Christ. They and the saints who have in every age been persecuted by them shall come in sight, and must now confront one another before the great Judge. And now shall the saints on their glorious thrones be made the judges of those unjust kings and rulers who before judged and condemned them, and put them to cruel death. Now shall those persecutors behold the glory to which they are arrived, whom they before

so cruelly despised, and so cruelly treated. Thus wonderfully will the face of things be altered; now will all things be coming to rights.

**IV.** The righteousness of the church shall be manifested, and all the wickedness of their enemies shall be brought to light. Those saints who had been the objects of hatred, reproach, and contempt in the world; reviled and condemned by their persecutors without a cause, shall now be fully vindicated. They shall now appear clothed with the glorious robe of Christ's righteousness. It shall be most manifest before the world, that Christ's righteousness is theirs, and they shall gloriously shine forth in it. Then shall their inherent holiness be made manifest, and all their good works be brought to light. The good things which they did in secret shall now be manifested openly. Those holy ones of God, who had been treated as the filth and offscouring of the earth, as if not fit to live, as worse than beasts or devils, shall now appear to have been the excellent of the earth. Now God will bring forth their righteousness as the light, and their judgment as the noon-day. And now it shall appear who indeed were those wicked persons that were not fit to live, when all the wickedness of the enemies of Christ and his church, their pride, their malice, their cruelty, their hatred of true religion, shall be set forth in all its horrid acts, in its proper colours.


And now the righteous may be heard before this great Judge, who could not be heard before those unjust judges. Now they shall declare their cause, and rise up in judgment against their persecutors and shall declare how they had been treated by them. And now all the wickedness of the wicked shall be brought to light, even all their wickedness, and their very hearts shall be opened to view, and as it were fumed inside out, before the bright light of that great day. Things which have been spoken in the ear, in the closet, and done in the dark, shall be manifested in the light, and proclaimed before angels and men.

**V.** The sentence shall be pronounced on the righteous and the wicked. Christ, the glorious Judge, shall pass that blessed sentence on the church at his right hand, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." This sentence shall be pronounced with infinite love, and the voice will cause every heart to flow with joy. Thus Christ shall pronounce a sentence of justification on

millions, who before had a sentence of condemnation passed upon them by their persecuting rulers. He will thus put honour upon those who have been before despised: he will own them for his, and will put a crown of glory upon their heads before the world, and then shall they shine forth as the sun with Jesus Christ in glory and joy, in the sight of all their enemies.

And then shall the sentence of condemnation be passed on the wicked, “Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.” Thus shall the church’s enemies be condemned, in which sentence of condemnation, the holy martyrs, who have suffered from them, shall concur. When the words of this sentence are pronounced they will strike every heart of those at the left hand with inconceivable horror and amazement. Every syllable of it will be more terrible than a stream of lightning through their hearts. What horrible shrieking, queering, gnashing of teeth, distortions of countenance, hideous looks, hideous actions, and hideous voices, will be seen through all that vast throne!

**VI.** Upon this, Christ and all his saints, and all the holy angels ministering to them, shall leave this lower world, and ascend towards the highest heavens. Christ shall ascend in as great glory as he descended, and in some respects greater: for now he shall ascend with his elect church with him, glorified in body and soul. Christ’s first ascension to heaven soon after his own resurrection was very glorious. But this his second ascension, with his mystical body, his whole church, shall be far more glorious. The redeemed church shall all ascend with him in a most joyful and triumphant manner: and all their enemies and persecutors, who shall be left behind to be consumed, shall see the sight, and hear their songs. — And thus Christ’s church shall for ever leave this accursed world, to go into the highest heavens, the paradise of God, the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world.

**VII.** When they are gone, this world shall be set on fire, and be turned into a great furnace wherein all the enemies of Christ and his church shall be tormented for ever and ever. This is manifest by  2 Peter 3:7.

“But the heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men.”

When Christ and his church are ascended to a distance from this world- that miserable company of the wicked being left behind, m have their sentence executed upon them here- then, this whole lower world shall be set on fire, either from heaven, or by fire breaking out of the bowels of the earth, or both, as It was with the water in the time of the deluge. However, this lower world shall be set all on fire. How will it strike the wicked with horror, when the fire begins to lay hold upon them, and they find no way to escape from it! W hat shrieking and crying will there be among those many millions, when they begin to enter into this great furnace, when the whole world shall be a furnace of the fiercest and most raging heat! insomuch that the apostle Peter says, (~~GEN~~ 2 Peter 3:10,12.) that “the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up; and the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shalt men with fervent heat.” And so fierce shall be its heat, that it shall burn the earth into its very centre; which seems to be what is meant,

“For a fire is kindled in my anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell, and shall consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains.” (~~GEN~~ Deuteronomy 32:22.)


And here shall all the persecutors of the church of God burn in everlasting fire, who had before burnt the saints at the stake; and shall suffer torments far beyond all that their utmost wit and malice could inflict on the saints. And here the bodies of all the wicked shall burn, and be tormented to all eternity, and never be consumed; and the wrath of God shall be poured out on their souls. Though the souls of the wicked in hell do now suffer dreadful punishment, yet their punishment will be so increased at the day of Judgment, that what they suffered before, is, in comparison of it, as an imprisonment to the execution which follows it. And now the devil, that old serpent, shall receive his full punishment; now that for fear of which he before trembled, shall fully come upon him. This world, which formerly used to be the place of his kingdom, where he set up himself as God, shall now be the place of his complete punishment, of full and everlasting torment.-And in this, one design of the work of redemption, viz. putting Christ’s enemies under his feet, shalt be perfectly accomplished. His enemies shall now be made his footstool, in the fullest degree. Now shall

be the most perfect fulfillment of ~~coris~~ Genesis 3:15. "It shall bruise thy head."

**VIII.** At the same time, all the church shall enter with Christ, their glorious Lord, into the highest heavens, and there shall enter on the state of their highest and eternal blessedness and glory. While the lower world, which they have left under their feet, is seized with the fire of God's vengeance, and flames are kindling upon it, and the wicked are entering into everlasting fire, the whole church shall enter, with their glorious Head, and all the holy angels attending, in a joyful manner, into the eternal paradise of God, the palace of the great Jehovah, their heavenly Father. The gates shall open wide for them to enter, and there Christ will bring them into his chambers in the highest sense. Here Christ will bring them, and present them in glory to his Father, saying, "Here am I, and the children which thou hast given me;" as much as to say, Here am I, with every one of those whom thou gavest me from eternity to take the care of, that they might be redeemed and glorified' end to redeem whom I have done and suffered so much, and to make way for whose redemption I have for so many ages been accomplishing such great changes. Here they are now perfectly redeemed in body and soul; I have delivered them from all the ill fruits of the fall, and freed them from all their enemies; I have brought them all together into one glorious society, and united them all in myself; I have openly justified them before all angels and men, and here I have brought them all away from that accursed world where they have suffered so much and have brought them before thy throne: I have done all that for them which thou hast appointed me: I have perfectly cleansed them in my blood, and here they are in perfect holiness, shining with thy perfect image.

And then the Father will accept of them, own them all for his children, and welcome them to the eternal and perfect inheritance and glory of his house, and will on this occasion give more glorious manifestations of his love than ever before, and will admit them to a more full and perfect enjoyment of himself.

Now shall be the marriage of the Lamb in the most perfect sense. The commencement of the glorious times of the church on earth, after the fall of Antichrist, is represented as the marriage of the Lamb; but after this we

read of another marriage of the Lamb, at the close of the day of judgment. — After the beloved disciple had given an account of the day of judgment, ( Revelation 20:21) he gives an account, that he saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. Christ shall bring his church into his Father's house in heaven, as his bride, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.


The bridegroom and the bride shall then enter into heaven, both having only their wedding-robcs, attended with all the glorious angels. And there they enter on the feast and joys of their marriage before the Father, they shall then begin an everlasting wedding-day. This shall be the day of the gladness of Christ's heart, wherein he will greatly rejoice, and all the saints shall rejoice with him. Christ shall rejoice over his bride, and the bride shall rejoice in her husband, in the state of her consummate and everlasting blessedness, of which we have a particular description in the 21st and 22d chapters of Revelation.

And now the whole work of redemption is finished. Now the top-stone of the building is laid. In the progress of our discourse, we have followed the church of God in all her great changes, all her tossings to and fro, all her storms and tempests through the many ages of the world. We have seen her enter the harbour, and landed in the highest heavens, in complete and eternal glory. We have gone through the several ages of time, as the providence and word of God have led us. We have seen all the church's enemies fixed in endless misery, and have seen the church presented in her perfect redemption before her Father in heaven, there to enjoy this most unspeakable and inconceivable glory and blessedness, and there we leave her to enjoy this glory throughout the never-ending ages of eternity.




Now all Christ's enemies will be perfectly put under his feet, and he shall have his most perfect triumph over sin and Satan, and all his instruments, and death, and hell. Now shall all the promises made to Christ by God the Father before the foundation of the world, the promises of the covenant of redemption, be fully accomplished. Christ shall now perfectly have obtained the joy set before him, for which he undertook those great sufferings in his state of humiliation. Now shall all the hopes and expectations of the saints be fulfilled. The state of the church before, was progressive and preparatory: but now she is arrived to her most perfect

state of glory. All the glory of the church on earth, Is but a faint shadow of this her consummate glory in heaven.

Now Christ the great Redeemer shall be most perfectly glorified, God the Father shall be glorified in him, and the Holy Ghost shall be most fully glorified in the perfection of his work on the hearts of all the church. — And now shall that new heaven and new earth, or the renewed state of things, be completely finished, after the material frame of the old heavens and old earth is destroyed:

“And I saw a new heaven, and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away.” (  Revelation 21:1)

— And now will the great Redeemer have perfected every thing that appertains to the work of redemption, which he began so soon after the fall of man. And who can conceive of the triumph of those praises which shall be sung in heaven on this great occasion, so much greater than that on the fall of Antichrist. The beloved disciple John (Revelation 19) seems to want expressions to describe those praises, and says, “It was as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.” But much more inexpressible will those praises be, which will be sung in heaven after the final consummation of all things. How shall the praises of that vast and glorious multitude be as mighty thunderings indeed!

How are all the former things passed away, and what a glorious state are things fixed in to remain to all eternity! — And as Christ, when he first entered upon the work of redemption, had the kingdom committed to him of the Father, and as he took on himself the administration of the affairs of the universe, to manage all so as to subserve the purposes of this affair; so now, the work being finished, he will deliver up the kingdom to God even the Father,  1 Corinthians 15:24. “Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power.” Not that Christ shall cease to reign after this; for It is said,  Luke 1:33. “He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end;” and  Daniel 7:14. “His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.” But the meaning is, that Christ shall deliver up that kingdom or dominion which he

has over the world, as the Father's delegate or vicegerent, which the Father committed to him, to be managed in subserviency to this great design of redemption. The end of this commission, or delegation, which he had from the Father, seems to be to subserve this particular design of redemption; and therefore, when that design is fully accomplished, the commission will cease, and Christ will deliver it up to the Father, from whom he received it.

## PART 10

### IMPROVEMENT OF THE WHOLE.

I PROCEED now to enter upon some improvement of the whole that has been said from this doctrine.

**I.** Hence we may learn how great a work is this of redemption. We have now had it, though in a very imperfect manner, set forth, in its whole progress, from its first beginning after the fall, to its consummation. We have seen how God has carried on this building, by a long succession of wonderful works, advancing it higher and higher from one age to another, till the top-stone is laid. And now let us consider how great a work this is. Do men, when they behold some great edifices, admire their magnificence, how well may we admire the greatness of this building of God, which he builds up age after age! There are three things exhibited to us in what has been said, which especially show the greatness of the work of redemption.

**1.** The greatness of those particular evens, and dispensations of providence, by which it is accomplished. How great are those things which God has done, which are but so many parts of this great work! What great things were done in the world to prepare the way for Christ's coming to purchase, and what great things were done in the actual purchase of redemption! What a wonderful thing was accomplished to put Christ in an immediate capacity for this purchase, viz. his incarnation, that God should become man! And what great things were done in that purchase, that a person, who is the eternal Jehovah, should live upon earth for four or five and thirty years together, in a mean, despised condition, that he should spend his life in such labours and sufferings, and that at last he should die upon the cross! And what great things have been done to

accomplish the success of Christ's redemption! what great things to put him into a capacity to accomplish this success! For this purpose he rose from the dead, and ascended into heaven, and all things were made subject to him. How many miracles have been wrought, what mighty revolutions have been brought to pass in the world already, and how much greater shall be brought to pass, in order to it!

**2.** The number of those great events by which God carries on this work, shows the greatness of the work. Those mighty revolutions are so many as to fill up many ages. The particular wonderful events by which the work of creation was carried on filled up six days, but the great dispensations by which the work of redemption is carried on, are so many, that they fill up six or seven thousand years at least, as we have reason to conclude from the word of God. — There were great things wrought in this affair before the flood, and in the flood the world was once destroyed by water, and God's church was so wonderfully preserved from it in order to carry on this work. And after the flood, what great things did God work relating to the resettling of the world, to the building of Babel, the dispensing of the nations, the shortening at the days of man's life, the calling of Abraham, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and that long series of wonderful providence's relating, to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph; and those wonders in Egypt, and at the Red sea. in the wilderness, and in Canaan in Joshua's time, and by a long succession of wonderful providence's from age to age towards the nation of the Jews.

What great things were wrought by God, in so open overturning the world before Christ came, to make way for his coming! What great things were done also in Christ's time, and after that, in overturning Satan's kingdom in the heathen empire, and in so preserving his church in the dark times of popery, and in bringing about the Reformation! — How many great and wonderful things will be effected in accomplishing the glorious times of the church, and at Christ's last coming on the day of judgment, in the destruction of the world, and in carrying the whole church into heaven!

**3.** The glorious issue of this whole affair. in the perfect and eternal destruction of the wicked, and in the consummate glory of the righteous. And now let us once more take a view of this building, now all is finished and the top-stone laid. It appeared in a glorious height in the apostle's

time, and much more glorious in the time of Constantine, and will appear much more glorious still after the fall of Antichrist; but at the consummation of all things, it appears in an immensely more glorious height than ever before. Now it appears in its greatest magnificence, as a complete lofty structure, whose top reaches to the heaven of heavens; a building worthy of the great God, the King of kings.

And from what has been said, one may argue, that the work of redemption is the greatest of all God's works of which we have any notice, and it is the end of all his other works. — It appears plainly from what has been said, that this is the principal of all God's works of providence, and that all are subordinate to the great affair of redemption. We see that all the revolutions in the world are to subserve this grand design. This shows how much greater the work of redemption is, than the work of creation: because it is the end of it; as the use of a house is the end of the building it. But the work of redemption, is the sum of all God's works of providence; all are subordinate to it: so the work of the new creation is more excellent than the old. So it ever is, that when one thing is removed by God to make way for another. the new one excels the old. Thus the temple excelled the tabernacle; the new covenant the old: the new dispensation of the gospel the dispensation of Moses; the throne of David the throne of Saul, the priesthood of Christ the priesthood of Aaron; the new Jerusalem the old; and so the new creation far excels the old.

God has used the creation for no other purpose, but to subserve the designs of this affair. To answer this end, he hath created and disposed of mankind, to this the angels, to this the earth. to this the highest heavens. God created the world to provide a spouse and a kingdom for his Son: and the setting up of the kingdom of Christ, and the spiritual marriage of the spouse to him, is what the whole creation labours and travails in pain to bring to pass. This work of redemption is so much the greatest of all the works of God, that all other works are to be looked upon either as parts of it, or appendages to it, or are some way reducible to it; and so all the decrees of God some way or other belong to that eternal covenant of redemption which was between the Father and the Son before the foundation of the world. Every decree of God is some way or other reducible to that covenant. And seeing this work of redemption is so great, we need not wonder that the angels desire to look into it. And we need not

wonder that so much is made of it in Scripture, that it is so much insisted on in the histories and prophecies, and songs of the Bible; for the work of Redemption is the great subject of the whole, its doctrines, its promises, its types, its songs, in histories, and its prophecies.

**II.** Hence we may learn how God is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and ending of all things. Such are the characters and titles we find often ascribed to him in Scripture. <sup><2344></sup>Isaiah 12:4. “Who hath wrought and none it, calling the generations from the beginning? I the Lord, the first, and with the last, I am he.” And particularly does the Scripture ascribe such titles to God, where it speaks of providence, as it relates to, and is summed up in the great work of redemption; (as <sup><2345></sup>Isaiah 44:6, 7. and 48:11-12.) Therefore, when Christ reveals the future great events of providence relating to his church and people, to his disciple John, he often reveals himself under this character. <sup><6100></sup>Revelation 1:8. “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.” So again, verse 10, 11. “I heard behind me a great voice as of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last.” Alpha and Omega being the names of the first and the last letters of the Greek alphabet, it signifies the same as his being the first and the last, and the beginning and the ending: as <sup><6101></sup>Revelation 21:6. “And he said unto me, it is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end.” And so chapter 22:12, 13. “And behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every, man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.”

We have seen on what design (‘oaf began the course of his providence in the beginning of the generations of men and how he has all along carried things on agreeably to the same design without ever failing, and how at last the conclusion and final issue of things are to God, and therefore may well now cry out with the apostle, <sup><6113></sup>Romans 11:33. “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!” and verse 36. “For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.”

We have seen how other things came to an end one after another; how states, and kingdoms, and empires, fell, and came to nothing, even the greatest and strongest of them; we have seen how the world has been often

overturned, and will be more remarkable yet, we have seen how it was first destroyed by water, and how at fact it shall be utterly destroyed by fire: but yet God remains the same through all ages. He was before the beginning of this course of things, and he will be after the end of them (~~CHR~~ Psalm 112:25, 26.) Thus God is he who is, and who was, and who is to come.

We have seen, in a variety of instances, how all other gods perish. Those in the nations about Cannan, and throughout the Roman empire, are all destroyed and their worship long since overthrown. We have heard how Antichrist, who has called himself a god on earth, how Mahomet, who claims religious honours; how all the gods of the heathen through the world, will come to an end, and how Satan, the great dragon, that old serpent, who has set up himself as god of this world, will be cast into the lake of fire, there to suffer his complete punishment: but Jehovah remained his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom and of his dominion there is no end. We have seen what mighty changes there have been in the world, but God is unchangeable, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

We began at the head of the stream of divine providence, and have traced it through its various windings, till we are come to the end where it issues. As it began in God, so it ends in him. God is the infinite ocean into which it emptied itself.-Providence is like a mighty wheel, whose circumference is so high that it is dreadful; with the glory of the God of Israel above upon it, as it is represented in Ezekiel's vision. We have seen the revolution of this wheel, and how as it was from God, its return has been to God again. All the events of divine providence are like the links of a chain; the first link is from God, and the last is to him.

**III.** We may see by what has been said, how Christ has in all things the pre-eminence. For he is the great Redeemer, and therefore the work of redemption being the sum of God's works of providence, shows the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, as being above all, and through all, and in all. That God intended the world for his Son's use in the affair of redemption is one reason why he created the world by him, ~~CHR~~ Ephesians 3:9-12. What has been said, shows how all the purposes of God are purposed in Christ; and how he is before all, and above all. All things consist in him, are governed by him and are for him, Colos. 1:15-18. God makes him his first-

loom, higher than the kings of the earth, and sets his throne above their thrones. God has always upheld his kingdom, when others have come to an end; that appears at last above all, however greatly opposed for so many ages. All other kingdoms fall, but his kingdom is the last, and never gives place to any other.

We see, that whatever changes there are, and however highly Christ's enemies exalt themselves, yet he reigns in uncontrolled power and immense glory: in the end, his people are all perfectly saved and made happy, and all his enemies become his footstool. — And thus God gives the world to his Son for his inheritance.

**IV.** The consideration of what has been said, may greatly serve to show us the consistency, order, and beauty, of God's works of providence. If we behold events in any other view, all will look like confusion, like the tossing of waves, things will look as though one confused revolution came to pass after another, merely by blind chance, without any regular or certain end. But if we consider the events of providence in the light in which they have been set before us, and in which the Scriptures set them before us, they appear an orderly series of events, all wisely directed in excellent harmony and consistence, tending all to one end. The wheels of providence are not turned round by blind chance, but are full of eyes round about, (as Ezekiel represents them,) and are guided by the Spirit of God: where the Spirit goes, they go. All God's works of providence, through all ages, meet at last, as so many lines meeting in one centre.

God's work of providence, like that of creation, is but one. The events of providence are not so many distinct, independent works but rather so many different parts of one work, one regular scheme. They are all united, just as the several parts of one building: there are many stones, many pieces of timber, but all are so joined, and fitly formed together, that they make but one building, they have all but one foundation, and are united at last in one top-stone.

God's providence may not unfitly be compared to a large and long river, having innumerable branches, beginning in different regions, and at a great distance one from another, and all conspiring to one common issue. After their very diverse and apparent contrary courses, they all collect together, the nearer they come to their common end, and at length discharge

themselves at one mouth into the same ocean. The different streams of this river are apt to appear like mere confusion to us, because of our limited sight, whereby we cannot see the whole at once. A man who sees but one or two streams at a time cannot tell what their course tends to. Their course seems very crooked, and different streams seem to run for a while different and contrary ways: and if we view things at a distance, there seem to be innumerable obstacles and impediments in the way as rocks and mountains, and the like to hinder their ever uniting, and coming to the ocean; but yet if we trace them, they all unite at last, all come to the same issue, disgorge themselves in one into the same great ocean. Not one of all the streams fail.

**V.** From the whole that has been said, we may strongly argue, that the Scriptures are the word of God, because they alone inform us what God aims at, in his works. God doubtless is pursuing some design, and carrying on some scheme, in the various changes and revolutions which from age to age came to pass in the world. It is most reasonable to suppose, that there is some certain great design to which Providence subordinates all great successive changes in affairs. It is reasonable to suppose, that all revolutions, from the beginning of the world to the end of it, are but the various parts of the same scheme, all conspiring to bring to pass that great event which the great Creator and Governor of the world has ultimately in view; and that the scheme will not be finished, nor the design fully accomplished, and the great and ultimate event fully brought to pass, till the end of the world, and the last revolution is brought about.

Now there is nothing else that informs us what this scheme and design of God in his works is, but the Holy Scriptures. — Nothing else pretends to set in view the whole series of God's works of providence from beginning to end, and to inform at how all things were from God at first, for what end they are, how they were ordered from the beginning, how they will proceed to the end of the world, what they will come to at last, and how then all things shall be to God. Nothing else but the Scriptures has any pretence for showing any manner of regular scheme or drift in those revolutions which God orders from age to age. Nothing else pretends to show what God would effect by the things which he has done, is doing, and will do; what he seeks and intends by them. Nothing else pretends to show, with any distinctness or certainty, how the world began, or to tell

us the true original of thinks. Nothing but the Scriptures set forth how God governed the world from the beginning of the generations of men upon the earth, in an orderly history; and nothing else sets before us how he will govern it to the end, by an orderly prophecy of future events, agreeable to the challenge which God makes to the gods, and prophets, and teachers of the heathen, in ~~2010~~ Isaiah 12:22, 23, “Let them bring them forth, and show us what shall happen: let them show the former things what they be, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them; or declare us things for to come. Show the thinks that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods.”

Reason shows, that it is fit and requisite, that the intelligent and rational beings of the world should know something of God’s scheme and design in his works: for they doubtless are principally concerned. God’s great design in his works, is doubtless concerning his reasonable creatures, rather than brute beasts and lifeless things. The revolutions by which God’s greet design is brought to pass, are doubtless chiefly among them, and concern their state, and not the state of things without life or reason. And therefore surely it is requisite, that they should know something of it, especially since reason teaches, that God has given his rational creatures a capacity of seeing him in his works; for this end, that they may see God’s glory in them, and give him that glory. But how can they see God’s glory in his works, if they do not know what his design in them is, and what he aims at by what he is doing in the world?

Further, it is fit that mankind should be somewhat informed of God’s design in the government of the world, because they are made capable of actively falling in with that design, of promoting it, and acting herein as his friends and subjects. It IS therefore reasonable to suppose, that God has given mankind some revelation to inform them of this: but there is nothing else that does it but the Bible. In the Bible this is done. Here we may learn the first original of things, and have an orderly account of the scheme of God’s works from the beginning, through those ages that are beyond the reach of all other histories. Here we are told what God aims at in the whole, what is the great end how he has contrived the grand design, and the great things he would accomplish. — Here we have a most rational excellent account of this matter, worthy of God, and exceedingly showing forth the glory of his perfection’s, his majesty, his wisdom, his glorious

holiness, grace, and love, and his exaltation above all as the first and the last.

Here are shown the various parts of the work of providence and how all are connected together in a regular, beautiful, and glorious frame. In the Bible we have an account of the whole scheme of providence from the beginning of the world to the end of it, either in history or prophecy, and are told what will become of things at last, how they will issue in the subduing of God's enemies, and in the salvation and glory of his church, and setting up of the everlasting kingdom of his Son.

How rational, worthy, and excellent a revelation is this! and how excellent a book is the Bible, which contains so much beyond all other books in the world and what characters are here of its being indeed a divine book; a book that the great Jehovah has given to mankind for their instruction, without which we should be left in miserable darkness and confusion.

**VI.** From what has been said, we may see the glorious majesty and power of God in this affair of redemption. His glorious power appears in upholding his church for so long a time, and carrying on this work, upholding it oftentimes when it was but as a lime spark, or as smoking flax, in which the fire was almost extinct, and the powers of earth and hell combined to destroy it. Yet God has never suffered them to quench it, and finally will bring forth judgment unto victory. God glorifies his strength in his church's weakness, in causing his people, who are like a number of little infants, finally to triumph over all earth and hell; so that they shall tread on the lion and adder; the young lion and dragon shall they trample under foot. The glorious power of God appears in conquering his many and mighty enemies by that person who was once an meant in a manger, and appeared as a poor, weak, despised man. He conquers them, and triumphs over them in their own weapon, the cross.

The glorious majesty of God appears in conquering all those mighty enemies of the church one age after another in conquering Satan, that proud and strong spirit, and all his hellish host, in bringing him down under foot, long after he had vaunted himself as god of this world, and when he did his utmost to support himself in his kingdom. Christ, our Michael, has overcome him, the devil was cast out, and there was found no more place for him in heaven; but he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were

cast out with him. — He is conquered in that kingdom wherein his pride, and subtlety, and cruelly above all appears, viz. the kingdom of Antichrist. And the glorious power of God appears in thus conquering the devil, and bringing him under foot, after long time given him to strengthen himself to his utmost. He was once overthrown in his heathen Roman empire, after he had been making himself strong in those parts of the world, ever since the building of Babel. It appears also in overthrowing his kingdom more fatally and universally all over the world, after he had another opportunity to strengthen himself to his utmost for many ages, by setting up those two great kingdoms of Antichrist and Mahomet, and to establish his interest in the heathen world. We have seen how these kingdoms of God's enemies look strong, as though it was Impossible to overthrow them, yet, when God appears, they seem to melt away, as the fat of lambs before the fire, and are driven away as the chaff before the whirlwind.

Those mighty kingdoms of Antichrist and Mahomet, which have made such a figure for so many ages, and have trampled the world under foot, when God comes to appear, will vanish away like a shadow, and will disappear of themselves, as the darkness in a room does, when the light is brought in. What are God's enemies in his hands? How is their greatest strength weakness when he rises up! and how weak will they all appear together at the day of judgment! Thus we may apply those words in the song of Moses,

“Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power: thy right  
hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the enemy.” (Exodus 15:6)

And how great cloth the majesty of God appear in overturning the world from time to time, to accomplish his designs, and at last in causing the earth and heavens to flee away, for the advancement of the glory of his kingdom!

**VII.** From what has been said, we may see the glorious wisdom of God. It shows the wisdom of God in creating the world, in that he has created it for such an excellent use, to accomplish in it so glorious a work. And it shows the wisdom of Divine Providence, that he brings such great good out of such great evil, in making the fall and ruin of mankind, which in itself is so sorrowful and deplorable, an occasion of accomplishing such a glorious work as redemption, and of erecting such a glorious building,

whose top should reach unto heaven and of bringing his elect to a state of such unspeakable happiness. And how glorious doth the wisdom of God appear in that long course and series of great changes in the world, in bringing such order out of confusion, in so frustrating the most subtle machinations, and in causing the greatest works of Satan, those in which he has most glorified himself, to be wholly turned into occasions of so much the more glorious triumph of his Son Jesus Christ! And how wonderful is the wisdom of God, in bringing all such manifold and various changes and overturnings in the world to such a glorious and in so directing all to such a glorious period at last, one of them conspires, as the manifold wheels of a most curious machine, at last to strike out such an excellent issue, such a manifestation of the divine glory, such happiness to his people, and such a glorious and everlasting kingdom to his Son!

**VIII.** From what has been said, we may see the stability of God's mercy and faithfulness to his people, how he never forsakes his inheritance, and remembers his see what reason there was for the words of the text, "The moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool; but my righteousness shall endure for ever and ever, and my Salvation from generation to generation." And now we may see abundant reason for that name of God which he reveals to Moses, <sup><ERRA></sup>Exodus 3:14. "And God said unto Moses, I am that I am:" *i.e.* I am the same that I was when I entered into covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and ever shall be the same: I shall keep covenant for ever: I am self-sufficient, all sufficient, and immutable.

And now we may see the truth of <sup><ERRB></sup>Psalm 36:5, 6. "Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens; and thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds. Thy righteousness is like the great mountains; thy judgments are a great deep." And if we consider what has been said, we need not wonder that the psalmist, in the 136th Psalm, so often repeats this, "For his mercy endureth for ever," as if he were in an ecstasy at the consideration of the perpetuity of God's mercy to his church, delighted to think of it, and knew not how but continually to express it. Let us with like pleasure and ion celebrate the everlasting duration of God's mercy and faithfulness to his church and people, and let us be comforted by it under all the dark circumstances of the church of God, and all the uproar and confusions that are in the world, and all the threatenings of the church's enemies. And let

us take encouragement earnestly to pray for those glorious things which God has promised to accomplish for his church.

**IX.** Hence we may learn how happy a society the church of Christ is. For all this great work is for them. Christ undertook it for their sakes, and for their sakes he carries it on; it is because he has loved them with an everlasting love. For their sakes he overturns states and kingdoms. For their sakes he shakes heaven and earth. He elves men for them, and people for their life. Since they have been precious in God's sight, they have been honourable; and therefore he first gives the blood of his own Son, and then Rives the blood of all their enemies, many thousands and millions, all nations that stand in their way, as a sacrifice to their good.

For their sakes he made the world, and for their sakes he will destroy it, for their sakes he built beaver, and for their sakes he makes his angels ministering spirits. Therefore the apostle says, ~~412~~ 1 Corinthians 3:21, etc. "All things are yours: whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours." How biased is this people who are redeemed from among men, and are the first-fruits unto God, and to the Lamb; who have God in all ages for their protection and help!

"Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency I and shine enemies shall be found liars unto thee, and thou shalt trend upon their high places." (~~453~~ Deuteronomy 33:29)

Let who will prevail now, let the enemies of the church exalt themselves as much as they will, these are the people last kingdom shall finally be theirs; the kingdom shall finally be given into their hands, and shall not be left to other people. We have seen to what a blessed issue things shall finally be brought, and what glory they shall arrive at, and remain in possession of, for ever and ever; after all the kingdoms of the world are come to an end, and the earth is removed, and mountains are carried into the depth of the sea, or where the sea was, and this lower earth shall all be dissolved. O happy I people, and blessed society I Well may they spend an eternity in praises and hallelujahs to him who hath loved them, and will love them to eternity.

**X.** And, lastly, hence all wicked men; all that are in a Christless condition, may see their exceeding marry. You that are such, whoever you are, shall have no part or lot in this matter. You are never the better for any of these things: yea, your guilt is but so much the greater, and the misery you are exposed to so much the more dreadful. You are some of those against whom God in the progress of the work, exercises so much manifest wrath, some of those enemies who are liable to be made Christ's footstool, to be ruled with a rod of iron, and to be dashed in pieces. You are some of the seed of the serpent, to bruise the head of which is one great design of all this work. Whatever glorious things God accomplishes for his church, they will not be glorious to you. The most glorious times of the church are always the most dismal to the wicked and impenitent. (~~2634~~ Isaiah 66:14. — And so we find, wherever glorious things are foretold concerning the church, there terrible things are foretold concerning the wicked, its enemies. So it ever has been in remarkable deliverance's wrought for the church, there has been also a remarkable execution of wrath on its enemies. When God delivered the children of Israel out of Egypt; at the same time he remarkably poured out his wrath on Pharaoh and the Egyptians. When he brought them into Canaan by Joshua, and gave them that good land, he remarkably executed wrath upon the Canaanites. When they were delivered out of their Babyionish captivity, signal vengeance was inflicted on the Babylonians. When the Gentiles were called, and the elect of God were saved by the preaching of the apostles, Jerusalem and the persecuting Jews were destroyed in a most awful manner.

I might observe the same concerning the glory accomplished to the church in the days of Constantine, at the overthrow of Satan's visible kingdom in the downfall of Antichrist, and at the day judgment. In all these instances, and especially in the last, there have been, or will be, exhibited most awful tokens of the divine wrath against the wicked.

God will indeed make use of you in this affair: but it will be for the glory of his justice, and not of his mercy. The enemies of God are reserved for the triumph of Christ's glorious power in overcoming and punishing them. You are some of those who shall be consumed with this accursed world after the day of judgment, when Christ and his church shall triumphantly and gloriously ascend to heaven.—Therefore let all who are in a Christless condition seriously consider these things, and not be like the foolish

people of the old world, who would not take warning, when Noah told them, that the Lord was about to bring a flood of waters upon the earth; or like the people of Sodom, who would not regard, when Lot told them, that God would destroy that city, and would not flee from the wrath to come, and so were consumed in that terrible destruction.

And now I would say, to conclude my whole discourse on this subject, “These sayings are faithful and true, and blessed is he that keepeth these sayings. Behold Christ cometh quickly, and his reward is with him, to render to even man according as his work shall be. And he that is unjust, shall be unjust still; and he that is filthy, shall be filthy still; and he that is holy, shall be holy still. Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city for without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie. He that testifieth these things, saith, Surely I come quickly. — Amen; even so come, Lord Jesus.”

# FIVE DISCOURSES

ON IMPORTANT SUBJECTS

NEARLY CONCERNING THE GREAT AFFAIR

OF THE

## SOUL'S ETERNAL SATVATION

VIZ.

**I.** JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH ALONE

**II.** PRESSING INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD SINNERS.

**III.** RUTH'S RESOLUTION.

**IV.** THE JUSTICE OF GOD IN THE DAMNATION OF SINNERS.

**V.** THE EXCELLECY OF JESUS CHRIST.

**DELIVERED AT NORTHAMPTON. CHIEFLY AT THE TIME OF  
THE LATE WONDERFUL POURING OUT OF THE  
SPIRIT OF GOD THERE.**

Take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life. (~~Deut~~ Deuteronomy 4:9)

### PREFACE.

THE following discourses were all, excepting the last, delivered at the time of the late wonderful work of God's power and grace in this place, and are now published on the earnest desire of those to whom they were

preached. These particular discourses are fixed upon, and designed for the press, rather than others that were delivered in that remarkable season, by their election. What has determined them in their choice, is the experience they hope they have had of special benefit to their souls from these discourses. Their desire to have them in their hands from the press has been lone manifested, and often expressed to me, their earnestness in it is evident from this, that though it be a year of the greatest public charge to them that ever has been, by reason of the expense of building a new meeting-house, yet they chose rather to be at this additional expense now, though it be very considerable, than to have it delayed another year. I am fully sensible that their value for these discourses has arisen more from the flame in which they heard them; and the good which, through the sovereign blessing of God, they have received, than any real worth in them. And whatever the discourses are in themselves, yet those who heard them are not to be blamed or wondered at, if that is dear to them, which they hope God has made a means of saving and everlasting benefit. They have much insisted on this argument with me, to induce me to comply with their desire, viz. that they hoped the reading of these discourses would have a tendency in some measure to renew the same effect in them that was wrought in the hearing, and revive the memory of that great work of God, which this town has so much cause ever to remember, which argument has been of principal weight with me, to incline me to think it to be my duty to comply with their desire, though I cannot say there are no other considerations concurring to induce me to it.

With respect to the discourse on justification, besides the desire of my people to make it public, I have been advised to it by certain reverend gentlemen, my fathers, that happened to be the hearers of it (or, at least, part of it) when preached, whose opinion and advice, in such an affair, I thought should be of as great weight with me as of most that was acquainted with.

The beginning of the late work of God in this place was so circumstanced, that I could not but look upon it as a remarkable testimony of God's approbation of the doctrine of justification by faith, alone, here asserted and vindicated. — By the noise that had a little before been raised in this country concerning that doctrine, people here seemed to have their minds put into an unusual ruffle; some were brought to doubt of that way of

acceptance with God, which from their infancy they had been taught to be the only way, and many were engaged more thoroughly to look into the grounds of those doctrines in which they had been educated. — The following discourse of justification, that was preached (though not so fully as it is here printed) at two public lectures, seemed to be remarkably blessed, not only to establish the Judgments of many in this truth, but to engage their hearts in a more earnest pursuit of justification, in that way that had been explained and defended; and at that time, while I was greatly reproached for defending this doctrine in the pulpit, and just upon my suffering a very open abuse for it, God's work wonderfully brake forth amongst us, and souls began to flock to Christ, as the Saviour in whose righteousness alone they hoped to be justified. So that this was the doctrine on which this work in its beginning, was founded, as it evidently was in the whole progress of it.

A great objection that is made against the old protestant doctrine of justification by faith alone, and the scheme of those divines that have chiefly defended it, by those that value themselves upon the new fashioned divinity, is, that the scheme is too much incumbered with speculative niceties, and subtle distinctions, that, they say, serve only to involve the subject in endless controversy and dispute; whereas, their scheme, they suppose, is a plain, easy, and natural account of things. But their prejudice against distinctions in divinity, I humbly conceive, is carried to a great extreme. So great, so general, and loud a cry has been raised by modern philosophers and divines against the subtle distinctions of the schoolmen, for their learned impertinence, that many are ready to start at any thing that looks like nice distinction, and to condemn it for nonsense without examination. Upon the same account, we might expect to have St. Paul's epistles, that are full of very nice distinctions, called nonsense and unintelligible jargon, had not they the good luck to be universally received by all Christians as part of the Holy Scriptures.

Our discovering the absurdity of the impertinent and abstruse distinctions of the school divines, may justly give us a distaste of such distinctions as have a show of learning in obscure words but convey no light to the mind, but I can see no reason why we should also discard those that are clear and rational, and can be made out to have their foundation in truth, although they may be such as require some diligence and attention of mind clearly

to apprehend them. So much of the Scripture scheme of justification as is absolutely necessary to salvation, may be very plain, and level with the understandings of the weakest Christians, but it does not therefore follow, that the Scripture teaches us no more about it that would be exceeding profitable for us to know, and by gaining the knowledge, of which, we may obtain a more full and clear understanding of this doctrine, and be better able to solve doubts that may arise concerning it, and to defend it from the sophistry and cavils of subtle opposers.

It is so in most of the great doctrines of Christianity, that are looked upon as first principles of the christian faith, that though that contain something that is easy, yet they also contain great mysteries, and there is room for progress in the knowledge of them, and doubtless will be to the end of the world. But it is unreasonable, to expect that this progress should be made in the knowledge of things that are high and mysterious, without accurate distinction and close application of thought: and it is also unreasonable, to think that this doctrine, of the justification of a sinner by a mediator should be without mysteries. We all own it to be a matter of pure revelation, above the light of natural reason, and that it is what the infinite wisdom of God revealed in the gospel mainly appears in, that he hath found out such a way of reconciliation of which neither men nor angels could have thought. And after all, shall we expect that this way, when found out and declared, shall contain nothing but what is obvious to the most cursory and superficial view, and may be fully and clearly comprehended without some diligence, accuracy, and careful distinction?

If the distinctions I have made use of in handling this subject are found to be inconsistent, trivial. and unscriptural niceties, tending only to cloud the subject, I ought to be willing that they should be rejected; but if on due examination they are found both scriptural and rational, I humbly conceive that it will be unjust to condemn them, merely because they are distinctions, under a notion that niceness in divinity never helps it, but always perplexes and darkens it. It is to God's own revelation that I make my appeal, by which alone we are to know in what way he will be pleased again to receive into favour those who have offended him and incurred his displeasure. If there be any part of the scheme here laid down, or any distinction here used, not warranted by Scripture, let it be rejected; and if any opposite scheme can be found that is more easy and plain, having

fewer and more rational distinctions, and not demonstrably inconsistent with itself, and with the word of God, let it be received. Let the Arminian scheme of justification by our own virtue be as plain and natural as it will, if at the same time it is plainly contrary to the certain and demonstrable doctrine of the gospel, as contained in the Scriptures, we are bound to reject it, unless we reject the Scriptures themselves as perplexed and absurd, and make ourselves wiser than God, and pretend to know his mind better than himself.

This discourse on justification is printed much larger than it was preached, but the practical discourses that follow have but little added to them, and now appear in that very plain and unpolished dress in which they were first prepared and delivered, which was mostly at a time when the circumstances of the auditory they were preached to, were enough to make a minister neglect, forget, and despise such ornaments as politeness and modishness of style and method, when coming as a messenger from God to souls deeply impressed with a sense of their danger of God's everlasting wrath, to treat with them about their eternal salvation. — However unable I am to preach or write politely, if I would, yet I have this to comfort me under such a defect, that God has showed us he does not need such talents in men to carry on his own work, and that he has been pleased to smile upon and bless a very plain unfashionable way of preaching. And have we not reason to think, that it ever has been, and ever will be, God's manner, to bless the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe, let the elegance of language and excellency of style be carried to never so great a height, by the reaming and wit of the present and future ages?

What is published at the end concerning the excellency of Christ, is added on my own motion: thinking that a discourse on such an evangelical subject would properly follow others that were chiefly awakening, and that something of the excellency of the Saviour was proper to succeed those things that were to show the necessity of salvation. I pitched upon that particular discourse, partly because I had been earnestly importuned for a copy of it for the press, by some in another town in whose hearing it was occasionally preached.

I request every reader's candid acceptance and due improvement of what is here offered; and especially would earnestly beseech the people of my own charge, not to fail of improving these discourses to those purposes that they have mentioned to me as the ends for which they desired to have them published, that I may have no cause to repent of my labour in transcribing, nor they of their cost in printing them. Happy would it be for us, and an unspeakable mercy of heaven, if God should bless what is here printed, so to revive the memory of the past great work of God amongst us, and the lively impressions and sense of divine things that persons then had on their minds, and to cause us to lament our declensions, so that the same work might renewedly break forth and go on amongst us! Surely we have seen much to excite our longings after such a mercy, and to encourage us to cry to God for it!

# DISCOURSE 1

## JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH ALONE.

But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that, justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. (~~ROM~~ Romans 4:5.)

THE following things may be noted in this verse:

1. That justification respects a man as ungodly. This is evident by these words, — that justifieth the ungodly which cannot imply less, than that God, in the act of justification, has no regard to any thing in the person justified, as godliness, or any goodness in him; but that immediately before this act, God beholds him only as an ungodly creature; so that godliness in the person to be justified is not so antecedent to his justification as to be the ground of it. When it is said that God justifies the ungodly, it is absurd to suppose that our godliness, taken as some goodness in us, is the ground of our justification; as, when it is said that Christ gave sight to the blind, to suppose that sight was prior to, and the ground of, that act of mercy in Christ, or as, if it should be said that such an one by his bounty has made a poor man rich, to suppose that it was the wealth of this poor man that was the ground of this bounty towards him, and was the price by which it was procured.
2. It appears, that by him that worketh not, in this verse is not meant one who merely does not conform to the ceremonial law; because he that worketh not and the ungodly, are evidently synonymous expressions, or what signify the same, as appears by the manner of their connexion; if not, to what purpose is the latter expression, the ungodly, brought in? The context gives no other occasion for it, but to show, that by the grace of the gospel, God in justification has no regard to any godliness of ours. The foregoing verse is, “Now to him that worketh, is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.” In that verse, it is evident, gospel grace consists in the reward being given without works; and in this verse, which immediately follows it, and in sense is connected with it, gospel-grace

consists in a man's being justified as ungodly. By which it is most plain, that by him that worketh not, and him that is ungodly, are meant the same thing; and that therefore not only works of the ceremonial law are excluded in this business of justification, but works of morality and godliness.

**3.** It is evident in the words, that by the faith here spoken of, by which we are justified, is not meant the same thing as a course of obedience or righteousness, since the expression by which this faith is here denoted, is believing on him that justifies the ungodly. — They that oppose the Solifidians, as they call them, greatly insist on it, that we should take the words of Scripture concerning this doctrine in their most natural and obvious meaning; and how do they cry out, of our clouding this doctrine with obscure metaphors, and unintelligible figures of speech? But is this to interpret Scripture according to its most obvious meaning, when the Scripture speaks of our believing on him that justifies the ungodly, or the breakers of his law, to say, that the meaning of it is performing a course of obedience to his law, and avoiding the breaches of it? Believing on God as a justifier, certainly is a different thing from submitting to God as a lawgiver; especially believing on him as a justifier of the ungodly, or rebels against the lawgiver

**4.** It is evident that the subject of justification is looked upon as destitute of any righteousness in himself, by the expression, it is counted or imputed to him for righteousness. — The phrase, as the apostle uses it here and in the context manifestly imports, that God of his sovereign grace is pleased, in his dealings with the sinner, so to regard one that has no righteousness, that the consequence shall be the same as if he had. This however may be from the respect it bears to some thing that is indeed righteous. It is plain that this is the force of the expression in the preceding verses. In the last verse but one, It is manifest, the apostle lays the stress of his argument for the free grace of God — from that text of the Old Testament about Abraham — on the word counted or imputed; and this is the thing that he supposed God to show his grace in, this in this counting something for righteousness, in his consequential dealings with Abraham, that was no righteousness in itself. And in the next verse which, immediately precedes the text, “Now to him that worketh, is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt, “the word there translated reckoned, is the same that in the other verses is rendered imputed, and counted: and it

is as much as if the apostle had said, “As to him that works, there is no need of any gracious reckoning or counting it for righteousness, and causing the reward to follow as if it were a righteousness; for if he has works, he has that which is a righteousness in itself, to which the reward properly belongs.” This is further evident by the words that follow, verse 6. “Even as David also described the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works.” What can here be meant by imputing righteousness without works, but imputing righteousness to him that has none of his own? verse 7, 8. “Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven and whose sins are covered: blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.” How are these words of David to the apostle’s purpose? or how do they prove any such thing, as that righteousness is imputed without works, unless it be because the word imputed is used, and the subject of the imputation is mentioned as a sinner, and consequently destitute of a moral righteousness? For David says no such thing, as that he is forgiven without the works of the ceremonial law; there is no hint of the ceremonial law, or reference to it, in the words. — I will therefore venture to infer this doctrine from the words, for the subject of my present discourse, viz. That we are justified only by faith in Christ, and not by any manner of virtue or goodness of our own.

Such an assertion as this, I am sensible, many would be ready to call absurd, as betraying a great deal of ignorance and containing much inconsistency, but I desire every one’s patience till I have done.

In handling this doctrine, I would,

- I.** Explain the meaning of it, and show how I would be understood by such an assertion.
- II.** Proceed to the consideration of the evidence of the truth of it.
- III.** Show how evangelical obedience is concerned in this affair.
- IV.** Answer objections.
- V.** Consider the importance of the doctrine

**1.** I would explain the meaning of the doctrine, or show in what sense I assert it, and would endeavour to evince the truth of it: which may be done in answer to these two inquiries, viz. 1. What is meant by being justified? 2. What is meant when it is said, that this is, “by faith alone, without any manner of virtue or goodness of our own?”

First, I would show what justification is, or what I suppose is meant in Scripture by being justified.

A Person is said to be justified, when he is approved of God as free from the guilt of sin and its deserved punishment, and as having that righteousness belonging to him that entitles to the reward of life. That we should take the word in such a sense, and understand it as the judge’s accepting a person as having both a negative and positive righteousness belonging to him, and looking on him therefore as not only free from any obligation to punishment, but also as just and righteous, and so entitled to a positive reward, is not only most agreeable to the etymology and natural import of the word, which signifies to pass one for righteous in judgment, but also manifestly agreeable to the force of the word as used in Scripture.

Some suppose that nothing more is intended in Scripture by justification, than barely the remission of sins. If so, it is very strange, if we consider the nature of the case for it is most evident, and none will deny, that it is with respect to the rule or law of God we are under, that we are said in Scripture to be either justified or condemned. Now what is it to justify a person as the subject of a law or rule, but to judge him as standing right with respect to that rule? To justify a person in a particular case, is to approve of him as standing right, as subject to the law in that case; and to justify in general is to pass him in judgment, as standing right in a state correspondent to the law or rule in general: but certainly, in order to a person’s being looked on as standing right with respect to the rule in general, or in a state corresponding with the law of God more is needful than not having the guilt of sin, for whatever that law is, whether a new or an old one, doubtless something positive is needed in order to its being answered. We are no more justified by the voice of the law, or of him that judges according to it, by a mere pardon of sin, than Adam, our first surety, was justified by the law, at the first point of his existence, before he had fulfilled the obedience of the law, or had so much as any trial

whether he would fulfil it or no. If Adam had finished his course of perfect obedience, he would have been justified: and certainly his justification would have implied something more than what is merely negative; he would have been approved of, as having fulfilled the righteousness of the law, and accordingly would have been adjudged to the reward of it. So Christ, our second surety, (in whose justification all whose surety he is, are virtually justified,) was not justified till he had done the work the Father had appointed him, and kept the Father's commandments through all trials, and then in his resurrection he was justified. When he had been put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the spirit, <sup><B1B></sup>1 Peter 3:18. then he that was manifest in the flesh was justified in the spirit <sup><B1B></sup>1 Timothy 3:16.; but God, when he justified him in raising him from the dead, did not only release him from his humiliation for sin, and acquit him from any further suffering or abasement for it, but admitted him to that eternal and immortal life, and to the beginning of that exaltation that was the reward of what he had done. And indeed the justification of a believer is no other than his being admitted to communion in the justification of this head and surety of all believers; for as Christ suffered the punishment of sin, not as a private person, but as our surety; so when after this suffering he was raised from the dead, he was therein justified, not as a private person, but as the surety and representative of all that should believe in him. So that he was raised again not only for his own, but also for our justification, according to the apostle, <sup><B1B></sup>Romans 4:25. "Who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification." And therefore it is that the apostle says, as he does in <sup><B1B></sup>Romans 8:34.

"Who is he that condemneth?

It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again."

But that a believer's justification implies not only remission of sins, or acquittance from the wrath due to it, but also an admittance to a title to that glory which is the reward of righteousness, is more directly taught in the Scripture, particularly in <sup><B1B></sup>Romans 5:1, 2. where the apostle mentions both these as joint benefits implied in justification: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also we have access into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." So remission of sin, and inheritance among them that are sanctified, are mentioned together as what are jointly

obtained by faith in Christ, ~~Acts~~ Acts 26:18. “That they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them that are sanctified, through faith that is in me.” Both these are without doubt implied in that passing from death to life, which Christ speaks of as the fruit of faith, and which he opposes to condemnation, ~~John~~ John 5:24. “Verily I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.” I proceed now,

Secondly, To show what is meant when it is said, that this justification is by faith only, and not by any virtue or goodness of our own.

This inquiry may be subdivided into two, viz.

**1.** How it is by faith.

**2.** How it is by faith alone, without any manner of goodness of ours.

**1.** How justification is by faith.-Here the great difficulty has been about the import and force of the particle by, or what is that influence that faith has in the affair of justification that is expressed in Scripture by being justified by faith.

Here, if I may humbly express what seems evident to me, though faith be indeed the condition of justification so as nothing else is, yet this matter is not clearly and sufficiently explained by saying that faith is the condition of justification; and that because the word seems ambiguous, both in common use, and also as used in divinity. In one sense, Christ alone performs the condition of our justification and salvation; in another sense, faith is the condition of justification; in another sense, other qualifications and are conditions of salvation and justification too. There seems to be a great deal of ambiguity in such expressions as are commonly used, (which yet we are forced to use,) such as condition of salvation, what is required in order to salvation or justification, the terms of the covenant, and the like; and I believe they are understood in very different senses by different persons. And besides, as the word condition is very often understood in the common use of language, faith is not the only thing in us that is the condition of justification; for by the word condition, as it is very often (and perhaps most commonly) used, we mean any thing that may have the place of a condition in a conditional proposition, and as such is truly

connected with the consequent, especially if the proposition holds both in the affirmative and negative, as the condition is either affirmed or denied. If it be that with which, or which being supposed, a thing shall be, and without which, or it being denied, a thing shall not be, we in such a case call it a condition of that thing. But in this sense faith is not the only condition of salvation or justification; for there are many things that accompany and flow from faith, with which justification shall be, and without which it will not be, and therefore are found to be put in Scripture in conditional propositions with justification and salvation, in multitudes of places; such are love to God, and love to our brethren, forgiving men their trespasses, and many other good qualifications and acts. And there are many other things besides faith, which are directly proposed to us, to be pursued or performed by us, in order to eternal life, which if they are done, or obtained we shall have eternal life, and if not done, or not obtained, we shall surely perish. And if faith was the only condition of justification in this sense, I do not apprehend that to say faith was the condition of justification would express the sense of that phrase of Scripture, of being justified by faith. There is a difference between being justified by a thing, and that thing universally, necessarily, and inseparably attending justification; for so do a great many things that we are not said to be justified by. It is not the inseparable connexion with justification that the Holy Ghost would signify (or that is naturally signified) by such a phrase, but some particular influence that faith has in the affair, or some certain dependence that effect has on its influence.

Some, aware of this, have supposed, that the influence or dependence might well be expressed by faith's being the instrument of our justification; which has been misunderstood, and injuriously represented, and ridiculed by those that have denied the doctrine of justification by faith alone, as though they had supposed faith was used as an instrument in the hand of God, whereby he performed and brought to pass that act of his, viz. approving and justifying the believer. Whereas it was not intended that faith was the instrument wherewith God justifies, but the instrument wherewith we receive justification; not the instrument wherewith the justifier acts in justifying, but wherewith the receiver of justification acts in accepting justification. But yet, it must be owned, this is an obscure way of speaking, and there must certainly be some impropriety in calling

it an instrument wherewith we receive or accept justification; for the very persons who thus explain the manner, speak of faith as being the reception or acceptance itself and if so, how can it be the instrument of reception or acceptance? Certainly, there is a difference between the act and the instrument. Besides, by their own descriptions of faith, Christ, the mediator by whom, and his righteousness by which, we are justified, is more directly the object of this acceptance and justification which is the benefit arising therefrom more indirectly; and therefore, if faith be an instrument, it is more properly the instrument by which we receive Christ, than the instrument by which we receive justification.

But I humbly conceive we have been ready to look too far to find out what that influence of faith in our justification is, or what is that dependence of this effect on faith, signified by the expression of being justified by faith, overlooking that which is most obviously pointed forth in the expression, viz. that (there being a mediator that has purchased justification) faith in this mediator is that which renders it a meet and suitable thing, in the sight of God, that the believer, rather than others, should have this purchased benefit assigned to him. — There is this benefit purchased, which God sees it to be a more meet and suitable thing that it should be assigned to some rather than others, because he sees them differently qualified: that qualification wherein the meekness to this benefit, as the case stands, consist, is that in us by which we are justified. If Christ had not come into the world and died, etc. to purchase justification, no qualification whatever in us could render it a meet or fit thing that we should be justified. But the case being as it now stands, viz. that Christ has actually purchased justification by his own blood for infinitely unworthy creatures, there may be certain qualifications found in some persons, which, either from the relation it bears to the mediator and his merits, or on some other account, is the thing that in the sight of God renders it a meet and condecant thing, that they should have an interest in this purchased benefit, and of which if any are destitute, it renders it an unfit and unsuitable thing that they should have it. The wisdom of God in his constitutions doubtless appears much in the fitness and beauty of them, so that those things are established to be done that are fit to be done, and that those things are connected in his constitution that are agreeable one to another. So God justifies a believer according to his revealed constitution without doubt,

because he sees something in this qualification that, as the case stands, renders it a fit thing that such should be justified, whether it be because faith is the instrument, or as it were the hand, by which he that has purchased justification is apprehended and accepted, or because it is the acceptance itself, or whatever else. To be justified, is to be approved of God as a proper subject of pardon, with a right to eternal life; and therefore, when it is said that we are justified by faith, what else can be understood by it, than that faith is that by which we are rendered approvable, fitly so, and indeed, as the case stands, proper subjects of this benefit?

This is something different from faith being the condition of justification, though inseparably connected with justification. So are many other things besides faith, and yet nothing in us but faith renders it meet that we should have justification assigned to us; as I shall presently show in answer so the next inquiry, viz.

**2.** How this is said to be by faith alone, without any manner of virtue or goodness of our own. This may seem to some to be attended with two difficulties, viz. how this can be said to be by faith alone, without any virtue or goodness of ours, when faith itself is a virtue, and one part of our goodness, and is not only some manner of goodness of ours, but is a very excellent qualification, and one chief part of the inherent holiness of a Christian? And if it be a part of our inherent goodness or excellency (whether it be this part or any other) that renders it a condecant or congruous thing that we should have this benefit of Christ assigned to us what is this less than what they mean who talk of a merit of congruity? And moreover if this part of our christian holiness qualifies us, in the sight of God, for this benefit of Christ, and renders it a fit or meet thing, in his sight, that we should have it, why should not ushers parts of holiness, and conformity to God, which are also very excellent, and have as much of the imaze of Christ in them, and are no less lovely in God's eyes, qualify us as much, and have as much influence to render us meet, in God's sight, for such a benefit as this? Therefore I answer,

When it is said, that we are not justified by any righteousness or goodness of our own, what is meant is, that it is not out of respect to the excellency or goodness of any qualifications or acts in us whatsoever, that God judges

it meet that this benefit of Christ should be ours; and it is not, in any wise, on account of any excellency or value that there is in faith, that it appears in the sight of God a meet thing, that he who believes should have this benefit of Christ assigned to him, but purely from the relation faith has to the person in whom this benefit is to be had, or as it unites to that mediator, in and by whom we are justified. Here, for the greater clearness, I would particularly explain myself under several propositions.

(1.) It is certain that there is some union or relation that the people of Christ stand in to him, that is expressed in Scripture, from time to time, by being in Christ, and is represented frequently by those metaphors of being members of Christ, or being united to him as members to the head, and branches to the stock, and is compared to a marriage union between husband and wife. I do not now pretend to determine of what sort this union is; nor is it necessary to my present purpose to enter into any manner of disputes about it. If any are disgusted at the word union, as obscure and unintelligible, the word relation equally serves my purpose. I do not now desire to determine any more about it, than all, of all sorts, will readily allow, viz. that there is a peculiar relation between true Christians and Christ, which there is not between him and others; and which is signified by those metaphorical expressions in Scripture, of being in Christ, being members of Christ, etc.

(2.) This relation or union to Christ, whereby Christians are said to be in Christ, (whatever it be,) is the ground of their right to his benefits. This needs no proof, the reason of the thing, at first blush, demonstrates it. It is exceeding evident also by Scripture, 1 <sup>482</sup>John 5:12. “He that hath the Son, hath life; and he that hath not the Son, hath not life.” <sup>483</sup>1 Corinthians 1:30. “Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us — righteousness.” First we must be in him, and then he will be made righteousness or justification to us. <sup>484</sup>Ephesians 1:6. “Who hath made us accepted in the beloved.” Our being in him is the ground of our being accepted. So it is in those unions to which the HOLY GHOST has thought fit to compare this. The union of the members of the body with the head, is the ground of their partaking of the life of the head; it is the union of the branches to the stock, which is the ground of their partaking of the sap and life of the

stock; it is the relation of the wife to the husband, that is the ground of her joint interest in his estate; they are looked upon, in several respects, as one in law. So there is a legal union between Christ and true Christians; so that (as all except Socinians allow) one, in some respects, is accepted for the other by the Supreme Judge.

**(3.)** And thus it is that faith is the qualification in any person that renders it meet in the sight of God that he should be looked upon as having Christ's satisfaction and righteousness belonging to him, viz. because it is that in him which, on his part, makes up this union between him and Christ. By what has been just now observed, it is a person's being, according to scripture phrase, in Christ, that is the ground of having his satisfaction and merits belong to him, and a right to the benefits procured there by. The reason of it is plain; it is easy to see how our having Christ's merits and benefits belonging to us follows from our having (if I may so speak) Christ himself belonging to us, or our being united to him. And if so, it must also be easy to see how, or in what manner, that in a person, which on his part makes up the union between his soul and Christ, should be the thing on the account of which God looks on it as meet that he should have Christ's merits belonging to him. It is a very different thing for God to assign to a particular person a right to Christ's merits and benefits from regard to a qualification in him in this respect, from his doing it for him out of respect to the value or loveliness of that qualification, or as a reward of its excellency.

As there is nobody but what will allow that there is a peculiar relation between Christ and his true disciples, by which they are in some sense in Scripture said to be one; so I suppose these is nobody but what will allow, that there may be something that the true Christian does on his part, whereby he is active in coming into this relation or union; some uniting act, or that which is done towards this union or relation (or whatever any please to call it) on the Christian's part. Now faith I suppose to be this act.

I do not now pretend to define justifying faith, or to determine precisely how much is contained in it, but only to determine thus much concerning it, viz. That it is that by which the soul, which before was separate and

alienated from Christ, unites itself to him, or ceases to be any longer in that state of alienation, and comes into that forementioned union or relation to him; or, to use the scripture phrase, it is that by which the soul comes to Christ, and receives him: and this is evident by the Scriptures using these very expressions to signify faith. ~~John~~ John 6:35-39. “He that cometh to me, shall never hunger; and he that beliveth on me, shall never thirst. But I said unto you, that ye also have seen me and believe not. All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me; and him that cometh to, me, I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.” Verse 40. “And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.” Chapter 5:38 — 40. “Whom he hath sent, him ye believe not. Search the Scriptures, for — they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life.” Verse 43, 44. “I am come in my Father’s name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive. How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another?” Chapter 1:12. “But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.” If it be said that these are obscure figures of speech, which, however they might be well understood of old among those who commonly used such metaphors, are with difficulty understood now. I allow, that the expressions of receiving Christ and coming to Christ, are metaphorical expressions; and if I should allow them to be obscure metaphors, yet thus much at least is certainly plain in them, viz. that faith is that by which those who before were separated, and at a distance from Christ, (that is to say, were not so related and united to him as his people are,) cease to be any longer at such a distance, and come into that relation and nearness; unless they are so unintelligible, that nothing at all can be understood by them.

God does not give those that believe an union with or an interest in the Saviour as a reward for faith, but only because faith is the soul’s active uniting, with Christ, or is itself the very act of union, on their part. God sees it, that in order to an union being established between two intelligent active beings or persons so as that they should be looked upon as one, there should be the mutual act of both, that each should receive other, as

actively joining themselves one to another. God, in requiring this in order to an union with Christ as one of his people, treats men as reasonable creatures, capable of act and choice, and hence sees it fit that they only who are one with Christ by their own act, should be looked upon as one in law. What is real in the union between Christ and his people, is the foundation of what is legal; that is, it is something really in them, and between them, uniting them, that is the ground of the suitableness of their being accounted as one by the Judge. And if there be any act or qualification in believers of that uniting nature, that it is meet on that account the Judge should look upon them and accept them as one, no wonder that upon the account of the same act or qualification, he should accept the satisfaction and merits of the one for the other, as if these were their own satisfaction and merits. This necessarily follows, or rather is implied.

And thus it is that faith justifies, or gives an interest in Christ's satisfaction and merits, and a right to the benefits procured thereby, viz. as it thus makes Christ and the believer one in the acceptance of the Supreme Judge. It is by faith that we have a title to eternal life, because it is by faith that we have the Son of God, by whom life is.

The apostle John in these words, <sup>and</sup> 1 John 5:12. "He that hath the Son, hath life," seems evidently to have respect to those words of Christ of which he gives an account in his gospel, chapter <sup>and</sup> 3:36. "He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life." And where the Scripture speaks of faith as the soul's receiving or coming to Christ, it also speaks of this receiving, coming to, or joining with, Christ, as the ground of an interest in his benefits. To as many as received him, "to them gave he power" to become the sons of God. Ye will not come unto me "that ye might have life." And there is a wide difference between its being suitable that Christ's satisfaction and merits should be theirs who believe, because an interest in that satisfaction and merit is a fit reward of faith — or a suitable testimony of God's respect to the amiableness and excellency of that grace — -and its being suitable that Christ's satisfaction and merits should be theirs, because Christ and they are so united, that in the eyes of the Judge they may be looked upon and taken as one.

Although, on account of faith in the believer, it is in the sight of God fit and congruous, both that he who believes should be looked upon as in Christ and also as having an interest in his merits, in the way that has been now explained; yet it appears that this is very wide from a merit of congruity, or indeed any moral congruity at all to either. There is a twofold fitness to a state; I know not how to give them distinguishing names, otherwise than by calling the one a moral, and the other a natural, fitness. A person has a moral fitness for a state, when his moral excellency commends him to it, or when his being put into such a good state is but a suitable testimony of regard to the moral excellency, or value, or amiableness of any of his qualifications or acts. A person has a natural fitness for a state, when it appears meet and condecant that he should be in such a state or circumstances, only from the natural concord or agreeableness there is between such qualifications and such circumstances; not because the qualifications are lovely or unlovely, but only because the qualifications and the circumstances are like one another, or do in their nature suit and agree or unite one to another. And it is on this latter account only that God looks on it fit by a natural fitness, that he whose heart sincerely unites itself to Christ as his Saviour, should be looked upon as united to that Saviour, and so having an interest in him; and not from any moral fitness there is between the excellency of such a qualification as faith, and such a glorious blessedness as the having an interest in Christ. God's bestowing Christ and his benefits on a soul in consequence of faith, out of regard only to the natural concord there is between such a qualification of a soul, and such an union with Christ, and interest in him, makes the case very widely different from what it would be, if he bestowed this from regard to any moral suitableness. For, in the former case, it is only from God's love of order that he bestows these things on the account of faith: in the latter, God doth it out of love to the grace of faith itself. God will neither look on Christ's merits as ours, nor adjudge his benefits to us, till we be in Christ: nor will he look upon us as being in him, without an active union of our hearts and souls to him; because he is a wise being, and delights in order, and not in confusion, and that things should be together or asunder according to their nature; and his making such a constitution is a testimony of his love of order. Whereas if it were out of regard to any moral fitness or suitableness between faith and such blessedness, it would be a testimony of his love to the act or qualification

itself. The one supposes this divine constitution to be a manifestation of God's regard to the beauty of the act of faith: the other only supposes it to be a manifestation of his regard to the beauty of that order that there is in uniting those things that have a natural agreement, and congruity, and union of the one with the other. Indeed a moral suitableness or fitness to a state includes a natural: for, if there be a moral suitableness that a person should be in such a state, there is also a natural suitableness, but such a natural suitableness as I have described, by no means necessarily includes a moral.

This is plainly what our divines intend when they say, that faith does not justify as a work, or a righteousness, viz. that it does not justify as a part of our moral goodness or excellency, or that it does not justify as man was to have been justified by the covenant of works, which was, to trade a title to eternal life given him of God, in testimony of his pleasedness with his works, or his regard to the inherent excellency and beauty of his obedience. And this is certainly what the apostle Paul means, when he so much insists upon it that we are not justified by works, viz. that we are not justified by them as good works, or by any goodness, value, or excellency of our works. For the proof of this I shall at present mention but one thing, and that is, the apostle from time to time speaking of our not being justified by works, as the thing that excludes all boasting, ~~HEB~~ Ephesians 2:9. ~~HEB~~ Romans 3:27. and chapter 4:2. Now which way do works give occasion for boasting, but as good? What do men use to boast of, but of something they suppose good or excellent? And on what account do they boast of any thing, but for the supposed excellency that is in it?

From these things we may learn in what manner faith is the only condition of justification and salvation. For though it be not the only condition, so as alone truly to have the place of a condition in an hypothetical proposition, in which justification and salvation are the consequent, yet it is the condition of justification in a manner peculiar to it, and so that nothing else has a parallel influence with it; because faith includes the whole act of union to Christ as a Saviour. The entire active uniting of the soul, or the whole of what is called coming to Christ, and receiving of him, is called faith in Scripture; and however other things may be no less excellent than faith, yet it is not the nature of any other graces or virtues directly to close

with Christ as a mediator, any further than they enter into the constitution of justifying faith, and do belong to its nature.

Thus I have explained my meaning, in asserting it as a doctrine of the gospel, that we are justified by faith only, without any manner of goodness of our own.

I now proceed,

**II.** To be proof of it, which I shall endeavour to produce in the following arguments.

First, Such is our case, and the state of things, that neither faith, nor any other qualifications, or act or course of acts, does or can render it suitable that a person should have an interest in the Saviour, and so a title to his benefits, on account of any excellency therein, or any other way, than as something in him may unite him to the Saviour. It is not suitable that God should give fallen man an interest in Christ and his merits, as a testimony of his respect to any thing whatsoever as a loveliness in him and that because it is not meet, till a sinner is actually justified, that any thing in him should be accepted of God, as any excellency or amiableness of his person; or that God, by any act, should in any manner or degree testify any pleasedness with him, or favour towards him, on the account of any thing inherent in him: and that for two reasons:

**1.** The nature of things will not admit of it. And this appears from the infinite guilt that the sinner till justified is under; which arises from the infinite evil or heinousness of sin. But because this is what some deny, I would therefore first establish that point, and show that sin is a thing that is indeed properly of infinite heinousness, and then show the consequence, that it cannot be suitable, till the sinner is actually justified, that God should by any act testify pleasedness with or acceptance of any excellency or amiableness of his person.

That the evil and demerit of sin is infinitely great, is most demonstrably evident, because what the evil or iniquity of sin consists in, is the violating of an obligation, or doing what we should not do; and therefore by how much the greater the obligation is that is violated, by so much the greater is the iniquity of the violation. But certainly our obligation to love or honour any being is great in proportion to the greatness or excellency of that

being, or his worthiness to be loved and honoured. We are under greater obligations to love a more lovely being than a less lovely; and if a being be infinitely excellent and lovely, our obligations to love him are therein infinitely great. The matter is so plain, it seems needless to say much about it.

Some have argued exceeding strangely against the infinite evil of sin, from its being committed against an infinite object, that then it may as well be argued, that then is also an infinite value or worthiness in holiness and love to God, because that also has an infinite object whereas the argument, from parity of reason, will carry is in the rever. The sin of the creature against God is deserving in proportion to the distance there is between God and the creature; the greatness of the object, ad the meanness of the subject, aggravates it. But it is the rever. with regard to the worthiness of the respect of the creature to God, it is worthless (and not worthy) in proportion to the meanness of the subject. So much the greater the distance between God and the creature, so much the less is the creature's respect worthy of God's notice or regard. The unworthiness of sin or opposition to God rises and is great in proportion to the dignity of the object and inferiority of the subject, but on the contrary, the value of respect rises in proportion to the value of the subject; and that for this plain reason, viz. that the evil of disrespect is in proportion to the obligation that lies upon the subject to the object which obligation is most evidently increased by the excellency and superiority of the object. But on the contrary, the worthiness of respect to a being is in proportion to the obligation that lies on him who is the object, (or rather the reason he has,) to regard the subject, which certainly is in proportion to the subject's value or excellency. Sin or disrespect is evil or heinous in proportion to the degree of what it denies in the object, and as it were takes from it, viz. its excellency and worthiness of respect; on the contrary respect is valuable in proportion to the value of what is given to the object in that respect, which undoubtedly (other things being equal) is great in proportion to the subject's value, or worthiness of regard, because the subject in giving his respect, can give no more than himself so far as he gives his respect, he gives himself to the object; and therefore his gift is of greater or lesser value in proportion to the value of himself.

Hence, (by the way,) the love, honour, and obedience of Christ towards God) has infinite value, from the excellency and dignity of the person in whom these qualifications were inherent; and the reason why we needed a person of infinite dignity to obey for us, was because of our infinite comparative meanness, who had disobeyed, whereby our disobedience was infinitely aggravated. We needed one the worthiness of whose obedience might be answerable to the unworthiness of our disobedience; and therefore needed one who was as great and worthy as we were unworthy.

Another objection (that perhaps may be thought hardly worth mentioning) is, that to suppose sin to be infinitely heinous, is to make all sins equally heinous, for how can any sin be more than infinitely heinous? But all that can be argued hence is, that no sin can be greater with respect to that aggravation, the worthiness of the object against whom it is committed. One sin cannot be more aggravated than another in that respect, because the aggravation of every sin is infinite; but that does not hinder, that some sins may be more heinous than others in other respects: as if we should suppose a cylinder infinitely long, it cannot be greater in that respect, viz. with respect to the length of it but yet it may be doubled and trebled and made a thousand fold more, by the increase of other dimensions. Of sins that are all infinitely heinous some may be more heinous than others; as well as of divers punishments that are all infinitely dreadful calamities, or all of them infinitely exceeding all finite calamities, so that there is no finite calamity, however great, but what is infinitely less dreadful, or more eligible, than any of them yet some of them may be a thousand times more dreadful than others. A punishment may be infinitely dreadful by reason of the infinite duration of it; and therefore cannot be greater with respect to that aggravation of it, viz. its length of continuance, but yet may be vastly more terrible on other accounts.

Having thus, as I imagine, made it clear that all sin is infinitely heinous, and consequently that the sinner, before he is justified, is under infinite guilt in God's sight; I now remains that I show the consequence, or how it follows from hence, that it is not suitable that God should give the sinner an interest in Christ's merits, and so a title to his benefits, from regard to any qualification, or act, or course of acts in him, on the account of any excellency or goodness whatsoever therein, but only as uniting to Christ;

or (which fully implies it) that it is not suitable that God, by any act, should, in any manner or degree, testify any acceptance of, or pleasedness with, any thing, as any virtue, or excellency, or any part of loveliness, or valuableness in his person, until he is actually already interested in Christ's merits. From the premises it follows, that before the sinner is already interested in Christ, and justified, it is impossible God should have any acceptance of or pleasedness with the person of the sinner, as in an, degree lovely in his sight, or indeed less the object of his displeasure and wrath. For, by the supposition, the sinner still remains infinitely guilty in the sight of God, for guilt is not removed but by pardon: but to suppose the sinner already pardoned, is to suppose him already justified; which is contrary to the supposition. But if the sinner still remains infinitely guilty in God's sight, that is the same thing as still to be beheld of God as infinitely the object of his displeasure and wrath, or infinitely hateful in his eyes; and if so, where is any room for any thing in him; to be accepted as some valuableness or acceptableness of him in God's sight, or for any act of favour of any kind toward) him, or any gift whatsoever to him, in testimony of God's respect to and acceptance of something of him lovely and pleasing? If we should suppose that a sinner could have faith, or some other grace in his heart, and yet remain separate from Christ; and that he is not looked upon as being in Christ, or having any relation to him, it would not be meet that such true grace should be accepted of God as any loveliness of his person in the sight of God. If it should he accepted as the loveliness of the person, that would be to accept the person as in some degree lovely to God; but this cannot be consistent with his still remaining under infinite guilt, or infinite unworthiness in God's sight, which that goodness has no worthiness to balance. While God beholds the man as separate from Christ, he must behold him as he is in himself, and so his goodness cannot be beheld by God but as taken with his guilt and hatefulness, and as put in the scales with it, and so his goodness is nothing; because there is a finite on the balance against an infinite whose proportion to it is nothing. In such a case, if the man be looked on as he is in himself, the excess of the weight in one scale above another must be looked upon as the quality of the man. These contraries being beheld together, one takes from another, as one number is subtracted from another; and the man must be looked upon in God's sight according to the remainder. For here, by the supposition, all acts of grace or favour, in not

imputing the guilt as it is, are excluded, because that supposes a degree of pardon, and that supposes justification, which is contrary to what is supposed, viz. that the sinner is not already justified; and therefore things must be taken strictly as they are; and so the man is still infinitely unworthy and hateful in God's sight, as he was before, without diminution, because his goodness bears no proportion to his unworthiness, and therefore when taken together is nothing.

Hence may be more clearly seen the force of that expression in the text, of believing on him that justifieth the ungodly; for though there is indeed something in man that is really and spiritually good, prior to justification, yet there is nothing that is accepted as any godliness or excellency of the person, till after justification. Goodness or loveliness of the person in the acceptance of God, in any degree, is not to be considered as prior but posterior, in the order and method of God's proceeding in this affair. Though a respect to the natural suitableness between such a qualification, and such a state, does go before justification, yet the acceptance even of faith as any goodness or loveliness of the believer, follows justification. The goodness is on the forementioned account justly looked upon as nothing, until the man is justified: and therefore the man is respected in justification, as in himself altogether hateful. Thus the nature of things will not admit of a man having an interest given him in the merits or benefits of a Saviour, on the account of any thing as a righteousness, or a virtue, or excellency in him.

**2.** A divine constitution antecedent to that which establishes justification by a Saviour, (and indeed to any need of a Saviour,) stands in the way of it, viz. that original constitution or law which man was put under; by which constitution or law the sinner is condemned, because he is a violator of that law; and stands condemned, till he has actually an interest in the Saviour, through whom he is set at liberty from that condemnation. But to suppose that God gives a man an interest in Christ in reward for his righteousness or virtue, is inconsistent with his still remaining under condemnation till he has an interest in Christ, because he supposes, that the sinner's virtue is accepted, and he accepted for it, before he has an interest in Christ inasmuch as an interest in Christ is given as a reward of his virtue. But the virtue must first be accepted before it is rewarded, and the man must first be accepted for his virtue, before he is rewarded for it

with so great and glorious a reward; for the very notion of a reward is some good bestowed in testimony of respect to and acceptance of virtue in the person rewarded. It does not consist with the honour of the majesty of the King of heaven and earth, to accept of any thing from a condemned malefactor, condemned by the justice of his own holy law, till that condemnation be removed. And then, such acceptance is inconsistent with, and contradictory to, such remaining condemnation; for the law condemns him that violates it, to be totally rejected and cast off by God. But how can a man continue under this condemnation, i.e. continue utterly rejected and cast off by God, and yet his righteousness or virtue be accepted, and he himself accepted on the account of it, so as to have so glorious a reward as an interest in Christ bestowed as a testimony of that acceptance?

I know that the answer will be, that we now are not subject to that constitution which mankind were at first put under; but that God, in mercy to mankind, has abolished that rigorous constitution, and put us under a new law, and introduced a more mild constitution; and that the constitution or law itself not remaining, there is no need of supposing that the condemnation of it remains, to stand in the way of the acceptance of our virtue. And indeed there is no other way of avoiding this difficulty. The condemnation of the law must stand in force against a man till he is actually interested in the Saviour who has satisfied and answered the law, so as effectually to prevent any acceptance of his virtue, either before, or even in order to, such an interest, unless the law or constitution itself be abolished. But the scheme of those modern divines by whom this is maintained, seems to contain a great deal of absurdity and self-contradiction: they hold, that the old law given to Adam, which requires perfect obedience, is entirely repealed, and that instead of it we are put under a new law, which requires no more than imperfect sincere obedience, in compliance with our poor, infirm, impotent circumstances since the fall, whereby we are unable to perform that perfect obedience that was required by the first law, for they strenuously maintain, that it would be unjust in God to require any thing of us that is beyond our present power and ability to perform; and yet they hold, that Christ died to satisfy for the imperfections of our obedience, that so our imperfect obedience might be accepted instead of perfect. Now, how can these things hang together? I would ask, What law these imperfections of our obedience are a breach of?

If they are a branch of no law, then they are not sins; and if they be not sins, what need of Christ's dying to satisfy for them? but if they are sins, and so the breach of some law, what law is it? They cannot be a breach of their new law, for that requires no other than imperfect obedience, or obedience with imperfections; and they cannot be a breach of the old law, for that they say is entirely abolished, and we never were under it; and we cannot break a law that we never were under. They say it would not be just in God to exact of us perfect obedience, because it would not be just in God to require more of us than we can perform in our present state, and to punish us for failing of it: and therefore, by their own scheme, the imperfections of our obedience do not deserve to be punished. What need therefore of Christ's dying to satisfy for them? What need of Christ's suffering to satisfy for that which is no fault, and in its own nature deserves no suffering? What need of Christ's dying to purchase that our imperfect obedience should be accepted, when according to their scheme it would be unjust in itself that any other obedience than imperfect should be required? What need of Christ's dying to make way for God's accepting such an obedience, as it would in itself be unjust in him not to accept? Is there any need of Christ's dying to persuade God not to do unjustly? If it be said that Christ died to satisfy that law for us, that so we might not be under that law, but might be delivered from it, that so there might be room for us to be under a more mild law; still I would inquire, What need of Christ's dying that we might not be under a law that (according to their scheme) it would in itself be unjust that we should be under, because in our present state we are not able to keep it? What need of Christ's dying that we might not be under a law that it would be unjust that we should be under, whether Christ died or no?

Thus far I have argued principally from reason, and the nature of things:-I proceed now to the Second argument, which is, That this is a doctrine which the Holy Scriptures, the revelation that God has given us of his mind and will — by which alone we can never come to know how those who have offended God can come to be accepted of him, and justified in his sight — is exceeding full. The apostle Paul is abundant in teaching, that “we are justified by faith alone, without the works of the law! “There is no one doctrine that he insists so much upon, and that he handles with so much distinctness, explaining giving reasons, and answering objections.

Here it is not denied by any, that the apostle does assert, that we are justified by faith, without the works of the law, because the words are express; but only it is said that we take his words wrong and understand that by them that never entered into his heart, in that when he excludes the works of the law, we understand him of the whole law of God, or the rule which he has given to mankind to walk by; whereas all that he intends is the ceremonial law.

Some that oppose this doctrine indeed say, that the apostle sometimes means that it is by faith, *i.e.* a hearty embracing the gospel in its first act only, or without any preceding holy life, that persons are admitted into a justified state; but, say they, it is by a persevering obedience that they are continued in a justified state, and it is by this that they are finally justified. But this is the same thing, as to say, that a man on his first embracing the gospel is conditionally justified and pardoned. To pardon sin, is to free the sinner from the punishment of it, or from that eternal misery that is due to it; and therefore if a person is pardoned, or freed from this misery, on his first embracing the gospel, and yet not finally freed, but his actual freedom still depends on some condition yet to be performed, it is inconceivable how he can be pardoned otherwise than conditionally; that is, he is not properly actually pardoned, and freed from punishment, but only he has God's promise that he shall be pardoned on future conditions. God promises him, that now, if he perseveres in obedience, he shall be finally pardoned, or actually freed from hell; which is to make just nothing at all of the apostle's great doctrine of justification by faith alone. Such a conditional pardon is no pardon or justification at all, any more than all mankind have, whether they embrace the gospel or no for they all have a promise of final justification on conditions of future sincere obedience, as much as he that embraces the gospel. But not to dispute about this, we will suppose that there may be something or other at the sinner's first embracing the gospel, that may properly be called justification or pardon, and yet that final justification, or real freedom from the punishment of sin, is still suspended on conditions hitherto unfulfilled, yet they who hold that sinners are thus justified on embracing the gospel, suppose that they are justified by this, no otherwise than as it is a leading act of obedience, or at least as virtue and moral goodness in them, and therefore would be excluded by the apostle as much as any other virtue or obedience, if it be

allowed that he means the moral law, when he excludes works of the law. And therefore, if that point be yielded, that the apostle means the moral, and not only the ceremonial, law, their whole scheme falls to the ground.

And because the issue of the whole argument from those texts in St. Paul's epistles depends on the determination of this point, I would be particular in the discussion of it.

Some of our opponents, in this doctrine of justification, when they deny, that by the law the apostle means the moral law, or the whole rule of life which God has given to mankind, seem to choose to express themselves thus, that the apostle only intends the Mosaic dispensation.

But this comes to just the same thing as if they said, that the apostle only means to exclude the works of the ceremonial law, for when they say, that it is intended only that we are not justified by the works of the Mosaic dispensation, if they mean any thing by it, it must be, that we are not justified by attending and observing what is Mosaic in that dispensation, or by what was peculiar to it, and wherein it differed from the christian dispensation which is the same as that which is ceremonial and positive and not moral, in that administration. So that this is what I have to disprove, viz. that the apostle, when he speaks of works of the law in this affair, means only works of the ceremonial law, or those observances that were peculiar to the Mosaic administration.

And here it must be noted, that nobody controverts it with them, whether the works of the ceremonial law be not included, or whether the apostle does not particularly argue against justification by circumcision, and other ceremonial observances: but all in question is, whether, when he denies justification by works of the law, he is to be understood only of the ceremonial law, or whether the moral law be not also implied and intended; and therefore those arguments which are brought to prove that the apostle meant the ceremonial law, are nothing to the purpose, unless they prove that the apostle meant those only.

What is much insisted on is, that it was the judaizing Christians being so fond of circumcision, and other ceremonies of the law, and depending so much on them, which was the very occasion of the apostle's writing as he does against justification by the works of the law. But supposing it were

so, that their trusting in works of the ceremonial law were the sole occasion of the apostle's writing, (which yet there is no reason to allow, as may appear afterwards,) If their trusting in a particular work, as a work of righteousness, was all that gave occasion to the apostle to write, how does it follow, that therefore the apostle did not upon that occasion write against trusting in all works of righteousness whatsoever? Where is the absurdity of supposing that the apostle might take occasion, from his observing some to trust in a certain work as a work of righteousness, to write to them against persons trusting in any works of righteousness at all, and that it was a very proper occasion too? Yea, it would have been unavoidable for the apostle to have argued against trusting in a particular work, in the quality of a work of righteousness, which quality was general, but he must therein argue against trusting in works of righteousness in general. Supposing it had been some other particular sort of works that was the occasion of the apostle's writing, as for instance, works of charity, and the apostle should hence take occasion to write to them not to trust in their works, could the apostle by that be understood of no other works besides works of charity? Would it have been absurd to understand him as writing against trusting in any work at all, because it was their trusting to a particular work that gave occasion to his writing?

Another thing alleged, as an evidence that the apostle means the ceremonial law — when he says, we cannot be justified by the works of the law — is, that he uses this argument to prove it, viz. that the law he speaks of was given so long after the covenant with Abraham, in ~~REF~~ Galatians 3:17. “And this I say, that the covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul.” But, say they, it was only the Mosaic administration, and not the covenant of works, that was given so long after. But the apostle's argument seems manifestly to be mistaken by them. The apostle does not speak of a law that began to exist four hundred and thirty years after; if he did, there would be some force in their objection; but he has respect to a certain solemn transaction, well known among the Jews by the phrase “the giving of the law.” which was at mount Sinai, (~~DEF~~ Exodus 19:20.) consisting especially in God's giving the ten commandments (which is the moral law) with a terrible voice, which law he afterwards gave in tables of stone. This transaction the Jews in the apostle's time misinterpreted, they looked

upon it as God's establishing that law as a rule of justification. Against this conceit of theirs the apostle brings this invincible argument, viz. that God would never go about to disannul his covenant with Abraham, which was plainly a covenant of grace, by a transaction with his posterity that was so long after it, and was plainly built upon it. He would not overthrow a covenant of grace that he had long before established with Abraham, for him and his seed, (which is often mentioned as the ground of God's making them his people,) by now establishing a covenant of works with them at mount Sinai, as the Jews and judaizing Christians supposed.

But that the apostle does not mean only works of the ceremonial law, when he excludes works of the law in justification, but also of the moral law, and all works of obedience, virtue, and righteousness whatsoever, may appear by the following things

**1.** The apostle does not only say that we are not justified by the works of the law, but that we are not justified by works, using a general term; as in our text, "to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth," etc.; and in the 6th verse, "God imputeth righteousness without works;" and chapter 11:6. "And if by grace, then is it no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace: but if it be of works, then it is no more grace, otherwise work is no more work." So, ~~4th~~ Ephesians 2:8, 9. "For by grace are ye saved, through faith, — not of works," by which, there is no reason in the world to understand the apostle of any other than works in general, as correlates of a reward, or good works, or works of virtue and righteousness. When the apostle says, we are justified or saved not by works, without any such term annexed, as the law, or any other addition, to limit the expression, what warrant have any to confine it to works of a particular law or institution, excluding others? Are not observances of other divine laws works, as well as of that? It seems to be allowed by the divines in the Arminian scheme, in their interpretation of several of those texts where the apostle only mentions works, without any addition, that he means our own good works in general; but then, they say, he only means to exclude any proper merit in those works. But to say the apostle means one thing when he says, we are not justified by works, and another when he says, we are not justified by the works of the law, when we find the expressions mixed and used in the same discourse, and when the apostle is evidently upon the same argument, is very unreasonable; it is to

dodge, and fly from Scripture, rather than open and yield ourselves to its teachings.

**2.** In the third chapter of Romans, our having been guilty of breaches of the moral law, is an argument that the apostle uses, why we cannot be justified by the works of the law. Beginning with the ~~8th~~ 9th verse, he proves out of the Old Testament, that all are under sin: “There is none righteous, no not one: their throat is as an open sepulcher; with their tongues they have used deceit: their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness; and their feet swift to shed blood.” And so he goes on, mentioning only those things that are breaches of the moral law; and then when he has done, his conclusion is, in the 19th and 20th verses, “Now we know that whatsoever things the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore, by the deeds of the law, shall no flesh be justified in his sight.” This is most evidently his argument, because all had sinned, (as it was said in the 9th verse,) and been guilty of those breaches of the moral law that he had mentioned, (and it is repeated over again, verse 23.) “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;” therefore none at all can be justified by the deeds of the law. Now if the apostle meant only, that we are not justified by the deeds of the ceremonial law, what kind of arguing would that be, “their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness, their feet are swift to shed blood?”

Therefore they cannot be justified by the deeds of the Mosaic administration. They are guilty of the breaches of the moral law; and therefore they cannot be justified by the deeds of the ceremonial law! Doubtless, the apostle's argument is that the very same law they have broken, can never justify them as observers of it, because every law necessarily condemns its violators. And therefore our breaches of the moral law argue no more, than that we cannot be justified by that law we have broken.

And it may be noted, that the apostle's argument here is the same that I have already used, viz. that as we are in ourselves, and out of Christ, we are under the condemnation of that original law or constitution that God established with mankind; and therefore it is no way fit that any thing we

do, any virtue or obedience of ours, should be accepted, or we accepted on the account of it.

**3.** The apostle, in all the preceding part of this epistle, wherever he has the phrase, the law, evidently intends the moral law principally. As in the 12th verse of the foregoing chapter: “For as many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law.” It is evidently the written moral law the apostle means, by the next verse but one. “For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law;” that is, the moral laws that the Gentiles have by nature. And so the next verse, “Which show the work of the law written in their hearts.” It is the moral law, and not the ceremonial that is written in the hearts of those who are destitute of divine revelation. And so in the 18th verse, “Thou, approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law.” It is the moral law that shows us the nature of things, and teaches us what is excellent, 20th verse, “Thou hast a form of knowledge and truth in the law.” It is the moral law, as is evident by what follows, verse 22, 23. “Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law, dishonourest thou God? Adultery, idolatry, and sacrilege, surely are the breaking of the moral and not the ceremonial law. So in the 27th verse, “And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision cost transgress the law?” *i.e.* the Gentiles, that you despise because uncircumcised, if they live moral and holy lives, in obedience to the moral law; shall condemn you though circumcised. And so there is not one place in all the preceding part of the epistle, where the apostle speaks of the law, but that he most apparently intends principally the moral law; and yet when the apostle, in continuance of the same discourse, comes to tell us, that we cannot be justified by the works of the law, then they will needs have it, that he means only the ceremonial law. Yea, though all this discourse about the moral law, showing how the Jews as well as Gentiles have violated it, is evidently preparatory and introductory to that doctrine, chapter 3:20. “That no flesh,” that is, none of mankind, neither Jews nor Gentiles, “can be justified by the works of the law.”

**4.** It is evident that when the apostle says, we cannot be justified by the works of the law, he means the moral as well as ceremonial law, by his giving this reason for it, that “by the law is the knowledge of sin,” as ~~ROM~~ Romans 3:20. “By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin.” Now that law by which we come to the knowledge of sin, is the moral law chiefly and primarily. If this argument of the apostle be good, “that we cannot be justified by the deeds of the law, because it is by the law that we come to the knowledge of sin,” then it proves that we cannot be justified by the deeds of the moral law, nor by the precepts of Christianity; for by them is the knowledge of sin. If the reason be good, then where the reason holds, the truth holds. It is a miserable shift, and a violent force put upon the words, to say that the meaning is, that by the law of circumcision is the knowledge of sin, because circumcision signifying the taking away of sin, puts men in mind of sin. The plain meaning of the apostle is, that as the law most strictly forbids sin, it tends to convince us of sin, and bring our own consciences to condemn us, instead of justifying of us; that the use of it is to declare to us our own guilt and unworthiness, which is the rever. of justifying and approving of us as virtuous or worthy. This is the apostle’s meaning, if we will allow him to be his own expositor; for he himself, in this very epistle, explains to us how it is that by the law we have the knowledge of sin, and that it is by the law’s forbidding sin, chapter 7:7. “I had not known sin, but by the law, for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.” There the apostle determines two things, first, That the way in which “by the law is the knowledge of sin,” is by the law’s forbidding sin: and secondly, which is more directly still to the purpose, he determines that it is the moral law by which we come to the knowledge of sin; “for,” says he, “I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.” Now it is the moral, and not the ceremonial law, that says, “Thou shalt not covet.” Therefore, when the apostle argues, that by the deeds of the law no flesh living shall be justified, because by the law is the knowledge of sin, his argument proves, (unless he was mistaken as to the force of his argument,) that we cannot be justified by the deeds of the moral law.

**5.** It is evident that the apostle does not mean only the ceremonial law, because he gives this reason why we have righteousness, and a title to the

privilege of God's children, not by the law, but by faith, "that the law worketh wrath." ~~ROM~~ Romans 4:13-16. "For the promise that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed through the law, but through righteousness of faith. For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect. Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression. Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace." Now the way in which the law works wrath by the apostle's own account, in the reason he himself annexes, is by forbidding sin, and aggravating the guilt of the transgression, "for," says he, "where no law is, there is no transgression:" And so, chapter 7:13. "That sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful." If, therefore, this reason of the apostle be good, it is much stronger against justification by the moral law than the ceremonial law; for it is by transgressions of the moral law chiefly that there comes wrath: for they are most strictly forbidden, and most terribly threatened.

**6.** It is evident that when the apostle says, we are not justified by the works of the law, that he excludes all our own virtue, goodness, or excellency, by that reason he lives for it, viz. "That boasting might be excluded." ~~ROM~~ Romans 3:26, 27, 28. "To declare, I Say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay, but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude, that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." ~~EPH~~ Ephesians 2:8, 9. "For by grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." Now what are men wont to boast of, but what they esteem their own goodness or excellency? If we are not justified by works of the ceremonial law yet how does that exclude boasting, as long as we are justified by our own excellency, or virtue and goodness of our own, or works of righteousness which we have done?

But it is said, that boasting is excluded, as circumcision was excluded, which was what the Jews especially used to glory in, and value themselves upon, above other nations.

To this I answer, that the Jews were not only used to boast of circumcision, but were notorious for boasting of their moral righteousness.

The Jews of those days were generally admirers and followers of the Pharisees, who were full of their boasts of their moral righteousness; as we may see by the example of the Pharisee mentioned in the 18th of Luke, which Christ mentions as describing the general tempter of that sect: "Lord," says he, "I thank thee, that I am not as other men, an extortioner nor unjust, nor an adulterer." The works that he boasts of were chiefly moral works: he depended on the works of the law for justification, and therefore Christ tells us, that the publican, that renounced all his own righteousness "went down to his house justified rather than he." And elsewhere, we read of the Pharisees praying in the corners of the streets, and sounding a trumpet before them when they did alms. But those works which they so vainly boasted of were moral works. And not only so, but what the apostle in this very epistle condemns the Jews for, is their boasting of the moral law. Chapter 2:22, 23. "Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, cost thou commit adultery? Thou that abhorrest idols, cost thou commit sacrilege? Thou that makest thy boast of the law through breaking the law, dishonourest thou God? The law here mentioned that they made their boast of, was that of which adultery, idolatry, and sacrilege, were the breaches, which is the moral law. So that this is the boasting which the apostle condemns them for: and therefore, if they were justified by the works of this law, then how comes he to say that their boasting is excluded? And besides when they boasted of the rites of the ceremonial law, it was under a notion of its being a part of their own goodness or excellency, or what made them holier and more lovely in the sight of God than other people; and if they were not justified by this part of their own supposed goodness or holiness, yet if they were by another, how did that exclude boasting? How was their boasting excluded, unless all goodness or excellency of their own was excluded?

**7.** The reason given by the apostle why we can be justified only by faith, and not by the works of the law, in the 3rd chapter of Galatians viz. "That they that are under the law are under the curse," makes it evident that he does not mean only the ceremonial law In that chapter the apostle had particularly insisted upon it, that Abraham was justified by faith, and that it is by faith only and not by the works of the law, that we can be justified and become the children of Abraham, and he made partakers of the blessing of Abraham: and he gives this reason for it in the 10th verse: "For

as many as are of the works of the law, are under the curse; for it is written. Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.” It is manifest that these words, cited from Deuteronomy, are spoken not only with regard to the ceremonial law, but the whole law of God to mankind, and chiefly the moral law: and that all mankind are therefore as they are in themselves under that curse, not only while the ceremonial law lasted, but now since that has ceased. And therefore all who are justified, are redeemed from that curse, by Christ’s hearing it for them: as in verse 13. “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree “ Now therefore, either its being said, that he is cursed who continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them, is a good reason why we cannot be justified by the works of that law of which it is so said; or it is not: if it be, then it is a good reason why we cannot be justified by the works of the moral law, and of the whole rule which God has given to mankind to walk by; for the words are spoken of the moral as well as the ceremonial law, and reach every command or precept which God has given to mankind, and chiefly the moral precepts, which are most strictly enjoined, and the violations of which in both the New Testament and the Old, and in the books of Moses themselves, are threatened with the most dreadful curse.

**8.** The apostle in like manner argues against our being justified by our own righteousness, as he does against being justified by the works of the law; and evidently uses the expressions, of our own righteousness, and work, of the law, promiscuously, and as signifying the same thing. It is particularly evident by ~~ROM~~ Romans 10:3.

“For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.”

Here it is plain that the same thing is asserted as in the two last verses but one of the foregoing chapter. “But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore, because they sought it, not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law.” And it is very unreasonable, upon several accounts, to suppose that the apostle, by their own righteousness, intends only their ceremonial

righteousness. For when the apostle warns us against trusting in our own righteousness for justification, doubtless it is fair to interpret the expression in an agreement with other scriptures, where we are warned, not to think that it is for the sake of our own righteousness that we obtain God's favour and blessing as particularly in <sup><ROM></sup>Deuteronomy 9:4-6.

"Speak not thou in thine heart, after that the Lord thy God hath cast them out from before thee, saying, For my righteousness the Lord hath brought me in to possess this land: bus for the wickedness of these nations the Lord doth drive them out from before thee. Not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thine heart, dost thou go to possess their land: but for the wickedness of these nations, the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee, and that he may perform the word which he swear unto thy fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Understand therefore, that the Lord thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it, for thy righteousness; for thou art a stiff-necked people:, None will pretend that here the expression thy righteousness, signifies only a ceremonial righteousness, but all virtue or goodness of their own; yea, and the inward goodness of the heart, as well as the outward goodness of life; which appears by the beginning of the 5th verse, "Not for thy righteousness or for the uprightness of thy heart;" and also by the antithesis in the 6th verse, "Not for thy righteousness, for thou art a stiff-necked people." Their stiff-neckedness was their moral wickedness, obstinacy, and perverseness of heart. By righteousness, therefore, on the contrary is meant their moral virtue, and rectitude of heart and life. This is what I would argue from hence, that the expression of our own righteousness, when used in Scripture with relation to the favour of God — and when we are warned against looking upon it as that by which that favour, or the fruits of it, are obtained — does not signify only a ceremonial righteousness, but all manner of goodness, of our own.

The Jews also, in the New Testament, are condemned for trusting in their own righteousness in this sense; <sup><MT></sup>Luke 17:9, etc. "And he spake this parable unto certain that trusted in themselves that they were righteous." This intends chiefly a moral righteousness; as appears by the parable itself, in which we have an account of the prayer of the Pharisee, wherein the things that he mentions as what he trusts in, are chiefly moral

qualifications and performances viz. That he was not an extortioner, unjust, nor an adulterer, etc.

But we need not go to the writings of other penmen of the Scripture. If we will allow the apostle Paul to be his own interpreter he — when he speaks of our own righteousness as that by which we are not justified or saved — does not mean only a ceremonial righteousness, nor does he only intend a way of religion and serving God, of our own choosing, without divine warrant or prescription, but by our own righteousness he means the same as a righteousness of our own doing, whether it be a service or righteousness of God's prescribing, or our own unwarranted performing. Let it be an obedience to the ceremonial law, or a gospel obedience or what it will, if it be a righteousness of our own doing it is excluded by the apostle in this affair, as is evident by ~~Titus~~ Titus 3:5.

**“Not by works of righteousness which we have done.”**

But I would more particularly insist on this text, and therefore this may be the

9th argument, That the apostle, when he denies justification by works, works of the law, and our own righteousness, does not mean works of the ceremonial law only. ~~Titus~~ Titus 3:3-7. “For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour: that being justified by his grace we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.” Works of righteousness that we have done are here excluded, as what we are neither saved nor justified by. The apostle expressly says, we are not saved by them; and it is evident that when he says this, he has respect to the affair of justification. And that he means, we are not saved by them in not being justified by them, as by the next verse but one, which is part of the same sentence, “That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”

It is several ways manifest, that the apostle in this text, by “works of righteousness which we have done,” does not mean only works of the ceremonial law. It appears by the 3rd verse, “For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.” These are breaches of the moral law that the apostle observes they lived in before they were justified: and it is most plain that it is this which gives occasion to the apostle to observe, as he does in the 5th verse that it was not by works of righteousness which they had done, that they were saved or justified.

But we need not go to the context, it is most apparent from the words themselves, that the apostle does not mean only works of the ceremonial law. If he had only said, it is not by our own works of righteousness; what could we understand by works of righteousness, but only righteous works, or, which is the same thing, good works? And to say, that it is by our own righteous works that we are justified, though not by one particular kind of righteous works, would certainly be a contradiction to such an assertion. But, the words are rendered yet more strong, plain and determined in their sense, by those additional words, which we have done; which shows that the apostle intends to exclude all our own righteous or virtuous works universally. If it should be asserted concerning any commodity treasure, or precious jewel, that it could not be procured by money, and not only so, but, to make the assertion the more strong, it should be asserted with additional words, that it could not be procured by money that men possess how unreasonable would it be, after all, to say, that all that was meant was, that it could not be procured with brass money.

And what renders the interpreting of this text, as intending works of the ceremonial law, yet more unreasonable, is, that these works were indeed no works of righteousness at all, but were only falsely supposed to be so by the Jews. And this our opponents in this doctrine also suppose is the very reason why we are not justified by them, because they are not works of righteousness, or because (the ceremonial law being, now abrogated) there is no obedience in them. But how absurd is it to say, that the apostle, when he says we are not justified by works of righteousness that we have done, meant only works of the ceremonial law, and that for that very reason, because they are not works of righteousness? To illustrate

this by the forementioned comparison: If it should be asserted, that such a thing could not be procured by money that men possess, how ridiculous would it be to say, that the meaning only was, that it could not be procured by counterfeit money, and that for that reason, because it was not money. What scripture will stand before men, if they will take liberty to manage scripture thus? Or what one text is there in the Bible that may not at this rate be explained all away, and perverted to any sense men please?

But further, if we should allow that the apostle intends only to oppose justification by works of the ceremonial law in this text, yet it is evident by the expression he uses, that he means to oppose it under that notion, or in that quality, of their being works of righteousness of our own doing. But if the apostle argues against our being justified by works of the ceremonial law, under the notion of their being of that nature and kind, viz. works of our own doing; then it will follow, that the apostle's argument is strong against, not only those, but all of that nature and kind, even all that are of our own doing.

If there were no other text in the Bible about justification but this, this would clearly and invincibly prove, that we are not justified by any of our own goodness, virtue, or righteousness, or for the excellency or righteousness of any thing that we have done in religion; because it is here so fully and strongly asserted, but this text abundantly confirms other texts of the apostle, where he denies justification by works of the law. No doubt can be rationally made, but that the apostle, when he shows, that God does not save us by “works of righteousness that we have done,” verse 5. and that so we are “justified by grace,” verse 7. herein opposing salvation by works and salvation by grace — means the same works as he does in other places where he in like manner opposes works and grace: as in ~~ROM~~ Romans 11:6

“And if by grace, then it is no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.”

And the same works as in ~~ROM~~ Romans 4:4.

“Now to him that worketh, is the reward not  
reckoned of grace, but of debt.”

And the same works that are spoken of in the context of the 24th verse of the foregoing chapter, which the apostle there calls “works of the law, being justified freely by his grace.” And of the 4th chapter, 16th verse, “Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace.” Where in the context the righteousness of faith is opposed to the righteousness of the law: for here God’s saving us according to his mercy, and justifying us by grace, is opposed to saving us by works of righteousness that we have done; in the same manner as in those places, justifying us by his grace, is opposed to justifying us by works of the law.

**10.** The apostle could not mean only works of the ceremonial law, when he says, we are not justified by the works of the law, because it is asserted of the saints under the Old Testament as well as New. If men are justified by their sincere obedience, it will then follow that formerly, before the ceremonial law was abrogated, men were justified by the works of the ceremonial law, as well as the moral. For if we are justified by our sincere obedience, then it alters not the case, whether the commands be moral or positive, provided they be God’s commands, and our obedience be obedience to God. And so the case must be just the same under the Old Testament, with the works of the moral law and ceremonial, according to the measure of the virtue of obedience there was in either. It is true, their obedience to the ceremonial law would have nothing to do in the affair of justification, unless it was sincere and so neither would the works of the moral law. If obedience was the thing, then obedience to the ceremonial law, while that stood in force, and obedience to the moral law, had just the same sort of concern, according to the proportion of obedience that consists in each, as now under the New Testament, if obedience is what we are justified by, that obedience must doubtless comprehend obedience to all God’s commands now in force, to the positive precepts of attendance on baptism and the Lord’s supper, as well as moral precepts. If obedience be the thing, it is not because it is obedience to such a kind of commands, but because it is obedience. So that by this supposition, the saints under the Old Testament were justified, at least in part, by their obedience to the ceremonial law.

But it is evident that the saints under the Old Testament were not justified, in any measure, by the works of the ceremonial law. This may be proved, proceeding on the foot of our adversaries' own interpretation of the apostle's phrase, "the works of the law," and supposing them to mean by it only the works of the ceremonial law. To instance in David, it is evident that he was not justified in any wise by the works of the ceremonial law, by ~~the~~ Romans 4:6-8. "Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and "Those sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." It is plain that the apostle is here speaking of justification from the preceding verse, and all the context; and the thing spoken of, viz. forgiving iniquities and covering sins, is what our adversaries themselves suppose to be justification, and even the whole of justification. This David, speaking, of himself, says (by the apostle's interpretation) that he had without works. For it is manifest that David, in the words here cited, from the beginning, of the 32nd Psalm, has a special respect to himself: he speaks of his own sins being forgiven and not imputed to him; as appears by the words that immediately follow. "When I kept silence, my bones waxed old; through my roaring, all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is fumed into the drought of summer. I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid; I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." Let us therefore understand the apostle which way we will respecting works, when he says, "David describes the blessedness of the man to whom the Lord imputes righteousness without works," whether of all manner of works, or only works of the ceremonial law, yet it is evident at least, that David was not justified by works of the ceremonial law. Therefore here is the argument: if our own obedience be that by which men are justified, then under the Old Testament men were justified partly by obedience to the ceremonial law (as has been proved); but the saints under the Old Testament were not justified partly by the works of the ceremonial law, therefore men's own obedience is not that by which they are justified.

**11.** Another argument that the apostle, when he speaks of the two opposite ways of justification, one by the works of the law and the other

by faith, does not mean only the works of the ceremonial law may be taken from ~~SITE~~ Romans 10:5, 6. "For Moses described; the righteousness which is of the law, that the man which doth those things, shall live by them. But the righteousness which is of faith, speaketh on this wise," etc. — Here two things are evident.

First, That the apostle here speaks of the same two opposite ways of justification, one by the righteousness which is of the law, the other by faith, that he had treated of in the former part of the epistle; and therefore it must be the same law that is here spoken of. The same law is here meant as in the last verses of the foregoing chapter, where he says, the Jews had "not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it, not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law;" as is plain, because the apostle is still speaking of the same thing the words are a continuation of the same discourse, as may be seen at first glance, by any one that looks on the context.

Secondly, It is manifest that Moses, when he describes the righteousness which is of the law, or the way of justification by the law, in the words here cited, "He that doth those things, shall live in them," does not speak only, nor chiefly, of the works of the ceremonial law; for none will pretend that God ever made such a covenant with man, that he who kept the ceremonial law should live in it, or that there ever was a times that it was chiefly by the works of the ceremonial law that men lived and were justified. Yea, it is manifest by the forementioned instance of David, mentioned in the 4th of Romans, that there never was a time wherein men were justified in any measure by the works of the ceremonial law, as has been just now shown. Moses therefore, in those words which, the apostle says, are a description of the righteousness which is of the law, cannot mean only the ceremonial law. And therefore it follows, that when the apostle speaks of justification by the works of the law, as opposite to justification by faith, he does not mean only the ceremonial law, but also the works of the moral law, which are the things spoken of by Moses, when he says, "He that doth those things, shall live in them." And these are the things which the apostle in this very place is arguing that we cannot be justified by; as is evident by the last verses of the preceding chapter; "But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought

it, not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law,” etc. And in the 3rd verse of this chapter “For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.”

And further, how can the apostle’s description that he here gives from Moses, of this exploded way of justification by the works of the law, consist with the Arminian scheme, of a way of justification by the virtue of a sincere obedience, that still remains as the true and only way of justification under the gospel? It is most apparent that it is the design of the apostle to give a description of both the legal rejected and the evangelical valid ways of justification, in that wherein they are distinguished the one from the other. But how is it, that “he who doth those things, shall live in them,” that wherein the way of justification by the works of the law is distinguished from that in which Christians under the gospel are justified, according to their scheme, for still, according to them, it may be said, in the same manner, of the precepts of the gospel, he that doth these things, shall live in them. The difference lies only in the things to be done, but not at all in that the doing of them is not the condition of living in them, just in the one case, as in the other. The words, “He that doth them, shall live in them,” will serve just as well for a description of the latter as the former. By the apostle’s saying, the righteousness of the law is described thus, be that doth these things, shall live in them; but the righteousness of faith saith thus, plainly intimates that the righteousness of faith saith otherwise, and in an opposite manner. Besides, if these words cited from Moses are actually said by him of the moral law as well as ceremonial, as it is most evident they are, it renders it still more absurd to suppose them mentioned by the apostle, as the very note of distinction between justification by a ceremonial obedience, and a moral sincere obedience, as the Arminians must suppose.

Thus I have spoken to a second argument, to prove that we are not justified by any manner of virtue or goodness of our own, viz. that to suppose otherwise, is contrary to the doctrine directly urged, and abundantly insisted on, by the apostle Paul in his epistles.

I now proceed to a Third argument, viz. That to suppose that we are justified by our own sincere obedience, or any of our own virtue or goodness, derogates from gospel grace.

That scheme of justification that manifestly takes from or diminishes the grace of God, is undoubtedly to be rejected; for it is the declared design of God in the gospel to exalt the freedom and riches of his grace, in that method of justification of sinners, and way of admitting them to his favour, and the blessed fruits of it, which it declares. The Scripture teaches that the way of justification appointed in the gospel-covenant, is appointed for that end, that free grace might be expressed, and glorified,

“Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace.”

(~~Scripture~~ Romans 4:16)

The exercising and magnifying of free grace in the gospel-contrivance for the justification and salvation of sinners, is evidently the chief design of it. And this freedom and riches of grace in the gospel is every where spoken of in Scripture as the chief glory of it. Therefore that doctrine which derogates from the free grace of God in justifying sinners, as it is most opposite to God’s design, so it must be exceedingly offensive to him.

Those who maintain, that we are justified by our own sincere obedience, pretend that their scheme does not diminish the grace of the gospel, for they say, that the grace of God is wonderfully manifested in appointing such a way and method of salvation by sincere obedience, in assisting us to perform such an obedience, and in accepting our imperfect obedience, instead of perfect.

Let us therefore examine that matter, whether their scheme, of a man’s being justified by his own virtue and sincere obedience, does derogate from the grace of God or no; or whether free grace is not more exalted in supposing, as we do, that we are justified without any manner of goodness of our own. In order to this, I will lay down this self-evident Proposition, that whatsoever that be by which the abundant benevolence of the giver is expressed, and gratitude in the receiver is obliged, that magnifies free grace. This I suppose none will ever controvert or dispute. — And it is not much less evident, that it doth both show a more abundant benevolence in the giver when he shows kindness without goodness or excellency in the

object, to move him to it; and that it enhances the obligation to gratitude in the receiver

It shows a more abundant goodness in the giver when he shows kindness without any excellency in our persons or actions that should move the giver to love and beneficence. For it certainly shows the more abundant and overflowing goodness, or disposition to communicate good, by how much the less loveliness or excellency there is to entice beneficence. The less there is in the receiver to draw good-will and kindness, it argues the more of the principle of good-will and kindness in the giver. One that has but little of a principle of love and benevolence, may be drawn to do good, and to show kindness, when there is a great deal to draw him, or when there is much excellency and loveliness in the object to move good-will, when he whose goodness and benevolence is more abundant will show kindness where there is less to draw, it forth; for he does not so much need to have it drawn from without, he has enough of the principle within to move him of itself. Where there is most of the principle, there it is most sufficient for itself, and stands in least need of something without to excite it. For certainly a more abundant goodness more easily flows forth with less to impel or draw it, than where there is less; or, which is the same thing, the more any one is disposed of himself, the less he needs from without himself, to put him upon it, or stir him up to it. And therefore his kindness and goodness appears the more exceeding great, when it is bestowed without any excellency or loveliness at all in the receiver, or when the receiver is respected in the gift, as wholly without excellency. And much more still when the benevolence of the giver not only finds nothing in the receiver to draw it, but a great deal of hatefulness to repel it. The abundance of goodness is then manifested, not only in flowing forth without any thing extrinsic to put it forward, but in overcoming great repulsion in the object. And then does kindness and love appear most triumphant, and wonderfully great, when the receiver is not only wholly without all excellency or beauty to attract it, but altogether, yea infinitely, vile and hateful.

**2.** It is apparent also that it enhances the obligation to gratitude in the receiver. This is agreeable to the common sense of mankind, that the less worthy or excellent the object of benevolence, or the receiver of kindness, is, the more he is obliged, and the greater gratitude is due. He therefore is

most of all obliged, that receives kindness without any goodness or excellency in himself, but with a total and universal hatefulness. And as it is agreeable to the common sense of mankind, so it is agreeable to the word of God. How often does God in the Scripture insist on this argument with men, to move them to love him and to acknowledge his, kindness! How much does he insist on this as an obligation to gratitude, that they are so sinful, and undeserving, and ill deserving!

Therefore it certainly follows, that the doctrine which teaches, that God, when he justifies a man, and shows him such great kindness as to give him a right to eternal life, does not do it for any obedience, or any manner of goodness, of his; but that justification respects a man as ungodly, and wholly without any manner of virtue, beauty, or excellency. I say, this doctrine does certainly more exalt the free grace of God in justification. And man's obligation to gratitude for such a favour, than the contrary doctrine, viz. That God, in showing this kindness to man, respects him as sincerely obedient and virtuous, and as having something in him that is truly excellent and lovely, and acceptable in his sight, and that this goodness or excellency of man is the very fundamental condition of the bestowment of that kindness on him, or of distinguishing him from others by that benefit. But I hasten, to a Fourth argument for the truth of the doctrine, That to suppose a man is justified by his own virtue or obedience, derogates from the honour of the Mediator and ascribes that to man's virtue which belongs only to the righteousness of Christ: it puts man in Christ's stead, and makes him his own saviour, in a respect in which Christ only is his Saviour. And so it is a doctrine contrary to the nature and design of the gospel, which is to abase man, and to ascribe all the glory of our salvation to Christ the Redeemer. It is inconsistent with the doctrine of the imputation of Christ's righteousness, which is a gospel doctrine.

Here I would explain what we mean by the imputation of Christ's righteousness. Prove the thing intended by it to be true. Show that this doctrine is utterly inconsistent with the doctrine of our being justified by our own virtue or sincere obedience.

First, I would explain what we mean by the imputation of Christ's righteousness. Sometimes the expression is taken by our divines in a larger

sense, for the imputation of all that Christ did and suffered for our redemption, whereby we are free from guilt, and stand righteous in the sight of God; and so implies the imputation both of Christ's satisfaction and obedience. But here I intend it in a stricter sense, for the imputation of that righteousness or moral goodness that consists in the obedience of Christ. And by that righteousness being imputed to us, is meant no other than this, that the righteousness of Christ is accepted for us, and admitted instead of that perfect inherent righteousness which ought to be in ourselves. Christ's perfect obedience shall be reckoned to our account, so that we shall have the benefit of it, as though we had performed it ourselves. And so we suppose that a title to eternal life is given us as the reward of this righteousness. The Scripture uses the word impute in this sense, viz. for reckoning any thing belonging to any person, to another person's account: as Philemon 18. "If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put this on mine account." In the original it is a word of the same root with that which is translated pute, ~~ROM~~ Romans 4:6. "To whom God imputeth righteousness without works." And it is the very same word that is used? ~~ROM~~ Romans 5:13. that is translated unpute, "sin is not imputed when there is no law."

The opposers of this doctrine suppose that there is an absurdity in supposing that God imputes Christ's obedience to us, it is to suppose that God is mistaken, and thinks that we performed that obedience which Christ performed. But why cannot that righteousness be reckoned to our account, and he accepted for us, without any such absurdity? Why is there any more absurdity in it, than in a merchant's transferring, debt or credit from one man's account to another, when one man pays a price for another, so that it shall be accepted as if that other had paid it? Why is there any more absurdity in supposing that Christ's obedience is imputed to us, than that his satisfaction is imputed? If Christ has suffered the penalty of the law in our stead, then it will follow, that his suffering, that penalty is imputed to us, that is accepted for us, and in our stead, and is reckoned to our account, as though we had suffered it. But why may not his obeying the law of God be as rationally reckoned to our account, as his suffering the penalty of the law? Why may not a price to bring into debt, be as rationally transferred from one person's account to another, as a

price to pay a debt? Having thus explained what we mean by the imputation of Christ's righteousness, I proceed,

Secondly, To prove that the righteousness of Christ is thus imputed.

**1.** There is the very same need of Christ's obeying the law in our stead, in order to the reward, as of his suffering the penalty of the law in our stead, in order to our escaping the penalty, and the same reason why one should be accepted on our account, as the other. There is the same need of one as the other, that the law of God might be answered: one was as requisite to answer the law as the other. It is certain, that was the reason why there was need that Christ should suffer the penalty for us, even that the law might be answered; for this the Scripture plainly teaches. This is given as the reason why Christ was made a curse for us, that the law threatened a curse to us <sup><R10></sup>Galatians 3:10, 13. But the same law that fixes the curse of God as the consequence of not continuing in all things written in the law to do them, verse 10. has as much fixed doing those things as an antecedent of living in them, (as verse 12.) There is as much connexion established in one ease as in the other. There is therefore exactly the same need, from the law, of perfect obedience being fulfilled in order to our obtaining the reward, as there is of death being suffered in order to our escaping the punishment, or the same necessity by the law, of perfect obedience preceding life, as there is of disobedience being succeeded by death. The law is, without doubt, as much of an established rule in one ease as in the other.

Christ by suffering the penalty, and so making atonement for us, only removes the guilt of our sins, and so sets us in the same state that Adam was in the first moment of his creation: and it is no more fit that we should obtain eternal life only on that account, than that Adam should have the reward of eternal life, or of a confirmed and unalterable state of happiness, the first moment of his existence, without any obedience at all. Adam was not to have the reward merely on account of his being innocent, if so, he would have had it fixed upon him at once, as soon as ever he was created, for he was as innocent then as he could be. But he was to have the reward on account of his activeness in obedience, not on account merely of his not having done ill, but on account of his doing well.

So on the same account we have not eternal life merely as void of guilt, which we have by the atonement of Christ; but on the account of Christ's

activeness in obedience, and doing well. Christ is our second federal head, and is called the second Adam, ~~1~~<sup>1</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:22. because he acted that part for us which the first Adam should have done. When he had undertaken to stand in our stead, he was looked upon and treated as though he were guilty with our guilt; and by his bearing the penalty, he did as it were free himself from this guilt. But by this the second Adam did only bring himself into the state in which the first Adam was on the first moment of his existence, viz. a state of mere freedom from guilt; and hereby indeed was free from any obligation to suffer punishment: but this being supposed, there was need of something further, even a positive obedience, in order to his obtaining, as our second Adam, the reward of eternal.

God saw meet to place man first in a state of trial, and not to give him a title to eternal life as soon as he had made him, because it was his will that he should first give honour to his authority, by fully submitting to it, in will and act, and perfectly obeying his law. God insisted upon it, that his holy majesty and law should have their due acknowledgment and honour from man, such as became the relation he stood in to that Being who created him, before he would bestow the reward of confirmed and everlasting happiness upon him; and therefore God gave him a law that he might have opportunity, by giving due honour to his authority in obeying it, to obtain this happiness. It therefore became Christ seeing that, in assuming man to himself, he sought a title to this eternal happiness for him after he had broken the law — that he himself should become subject to God's authority, and be in the form of a servant, that he might do that honour to God's authority for him, by his obedience, which God at first required of man as the condition of his having a title to that reward. Christ came into the world to render the honour of God's authority and law consistent with the salvation and eternal life of sinners; he came to save them, and yet withal to assert and vindicate the honour of the lawgiver, and his holy law. Now, if the sinner, after his sin was satisfied for, bad eternal life bestowed upon him without active righteousness, the honour of his law would not be sufficiently vindicated. Supposing this were possible, that the sinner himself could, by suffering. Pay the debt, and afterwards be in the same state that he was in before his probation, that is to say, negatively righteous, or merely without guilt; if he now at last

should have eternal life bestowed upon him, without performing that condition of obedience; then God would recede from his law, and would give the promised reward, and his law never have respect and honour shown to it, in that way of being obeyed. But now Christ, by subjecting himself to the law, and obeying it, has done great honour to the law, and to the authority of God who gave it. That so glorious a person should become subject to the law, and fulfil it, has done much more to honour it, than if mere man had obeyed it. It was a thing infinitely honourable to God, that a person of infinite dignity was not ashamed to call him his God, and to adore and obey him as such. This was more to God's honour than if any mere creature, of any possible degree of excellence and dignity, had so done.

It is absolutely necessary, that in order to a sinners being justified the righteousness of some other should be reckoned to his account, for it is declared, that the person justified is looked upon as (in himself ) ungodly; but God neither will nor can justify a person without a righteousness, for justification is manifestly a forensic term, as the word is used in Scripture, and a judicial thing, or the act of a judge. So that if a person should be justified without a righteousness, the judgment would not be according to truth. The sentence of justification would be a false sentence, unless there be a righteousness performed that is by the judge properly looked upon as his. To say, that God does not justify the sinner without sincere, though an imperfect, obedience, does not help the ease: for an imperfect righteousness before a judge is no righteousness. To accept of something that falls short of the rule, instead of something else that answers the rule, is no judicial act, or act of a judge, but a pure set of sovereignty. An imperfect righteousness is no righteousness before a judge; for "righteousness (as one observes) is a relative thing, and has always relation to a law. The formal nature of righteousness properly understood, lies in a conformity of actions to that which is the rule and measure of them." Therefore that only is righteousness in the sight of a judge that answers the law. The law is the judge's rule: if he pardons and hides what really is, and so does not pass sentence according to what things are in themselves, he either does not act the part of a judge, or else judges falsely. The very notion of judging is to determine what is, and what is not, in any one's case. The judge's work is twofold; it is to determine first what is fact, and

then whether what is in fact be according to rule, or according to the law. If a judge has no rule or law established beforehand, by which he should proceed in judging, he has no foundation to go upon in judging, he has no opportunity to be a judge; nor is it possible that he should do the part of a judge. To judge without a law or rule by which to judge, is impossible; for the very notion of judging, is to determine whether the object of judgment be according to rule; and therefore God has declared, that when he act as a judge, he will not justify the wicked, and cannot clear the guilty; and, by parity of reason, cannot justify without righteousness.

And the scheme of the old law's being abrogated, and a new law introduced, will not help at all in this difficulty, for an imperfect righteousness cannot answer the law of God we are under, whether that be an old or a new one, for every law requires perfect obedience to itself. Every rule whatsoever requires perfect conformity to itself it is a contradiction to suppose otherwise. For to say, that there is a law that does not require perfect obedience to itself, is to say that there is a law that does not require all that it requires. That law that now forbids sin, is certainly the law that we are now under, (let that be an old or a new one,) or else it is not sin. That which is not forbidden, and is the breach of no law, is no sin. But if we are now forbidden to commit sin, then it is by a law that we are now under, for surely we are neither under the forbiddings nor commanding of a law that we are not under. Therefore, if all sin is now forbidden, then we are now under a law that requires perfect obedience, and therefore nothing, can be accepted as a righteousness in the sight of our Judge, but perfect righteousness. So that our Judge cannot justify us, unless he sees a perfect righteousness, some way belonging to us, either performed by ourselves, or by another, and justly and duly reckoned to our account God doth, in the sentence of justification, pronounce a man perfectly righteous, or else he would need a further justification after he is justified. His sins being removed by Christ's atonement, is not sufficient for his justification; for justifying a man as has been already shown, is not merely pronouncing him innocent, or without guilt, but standing right with regard to the rule that he is under and righteous unto life: but this, according to the established rule of nature, reason, and divine appointment, is a positive, perfect righteousness.

As there is the same need that Christ's obedience should be reckoned to our account, as that his atonement should so there is the same reason why it should. As if Adam had persevered, and finished his course of obedience, we should have received the benefit of his obedience, as much as now we have the mischief of his disobedience; so in like manner, there is reason that we should receive the benefit of the second Adam's obedience, as of his atonement of our disobedience. Believers are represented in Scripture as being so in Christ, as that they are legally one, or accepted as one, by the Supreme Judge: Christ has assumed our nature, and as so assumed all in that nature that belongs to him, into such an union with himself, that he is become their head, and has taken them to be his members. And therefore, what Christ has done in our nature, whereby he did honour to the law and authority of God by his acts, as well as the reparation to the honour of the law by his sufferings, is reckoned to the believer's account, so as that the believer should be made happy, because it was so well and worthily done by his Head, as well as freed from being miserable, because he has suffered for our ill and unworthy doing.

When Christ had once undertaken with God to stand for us, and put himself under our law, by that law he was obliged to suffer, and by the same law he was obliged to obey: by the same law, after he had taken man's guilt upon him, he himself, being our surety, could not be acquitted till he had suffered, nor rewarded till he had obeyed: out he was not acquired as a private person, but as our head, and believers are acquitted in his acquittance; nor was he accepted to a reward for his obedience, as a private person, but as our head, and we are accepted to a reward in his acceptance. The Scripture teaches us, that when Christ was raised from the dead, he was justified which justification, as I have already shown, implies both his acquittance from our guilt, and his acceptance to the exaltation and glory that was the reward of his obedience: but believers, as soon as they believe, are admitted to partake with Christ in this his justification: hence we are told, that he was "raised again for our justification," <sup><8105></sup>Romans 4:25. which is true, not only of that part of his justification that consists in his acquittance, but also his acceptance to his reward. The Scripture teaches us, that he is exalted and gone to heaven to take possession of glory in our name as our forerunner, <sup><8102></sup>Hebrews 6:20.

We are, as it were both raised up together with Christ, and also made to sit together with Christ in heavenly places, and in him, ~~and~~ Ephesians 2:6.

If it be objected here, that there is this reason, why what Christ suffered should be accepted on our account, rather than the obedience he performed, that he was obliged to obedience for himself, but was not obliged to suffer but only on our account; to this I answer, That Christ was not obliged, on his own account, to undertake to obey. Christ, in his original circumstances, was in no subjection to the Father, being altogether equal with him: he was under no obligation to put himself in man's stead and under man's law: or to put himself into any state of subjection to God whatsoever. There was a transaction between the Father and the Son, that was antecedent to Christ's becoming man, and being made under the law, wherein he undertook to put himself under the law, and both to obey and to suffer; in which transaction these things were already virtually done in the sight of God; as is evident by this; that God acted on the ground of that transaction, justifying and saving sinners, as if the things undertaken had been actually performed long before they were performed indeed. And therefore, without doubt, in order to estimate the value and validity of what Christ did and suffered, we must look back to that transaction, wherein these things were first undertaken, and virtually done in the sight of God, and see what capacity and circumstances Christ acted in them, and we shall find that Christ was under no manner of obligation, either to obey the law, or to suffer its penalty. After this he was equally under obligation to both for henceforward he stood is our surety or representative: and therefore this consequent obligation may be as much of an objection against the validity of his suffering the penalty, as against his obedience. But if we look to that original transaction between the Father and the Son, wherein both these were undertaken and accepted as virtually done in the sight of the Father, we shall find Christ acting with regard to both as one perfectly in his own right, and under no manner of previous obligation to hinder the validity of either.

**2.** To suppose that all Christ does is only to make atonement for us by suffering, is to make him our Saviour but in part. It is to rob him of half his glory as a Saviour. For if so, all that he does is to deliver us from hell; he does not purchase heaven for us. The adverse scheme supposes that he purchases heaven for us, in that he satisfies for the imperfections of our

obedience, and so purchases that our sincere imperfect obedience might be accepted as the condition of eternal life; and so purchases an opportunity for us to obtain heaven by our own obedience. But to purchase heaven for us only in this sense, is to purchase it in no sense at all; for all of it comes to no more than a satisfaction for our sins, or removing the penalty by suffering in our stead. For all the purchasing they speak of, that our imperfect obedience should be accepted, is only his satisfying for the sinful imperfection of our obedience, or (which is the same thing) making atonement for the sin that our obedience is attended with. But that is not purchasing heaven, merely to set us at liberty again, that we may go and get heaven by what we do ourselves: all that Christ does is only to pay a debt for us; there is no positive purchase of any good. We are taught in Scripture that heaven is purchased for us; it is called the purchased possession, ~~ⲁⲓⲏⲏ~~ Ephesians 1:14. The gospel proposes the eternal inheritance, not to be acquired, as the first covenant did, but as already acquired and purchased. But he that pays a man's debt for him, and so delivers him from slavery, cannot be said to purchase an estate for him, merely because he sets him at liberty, so that henceforward he has an opportunity to get an estate by his own hand-labour. So that according to this scheme, the saint in heaven have no reason to thank Christ for purchasing heaven for them, or redeeming them to God, and making them kings and priests, as we have an account that they do, in ~~ⲁⲓⲏⲏ~~ Revelation 5:9.

**3.** Justification by the righteousness and obedience of Christ, is a doctrine that the Scripture teaches in very full terms; ~~ⲁⲓⲏⲏ~~ Romans 5:18, 19. "By the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners; so, by the obedience of one, shall many be made righteous." Here in one verse we are told, that we have justification by Christ's righteousness; and, that there might be no room to understand the righteousness spoken of, merely of Christ's atonement by his suffering the penalty, in the next verse it is put in other terms, and asserted, that it is by Christ's obedience we are made righteous. It is scarcely possible any thing should be more full and determined: the terms, taken singly, are such as fix their own meaning, and taken together, they fix the meaning of each other. The words show that we are justified by that righteousness of Christ which consists in his

obedience, and that we are made righteous or justified by that obedience of his, that is, his righteousness, or moral goodness before God.

Here possibly it may be objected that this text means only, that we are justified by Christ's passive obedience.

To this I answer, whether we call it active or passive, it alters not the case as to the present argument as long as it is evident by the words, that it is not merely under the notion of an atonement for disobedience, or a satisfaction for unrighteousness, but under the notion of a positive obedience, and a righteousness, or moral goodness, that it justifies us, or makes us righteous, because both the words righteousness and obedience are used, and used too as the opposites to sin and disobedience, and an offence. "Therefore as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so, by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men to justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners; so, by the obedience of one, shall many be made righteous." Now, what can be meant by righteousness, when spoken of as the opposite to sin, or moral evil, but moral goodness? What is the righteousness that is the opposite of an offence, but the behaviour that is well pleasing? and what can be meant by obedience, when spoken of as the opposite of disobedience, or going contrary to a command, but a positive obeying and an actual complying with the command? So that there is no room for any invented distinction of active and passive, to hurt the argument from this scripture; for it is evident by it, as any thing can be, that believers are justified by the righteousness and obedience of Christ, under the notion of his moral goodness; — his positive obeying and actual complying with the commands of God, and that behaviour which, because of its conformity to his commands, was well-pleasing in his sight. This is all that ever any need to desire to have granted in this dispute.

By this it appears, that if Christ's dying be here included in the words righteousness and obedience, it is not merely as a propitiation, or bearing a penalty of a broken law in our stead, but as his voluntary submitting and yielding himself to those suffering, was an act of obedience to the Father's commands, and so was a part of his positive righteousness, or moral goodness.

Indeed all obedience considered under the notion of righteousness, is something active, something done in voluntary compliance with a command, whether it may be done without suffering, or whether it be hard and difficult; yet as it is obedience, righteousness, or moral goodness, it must be considered as something voluntary and active. If any one is commanded to go through difficulties and sufferings, and he in compliance with this command, voluntarily does it, he properly obeys in so doing and as he voluntarily does it in compliance with a command, his obedience is as active as any whatsoever is. It is the same sort of obedience, a thing of the very same nature, as when a man, in compliance with a command, does a piece of hard service, or goes through hard labour and there is no room to distinguish between such obedience of it, as if it were a thing of quite a different nature by such opposite terms as active and passive: all the distinction that can be pretended, is that which is between obeying an easy command and a difficult one. But is there from hence any foundation to make two species of obedience, one active and the other passive? There is no appearance of any such distinction ever entering into the hearts of any of the penmen of Scripture.

It is true, that of late, when a man refuses to obey the precept of a human law, but patiently yields himself up to suffer the penalty of the law, it is called passive obedience; but this I suppose is only a modern use of the word obedience surely it is a sense of the word that the Scripture is a perfect stranger to. It is improperly called obedience unless there be such a precept in the law, that he shall yield himself patiently to suffer, to which his so doing shall be an active voluntary conformity. There may in some sense be said to be a conformity of the law in a person's suffering the penalty of the law; but no other conformity to the law is properly called obedience to it, but an active voluntary conformity to the precepts of it. The word obey is often found in Scripture with respect to the law of God to man, but never in any other sense.

It is true that Christ's willingly undergoing those sufferings which he endured, is a great part of that obedience or righteousness by which we are justified. The sufferings of Christ are respected in Scripture under a twofold consideration, either merely as his being substituted for us, or put into our stead, in suffering the penalty of the law, and so his sufferings are considered as a satisfaction and propitiation for sin; or as he, in obedience

to a law or command of the Father, voluntarily submitted himself to those sufferings, and actively yielded himself up to hear them; and so they are considered as his righteousness and a part of his active obedience. Christ underwent death in obedience to the command of the Father, <sup><1908></sup>Psalm 40:6, 7, 8. "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire, mine ears hast thou opened: burnt-offering and sin-offering hast thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me: I delight to do thy will, O my God yea, thy "law is within my heart." <sup><807></sup>John 10:17,18. "I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself: I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father." <sup><8181></sup>John 18:11. "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" And this is part, and indeed the principal part, of that active obedience by which we are justified.

It can be no just objection against this, that the command of the Father to Christ that he should lay down his life, was no part of the law that we had broken; and therefore, that his obeying this command could be no part of that obedience that he performed for us, because we needed that he should obey no other law for us, but only that which we had broken or failed of obeying. For although it must be the same legislative authority, whose honour is repaired by Christ's obedience, that we have injured by our disobedience; yet there is no need that the law which Christ obeys should be precisely the same that Adam was to have obeyed, in that sense, that there should be no positive precepts wanting, nor any added. There was wanting the precept about the forbidden fruit, and there was added the ceremonial law. The thing required was perfect obedience. It is no matter whether the positive precepts were the same, if they were equivalent. The positive precepts that Christ was to obey, were much more than equivalent to what was wanting, because infinitely more difficult, particularly the command that he had received to lay down his life, which was his principal act of obedience, and which, above all other, is concerned in our justification. As that act of disobedience by which we fell, was disobedience to a positive precept that Christ never was under, viz. that of abstaining from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, so that act of obedience by which principally we are redeemed, is obedience to a positive precept that Adam never was under, viz. the precept of laying

down his life. It was suitable that it should be a positive precept, that should try both Adam's and Christ's obedience. Such precepts are the greatest and most proper trial of obedience; because in them, the mere authority and will of the legislator is the sole ground of the obligation, (and nothing in the nature of the things themselves,) and therefore they are the greatest trial of any person's respect to that authority and will.

The law that Christ was subject to, and obeyed, was in some sense the same that was given to Adam. There are innumerable particular duties required by the law only conditionally, and in such circumstances, are comprehended in some great and general rule of that law. Thus, for instance, there are innumerable acts of respect and obedience to men, which are required by the law of nature, (which was a law given to Adam.) which yet are not required absolutely, but upon many pre-requisite conditions, as, that there be men standing in such relations to us, and that they give forth such commands, and the like So many acts of respect and obedience to God are included, in like manner, in the moral law conditionally, or such and such things being supposed; as Abraham's going about to sacrifice his son, the Jews' circumcising their children when eight days old, and Adam's not eating the forbidden fruit, they are virtually comprehended in that great general rule of the moral law, that we should obey God, and be subject to him in whatsoever he pleases to command us. Certainly the moral law does as much require us to obey God's positive commands, as it requires us to obey the positive commands of our parents And thus all that Adam, and all that Christ was commanded, even his observing the rites and ceremonies of the Jewish worship, and his ravine down his life, was virtually included in this same great law.

It is no objection against the last-mentioned thing, even Christ's laying his life, it being included in the moral law given to Adam, because that law itself allowed of no occasion for any such thing for the moral law virtually includes all right acts, on all possible occasions, even occasions that the law itself allows not: thus we are obliged by the moral law to mortify our lusts, and repent of our sins, though that law allows of no lust to mortify, or sin to repent of.

There is indeed but one great law of God, and that is the same law that says, "if thou sinnest, thou shalt die;" and "cursed is every one that

continues not in all things contained in this law to do them.” All duties of positive institution are virtually comprehended in this law: and therefore, if the Jews broke the ceremonial law, it exposed them to the penalty of the law, or covenant of works, which threatened, “thou shalt surely die.” The law is the eternal and unalterable rule of righteousness between God and man, and therefore is the rule of judgment, by which all that a man does shall be either justified or condemned and no sin exposes to damnation, but by the law. So now he that refuses to obey the precepts that require an attendance on the sacraments of the New Testament, is exposed to damnation, by virtue of the law or covenant of works. It may moreover be argued, that all sins whatsoever are breaches of the law or covenant of works, because all sins, even breaches of the positive precepts, as well as others have atonement by the death of Christ: but what Christ cried for, was to satisfy the law, or to bear the curse of the law; as appears by ◀BIB Galatians 3:10-13. and ◀BIB Romans 7:3, 4.

So that Christ’s laying down his life might be part of that obedience by which we are justified, though it was a positive precept not given to Adam. It was doubtless Christ’s main act of obedience, because it was obedience to a command that was attended with immensely the greatest difficulty, and so to a command that was the greatest trial of his obedience. His respect shown to God in it, and his honour to God’s authority was proportionally great. It is spoken of in Scripture as Christ’s principal act of obedience. ◀BIB Philippians 2:7 8. “But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” ◀BIB Hebrews 5:8. “Though he were a son, yet learned he obedience by the things that he suffered.” It was mainly by this act of obedience that Christ purchased so glorious a reward for himself, ◀BIB Philippians 2:8, 9. “He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name.” And it therefore follows from what has been already said, that it is mainly by this act of obedience that believers in Christ also have the reward of glory, or come to partake with Christ in his glory. We are as much saved by the death of Christ, as his yielding himself to die was an act of obedience, as we are, as it was a propitiation for our sins: for as it was not the only act

of obedience that merited, he having performed meritorious acts of obedience through the whole course of his life so neither was it the only suffering that was propitiatory; all his sufferings through the whole course of his life being propitiatory, as well as every act of obedience meritorious. Indeed this was his principal suffering; and it was as much his principal act of obedience.

Hence we may see how that the death of Christ did not only make atonement, but also merited eternal life; and hence we may see how by the blood of Christ we are not only redeemed from sin, but redeemed unto God; and therefore the Scripture seems every where to attribute the whole of salvation to the blood of Christ. This precious blood is as much the main price by which heaven is purchased, as it is the main price by which we are redeemed from hell. The positive righteousness of Christ, or that price by which he merited, was of equal value with that by which he satisfied; for indeed it was the same price. he spilled his blood to satisfy, and by reason of the infinite dignity of his person, his sufferings were looked upon as of infinite value, and equivalent to the eternal sufferings of a finite creature. And he spilled his blood out of respect to the honour of God's majesty, and in submission to his authority, who had commanded him so to do: and his obedience therein was of infinite value both because of the dignity of the person that performed it, and because he put himself to infinite expense to perform it, whereby the infinite degree of his regard to God's authority appeared.

One would wonder what Arminians mean by Christ's merits. They talk of Christ's merits as much as any body, and yet deny the imputation of Christ's positive righteousness. What should there be that any one should merit or deserve any thing by, besides righteousness or goodness? If any thing that Christ did or suffered, merited or deserved any thing, it was by virtue of the goodness, or righteousness, or holiness of it. If Christ's sufferings and death merited heaven, it must be because there was an excellent righteousness and transcendent moral goodness in that act of laying down his life. And if by that excellent righteousness he merited heaven for us; then surely that righteousness is reckoned to our account, that we have the benefit of it, or, which is the same thing, it is imputed to us.

Thus, I hope, I have made it evident, that the righteousness of Christ is indeed imputed to us. I proceed now to the third and last thing under this argument, That this doctrine, of the imputation of Christ's righteousness, is utterly inconsistent with the doctrine of our being justified by our own virtue or sincere obedience. If acceptance to God's favour, and a title to life, be given to believers as the reward of Christ's obedience, then it is not given as the reward of our own obedience. In what respect soever Christ is our Saviour, that doubtless excludes our being our own saviours in that same respect. If we can be our own saviours in the same respect that Christ is, it will thence follow, that the salvation of Christ is needless in that respect; according to the apostle's reasoning,

“Christ is rendered of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law.” (Ⓜ Galatians 5:4)

Doubtless, it is Christ's prerogative to be our Saviour in that sense wherein he is our Saviour. And therefore, if it be by his obedience that we are justified, then it is not by our own obedience.

Here perhaps it may be said, that a title to salvation is not directly given as the reward of our obedience, for that? not by any thing of ours, but only by Christ's satisfaction and righteousness; but yet an interest in that satisfaction and righteousness is given as a reward of our obedience.

But this does not at all help the case; for this is to ascribe as much to our obedience as if we ascribed salvation to it directly, without the intervention of Christ's righteousness. For it would be as great a thing for God to give us Christ, and his satisfaction and righteousness, in reward for our obedience, as to give us heaven immediately; it would be as great a reward, and as great a testimony of respect to our obedience. And if God gives as great a thing as salvation for our obedience, why could he not as well drive salvation itself directly? and then there would have been no need of Christ's righteousness. And indeed if God gives us Christ, or an interest in him, properly in reward of our obedience, he does really give us salvation in reward for our obedience: for the former implies the latter; yea, it implies it, as the greater implies the less. So that indeed it exalts our virtue and obedience more, to suppose that God gives us Christ in reward of that virtue and obedience, than if he should give salvation without Christ.

The thing that the Scripture guards and militates against is our imagining that it is our own goodness, virtue, or excellency, that instates us in God's acceptance and favour. But to suppose that God gives us an interest in Christ in reward for our virtue, is as great an argument that it instates us in God's favour, as if he bestowed a title to eternal life as its direct reward. If God gives us an interest in Christ as a reward of our obedience, it will then follow that we are instated in God's acceptance and favour by our own obedience, antecedent to our having an interest in Christ. For a rewarding any one's excellency, ever more supposes favour and acceptance on the account of that excellency: it is the very notion of a reward, that it is a good thing, bestowed in testimony of respect and favour for the virtue or excellence rewarded. So that it is not by virtue of our interest in Christ and his merits, that we first come into devour with God, according to this scheme; for we are in God's favour before we have any interest in those merits, in that we have an interest in those merits given as a fruit of God's favour for our own virtue. If our interest in Christ be the fruit of God's favour, then it cannot be the ground of it. If God did not accept us, and had no favour for us for our own excellency, he never would bestow so great a reward upon us, as a right in Christ's satisfaction and righteousness. So that such a scheme destroys itself; for it supposes that Christ's satisfaction and righteousness are necessary for us to recommend us to the favour of God; and yet supposes that we have God's favour and acceptance before we have Christ's satisfaction and righteousness, and have these given as a fruit of God's favour.

Indeed, neither salvation itself, nor Christ the Saviour, are given as a reward of any thing in man: they are not given as a reward of faith, nor any thing else of ours: we are not united to Christ as a reward of our faith, but have union with him by faith, only as faith is the very act of uniting or closing on our part. As when a man offers himself to a woman in marriage, he does not give himself to her as a reward of her receiving him in marriage. Her receiving him is not considered as a worthy deed in her for which he rewards her by giving himself to her; but it is by her receiving him that the union is made, by which she hath him for her husband. It is on her part the union itself. By these things it appears how contrary to the gospel of Christ their scheme is, who say that faith justifies as a principle of obedience, or as a leading act of obedience; or (as others) the sum and

comprehension of all evangelical obedience. For by this, the obedience or virtue that is in faith gives it its justifying influence; and that is the same thing as to say, that we are justified by our own obedience, virtue, or goodness.

Having thus considered the evidence of the truth of the doctrine, I proceed now to the

**III.** Thing proposed, viz. “To show in what sense the acts of a christian life, or of evangelical obedience, may be looked upon to be concerned in this affair.”

From what has been said already, it is manifest that they cannot have any concern in this affair as good works, or by virtue of any moral goodness in them; not as works of the law, or as that moral excellency, or any part of it, which is the fulfillment of that great, universal, and everlasting law or covenant of works which the great lawgiver has established, as the highest and unalterable rule of judgment, which Christ alone answers, or does any thing towards it.

It having been shown out of the Scripture, that it is only by faith, or the soul’s receiving and uniting to the Saviour who has wrought our righteousness, that we are justified; it therefore remains, that the acts of a Christian life cannot be concerned in this affair any otherwise than as they imply, and are the expressions of, faith, and may be looked upon as so many acts of reception of Christ the Saviour. But the determining what concerns acts of christen obedience can have in justification in this respect, will depend on the resolving of another point, viz. Whether any other act of faith besides the first act, has any concern in our justification, or how far perseverance in faith, or the continued and renewed acts of faith, have influence in this affair. And it seems manifest that justification is by the first act of faith, in some respects, in a peculiar manner, because a sinner is actually and finally justified as soon as he has performed one act of faith; and faith in its first act does, Actually at least, depend on God for perseverance, and entitles to this among other benefits. out yet the perseverance of faith is not excluded in this affair; it is not only certainly connected with justification, but it is not to be excluded from that on which the justification of a sinner has a dependence, or that by which he is justified.

I have shown that the way in which justification has a dependence on faith, that it is the qualification on which the congruity of an interest in the righteousness of Christ depends, or wherein such a fitness consists. But the consideration of the perseverance of faith cannot be excluded out of this congruity or fitness, for it is congruous that he that believes in Christ should have an interest in Christ's righteousness, and so in the eternal benefits purchased by it, because faith is that by which the soul hath union or oneness with Christ; and there is a natural congruity in it, that they who are one with Christ should have a joint interest with him in his eternal benefits; but yet this congruity depends on its being an abiding union. As it is needful that the branch should abide in the vine, in order to its receiving the lasting benefits of the root; so it is necessary that the soul should abide in Christ, in order to its receiving those lasting benefits of God's final acceptance and favour. <sup><B1876></sup>John 15:6, 7. "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto joy." Verse 9, 10. "Continue ye in my love. If ye keep (or abide in) my commandments, ye shall abide in my love: even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love." There is the same reason why it is necessary that the union with Christ should remain, as why it should be begun; why it should continue to be, as why it should once be. If it should be begun without remaining, the beginning would be in vain. In order to the soul's being now in a justified state, and now free from condemnation, it is necessary that it should now be in Christ, and not merely that it should once have been in him. <sup><B1876></sup>Romans 8:1. "There is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." The soul is saved in Christ, as being now in him, when the salvation is bestowed, and not merely as remembering that it once was in him. <sup><B1876></sup>Philippians 3:9. "That I may be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." <sup><B1876></sup>1 John 2:28. "And now, little children, abide in him; that when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming." In order to persons being blessed after death, it is necessary not only that they should once be in him, but that they should die in him.

"Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord." (<sup><B1876></sup>Revelation 14:13)

And there is the same reason why faith, the uniting qualification should remain, in order to the union's remaining; as why it should once be, in order to the union's once being.

So that although the sinner is actually and finally justified on the first acts of faith, yet the perseverance of faith, even then, comes into consideration, as one thing on which the fitness of acceptance to life depends. God, in the act of justification, which is passed on a sinner's first believing, has respect to perseverance, as being virtually contained in that first act of faith; and it is looked upon, and taken by him that justifies, as being as it were a property in that faith. God has respect to the believer's continuance in faith, and he is justified by that, as though it already were, because by divine establishment it shall follow, and it being by divine constitution connected with that first faith, as much as if it were a property in it, it is then considered as such, and so justification is not suspended; but were it not for this, it would be needful that it should be suspended, All the sinner had actually persevered in faith.

And that it is so, that God in the act of final justification which he passes at the sinner's conversion, has respect to perseverance in faith, and future acts of Oth, as being virtually implied in the first act, is further manifest by this, viz. That in a sinner's justification, at his conversion there is virtually contained a forgiveness as to eternal and deserved punishment, not only of all past sins, but also of all future infirmities and acts of sin that they shall be guilty of; because that first justification is decisive and final. And yet pardon, in the order of nature, properly follows the crime, and also follows those acts of repentance and faith that respect the crime pardoned, as is manifest both from reason and Scripture. David, in the beginning of Psalm xxxii speaks of the forgiveness of sins which were doubtless committed long after he was first godly, as being consequent on those sins, and on his repentance and faith with respect and yet this forgiveness is spoken of by the apostle in the 4th of Romans, as an instance of justification by faith. Probably the sin David there speaks of is the same that he committed in the matter of Uriah, and so the pardon the same with that release from death, or eternal punishment, which the prophet Nathan speaks of, <sup>1023</sup>2 Samuel 12:13.

“The Lord also hath put away thy sin, thou shalt not die.”

Not only does the manifestation of this pardon follow the sin in the order of time, but the pardon Itself, in the order of nature, follows David's repentance and faith with respect to this sin; for it is spoken of in the 32nd Psalm, as depending on it.

But inasmuch as a sinner, in his first justification, is for ever justified and freed from all obligation to eternal punishment, it hence of necessity follows, that future faith and repentance are beheld, in that justification, as virtually contained in that first faith and repentance, because repentance of those future sins, and faith in a Redeemer, with respect to them, or, at least, the continuance of that habit and principle in the heart that has such an actual repentance and faith in its nature and tendency, is now made sure by God's promise. — If remission of sins, committed after conversion, in the order of nature, follows that faith and repentance that is after them, then it follows that future sins are respected in the first justification, no otherwise than as future faith and repentance are respected in it. And future repentance and faith are looked upon by him that justifies, as virtually implied in the first repentance and faith, in the same manner as justification from future sins is virtually implied in the first justification, which is the think that was to be proved.

And besides, if no other act of faith could be concerned in justification but the first act, it will then follow, that Christians ought never to seek justification by any other act of faith. For if justification is not to be obtained by after acts of faith, then surely it is not a duty to seek it by such acts: and so it can never be a duty for persons after they are once converted, by faith to seek to God, or believingly to look to him, for the remission of sin, or deliverance from the guilt of it, because deliverance from the guilt of sin is part of what belongs to justification. And if it be not proper for converts by faith to look to God through Christ for it, then it will follow, that it is not proper for them to pray for it; for Christian prayer to God for a blessing, is but an expression of faith in God for that blessing; prayer is only the voice of faith. But if these things are so, it will follow that the petition in the Lord's prayer, forgive us our debts, is not proper to be put up by disciples of Christ, or to be used in Christian assemblies; and that Christ improperly directed his disciples to use that petition, when they were all of them, except Judas, converted before. The debt that Christ directs his disciples to pray for the forgiveness of, can me

m nothing else but the punishment that sin deserves, or the debt that we owe to divine justice, the ten thousand talents we owe our Lord. To pray that God would forgive our debts, is undoubtedly the same thing as to pray that God would release us from obligation to due punishment; but releasing from obligation to the punishment due to sin, and forgiving the debt that we owe to divine justice, is what appertains to Justification.

And then to suppose that no after acts of faith are concerned in the business of justification, and so that it is not proper for any ever to seek justification by such acts, would be for ever to cut off those Christians that are doubtful concerning their first act of faith, from the joy and peace of believing. As the business of a justifying faith is to obtain pardon and peace with God, by looking to God and trusting in him for these blessings; so the joy and peace of that faith is in the apprehension of pardon and peace obtained by such a trust. This a Christian that is doubtful of his first act of faith cannot have from that act, because, by the supposition, he is doubtful whether it be an act of faith, and so whether he did obtain pardon and peace by that act. The proper remedy, in such a case, is now by faith to look to God in Christ for these blessings: but he is cut off from this remedy, because he is uncertain whether he has warrant so to do; for he does not know but that he has believed already; and if so, then he has no warrant to look to God by faith for these blessings now, because, by the supposition, no new act of faith is a proper means of obtaining these blessings. And so he can never properly obtain the joy of faith, for there are acts of true faith that are very weak, and the first act may be so as well as others: it may be like the first motion of the infant in the womb, it may be so weak an act, that the Christian by examining it, may never be able to determine whether it was a true act of faith or no, and it is evident from fact, and abundant experience, that many Christians are for ever at a loss to determine which was their first act of faith. And those saints who have had a good decree of satisfaction concerning their faith, may be subject to great declensions and falls, in which case they are liable to great fears of eternal punishment, and the proper way of deliverance, is to forsake their sin by repentance, and by faith now to come to Christ for deliverance from the deserved eternal punishment, but this it would not be, if deliverance from that punishment was not this way to be obtained.

But what is a still more plain and direct evidence of what I am now arguing for, is, that the act of faith which Abraham exercised in the great promise of the covenant of grace that God made to him, of which it is expressly said, ~~<K16~~ Galatians 3:6. “It was accounted to him for righteousness the grand instance and proof that the apostle so much insists upon throughout the 4th chapter of Romans, and 3rd chapter of Galatians, to confirm his doctrine of justification by faith alone-was not Abraham’s first act of faith, hut was exerted long after he had by faith forsaken his own country, ~~<K16~~ Hebrews 11:8. and had been treated as an eminent friend of God.

Moreover, the apostle Paul, in the 3rd chapter of Philippians tells us how earnestly he sought justification by faith, or to win Christ and obtain that righteousness which was by the faith of him, in what he did after his conversion. Verse 8, 9. “For whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness which is o the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.” And in the two next verses he expresses the same thing in other words, and tells us how he went through superiors, and became conformable to Christ’s death, that he might be a partaker with Christ in the benefit of his resurrection; which the same apostle elsewhere teaches us, is especially justification Christ’s resurrection was his justification; in this, he that was put to death in the flesh, was justified by the Spirit; and he that was delivered for our offenses, rose again for our justification. And the apostle tells us in the verses that follow in that 3rd chapter of Philippians, that the thus sought to attain the righteousness which is through the faith of Christ, and so to partake of the benefit of his resurrection, still as though he had not already attained but that he continued to follow after it.

On the whole, it appears, that the perseverance of faith is necessary, even to the congruity of justification; and that not the less, because a sinner is justified, and perseverance promised, on the first act of faith, but God, in that justification, has respect, not only to the past act of faith, but to his own promise of figure acts, and to the fitness of a qualification beheld as yet only in his own promise. And that perseverance in faith is thus necessary to salvation, not merely as a sine qua non, or as an universal concomitant of it, but by reason of such an influence and dependence, seems manifest by many scriptures: I would mention two or three,

Hebrews 3:6; “Whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence, and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.” Verse 14. “For we are made partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end.” Chapter 6:12. “Be ye followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises.” Romans 11:20. “Well, because of unbelief they were broken off; but thou standest by faith. Be not high minded, but fear.”

And, as the congruity to a final justification depends on perseverance in faith, as well as the first act, so oftentimes the manifestation of justification in the conscience, arises a great deal more from after acts, than the first act. And all the difference whereby the first act of faith has a concern in this affair that is peculiar, seems to be, as it were, only an accidental difference, arising from the circumstance of time, or its being first in order of time; and not from any peculiar respect God has to it, or any influence it has of a peculiar nature, in the affair of our salvation.

And thus it is that a truly Christian walk and the acts of an evangelical, child-like, believing obedience, are concerned in the affair of our justification, and seem to be sometimes so spoken of in Scripture, viz. as an expression of a persevering faith in the Son of God, The only Saviour. Faith unites to Christ, and so gives a congruity to justification, not merely as remaining a dormant principle in the heart, but as being and appearing in its active expressions. The obedience of a Christian, so far as it is truly evangelical, and performed With the Spirit of the Son sent forth into the heart, has all relation to Christ, the Mediator, and is but an expression of the soul’s believing union to Christ. All evangelical works are works of that faith that worketh by love, and every such act of obedience, whereat it is inward, and the act of the soul, is only a new effective act of reception of Christ, and adherence to the glorious Saviour. Hence that of the apostle, Galatians ii 20 “I live; yet not I but Christ liveth in me, and the life that I now live in the flesh, is by the faith of the Son of God.” And hence we are directed, in whatever we do, whether in word or deed to do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Colossians 3:17.

And that God in justification has respect, not only to the first act of faith, but also to future persevering acts, as expressed in life, seems manifest by Romans 1:17.

“For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith as it is written, The just shall live by faith.”

And ~~scrib~~ Hebrews 10:38, 39. “Now the just shall live by faith; but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe, to the saving of the soul.”

So that as was before said of faith, so may it be said of a child-like believing obedience, it has no concern in justification by any virtue or excellency in it; but only as there is a reception of Christ in it. And this is no more contrary to the apostle’s frequent assertion of our being justified without the works of the law, than to say that we are justified by faith, for faith is as much a work, or act of Christian obedience, as the expressions of faith, in spiritual life and walk. And therefore as we say that faith does not justify as a work, so we say of all these effective expressions of faith.

This is the rever. of the scheme of our modern divines, who hold, that faith justifies only as an act or expression of obedience; whereas, in truth, obedience has no concern in justification, any otherwise than as an expression of faith.

I now proceed to the

**IV.** Thing proposed, viz. To answer objections.

**Objection 1.** We frequently find promises of eternal life and salvation, and sometimes of justification itself, made to our own virtue and obedience. Eternal life is promised to obedience, in ~~scrib~~ Romans 2:7. “To them, who by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory, honour, and immortality; eternal life:” and the like in innumerable other places. And justification itself is promised to that virtue of a forgiving spirit or temper in us,

“For, if ye forgive men their trespasses? your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” (~~scrib~~ Matthew 6:14)

All allow that justification in great part consists in the forgiveness of sins.

To this I answer,

**1.** These things being promised to our virtue and obedience, argues no more, than that there is a connexion between them and evangelical obedience, which, I have already observed, is not the thing in dispute. All thus can be proved by obedience and salvation being connected in the promise, is, that obedience and salvation are connected in fact, which nobody denies; and whether it be owned or denied, is, as has been shown, nothing to the purpose. There is no need that an admission to a title to salvation should be given on the account of our obedience, in order to the promises being true. If we find such a promise that he that obeys shall be saved, or he that is holy shall be justified; all that is needful, in order to such promises being true, is, that it be really so, that he that obeys shall be saved, and that holiness and justification shall indeed go together. That proposition may be a truth, that he that obeys shall be saved; because obedience and salvation are connected together in fact; and get an acceptance to a title to salvation not be granted the account of any of our own virtue or obedience. What is a promise, but only a declaration of future truth, for the comfort and encouragement of the person to whom it is declared! Promises are conditional propositions; and, as has been already on served, it is not the thing in dispute, whether other things besides faith may not have the place of the condition in such propositions wherein pardon and salvation are the consequent.

**2.** Promises may rationally be made to signs and evidences of faith, and yet the thing promised not be upon the account of the sign, but the thing signified. Thus, for instance, human government may rationally make promises of such and such privileges to those that can show such evidences of their being free of such a city, or members of such a corporation, or descended of such a family; when it is not at all for the sake of that which is the evidence or sign, in itself considered, that they are admired to such a privilege, but only and purely for the sake of that which it is an evidence of. And though God does not spud in need of signs to know whether we have true faith or not, yet our own consciences do, so that it is much for our comfort that promises are made to signs of faith. Finding in ourselves a forgiving temper and disposition, may be a most proper and natural evidence to our consciences, that our hearts have, in a sense of our own utter unworthiness truly closed and fallen in with the way of free and infinitely gracious forgiveness of our sins by Jesus Christ;

whence we may be enabled, with the greater comfort, to apply to ourselves the promises of forgiveness by Christ.

**3.** It has been just now shown, how that acts of evangelical obedience are indeed concerned in our justification itself, and are not excluded from that condition that justification depends upon, without the least prejudice to that doctrine of justification by faith, without any goodness of our own, that has been maintained; and therefore it can be no objection against this doctrine, that we have sometimes in Scripture promises of pardon and acceptance made to such acts of obedience.

**4.** Promises of particular benefits implied in justification and salvation, may especially be fitly made to such expressions and evidences of Oth as they have a peculiar natural likeness and suitableness to. As forgiveness is promised to a forgiving spirit in us; obtaining mercy is fitly promised to mercifulness in us, and the like: and that upon several accounts, they are the most natural evidences of our heart's dosing with those benefits by faith, for they do especially show the sweet accord and consent that there is between the heart and these benefits; and by reason of the natural likeness that there is between the virtue and the benefit, the one has the greater tendency to bring the other to mind, the practice of the virtue tends the more to renew the sense, and refresh the hope, of the blessing promised; and also to convince the conscience of the justice of being denied the benefit, if the duty be neglected. Besides the sense and manifestation of divine forgiveness in our own consciences-gee, and many exercises of God's forgiving mercy, (as it respects God's fatherly displeasure,) granted after justification, through the course of a Christian's life-may be given as the proper rewards of a forgiving spirit, and yet this not be at all to the prejudice of the doctrine we have maintained; as will more fully appear, when we come to answer another objection hereafter to be mentioned.

**Object.** 2. Our own obedience, and inherent holiness, is necessary to prepare men for heaven; and therefore is doubtless what recommends persons to God's acceptance, as the heirs of heaven.

To this I answer.

1. Our own obedience being necessary in order to a preparation for an actual bestowment of glory, is no argument that it is the thing upon the account of which we are accepted to a right to it. God may, and does do many things to prepare the saints for glory, after he has accepted them as the heirs of glory. A parent may do much to prepare a child for an inheritance in its education, after the child is an heir, yea, there are many things necessary to fit a child for the actual possession of the inheritance, yet not necessary in order to its having a right to the inheritance.
2. If every thing that is necessary to prepare for glory must be the proper condition of justification, then perfect holiness is the condition of justification. Men must be made perfectly holy, before they are admitted to the enjoyment of the blessedness of heaven; for there must be no wise enter in there any spiritual defilement. And therefore, when a saint dies, he leaves all his sin and corruption when he leaves the body.

**Object.** 3. Our obedience is not only indissolubly connected with salvation, and preparatory to it, but the Scripture expressly speaks of bestowing eternal blessings as rewards for the good deeds of the saints. ~~1000~~ Matthew 10:42. "Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, he shall in no wise lose his reward." ~~1000~~ 1 Corinthians 3:8. "Every man shall receive his own reward, according to his own labour." And in many other places. This seems to militate against the doctrine that has been maintained two ways:

(1.) The bestowing a reward carries in it a. respect to a moral fitness in the thing rewarded to the reward, the very notion of a reward being a benefit bestowed in testimony of acceptance of, and respect to, the goodness or amiableness of some qualification or work in the person rewarded. Besides. the Scripture seems to explain itself in this matter, in ~~1000~~ Revelation 3:4.

"Thou hast a few names, even in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy."

This is here given as the reason why they should have such a reward, "because they were worthy;" which, though we suppose it to imply no proper merit, yet it at least implies a moral fitness, or that the excellency

of their virtue in God's sight recommends them to such a reward; which seems directly repugnant to what has been supposed, viz. that we are accepted, and approved of God, as the heirs of salvation, not out of regard to the excellency of our own virtue or goodness, or any moral fitness therein to such a reward, but only on account of the dignity and moral fitness of Christ's righteousness.

**(2.)** Our being eternally rewarded for our own holiness and good works necessarily supposes that our future happiness will be greater or smaller, in some proportion as our own holiness and obedience is more or less, and that there are different degrees of glory, according to different degrees of virtue and good works, is a doctrine very expressly and frequently taught us in Scripture. But this seems quite inconsistent with the saints all having their future blessedness as a reward of Christ's righteousness: for if Christ's righteousness be imputed to all, and this be what entitles each one to glory, then it is the same righteousness that entitles one to glory which entitles another. But if all have glory as the reward of the same righteousness, why have not all the same glory? Does not the same righteousness merit as much glory when imputed to one as when imputed to another?

In answer to the first part of this objection, I would observe, that it does not argue that we are justified by our good deeds, that we shall have eternal blessings in reward for them; for it is in consequence of our justification, that our good deeds become rewardable with spiritual and eternal rewards. The acceptableness, and so the rewardableness, of our virtue, is not antecedent to justification, but follows it, and is built entirely upon it; which is the reverse of what those in the adverse scheme of justification suppose, viz. that justification is built on the acceptableness and rewardableness of our virtue. They supposed that a saving interest in Christ is given as a reward of our virtue, or, (which is the same thing,) as a testimony of God's acceptance of our excellency in our virtue. But the contrary is true; that God's respect to our virtue as our amiableness in his sight, and his acceptance of it as rewardable, is entirely built on our interest in Christ already established. So that the relation to Christ, whereby believers in scripture language are said to be in Christ, is the very foundation of our virtues and good deeds being accepted of God, and so of their being rewarded; for a reward is a testimony of acceptance. For we,

and all that we do, are accepted only in the beloved, ~~400~~ Ephesians 1:6. Our sacrifices are acceptable, only through our interest in him, and through his worthiness and preciousness being, as it were, made ours. ~~400~~ 1 Peter 2:4, 5. “To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious. Ye also as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.” Here being actually built on this stone, precious to God, is mentioned as all the ground of the acceptableness of our good works to God, and their becoming also precious in his eyes. So. ~~500~~ Hebrews 13:21.

“Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ.”

And hence we are directed, whatever we offer to God, to offer it in Christ’s name, as expecting to have it accepted no other way, than from the value that God has to that name. ~~500~~ Colossians 3:17. “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.” To act in Christ’s name, is to act under him as our head, and as having him to stand for us, and represent us to God-ward.

The reason of this may be seen from what has been already said, to show it is not meet that any thing in us should be accepted of God as any excellency of our persons, until we are actually in Christ, and justified through him. The loveliness of the virtue of fallen creatures is nothing in the sight of God, till he beholds them in Christ and clothed with his righteousness.

1. Because till then we stand condemned before God, by his own holy law, to his utter rejection and abhorrence. And,
2. Because we are infinitely guilty before him; and the loveliness of our virtue bears no proportion to our guilt, and must therefore pass for nothing before a strict judge. And,
3. Because our good deeds and virtuous acts themselves are in a sense corrupt; and the hatefulness of the corruption of them, if we are beheld as we are in ourselves, or separate from Christ, infinitely outweighs the loveliness of the good that is in them.

So that if no other sin was considered but only that which attends the act of virtue itself, the loveliness vanishes into nothing in comparison of it. and therefore the virtue must pass for nothing, out of Christ. Not only are our best duties defiled in being attended with the exercises of sin and corruption which precede, follow, and are intermingled with them: but even the holy acts themselves, and the gracious exercises of the godly, are defective. Though the act most simply considered is good, yet take the acts in their measure and dimensions, and the manner in which they are exerted and they are sinfully defective: there is that defect in them that may well be called the corruption of them. That defect is properly sin, an expression of a vile sinfulness of heart, and what tends to provoke the just anger of God: not because the exercise of love and other grace is not equal to God's loveliness: for it is impossible the love of creatures (men or angels) should be so: but because the act is so very disproportionate to the occasion given for love or other grace, considering God's loveliness. the manifestation that is made of it, the exercises of kindness, the capacity of human nature, and our advantages (and the like) together. — A negative expression of corruption may be as truly sin, and as just cause of provocation, as a positive. Thus if a worthy and excellent person should, from mere generosity and goodness, exceedingly lay out himself, and with great expense and suffers save another's life, or redeem him from some extreme calamity: and if that other person should never thank him for it, or express the least gratitude any way; this would be a negative expression of his ingratitude and baseness: but is equivalent to an act of ingratitude. or positive exercise of a base unworthy spirit: and is truly an expression of it, and brings as much blame as if he by some positive act had much injured another person. And so it would be (only in a lesser degree) if the gratitude was but very small, bearing no proportion to the benefit and obligation: as if, for so great and extraordinary a kindness, he should express no more gratitude than would have been becoming towards a person who had only given him a cup of water when thirsty, or shown him the way in a journey when at a loss, or had done him some such small kindness. If he should come to his benefactor to express his gratitude, and should do after this manner, he might truly be said to act unworthily odiously, he would show a most ungrateful spirit. His doing after such a manner might justly be abhorred by all, and yet the gratitude, that tattle there is of it, most simply considered, and so far as it goes is good. And so it is with respect to our

exercise of love and gratitude, and other graces, towards God, they are defectively corrupt and sinful, and, take them as they are, in their manner and measure, might justly be odious and provoking to God, and would necessarily be so, were we beheld out of Christ. For in that this defect is sin it is infinitely hateful; and so the hatefulness of the very act infinitely outweighs the loveliness of it, because all sin has infinite hatefulness and heinousness, but our holiness has but little value and loveliness, as has been elsewhere demonstrated.

Hence, though it be true that the saints are rewarded for their good works, yet it is for Christ's sake only, and not for the excellency of their works in themselves considered, or beheld separately from Christ; for so they have no excellency in God's sight, or acceptableness to him, as has now been shown. It is acknowledged that God, in rewarding the holiness and good works of believers, does in some respect give them happiness as a testimony of his respect to the loveliness of their holiness and good works in his sight, for that is the very notion of a reward. But it is in a very different sense from what would have been if man had not fallen; which would have been to bestow eternal life on man, as a testimony of God's respect to the loveliness of what man did, considered as in itself, and as in man separately by himself and not beheld as a member of Christ. In which sense also, the scheme of justification we are opposing necessarily supposes the excellency of our virtue to be respected and rewarded; for it supposes a saving interest in Christ itself to be given as a reward of it.

Two things come to pass, relating to the saints' reward for their inherent righteousness, by virtue of their relation to Christ.

1. The guilt of their persons is all done away, and the pollution and hatefulness that attends and is in their good works, is hid.
2. Their relation to Christ adds a positive value and dignity to their good works in God's sight.

That little holiness; and those faint and feeble acts of love, and other grace, receive an exceeding value in the sight of God, by virtue of God's beholding them as in Christ, and as it were members of one so infinitely worthy in his eyes, and that because God looks upon the persons as of greater dignity on this account. <sup>2801</sup> Isaiah 43:4. "Since thou wast precious in

my sight thou hast been honourable.” God, for Christ’s sake and because they are members of his own righteous and dear Son, sets an exceeding value upon their persons; and hence it follows, that he also sets a great value upon their good acts and offerings. The same love and obedience in a person of greater dignity and value in God’s sight, is more valuable in his eyes than in one of less dignity. Love is valuable in proportion to the dignity of the person whose love it is; because, so far as any one gives his love to another, he gives himself, in that he gives his heart. But this is a more excellent offering, in proportion as the person whose self is offered is more worthy. Believers are become immensely more honourable in God’s esteem by virtue of their relation to Christ, than man would have been considered as by himself, though he had been free from sin; as a mean person becomes more honourable when married to a king. Hence God will probably reward the little weak love, and poor and exceeding imperfect obedience of believers in Christ, with more glorious reward than he would have done Adam’s perfect obedience. According to the tenor of the first covenant, the person was to be accepted and rewarded, only for the work’s sake; but by the covenant of grace the work is accepted and rewarded, only for the person’s sake; the person being beheld antecedently as a member of Christ, and clothed with his righteousness. So that though the saints’ inherent holiness is rewarded, yet this very reward is indeed not the less founded on the worthiness and righteousness of Christ. None of the value that their works have in his sight, nor any of the acceptance they have with him, is out of Christ, and out of his righteousness; but his worthiness as mediator is the prime and only foundation on which all is built, and the universal source whence all arises. God indeed doth great out of regard to the saints’ loveliness, but it is only as a secondary and derivative loveliness. When I speak of a derivative loveliness, I do not mean only, that the qualifications themselves accepted as lovely, are derived from Christ, from his power and purchase; but that the acceptance of them as a loveliness, and all the value that is set upon them, and all their connexion, with the reward, is founded in, and derived from, Christ’s righteousness and worthiness.

If we suppose that not only higher degrees of glory in heaven, but heaven itself, is in some respect given in reward for the holiness and good works of the saints, in this secondary and derivative sense, it will not prejudice

the doctrine we have maintained. It is no way impossible that God may bestow heaven's glory wholly out of respect to Christ's righteousness, and yet in reward for man's inherent holiness, in different respects, and different ways. It may be only Christ's righteousness that God has respect to, for its own sake, the independent acceptableness and dignity of it being sufficient of itself to recommend all that believe in Christ to a title to this glory; and so it may be only by this that persons enter into a title to heaven, or have their prime right to it: and yet God may also have respect to the saint's own holiness, for Christ's sake, and as deriving a grace from Christ's merit, which he may testify in bestowing heaven upon them. The saints being beheld as members of Christ, their obedience is looked upon by God as something of Christ's, it being the obedience of the members of Christ; as the sufferings of the members of Christ are looked upon, in some respect, as the sufferings of Christ. Hence the apostle, speaking of his sufferings, says, <sup><502></sup>Colossians 1:24. "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh." To the same purpose is <sup><455></sup>Matthew 25:35, etc. I was an hundred, naked, sick, and in prison, etc. And so that in <sup><610></sup>Revelation 11:8.

"And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt. where also our Lord was crucified."

By the merit and righteousness of Christ, such favour of God towards the believer may be obtained, as that God may hereby be already, as it were, disposed to make them perfectly and eternally happy. But yet this does not hinder, but that God in his wisdom may choose to bestow this perfect and eternal happiness in this way, viz. in some respect as a reward of their holiness and obedience. It is not impossible but that the blessedness may be bestowed as a reward for that which is done after that an interest is already obtained in that favour, which (to speak of God after the manner of men) disposes God to bestow the blessedness. Our heavenly Father may already have that favour for a child, whereby he may be thoroughly ready to give the child an inheritance, because he is his child which he is by the purchase of Christ's righteousness: and yet that the Father may choose to bestow the inheritance on the child in a way of reward for his dutifulness, and behaving in a manner becoming a child. And so great a

regard may not be judged more than a meet reward for his dutifulness; but that so great a reward is judged meet, does not arise from the excellency of the obedience absolutely considered, but from his standing in so near and honourable a relations to God, as that of a child, which is obtained only by the righteousness of Christ. And thus the reward, and the greatness of it, arises properly from the righteousness of Christ; though it be indeed in some sort the reward of their obedience. As a father might justly esteem the inheritance no more than a meet reward for the obedience of his child, and yet esteem it more than a meet reward for the obedience of a servant. The devour whence a believer's heavenly Father bestows the eternal inheritance, and his title as an heir, is founded in that relation he stands in to him as a child, purchased by Christ's righteousness; though he in wisdom chooses to bestow it in such a way, and therein to testify his acceptance of the amiableness of his obedience in Christ.

Believers having a title to heaven by faith antecedent to their obedience, or its being absolutely promised to them before, does not hinder but that the actual bestowment of heaven may also be a testimony of God's regard to their obedience, though performed afterwards. Thus it was with Abraham, the father and pattern of all believers: God be stowed upon him that blessing o multiplying his seed as the stars of heaven, and causing that in his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed, in reward for his obedience in offering up his son Isaac, <sup><0216></sup>Genesis 22:16, 17, 18 "And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou' host done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, shine only son; that in blessing I oval bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice." And yet the very same blessings had hen from time to time promised to Abraham, in the most positive terms, and the promise, with great solemnity, confirmed and sealed to him; as chapter 12:2, 3. chapter 13:16. chapter 15:1, 4-7, etc. chapter 17 throughout; chapter 18:10, 18.

From what has been said we may easily solve the difficulty arising from that text in <sup><0100></sup>Revelation 3:4. "They shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy;" which is parallel with that text in <sup><0105></sup>Luke 20:35. "But they vehicle shall be accosted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection

from the dead.” I allow (as in the objection that this worthiness does doubtless denote a moral fitness to the reward, or that God looks on these glorious benefits as a meet testimony of his regard to the value which their persons and performances have in his sight.

**1.** God looks on these glorious benefits as a meet testimony or his regard to the value which their persons have in his sight. But he sets this value upon their persons purely for Christ’s sake. They are such jewels, and have such preciousness in his eyes, only because they are beheld in Christ, and by reason of the worthiness of the head they are the members of, and the stock they are grafted into. And the value that God sets upon them on this account is so great, that God thinks meet, from regard to it, to admit them to such exceeding glory. The saints, on account of their relation to Christ, are such precious jewels in God’s sight, that they are thought worthy of a place in his own crown. <sup><3087></sup>Malachi 3:17. <sup><3090></sup>Zechariah 9:16. So far as the saints are said to be valuable in God’s sight, on whatever account, so far may they properly be said to be worthy, or meet for that honour which is answerable to the value or price which God sets upon them. A child or wife of a prince is worthy to be treated with great honour; and therefore if a mean person should be adopted to be a child of a prince, or should be espoused to a prince, it would be proper to say, that she was worthy of such and such honour and respect. and there would be no force upon the words in saying, that she ought to have such respect paid her, for she is worthy, though it be only on account of her relation to the prince that she is so.

**2.** From the value God sets upon their persons, for the sake of Christ’s worthiness, he also sets a high value on their virtue and performances. Their meek and quiet spirit is of great price in his sight. Their fights are pleasant fruits, their offerings are an odour of sweet smell to him; and that because of the value he sets on their persons, as has been already observed and explained. This preciousness or high valuableness of believers is a moral fitness to a reward; and yet this valuableness is all in the righteousness of Christ, that is the foundation of it. The thing respected is not excellency in them separately by themselves, or in their virtue by itself, but the value in God’s account arises from other considerations; which is the natural import of <sup><215></sup>Luke 20:35. “They which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world,” etc. and <sup><216></sup>Luke 21:36. “That we

may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.” ~~2~~ 2 Thessalonians 1:5. “That ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer.”

There is a vast difference between this scheme, and what is supposed in the scheme of those that oppose the doctrine of justification by faith alone. This lays the foundation of first acceptance with God, and all actual salvation consequent upon it, wholly in Christ and his righteousness. On the contrary in their scheme, a regard to man’s own excellency or virtue is supposed to be first, and to have the place of the first foundation in actual salvation, though not in that ineffectual redemption, which they suppose common to all. They lay the foundation of all discriminating salvation in man’s own virtue and moral excellency. This is the very bottom stone in this affair; for they suppose that it is from regard to our virtue, that even a special interest in Christ itself is given. The foundation being thus contrary, the whole scheme becomes exceeding diverse and contrary, the one is an evangelical scheme, the other a legal one, the one is utterly inconsistent with our being justified by Christ’s righteousness, the other not at all.

From what has been said, we may understand, not only how the forgiveness of sin granted in justification is indissolubly connected with a forgiving spirit in us, but how there may be many exercises of forgiving mercy granted in reward for our forgiving those who trespass against us. For none will deny but that there are many acts of divine forgiveness towards the saints, that do not presuppose an unjustified state immediately preceding that forgiveness. None will deny, that saints who never fell from a justified state, yet commit many sins which God forgives afterwards, by laying aside his fatherly displeasure. This forgiveness may be in reward for our forgiveness, without any prejudice to the doctrine that has been maintained, as well as other mercies and blessings consequent on justification.

With respect to the second part of the objection, that relates to the different degrees of glory, and the seeming inconsistency there is in it, that the degrees of glory in different saints should be greater or lesser according to their inherent holiness and good works, and yet, that every one’s glory

should be purchased with the price of the very same imputed righteousness, — I answer, That Christ, by his righteousness, purchased for every one complete and perfect happiness, according to his capacity. But this does not hinder but that the saints, being of various capacities, may have various degrees of happiness, and yet all their happiness be the fruit of Christ's purchase. Indeed it cannot be properly said, that Christ purchased any particular degree of happiness, so that the value of Christ's righteousness in the sight of God, is sufficient to raise a believer so high in happiness, and no higher, and so that if the believer were made happier, it would exceed the value of Christ's righteousness; but in general, Christ purchased eternal life, or perfect happiness for all, according to their several capacities. The saints are as so many vessels of different sizes, cast into a sea of happiness, where every vessel is full; this Christ purchased for all. But after all, it is left to God's sovereign pleasure to determine the largeness of the vessel, Christ's righteousness meddles not with this matter. <sup>1000</sup>Ephesians 4:4, 5, 6, 7. "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling one Lord, one faith, one baptism," etc. — "But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ." God may dispense in this matter according to what rule he pleases, not the less for what Christ has done: he may dispense either without condition, or upon what condition he pleases to fix. It is evident that Christ's righteousness meddles not with this matter; for what Christ did was to fulfil the covenant of works; but the covenant of works did not meddle at all with this. If Adam had persevered in perfect obedience, he and his posterity would have had perfect and full happiness; every one's happiness would have so answered kits capacity, that he would have been completely blessed; but God would have been at liberty to have made some of one capacity, and others of another, as he pleased. — The angels have obtained eternal life, or a state of confirmed glory, by a covenant of works, whose condition was perfect obedience, but yet some are higher in glory than others, according to the several capacities that God, according to his sovereign pleasure, hath given them. So that it being still left with God, notwithstanding the perfect obedience of the second Adam, to fix the degree of each one's capacity by what rule he pleases, he hath been pleased to fix the degree of capacity, and so of glory, by the proportion of the saints' grace and fruitfulness here. He gives higher degrees of glory, in reward for higher degrees of holiness and good works,

because it pleases him; and yet all the happiness of each saint is indeed the fruit of the purchase of Christ's obedience. If it had been but one man that Christ had obeyed and died for, and it had pleased God to make him of a very large capacity, Christ's perfect obedience would have purchased that his capacity should be filled, and then all is happiness might properly be said to be the fruit of Christ's perfect obedience; though, if he had been of a less capacity, he would not have had so much happiness by the same obedience, and yet would have had as much as Christ merited for him. Christ's righteousness meddles not with the degree of happiness, any otherwise than as he merits that it should be full and perfect, according to the capacity: and so it may be said to be concerned in the decree of happiness, as perfect is a degree with respect to imperfect but it meddles not with degrees of perfect happiness.

This matter may be yet better understood, if we consider that Christ and the whole church of saints are, as it were one body, of which he is the Head, and they members, of different place and capacity: now the whole body, head, and members, have communion in Christ's righteousness they are all partakers of the benefit of it; Christ himself the Head is rewarded for it, and every member is partaker of the benefit and reward. But it does by no means follow, that every part should equally partake of the benefit, but every part in proportion to its place and capacity, the Head partakes of far more than other parts, and the more noble members partake of more than the inferior. As it is in a natural body that enjoys perfect health, the head, and the heart, and lungs, have a greater share of this health, they have it more seated in them, than the hands and feet because they are parts of greater capacity, though the hands and feet are as much in perfect health as those nobler parts of the body. So it is in the mystical body of Christ, all the members are partakers of the benefit of the Head, but it is according to the different capacity and place they have in the body; and God determines that place and capacity as he pleases, he make whom he pleases the foot, and whom he pleases the hand, and whom he pleases the lungs, etc. <sup>428</sup>1 Corinthians 12:18. "God hath set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath, pleased him." God efficaciously determines the place and capacity of every member, by the different degrees of grace and assistance in the improvement of it in this world Those that he intends for the highest place in the body, he gives them most of his Spirit, the

greatest share of the divine nature, the Spirit and nature of Christ Jesus the Head, and that assistance whereby they perform the most excellent works, and do most abound in them.

**Object.** 4. It may be objected against what has been supposed, (viz. That rewards are given to our good works, only in consequence of an interest in Christ, or in testimony of God's respect to the excellency or value of them in his sight, as built on an interest in Christ's righteousness already obtained,) That the Scripture speaks of an interest in Christ itself, as being given out of respect to our moral fitness. ~~Matthew~~ Matthew 10:37, 38, 39. "He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me: he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me: he that taketh not up his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me: he that findeth his life, shall lose it," etc. Worthiness here at least signifies a moral fitness, or an excellency that recommends. And this place seems to intimate as though it were from respect to a moral fitness that men are admired even to an union with Christ, and interest in him; and therefore this worthiness cannot be consequent on being be Christ, and by the imputation of his worthiness, or from any value that is in us, or in our actions in God's sight, as beheld in Christ.

To this I answer, That though persons when they are accepted, are not accepted as worthy, yet when they are rejected, they are rejected as unworthy. He that does not love Christ above other things, but treats him with such indignity, as to set him below earthly things, shall be treated as unworthy of Christ; his unworthiness of Christ especially in that particular, shall be marked against him and imputed to him. And though he be a professing Christian, and live in the enjoyment of the gospel, and has been visibly engrafted into Christ, and admitted as one of his disciples, as Judas was; yet he shall be thrust out in wrath, as a punishment of his vile treatment of Christ. The forementioned words do not imply, that if a man does love Christ above father and mother, etc. that he would be worthy; the most they imply is, that such a visible Christian shall be treated and thrust out as unworthy. He that believes is not received for the worthiness or moral fitness of faith; but yet the visible Christian is cast out by God, for the unworthiness and moral unfitness of unbelief. A being accepted as one of Christ's, is not the reward of believing; but being thrust out from being one of Christ's disciples, Her a visible admission as such, is

properly a punishment of unbelief. <sup><418></sup>John 3:18,19. “He that believeth on him, is not condemned; but he that believeth not, is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.” Salvation is promised to faith as a free gift, but damnation is threatened to unbelief as a debt, or punishment due to unbelief. They who believed while in the wilderness, did not enter into Canaan, because of the worthiness of their faith, but God swore in his wrath, that they that believed not should not enter in, because of the unworthiness of their unbelief. Admitting a soul to an union with Christ is an act of free and sovereign grace; but excluding at death, and at the day of judgment, those professors of Christianity who have had the offers of a Saviour, and enjoyed great privileges as God’s people, is a judicial proceeding, and a just punishment of them unworthy treatment of Christ. The design of this saving of Christ is to make them sensible of the unworthiness of their treatment of Christ, who professed him to be their Lord and Saviour, and set him below father and mother, etc. and not to show the worthiness of loving him above father and mother. If a beggar should he offered any great and precious gift, but as soon as offered, should trample it under his feet, it might be taken from him, as unworthy to have it. Or if a malefactor should have his pardon offered him that he might be freed from execution, and should only scoff at it, his pardon might be refused him, as unworthy of it, though if he had received it, he would not have had it for his worthiness, or as being recommended to it by his virtue, for his being a malefactor supposes him unworthy, and its being offered him to have it only on accepting, supposes that the king looks for no worthiness, nothing in him for which he should bestow pardon as a reward. This may teach us how to understand <sup><413></sup>Acts 13:46.

“It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken unto you; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, to, we turn to the Gentiles.”

**Object.** 5. It is objected against the doctrine of justification by faith alone, That repentance is evidently spoken of in Scripture as that which is in a special manner the condition of remission of sins, but remission of sins is

by all allowed to be that wherein justification does (at least) in great part consist.

But it must certainly arise from a misunderstanding of what the Scripture says about repentance, to suppose that faith and repentance are two distinct things, that in like manner are the conditions of justification. For it is most plain from the Scripture, that the condition of justification, or that in us by which we are justified, is but one, and that is faith. Faith and repentance are not two distinct conditions of justification, nor are they two distinct things that together make one condition of justification; but with comprehends the whole of that by which we are justified, or by which we come to have an interest in Christ, and there is nothing else has a parallel concern with it in the affair of our salvation. And this the divines on the other side themselves are sensible of, and therefore they suppose that the faith the apostle Paul speaks of, which he says we are justified by alone. comprehends in it repentance.

And therefore, hi answer to the objection, I would say, That when repentance is spoken of in Scripture as the condition of pardon, thereby is not intended any particular grace, or act, properly distinct from faith, that has a parallel influence with it in the affair of our pardon or Justification; but by repentance is intended nothing distinct from active conversion, (or conversion actively considered,) as it respects the term from which. Active conversion is a motion at exercise of the mind that respects two terms, viz. sin and God; and by repentance is meant this conversation or active change of the mind, so far as it is conversant about the term from which, or about sin. This is what the word repentance properly signifies; which, in the original of the New Testament, is signified a change of the mind, or, which is the same thing, the turning or the conversion of the mind. Repentance is this turning, as it respects what is turned from.

“Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I showed unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent, and turn to God.”

(~~423~~ Acts 26:10)

Both these are the same turning, but only with respect to opposite terms in the former, is expressed the exercise of mind about sin in this turning, in the other, the exercise of mind towards God.

If we look over the scriptures that speak of evangelical repentance, we shall presently see that repentance is to be understood in this sense; as <sup><103></sup>Matthew 9:13. "I am not come to call the righteous, hut sinners to repentance." <sup><103></sup>Luke 13:3. "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." And chapter <sup><103></sup>15:7,10. "where is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth," *i.e.* over one sinner that is conversed. <sup><4113></sup>Acts 11:18. "Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life." This is said by the Christians of the circumcision at Jerusalem, upon Peter's giving an account of the conversion of Cornelius and his family, and their embracing the gospel, though Peter had said nothing expressly about their sorrow for sin. And again, <sup><4171></sup>Acts 17:30. "But now commandeth all men every where to repent." And <sup><103></sup>Luke 16:30 "Nay, father Abraham, but if one went to them from the dead, they would repent." <sup><103></sup>2 Peter 3:9. "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness, but is long suffering to us-ward, no twilling that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." It is plain that in these and other places, by repentance is meant conversion.

Now it is true, that conversion is the condition of pardon and justification but if it be so, how absurd is it to say, that conversion is one condition of justification, and faith another, as though they were two distributively distinct and parallel conditions! Conversion is the condition of justification, because it is that great change by which we are brought from sin to Christ, and by which we be come believers in him: agreeable to <sup><103></sup>Matthew 21:32. "And ye, when ye had seen it! repented not afterward, that ye might believe him." When we are directed to repent, that our sins may be blotted out, it is as much as to say, Let your minds and hearts be changed, that your sins may be blotted out. But if it be said, Let your hearts be changed, that you may be justified; and believe, that you may be justified; does it therefore follow, that the heart being changed is one condition of justification, and believing another? But our minds must be changed, that we may believe, and so may be justified.

And besides, evangelical repentance, being active conversion, is not to be treated of as a particular grace, properly and entirely distinct from faith, as by some it seems to have been. What is conversion, but the sinful, alienated soul's closing with Christ, or the sinner's being brought to believe in Christ? That exercise of soul in conversion that respects sin,

cannot be excluded out of the nature of faith in Christ: there is something in faith, or closing with Christ, that respects sin, and that is evangelical repentance. That repentance which in Scripture is called, repentance for the remission of sins, is that very principle or operation of the mind itself that is called faith, so far as it is conversant about sin. Justifying faith in a Mediator is conversant about two things: it is conversant about sin or evil to be rejected and to be delivered from, and about positive good to be accepted and obtained by the Mediator; as conversant about the former of these, it is evangelical repentance, or repentance for remission of sins. Surely they must be very ignorant, or at least very inconsiderate, of the whole tenor of the gospel, who think that the repentance by which remission of sins is obtained, can be completed, as to all that is essential to it, without any respect to Christ, or application of the mind to the Mediator, who alone has made atonement for sin. Surely so great a part of salvation as remission of sins, is not to be obtained without looking or coming to the great and only Savior. It is true, repentance, in its more general abstracted nature, is only a sorrow for sin, and forsaking of it, which is a duty of natural religion; but evangelical repentance, or repentance for remission of sins, hath more than this essential to it, a dependence of soul on the Mediator for deliverance from sin, is of the essence of it.

That justifying repentance has the nature of faith, seems evident by ~~499~~ Acts 19:4. “Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.” The latter words, “saying unto the people, that they should believe on him,” etc. are evidently exegetical of the former, and explain how he preached repentance for the remission of sins. When it is said, that he preached repentance for the remission of sin, saying, that they should believe on Christ, it cannot be supposed but that his savior, that they should believe on Christ, was intended as directing them what to do that they might obtain the remission of sins. So, ~~505~~ 2 Timothy 2:25. “In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth.” That acknowledging of the truth which there is in believing, is here spoken of as what is retained in repentance. And on the other hand, that faith includes repentance in its nature, is evident by

the apostle's speaking of sin as destroyed in Oth, ~~RED~~ Galatians 2:18. — In the preceding verses the apostle mentions an objection against the doctrine of justification by faith alone, viz. that it tends to encourage men in sin, and so to make Christ the minister of sin. This objection he rejects and refutes with this, "If I build again the things that I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor." If sin be destroyed by faith, it must be by repentance of sin included in it, for we know that it is our repentance of sin, or turning of the mind from sin, that is our destroying our sin.

That in justifying faith which directly respects sin, or the evil to be delivered from by the Mediator, is as follows: a sense of our own sinfulness, and the hatefulness of it, and a hearty acknowledgment of its desert of the threatened punishment looking to the free mercy of God in a Redeemer, for deliverance from it and its punishment.

Concerning this, here described, three things may be noted.

- 1.** That it is the very same with that evangelical repentance to which remission of sins is promised in Scripture.
  - 2.** That it is of the essence of justifying faith. and is the same with that faith, so far as it is conversant about evil to be delivered from by the Mediator.
  - 3.** That this is indeed the proper and peculiar condition of remission of sins.
- 1.** All of it is essential to evangelical repentance, and is indeed the very thing meant by that repentance, to which remission of sins is promised in the gospel. As to the former part of the description, viz. a sense of our own sinfulness, and the hatefulness of it, and a hearty acknowledgment of its desert of wrath, none will deny it to be included in repentance: but this does not comprehend the whole essence of evangelical repentance; but what follows does also properly and essentially belong to its nature looking to the free mercy of God in a Redeemer, for deliverance from it, and the punishment of it. That repentance to which remission is promised, not only always has this with it, but it is contained in it, as what is of the proper nature and essence of it: and respect is ever had to this in the nature of repentance, whenever remission is promised to it; and it is especially from respect to this in the nature of repentance, that it has that

promise made to it if this latter part be missing, it fails of the nature of that evangelical repentance to which remission of sins is promised. If repentance remains in sorrow for sin, and does not reach to a looking to the free mercy of God in Christ for pardon, it is not that which is the condition of pardon, neither shall pardon be obtained by it. Evangelical repentance is an humiliation for sin before God; but the sinner never comes and humbles himself before God in any other repentance, but that which includes hoping in his mercy for remission: if sorrow be not accompanied with that, there will be no coming to God in it. but a flying further from him. There is some worship of God in justifying repentance; but that is not in any other repentance which lies not a sense of and faith in the divine mercy to forgive sin, <sup>(110)</sup> Psalm 130:4. “There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.” The promise of mercy to a true penitent, in <sup>(111)</sup> Proverbs 28:13. is expressed in these terms, “Whoso confesseth and forsaketh his sins, shall have mercy.” But there is faith in God’s mercy in that confessing. The psalmist, (Psalm 32) speaking of the blessedness of the man whose transgression is forgiven and whose sin is covered, to whom the Lord imputes not sin — says, that while he kept silence his bones waxed old: but he acknowledged his sin unto God, his iniquity he did not hide, he said, he would confess his transgression to the Lord, and then God forgave the iniquity of his sin. The manner of expression plainly holds forth, that then he began to encourage himself in the mercy of God, but his bones waxed old while he kept silence, and therefore the apostle Paul. in the 4th of Romans, brings this instance, to confirm the doctrine of justification by faith alone, that he had been insisting on. When sin is aright confessed to God, there is always faith in that act. That confessing of sin which is joined with despair, as in Judas, is not the confession to which the promise is made. In <sup>(112)</sup> Acts 2:38. the direction given to those who were pricked in their heart with a sense of the guilt of sin, was to repent, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of their sins. Being baptized in the name of Christ for the remission of sins, implied faith in Christ for the remission of sins. Repentance for the remission of sins was typified of old by the priests the scape goat laying his hands on him, <sup>(113)</sup> Leviticus 16:21 denoting it is that repentance and confusion of sin only that obtains remission, which is made over Christ the great sacrifice, and with dependence on him. Many other things might

be produced from the Scripture, that in like manner confirm this point; but these may be sufficient.

**2.** All the forementioned description is of the essence of justifying With and not different from it, so far as it is conversant about sin, or the evil to be delivered from by the Mediator. For it is doubtless of the essence of justifying faith, to embrace Christ as a Saviour from sin and its punishment, and all that is contained in that act is contained in the nature of With itself. But in the act of embracing Christ as a Saviour from our sin and its punishment, is implied a sense of our sinfulness, and a hatred of abhorrence, and a sense our sins, or a rejecting them with abhorrence, and a sense of our desert of punishment. Embracing Christ as a Saviour from sin, implies the contrary act, viz. rejecting sin. If we fly to the light to be delivered from darkness, the same act is contrary to darkness, viz. a rejecting of it. In proportion to the earnestness with which we embrace Christ as a Saviour from sin, in the same proportion is the abhorrence with which we reject sin, in the same act. Yea, suppose there be in the nature of faith, as conversant about sin, no more than the hearty embracing of Christ as a Saviour from the punishment of sin, this act will imply in it the whole of the above-mentioned description. It implies a sense of our own sinfulness. Certainly in the hearty embracing of a Saviour from the punishment of our sinfulness, there is the exercise of a sense that we are sinful. We cannot heartily embrace Christ as a Saviour from the punishment of that which we are not sensible we are guilty of. There is also in the same act, a sense of our desert of the threatened punishment. We cannot heartily embrace Christ as a Saviour from that which we are not sensible that we have deserved. For if we are not sensible that we have deserved the punishment, we shall not be sensible that we have any need of a Saviour from it, or, at least shall not be convinced but that God who offers the Saviour, unjustly makes him needful; and we cannot heartily embrace such an offer. And further, there is implied in a hearty embracing Christ as a Saviour from punishment, not only a conviction of conscience, that we have deserved the punishment, such as the devils and damned have; but there is a hearty acknowledgment of it, with the submission of the soul, so as, with the accord of the heart, to own that God might be just in the punishment. If the heart rises against the act or judgment of God, in holding us obliged to the punishment, when he offers us his Son as a

Savior from the punishment, we cannot with the consent of the heart receive him in that character. but if persons thus submit to the righteousness of so dreadful a punishment of sin, this comes in it a hatred of sin.

That such a sense of our sinfulness, and utter unworthiness, and desert of punishment, belongs to the nature of saving faith, is what the Scripture from time to time holds forth, as particularly in ~~1051~~ Matthew 15:26-28.

“But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children’s bread, and to cast it to dogs. And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the does eat of the crumbs which fall from their master’s table. Then Jesus answered, and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith.” — And ~~1052~~ Luke 7:6-9. “The centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself, for I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof. Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee; but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed: for I also am a man set under authority,” etc. — “When Jesus heard these things, he marvelled at him and fumed him about, and said unto the people that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.” And also verse 37, 38. “And behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee’s house, brought an alabaster-box of ointment, and stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment.” Together with verse 50. “He said unto the woman, Thy with hath saved thee; go in peace.”

These things do not necessarily suppose that repentance and faith are words of just the same signification; for it is only so much in justifying faith as respects the evil to be delivered from by the Saviour, that is caned repentance. Besides, both repentance and faith, take them only in their general nature, are entirely distinct; repentance is a sorrow for sin, and forsaking of it; and With is a trusting in God’s sufficiency and truth. But With and repentance, as evangelical duties, or justifying With, and repentance for remission of sins, contain more in them. and imply a respect to a mediator, and involve each other’s nature; though they still bear the name of With and repentance, from those general moral virtues—that repentance, which is a duty of natural religion, and that faith, which was a duty required under the first covenant—that are contained in this evangelical

act, which severally appear, when this act is considered with respect to its different terms and objects.

It may be objected here, that the Scripture sometimes mentions faith and repentance together, as if they were entirely distinct things; as in ~~4115~~ Mark 1:15. “Repent ye, and believe the gospel.” But there is no need of understanding these as two distinct conditions of salvation, but the words are exegetical one of another. It is to teach us after what manner we must repent, viz. as believing the gospel, and after what manner we must believe the gospel, viz. as repenting. These words no more prove faith and repentance to be entirely distinct, than those fore-mentioned, ~~4123~~ Matthew 21:32. “And ye, when Ye had seen it, repented not afterwards, that ye might believe him.” Or those, ~~4125~~ 2 Timothy 2:25. “If peradventure God will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth.” The apostle, in ~~4131~~ Acts 19:4. seems to have reference to these words of John the Baptist, “John baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe,” etc. where the latter words, as we have already observed, are to explain how he preached repentance.

Another Scripture where faith and repentance are mentioned together, is

~~4131~~ Acts 20:21. “Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance towards God, and faith towards the Lord Jesus Christ.”

It may be objected, that in this place, faith and repentance are not only spoken of as distinct things, but having distinct objects.

To this I answer, That faith and repentance, in their general nature, are distinct things: and repentance for the remission of sins, or that in justifying faith that respects the evil to be delivered from, so far as it regards that teen, which is what especially denominates it repentance, has respect to God as the object, because he is the Being offended by sin, and to be reconciled, but that in this justifying act, whence it is denominated faith, does more especially respect Christ. But let us interpret it how we will, the objection of faith being here so distinguished from repentance, is as much of an objection against the scheme of those that oppose justification by faith alone, as against this scheme; for they hold that the

justifying faith the apostle Paul speaks of, includes repentance, as has been already observed.

**3.** This repentance that has been described, is indeed the special condition of remission of sins. This seems very evident by the Scripture, as particularly, <sup><400></sup>Mark 1:4. “John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance, for the remission of sins.” So, <sup><400></sup>Luke 3:3. “And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance, for the remission of sins.” <sup><404></sup>Luke 24:47. “And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations.” <sup><405></sup>Acts 5:31. “Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance unto Israel, and forgiveness of sins.” Chapter 2:38. Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins.” And, chapter 3:19. “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.” The like is evident by <sup><406></sup>Leviticus 26:40 2. <sup><407></sup>Job 33:27, 28. <sup><408></sup>Psalms 32:5. <sup><409></sup>Proverbs 28:13. <sup><410></sup>Jeremiah 3:13. And <sup><411></sup>1 John 1:9. and other places.

And the reason may be plain from what has been said. We need not wonder that what in faith especially respects sin, should be especially the condition of remission of sins, or that this motion or exercise of the soul, as it rejects and flies from evil, and embraces Christ as a Saviour from it, should especially be the condition of being free from that evil, in like manner, as the same principle or motion, as it seeks good, and cleaves to Christ as the procurer of that good, should be the condition of obtaining that good. faith with respect to good is accepting, and with respect to evil it is rejecting. Yea this rejecting evil is itself an act of acceptance, it is accepting freedom or separation from that evil, and this freedom or separation is the benefit bestowed in remission. No wonder that what in faith immediately respects this benefit, and is our acceptance of it, should be the special condition of our having it. It is so with respect to all the benefits that Christ has purchased. Trusting in God through Christ for such a particular benefit that we need, is the special condition of obtaining that benefit. When we need protection from enemies, the exercise of faith with respect to such a benefit, or trusting in Christ for protection from enemies is especially the way to obtain that particular benefit, rather than trusting in Christ for something else, and so of any other benefit that might be mentioned. So prayer (which is the expression of faith) for a particular

mercy needed, is especially the way to obtain that mercy. — So that no argument can be drawn from hence against the doctrine of justification by faith alone. And there is that in the nature of repentance, which peculiarly tends to establish the contrary of justification by works: for nothing so much renounces our own worthiness and excellency, as repentance, the very nature of it is to acknowledge our own utter sinfulness and unworthiness, and to renounce our own goodness, and all confidence in self, and so to trust in the propitiation of the Mediator, and ascribe all the glory of forgiveness to him.

**Object.** 6. The last objection I shall mention, is that paragraph in the 3rd chapter of James, where persons are said expressly to be justified by works: Verse 21. “Was not Abraham our father justified by works?” Ver 24. “Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.” Verse 25: “Was not Rahab the harlot justified by works?”

In answer to this objection, I would,

**1.** Take notice of the great unfairness of the divines that oppose us, in the improvement they make of this against us. All will allow, that in that proposition of St. James, “By works a man is justified, and not by faith only,” one of the terms, either the word faith, or else the word justify, is not to be understood precisely in the same sense as the same terms when used by St. Paul; because they suppose, as well as we, that it was not the intent of the apostle James to contradict St. Paul in that doctrine of justification by faith alone, in which he had instructed the churches. But if we understand both the terms, as used by each apostle, in precisely the same sense, then what one asserts is a precise, direct, and full contradiction of the other, the one affirming and the other denying the very same thing. So that all the controversy from this text comes to this, viz. which of these two terms shall be understood in a diversity from St. Paul. They say that it is the word faith; for they suppose, that when the apostle Paul uses the word, and makes faith that by which alone we are justified, that then by it is understood a compliance with and practice of Christianity in general; so as to include all saving Christian virtue and obedience. But as the apostle James uses the word faith in this place, they suppose thereby is to be understood only an assent of the understanding to the truth of gospel doctrines, as distinguished from good works, and

that may exist separate from them, and from all saving grace. We, on the other hand, suppose that the word justify is to be understood in a different sense from the apostle Paul. So that they are forced to go as far in their scheme, in altering the sense of terms from Paul's use of them, as we. But yet at the same time that they freely vary the sense of the former of them, viz. faith, yet when we understand the latter, viz. justify, in a different sense from St. Paul, they exclaim against us. what necessity of framing this distinction, but only to serve an opinion? At this rate a man may maintain any thing, though never so contrary to Scripture, and elude the clearest text in the Bible! though they do not show us why we have not as good warrant to understand the word justify in a diversity from St. Paul, as they the word faith: If the sense of one of the words must be varied on either scheme, to make the apostle James's doctrine consistent with the apostle Paul's; and if varying the sense of one term or the other be all that stands in the way of their agreeing with either scheme; and if varying the sense of the latter be in itself as fair as of the former, then the text lies as fair for one scheme as the other, and can no more fairly be an objection against our scheme than theirs. And if so, what becomes of all this great objection from this passage in James?

**2.** If there be no more difficulty in varying the sense of one of these terms than another; from any thing in the text itself, so as to make the words suit with either scheme, then certainly that is to be chosen that is most agreeable to the current of Scripture, and other places where the same matter is more particularly and fully treated of, and therefore that we should understand the word justify in this passage of James, in a sense in some respects diverse from that in which St. Paul uses it. For by what has been already said, it may appear, that there is no one doctrine in the whole Bible more fully asserted, explained, and urged, than the doctrine of justification by faith alone, without any of our own righteousness.

**3.** There is a very fair interpretation of this passage of St. James, no way inconsistent with this doctrine of justification, which I have shown that other scriptures abundantly teach, which the words themselves will as well allow of, as that which the objectors put upon them, and much better agrees with the context; and that is, that works are here spoken of as justifying as evidences. A man may be said to be justified by that which clears him, or vindicates him, or makes the goodness of his cause manifest.

When a person has a cause tried in a civil court, and is justified or cleared, he may be said in different senses to be justified or cleared, by the goodness of his cause, and by the goodness of the evidences of it. He may be said to be cleared by what evidences his cause to be good; but not in the same sense as he is by that which makes his cause to be good. That which renders his cause good, is the proper ground of his justification; it is by that that he is himself a proper subject of it; but evidences justify, only as they manifest that his cause is good in fact, whether they are of such a nature as to have any influence to render it so or no. It is by works that our cause appears to be good; but by faith our cause not only appears to be good, but becomes good; because thereby we are united to Christ. That the word justify should be sometimes understood to signify the former of these, as well as the latter, is agreeable to the use of the word in common speech; as we say such an one stood up to justify another, *i.e.* he endeavoured to show or manifest his cause to be good. — And it is certain that the word is sometimes used in this sense in Scripture, when speaking of our being justified before God; as where it is said, we shall be justified by our words, <sup><412></sup> Matthew 12:37. “For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.” let cannot be meant that men are accepted before God on the account of their words, for God has told us nothing more plainly, than that it is the heart that he looks at; and that when he acts as judge towards men, in order to justifying or condemning, he tries the heart, <sup><413></sup> Jeremiah 11:20. “But, O Lord of hosts, that judgest righteously, that triest the reins and the heart, let me see thy vengeance on them; for unto thee have I revealed my cause.” <sup><414></sup> Psalm 7:8, 9. “The Lord shall judge the people: judge me, O Lord, according to my righteousness, and according to mine integrity that is in me. O let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end; but establish the just; for the righteous God trieth the hearts and reins.” Verse 11. “God judgeth the righteous.” And many other places to the like purpose. And therefore men can be justified by their words, no otherwise than as evidences or manifestations of what is in the bears. And it is thus that Christ speaks of the words in this very place, as is evident by the context, verse 34, 35. “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart,” etc. The words, or sounds themselves, are neither parts of godliness nor evidences of godliness, but as signs of what is inward.

God himself, when he acts towards men as judge, in order to a declarative judgment, makes use of evidences, and so judges men by their works. And therefore, at the day of Judgment, God will judge men according to their works: for though God will stand in no need of evidence to inform him what is right, yet it is to be considered that he will then sit in judgment, not as earthly judges do, to find out what is right in a cause, but to declare and manifest what is right: and therefore that day is called by the apostle, the day of the revelation of the righteous Judgment of God,” ~~4115~~ Romans 2:5.

To be justified, is to be approved of and accepted: but a man may be said to be approved and accepted in two respects; the one is to be approved really, and the other to be approved and accepted declaratively.

Justification is twofold; it is either the acceptance and approbation of the judge itself, or the manifestation of that approbation, by a sentence or judgment declared by the judge, either to our own consciences, or to the world. If Justification be understood in the former sense, for the approbation itself, that is only that by which we become fit to be approved: but if it be understood in the latter sense, for the manifestation of this approbation, it is by whatever is a proper evidence of that fitness. In the former, only faith is concerned; because it is by that only in us that we become fit to be accepted and approved: in the latter, whatever is an evidence of our fitness, is alike concerned. And therefore take justification in this sense, and then faith, and all other graces and good works, have a common and equal concern in it: for any other grace, or holy act, is equally an evidence of a qualification for acceptance or approbation, as faith.

To justify has always, in common speech, signified indifferently, either simply approbation, or testifying that approbation; sometimes one, and sometimes the other; because they are both the same only as one is outwardly what the other is inwardly. So we, and it may be all nations, are wont to give the same name to two things when one is only declarative of the other. Thus sometimes judging, intends only judging in our thoughts; at other times, testifying and declaring judgment. So such works as an evidence. And where this instance of Abraham's obedience is elsewhere mentioned in the New Testament, it is mentioned as a fruit and evidence of his faith.

“By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac and he that had received the promises, offered up his only-begotten son.”  
(<sup>3117</sup> Hebrews 11:17)

And in the other instance which the apostle mentions, verse 25. “Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?” The apostle refers to a declarative judgment, in that particular testimony which was given of God’s approbation of her as a believer, in directing Joshua to save her when the rest of Jericho was destroyed, <sup>40625</sup> Joshua 6:25. “And Joshua saved Rahab the harlot alive, and her father’s household, and all that she had; and she dwelleth in Israel even unto this day: because she hid the messengers which Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.” This Ivan accepted as an evidence and expression of her faith. Hebrews 40:31. “By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.” The apostle in saying, “Was not Rabab the harlot justified by works?” by the manner of his speaking has reference to something in her history; but we have no account in her history of any other justification of her but this.

**4.** If notwithstanding, any choose to take justification in St. James’s precisely as we do in Paul’s epistles for God’s acceptance or approbation itself, and not any expression of that approbation, what has been already said concerning the manner in which acts of evangelical obedience are concerned in the affair of our justification, affords a very easy, clear, and full answer. For if we take works as acts or expressions of faith, they are not excluded so a man is not justified by faith only. but also by works *i.e.* he is not justified only by faith as a principle in the heart, or in its first and more immanent acts, but also by the effective acts of it in life, which are the expressions of the life of faith, as the operations and actions of the body are of the life of that agreeable to verse 26.

What has been said in answer to these objections, may also, I hope, abundantly serve for an answer to another objection, often made against this doctrine, viz. that it encourages licentiousness in life. For, from what has been said, we may see that the Scripture doctrine of justification by faith alone, without any manner of goodness or excellency of ours, does in no wise diminish either the necessity or benefit of a sincere evangelical

universal obedience Man's salvation is not only indissolubly connected with obedience, and damnation with the want of it, in those who have opportunity for it, but depends upon it in many respects. It is the way to salvation, and the necessary preparation for it; eternal blessings are bestowed in reward for it, and our justification in our own consciences and at the day of judgment depends on it, as the proper evidence of our acceptable state; and that even in accepting of us as entitled to life in our justification, God has respect to this, as that on which the fitness of such an act of justification depends: so that our Salvation does as truly depend upon it, as if we were justified for the moral excellency of it. And besides all this, the degree of our happiness to all eternity is suspended on, and determined by, the degree of this. So that this gospel-scheme of justification is as far from encouraging licentiousness, and contains as much to encourage and excite to strict and universal obedience, and the utmost possible eminency of holiness, as any scheme that can be devised, and indeed unspeakably more.

I come now to the

**V.** And last thing proposed, which is. to consider the “importance of this doctrine.”

I know there are many who make as though this controversy was of no great importance, that it is chiefly a matter of nice speculation, depending on certain subtle distinctions, which many that make use of them do not understand themselves: and that the difference is not of such consequence as to be worth being zealous about; and that more hurt is done by raising disputes about it than good.

Indeed I am far from thinking that it is of absolute necessity persons should understand, and be agreed upon, all the distinctions needful particularly to explain and defend this doctrine against all cavils and objections. Yet all Christians should strive after an increase of knowledge; and none should content themselves without some clear and distinct understanding in this point. But we should believe in the general, according to the clear and abundant revelations of God's word, that it is none of our own excellency, virtue, or righteousness, that is the ground of our being received from a state of condemnation into a state of acceptance in God's sight, but only Jesus Christ, and his righteousness and worthiness,

received by faith. This I think to be of great importance, at least in application to ourselves; and that for the following reasons.


**1.** The Scripture treats of this doctrine, as a doctrine of very great importance. That there is a certain doctrine of justification by faith, in opposition to justification by the works of the law, which the apostle Paul insists upon as of the greatest importance, none will deny; because there is nothing in the Bible more apparent. The apostle, under the infallible conduct of the Spirit of God, thought it worth his most strenuous and zealous disputing about and defending. He speaks of the contrary doctrine as fatal and ruinous to the souls of men, in the latter end of the 9th chapter of Romans, and beginning of the 10th. He speaks of it as subversive of the gospel of Christ, and calls it another gospel, and says concerning it, if any one, “though an angel from heaven, preach it, let him be accursed;”

~~4000~~ Galatians 1:6-9 compared with the following part of the epistle. Certainly we must allow the apostles to be good judges of the importance and tendency of doctrines; at least the Holy Ghost in them. And doubtless we are safe, and in no danger of harshness and censoriousness, if we only follow him, and keep close to his express teachings, in what we believe and say of the hurtful and pernicious tendency of any error. Why are we to blame, for saying what the Bible has taught us to say, or for believing what the Holy Ghost has taught us to that end that we might believe it?

**2.** The adverse scheme lays another foundation of man’s salvation than God hath laid. I do not now speak of that ineffectual redemption that they suppose to be universal and what all mankind are equally the subjects of; but, I say, it lays entirely another foundation of man’s actual, discriminating salvation, or that salvation wherein true Christians differ from wicked men. We suppose the foundation of this to be Christ’s worthiness and righteousness: on the contrary, that scheme supposes it to be men’s own virtue, even so, that this is the ground of a saving interest in Christ itself. It takes away Christ out of the place of the bottom stone, and puts in men’s own virtue in the room of him: so that Christ himself in the affair of distinguishing actual salvation, is laid upon this foundation. And the foundation being so different, I leave it to every one to judge whether the difference between the two schemes consists only in punctilios of small consequence. The foundation being contrary, makes the

whole scheme exceeding diverse and opposite; the one is a gospel scheme, the other a legal one.

**3.** It is in this doctrine that the most essential difference lies between the covenant of grace and the first covenant. The adverse scheme of justification supposes that we are justified by our works, in the very same sense wherein man was to have been justified by his works under the first covenant. By that covenant our first parents were not to have had eternal life risen them for any proper merit in their obedience; because their perfect obedience was a debt that they owed God. Nor was it to be bestowed for any proportion between the dignity of their obedience, and the value of the reward; but only it was to be bestowed from a regard to a moral fitness in the virtue of their obedience to the reward of God's favour; and a title to eternal life was to be given them, as a testimony of God's pleasedness with their works, or his regard to the inherent beauty of their virtue. And so it is the very same way that those in the adverse scheme suppose that we are received into God's special favour now, and to those saving benefits that are the testimonies of it. I am sensible the divines of that side entirely disclaim the popish doctrine of merit: and are free to speak of our utter unworthiness, and the great imperfection of all our services. But after all, it is, our virtue, imperfect as it is, that recommends men to God, by which good men come to have a saving interest in Christ, and God's favour, rather than others; and these things are bestowed in testimony of God's respect to their goodness. So that whether they will allow the term merit or no, yet they hold, that we are accepted by our own merit, in the same sense, though not in the same degree, as under the first covenant.

But the great and most distinguishing difference between that covenant and the covenant of grace is, that by the covenant of grace we are not thus justified by our own works, but only by faith in Jesus Christ. It is on this account chiefly that the new covenant deserves the name of a covenant of grace, as is evident by  Romans 4:16. "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace." And chapter 3:20, 24. "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight;"—"Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ." And chapter 11:6. "And if by grace, then it is no more of works otherwise grace is no more grace: but if it be of works, then it is no more grace; otherwise work

is no more work.” <sup>418</sup>Galatians 5:4. “Whosoever of you are justified by the law, ye are fallen from grace.” And therefore the apostle, in the same epistle to the Galatians, speaking of the doctrine of justification by works as another gospel, adds, “which is not another?” chapter 1:verse 6, 7. It is no gospel at all, it is law. It is no covenant of grace, but of worlds; not an evangelical, but a legal doctrine. Certainly that doctrine wherein consists the greatest and most essential difference between the covenant of grace and the first covenant, must be a doctrine of great importance. That doctrine of the gospel by which above all others it is worthy of the name of gospel, is doubtless a very important doctrine of the gospel.

**4.** This is the main thing for which fallen men stood in need of divine revelation, to teach us how we who have sinned may come to be again accepted of God; or, which is the same thing, how the sinner may be justified. Something beyond the light of nature is necessary to salvation chiefly on this account. Mere natural reason afforded no means by which we could come to the knowledge of this, it depending on the sovereign pleasure of the Being that we had offended by sin. This seems to be the great drift of that revelation which God has given, and of all those mysteries it reveals, all those great doctrines that are peculiarly doctrines of revelation, and above the light of nature. It seems to have been very much on this account, that it was requisite the doctrine of the Trinity itself should be revealed to us, that by a discovery of the concern of the several divine persons in the great affair of our salvation, we might the better understand and see how all our dependence in this affair is on God, and our sufficiency all in him, and not in our elves; that he is all in all in this business, agreeable to <sup>419</sup>1 Corinthians 1:29-31. “That no flesh should glory in his presence, But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.” What is the gospel, but only the glad tidings of a new way of acceptance with God unto life, a way wherein sinners may come to be free from the guilt of sin, and obtain a title to eternal life? And if, when this way is revealed, it is rejected, and another of man’s devising be put in the room of it, without doubt, it must be an error of great importance, and the apostle might well say it was another gospel.

**5.** The contrary scheme of justification derogates much from the honour of God and the Mediator. I have already shown how it diminishes the glory of the Mediator, in ascribing that to man's virtue and goodness, which belongs alone to his worthiness and righteousness. By the apostle's sense of the matter it renders Christ needless.

“Christ is become of no effect to you, whosoever of you are justified by the law.” (~~ROM~~ Galatians 5:4)


If that scheme of justification be followed in its consequences, it utterly overthrows the glory of all the great things that have been contrived, and done and suffered in the work of redemption. ~~ROM~~ Galatians 2:21.

“If righteousness come by the law, Christ is dead in vain.” It has also been already shown how it diminishes the glory of divine grace, (which is the attribute God hath especially bet himself to glorify in the work of redemption,) and so that it greatly the obligation to gratitude in the sinner that is saved. Yea, in the send of the apostle, it makes void the distinguishing grace of the gospel. Galatians v 4. “Whosoever of you are justified by the law, are fallen from grace.” It diminishes the glory of the grace of God and the Redeemer, and proportionately magnifies man. It makes the goodness and excellency of fallen man to be something, which I have shown are nothing. I have also already shown, that it is contrary to the truth of God in the threatening of his holy law, to justify the sinner for his virtue. And whether it were contrary to God's truth or no, it is a scheme of things very unworthy of God. It supposes that God, when about to lift up a poor forlorn malefactor condemned to eternal misery for sinning against his Majesty, and to make him unspeakably and eternally happy by bestowing his Son and himself upon him, as it were, sets all this to vale, for the price of his virtue and excellency. I know that those whom we oppose acknowledge, that the price is very disproportionate to the benefit bestowed: and say, that God's grace is wonderfully manifested in accepting so little virtue, and bestowing so glorious a reward for such imperfect righteousness. But seeing we are such infinitely sinful and abominable creatures in God's sight, and by our infinite guilt have brought ourselves into such wretched and deplorable circumstances and all our righteousnesses are nothing, and ten thousand times worse than nothing, if God looks upon them as they are in themselves-is it not immensely more

worthy of the infinite majesty and glory of God, to deliver and make happy such wretched vagabonds and captives, without any money or price of theirs, or any manner of expectation of excellency or virtue in them, in any wise to recommend them? Will it not betray a foolish exalting opinion of ourselves, and a mean one of God, to have thought of offering any thing of ours, to recommend us to the favour of being, brought from wallowing, like filthy swine, in the mire of our sins, and from the enmity and misery of devils in the lowest hell, to the state of God's dear children in the everlasting arms of his love in heavenly glory; or to imagine that it is the constitution of God, that we should bring our filthy rags, and offer them to him as the price of this?

**6.** The opposite scheme does most directly tend to lead men to trust in their own righteousness for justification, which is a thing fatal to the soul. This is what men are of themselves exceeding prone to do, (and that though they are never so much taught the contrary,) through the partial and high thoughts they have of themselves, and their exceeding dulness of apprehending any such mystery as our being accepted for the righteousness of another. But this scheme directly teaches men to trust in their own righteousness for justification, in that it teaches them that this is indeed what they must be justified by, being the way of justification which God himself has appointed. So that if a man had naturalist no disposition to trust in his own righteousness yet if he embraced this scheme, and acted consistently, it would lead him to it. But that trusting in our own righteousness, is a thing fatal to the soul, is what the Scripture plainly teaches us. It tells us, that it will cause that Christ shall profit us nothing, and be of no effect to us, <sup><418></sup>Galatians 5:2-4. For though the apostle speaks there particularly of circumcision, yet it is not merely being circumcised, but trusting in circumcision as a righteousness, that the apostle has respect to. He could not mean, that merely being circumcised would render Christ of no profit or effect to a person; for we read that he himself, for certain reasons, took Timothy and circumcised him, <sup><418></sup>Acts 16:3. And the same is evident by the context, and y the rest of the epistle. And the apostle speaks of trusting in their own righteousness as fatal to the Jews <sup><418></sup>Romans 9:31, 32. "But Israel which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the

law, for they stumbled at that stumbling-stone.” Together with chapter 10 verse 3. “For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.” And this is spoken of as fall to the Pharisees, in the parable of the Pharisee and the publican, which Christ spake to them in order to reprove them for trusting in themselves that they were righteous. The design of the parable is to show them, that the very publicists shall be testified, rather than they, as appears be the reflection Christ makes upon it,

“I tell you, this man went down to his house justified  
rather than the other,” (  Luke 18:14)

that is, this and not the other. The fatal tendency of it might also be proved from its inconsistency with the nature of justifying faith, and with the nature of that humiliation that the Scripture open speaks of as absolutely necessary to salvation, but these scriptures are so express, that it is needless to bring any further arguments.

How far a wonderful and mysterious agency of God’s Spirit may so influence some men’s hearts, that their practice in this regard may be contrary to their own principles, so that they shall not trust in their own righteousness, though they profess that men are justified by their own righteousness-or how far they may believe the doctrine of justification by men’s own righteousness in general and yet not believe it in a particular application of it to themselves — or how far that error which they may have been led into by education, or cunning sophistry of others, may yet be indeed contrary to the prevailing disposition of their hearts, and contrary to their practice-or how far some may seem to maintain a doctrine contrary to this gospel-doctrine of justification, that really do not; but only express themselves differently from others; or seem to oppose it through their misunderstanding of our expressions or we of theirs, when indeed our real sentiments are the same in the main-or may seem to differ more than they do, by using terms that are without a precisely fixed and determinate meaning-or to be wide in their sentiments from this doctrine, for want of a distinct understanding of it; whose hearts, at the same time, entirely agree with it, and if once it was clearly explained to their understandings, would immediately close with it, and embrace it: — how

far these things may be, I will not determine; but am fully persuaded that great allowances are to be made on these and such like accounts, in innumerable instances; though it is manifest, from what has been said, that the teaching and propagating contrary doctrines and schemes, is of a pernicious and fatal tendency.

## DISCOURSE 2

### PRESSING INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD

The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.

(~~John~~ Luke 16:16)

IN these words two things may be observed: First, Wherein the work and office of John the Baptist consisted, viz. in preaching the kingdom of God, to prepare the way for its introduction to succeed the law and the prophets. By the law and the prophets, in the text, seems to be intended the ancient dispensation under the Old Testament, which was received from Moses and the prophets. These are said to be until John; not that the revelations given by them are out of use since that time, but that the state of the church, founded and regulated under God by them, the dispensation of which they were the ministers, and wherein the church depended mainly on light received from them, fully continued till John. He first began to introduce the New-Testament dispensation, or gospel-state of the church; which, with its glorious, spiritual, and eternal privileges and blessings, is often called the kingdom of heaven, or kingdom of God. John the Baptist preached, that the kingdom of God was at hand. “Repent,” says he, “for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” — “Since that time,” says Christ, “the kingdom of God is preached.” John the Baptist first began to preach it; and then, after him, Christ and his disciples preached the same. Thus Christ preached, ~~John~~ Matthew 4:17. “From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” So the disciples were directed to preach, ~~John~~ Matthew 10:7. “And, as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.” It was not John the Baptist, but Christ, that fully brought in, and actually established, this kingdom of God; but he, as Christ’s forerunner to prepare his way before him, did the first thing that was done towards introducing it. The old dispensation was abolished, and the new brought in by degrees; as the night gradually ceases, and gives place to the increasing day which succeeds in its room. First the daystar arises; next follows the light of the

sun itself, but dimly reflected, in the dawning of the day; but this light increases, and shines more and more, and the stars that serve for light during the foregoing night, gradually go out, and their light ceases, as being now needless, till at length the sun rises, and enlightens the world by his own direct light, which increases as he ascends higher above the horizon, till the day-star itself gradually disappears; agreeable to what John says of himself,

“He must increase, but I must decrease.” (~~John~~ John 3:30)

John was the forerunner of Christ, and harbinger of the gospel-day; much as the morning-star is the forerunner of the sun. He had the most honourable office of any of the prophets; the other prophets foretold Christ to come, he revealed him as already come, and had the honour to be that servant who should come immediately before him, and actually introduce him, and even to be the instrument concerned in his solemn inauguration, as he was baptizing him. He was the greatest of the prophets that came before Christ, as the morning star is the brightest of all the stars, ~~Matthew~~ Matthew 11:11. He came to prepare men’s hearts to receive that kingdom of God which Christ was about more fully to reveal and erect. ~~Luke~~ Luke 1:17. “To make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”

Secondly, We may observe wherein his success appeared, viz. in that since he began his ministry, every man pressed into that kingdom of God which he preached. The greatness of his success appeared in two things:

**1.** In the generalness of it, with regard to the subject, or the persons in whom the success appeared; every man. Here is a term of universality; but it is not to be taken as universal with regard to individuals, but kinds; as such universal terms are often used in Scripture. When John preached, there was an extraordinary pouring out of the Spirit of God that attended his preaching. An uncommon awakening, and concern for salvation, appeared on the minds of all sorts of persons; and even in the most unlikely persons, and those from whom such a thing might least be expected; as the Pharisees, who were exceeding proud, and self-sufficient, and conceited of their own wisdom and righteousness, and looked on themselves fit to be teachers of others, and used to scorn to be taught; and the Sadducees, who were a kind of infidels, that denied any resurrection, angel, or spirit, or any future state. So that John himself seems to be

surprised to see them come to him, under such concern for their salvation; as in **◀HID** Matthew 3:7.

“But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?”

And besides these, the publicans, who were some of the most infamous sort of men, came to him, inquiring what they should do to be saved. And the soldiers, who were doubtless a very profane, loose, and profligate sort of persons, made the same inquiry, **◀HID** Luke 3:12, and 14. “Then came also publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do? And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do?”

**2.** His success appeared in the manner in which his hearers sought the kingdom of God; they pressed into it. It is elsewhere set forth by their being violent for the kingdom of heaven, and taking it by force.

**◀HID** Matthew 11:12. “From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.”

The DOCTRINE that I observe from the words is this. — “It concerns every one that would obtain the kingdom of God, to be pressing into it.” — In discoursing on this subject, I would,

**First**, Show what is that way of seeking salvation that seems to be pointed forth in the expression of pressing into the kingdom of God.

**Secondly**, Give the reasons why it concerns every one that would obtain the kingdom of God, to seek it in this way. — And then make application.

**I.** I would show what manner of seeking salvation seems to be denoted by “pressing into the kingdom of God.”

**1.** This expression denotes strength of desire. Men in general who live under the light of the gospel, and are not atheists, desire the kingdom of God; that is, they desire to go to heaven rather than to hell. Most of them indeed are not much concerned about it; but on the contrary, live a secure and careless life. And some who are many degrees above these, being under some degrees of the awakenings of God’s Spirit, yet are not pressing into

the kingdom of God. But they that may be said to be truly so, have strong desires to get out of a natural condition, and to get an interest in Christ. They have such a conviction of the misery of their present state, and of the extreme necessity of obtaining a better, that their minds are as it were possessed with and wrapped up in concern about it. To obtain salvation is desired by them above all things in the world. This concern is so great that it very much shuts out other concerns. They used before to have the stream of their desires after other things, or, it may be, had their concern divided between this and them; but when they come to answer the expression in the text, of pressing into the kingdom of God, this concern prevails above all others; it lays other things low, and does in a manner engross the care of the mind. This seeking eternal life should not only be one concern that our souls are taken up about with other things; but salvation should be sought as the one thing needful, ~~<CIC>~~ Luke 10:42. And as the one thing that is desired, ~~<CIC>~~ Psalm 27:4.

**2.** Pressing into the kingdom of heaven denotes earnestness and firmness of resolution. There should be strength of resolution, accompanying strength of desire, as it was in the psalmist, in the place just now referred to; “one thing have I desired, and that will I seek after.” In order to a thorough engagedness of the mind in this affair, both these must meet together. Besides desires after salvation, there should be an earnest resolution in persons to pursue this good as much as lies in their power; to do all that in the use of their utmost strength they are able to do, in an attendance on every duty, and resisting and militating against all manner of sin, and to continue in such a pursuit.

There are two things needful in a person, in order to these strong resolutions; there must be a sense of the great importance and necessity of the mercy sought, and there must also be a sense of opportunity to obtain it, or the encouragement there is to seek it. The strength of resolution depends on the sense which God gives to the heart of these things. Persons without such a sense, may seem to themselves to take up resolutions; they may, as it were, force a promise to themselves, and say within themselves, “I will seek as long as I live, I will not give up till I obtain,” when they do but deceive themselves. Their hearts are not in it; neither do they indeed take up any such resolution as they seem to themselves to do. It is resolution of the mouth more than of the heart; their

hearts are not strongly bent to fulfil what their mouth says. The firmness of resolution lies in the fulness of the disposition of the heart to do what is resolved to be done. Those who are pressing into the kingdom of God, have a disposition of heart to do every thing that is required, and that lies in their power to do, and to continue in it. They have not only earnestness, but steadiness of resolution: they do not seek with a wavering unsteady heart, by turns or fits, being off and on; but it is the constant bent of the soul, if possible, to obtain the kingdom of God.

**3.** By pressing into the kingdom of God is signified greatness of endeavour. It is expressed in <sup>2000</sup>Ecclesiastes 9:10. by doing what our hand finds to do with our might. And this is the natural and necessary consequence of the two forementioned things. Where there is strength of desire, and firmness of resolution, there will be answerable endeavours. Persons thus engaged in their hearts will “strive to enter in at the strait gate,” and will be violent for heaven; their practice will be agreeable to the counsel of the wise man, in Proverbs 2 at the beginning, “My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; so that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.” Here the earnestness of desire and strength of resolution is signified by inclining the ear to wisdom, and applying the heart to understanding; and the greatness of endeavour is denoted by crying after knowledge, and lifting up the voice for understanding; seeking her as silver, and searching for her as for hid treasures: such desires and resolutions, and such endeavours, go together.

**4.** Pressing into the kingdom of God denotes an engagedness and earnestness, that is directly about that business of getting into the kingdom of God. Persons may be in very great exercise and distress of mind, and that about the condition of their souls; their thoughts and cares may be greatly engaged and taken up about things of a spiritual nature, and yet not be pressing into the kingdom of God, nor towards it. The exercise of their minds is not directly about the work of seeking salvation, in a diligent attendance on the means that God hath appointed in order to it, but something else that is beside their business; it may be about God’s decrees

and secret purposes, prying into them, searching for signs whereby they may determine, or at least conjecture, what they are before God makes them known by their accomplishment. They distress their minds with fears that they be not elected, or that they have committed the unpardonable sin, or that their day is past, and that God has given them up to judicial and final hardness, and never intends to show them mercy; and therefore, that it is in vain for them to seek salvation. Or they entangle themselves about the doctrine of original sin, and other mysterious doctrines of religion that are above their comprehension. Many persons that seem to be in great distress about a future eternal state, get much into a way of perplexing themselves with such things as these. When it is so, let them be never so much concerned and engaged in their minds, they cannot be said to be pressing towards the kingdom of God; because their exercise is not in their work, but rather that which tends to hinder them in their work. If they are violent, they are only working violently to entangle themselves, and lay blocks in their own way; their pressure is not forwards. Instead of getting along, they do but lose their time, and worse than merely lose it; instead of fighting with the giants that stand in the way to keep them out of Canaan, they spend away their time and strength in conflicting with shadows that appear by the way-side.

Hence we are not to judge of the hopefulness of the way that persons are in, or of the probability of their success in seeking salvation, only by the greatness of the concern and distress that they are in; for many persons have needless distresses that they had much better be without. It is thus very often with persons overrun with the distemper of melancholy; whence the adversary of souls is wont to take great advantage. But then are persons in the most likely way to obtain the kingdom of heaven, when the intent of their minds, and the engagedness of their spirits, is about their proper work and business, and all the bent of their souls is to attend on God's means, and to do what he commands and directs them to. The apostle tells us,

“that he did not fight as those that beat the air.”

( 1 Corinthians 9:26)

Our time is short enough; we had not need to spend it in that which is nothing to the purpose. There are real difficulties and enemies enough for

persons to encounter, to employ all their strength; they had not need to waste it in fighting with phantoms.

**5.** By pressing into the kingdom of God is denoted a breaking through opposition and difficulties. There is in the expression a plain intimation of difficulty. If there were no opposition, but the way was all clear and open, there would be no need of pressing to get along. They therefore that are pressing into the kingdom of God, go on with such engagedness, that they break through the difficulties that are in their way. They are so set for salvation, that those things by which others are discouraged, and stopped, and turned back, do not stop them, but they press through them. Persons ought to be so resolved for heaven, that if by any means they can obtain, they will obtain. Whether those means be difficult or easy, cross or agreeable, if they are requisite means of salvation, they should be complied with. When any thing is presented to be done, the question should not be, Is it easy or hard? is it agreeable to my carnal inclinations or interest, or against them? But is it a required means of my obtaining an interest in Jesus Christ, and eternal salvation? Thus the apostle, ~~508~~ Philippians 3:2. “If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.” He tells us there in the context what difficulties he broke through, that he suffered the loss of all things, and was willingly made conformable even to Christ’s death, though that was attended with such extreme torment and ignominy.

He that is pressing into the kingdom of God, commonly finds many things in the way that are against the grain; but he is not stopped by the cross that lies before him, but takes it up, and carries it. Suppose there be something incumbent on him to do, that is cross to his natural temper, and irksome to him on that account; suppose something that he cannot do without suffering in his estate, or that he apprehends will look odd and strange in the eyes of others, and expose him to ridicule and reproach, or any thing that will offend a neighbour, and get his ill-will, or something that will be very cross to his own carnal appetite — he will press through such difficulties. Every thing that is found to be a weight that hinders him in running this race he casts from him, though it be a weight of gold or pearls; yea, if it be a right hand or foot that offends him, he will cut them off, and will not stick at plucking out a right eye with his own hands. These things are insuperable difficulties to those who are not thoroughly engaged in seeking their salvation; they are stumbling-blocks that they

never get overse But it is not so with him that presses into the kingdom of God. Those things (before he was thoroughly roused from his security) about which he was wont to have long parleyings and disputings with his own conscience — employing carnal reason to invent arguments and pleas of excuse — he now sticks at no longer; he has done with this endless disputing and reasoning, and presses violently through all difficulties. Let what will be in the way, heaven is what he must and will obtain, not if he can without difficulty, but if it be possible. He meets with temptation: the devil is often whispering in his ear, setting allurements before him, magnifying the difficulties of the work he is engaged in, telling him that they are insuperable, and that he can never conquer them, and trying all ways in the world to discourage him; but still he presses forward. God has given and maintains such an earnest spirit for heaven, that the devil cannot stop him in his course; he is not at leisure to lend an ear to what he has to say. — I come now,

**II.** To show why the kingdom of heaven should be sought in this manner. — It should be thus sought,

**1.** On account of the extreme necessity we are in of getting into the kingdom of heaven. We are in a perishing necessity of it; without it we are utterly and eternally lost. Out of the kingdom of God is no safety; there is no other hiding-place; this is the only city of refuge, in which we can be secure from the avenger that pursues all the ungodly. The vengeance of God will pursue, overtake, and eternally destroy, them that are not in this kingdom. All that are without this enclosure will be swallowed up in an overflowing fiery deluge of wrath. They may stand at the door and knock, and cry, Lord, Lord, open to us, in vain; they will be thrust back; and God will have no mercy on them; they shall be eternally left of him. His fearful vengeance will seize them; the devils will lay hold of them; and all evil come upon them; and there will be none to pity or help; their case will be utterly desperate, and infinitely doleful. It will be a gone case with them; all offers of mercy and expressions of divine goodness will be finally withdrawn, and all hope will be lost. God will have no kind of regard to their well-being; will take no care of them to save them from any enemy, or any evil; but himself will be their dreadful enemy, and will execute wrath with fury, and will take vengeance in an inexpressibly dreadful manner. Such as shall be in this case will be lost and undone indeed! They

will be sunk down into perdition, infinitely below all that we can think. For who knows the power of God's anger? And who knows the misery of that poor worm, on whom that anger is executed without mercy?

**2.** On account of the shortness and uncertainty of the opportunity for getting into this kingdom. When a few days are past, all our opportunity for it will be gone. Our day is limited. God has set our bounds, and we know not where. While persons are out of this kingdom, they are in danger every hour of being overtaken with wrath. We know not how soon we shall get past that line, beyond which there is no work, device, knowledge, nor wisdom; and therefore we should do what we have to do with our might, <sup><1010></sup>Ecclesiastes 9:10.

**3.** On account of the difficulty of getting into the kingdom of God. There are innumerable difficulties in the way, such as few conquer; most of them that try have not resolution, courage, earnestness, and constancy enough; but they fail, give up, and perish. The difficulties are too many and too great for them that do not violently press forward. They never get along, but stick by the way; are turned aside, or turned back, and ruined. <sup><1014></sup>Matthew 7:14. "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." <sup><10134></sup>Luke 13:24. "Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able."

**4.** The possibility of obtaining. Though it be attended with so much difficulty, yet it is not a thing impossible. <sup><4182></sup>Acts 8:22. "If perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee." <sup><10125></sup>2 Timothy 2:25. "If peradventure God will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth." However sinful a person is, and whatever his circumstances are, there is, notwithstanding a possibility of his salvation. He himself is capable of it, and God is able to accomplish it, and has mercy sufficient for it; and there is sufficient provision made through Christ, that God may do it consistent with the honour of his majesty, justice, and truth. So that there is no want either of sufficiency in God, or capacity in the sinner, in order to this. The greatest and vilest, most blind, dead, hard-hearted sinner living, is a subject capable of saving light and grace. Seeing therefore there is such necessity of obtaining the kingdom of God, and so short a time,

and such difficulty, and yet such a possibility, it may well induce us to press into it. ~~xxx~~ Jonah 3:8, 9.

**5.** It is meet that the kingdom of heaven should be thus sought, because of the great excellency of it. We are willing to seek earthly things, of trifling value, with great diligence, and through much difficulty; it therefore certainly becomes us to seek that with great earnestness which is of infinitely greater worth and excellence. And how well may God expect and require it of us, that we should seek it in such a manner, in order to our obtaining it!

**6.** Such a manner of seeking is needful to prepare persons for the kingdom of God. Such earnestness and thoroughness of endeavours, is the ordinary means that God makes use of to bring persons to an acquaintance with themselves, to a sight of their own hearts, to a sense of their own helplessness, and to a despair in their own strength and righteousness. And such engagedness and constancy in seeking the kingdom of heaven, prepare the soul to receive it the more joyfully and thankfully, and the more highly to prize and value it when obtained. So that it is in mercy to us, as well as for the glory of his own name, that God has appointed such earnest seeking, to be the way in which he will bestow the kingdom of heaven.

## APPLICATION

The use I would make of this doctrine, is of exhortation to all Christless persons to press into the kingdom of God. Some of you are inquiring what you shall do? You seem to desire to know what is the way wherein salvation is to be sought, and how you may be likely to obtain it. You have now heard the way that the holy word directs to. Some are seeking, but it cannot be said of them that they are pressing into the kingdom of heaven. There are many that in time past have sought salvation, but not in this manner, and so they never obtained, but are now gone to hell. Some of them sought it year after year, but failed of it, and perished at last. They were overtaken with divine wrath, and are now suffering the fearful misery of damnation, and have no rest day or night, having no more opportunity to seek, but must suffer and be miserable throughout the never-ending ages

of eternity. Be exhorted, therefore, not to seek salvation as they did, but let the kingdom of heaven suffer violence from you.

Here I would first answer an objection or two, and then proceed to give some directions how to press into the kingdom of God.

**Object 1.** Some may be ready to say, We cannot do this of ourselves; that strength of desire, and firmness of resolution, that have been spoken of, are out of our reach. If I endeavour to resolve and to seek with engagedness of spirit, I find I fail; my thoughts are presently off from the business, and I feel myself dull, and my engagedness relaxed, in spite of all I can do.

**Ans. 1.** Though earnestness of mind be not immediately in your power, yet the consideration of what has been now said of the need of it, may be a means of stirring you up to it. It is true, persons never will be thoroughly engaged in this business, unless it be by God's influence; but God influences persons by means. Persons are not stirred up to a thorough earnestness without some considerations that move them to it. And if persons can but be made sensible of the necessity of salvation, and also duly consider the exceeding difficulty of it, and the greatness of the opposition, and how short and uncertain the time is, but yet are sensible that they have an opportunity, and that there is a possibility of their obtaining, they will need no more in order to their being thoroughly engaged and resolved in this matter. If we see persons slack and unresolved, and unsteady, it is because they do not enough consider these things.

**2.** Though strong desires and resolutions of mind be not in your power, yet painfulness of endeavours is in your power. It is in your power to take pains in the use of means, yea very great pains. You can be very painful and diligent in watching your own heart, and striving against sin. Though there is all manner of corruption in the heart continually ready to work, yet you can very laboriously watch and strive against these corruptions; and it is in your power, with great diligence to attend the matter of your duty towards God and towards your neighbour. It is in your power to attend all ordinances, and all public and private duties of religion, and to do it with your might. It would be a contradiction to suppose that a man cannot do these things with all the might he has,

though he cannot do them with more might than he has. The dulness and deadness of the heart, and slothfulness of disposition, do not hinder men being able to take pains, though it hinders their being willing. That is one thing wherein your laboriousness may appear, even striving against your own dulness. That men have a dead and sluggish heart, does not argue that they be not able to take pains; it is so far from that, that it gives occasion for pains. It is one of the difficulties in the way of duty, that persons have to strive with, and that gives occasion for struggling and labour. If there were no difficulties attended seeking salvation, there would be no occasion for striving; a man would have nothing to strive about. There is indeed a great deal of difficulty attending all duties required of those that would obtain heaven. It is an exceeding difficult thing for them to keep their thoughts; it is a difficult thing seriously, or to any good purpose, to consider matters of the greatest importance; it is a difficult thing to hear, or read, or pray attentively. But it does not argue that a man cannot strive in these things because they are difficult; nay, he could not strive therein if there were not difficulty in them. For what is there excepting difficulties that any can have to strive or struggle with in any affair or business? Earnestness of mind, and diligence of endeavour, tend to promote each other. He that has a heart earnestly engaged, will take pains; and he that is diligent and painful in all duty, probably will not be so long before he finds the sensibleness of his heart and earnestness of his spirit greatly increased.

**Object. 2.** Some may object, that if they are earnest, and take a great deal of pains, they shall be in danger of trusting to what they do; they are afraid of doing their duty for fear of making a righteousness of it.

**Ans.** There is ordinarily no kind of seekers that trust so much to what they do, as slack and dull seekers. Though all seeking salvation, that have never been the subjects of a thorough humiliation, do trust in their own righteousness; yet some do it much more fully than others. Some though they trust in their own righteousness, yet are not quiet in it. And those who are most disturbed in their self-confidence, (and therefore in the likeliest way to be wholly brought off from it,) are not such as go on in a remiss way of seeking, but such as are most earnest and thoroughly engaged; partly because in such a way conscience is kept more sensible. A more awakened conscience will not rest so quietly in moral and religious duties, as one that is less awakened. A dull seeker's conscience will be in a

great measure satisfied and quieted with his own works and performances; but one that is thoroughly awakened cannot be stilled or pacified with such things as these. In this way persons gain much more knowledge of themselves, and acquaintance with their own hearts, than in a negligent, slight way of seeking; for they have a great deal more experience of themselves. It is experience of ourselves, and finding what we are, that God commonly makes use of as the means of bringing us off from all dependence on ourselves. But men never get acquaintance with themselves so fast, as in the most earnest way of seeking. They that are in this way have more to engage them to think of their sins, and strictly to observe themselves, and have much more to do with their own hearts, than others. Such a one has much more experience of his own weakness, than another that does not put forth and try his strength; and will therefore sooner see himself dead in sin. Such a one, though he hath a disposition continually to be flying to his own righteousness, yet finds rest in nothing; he wanders about from one thing to another, seeking something to ease his disquieted conscience; he is driven from one refuge to another, goes from mountain to hill, seeking rest and finding none; and therefore will the sooner prove that there is no rest to be found, nor trust to be put, in any creature whatsoever.

It is therefore quite a wrong notion that some entertain, that the more they do, the more they shall depend on it. Whereas the rever. is true; the more they do, or the more thorough they are in seeking, the less will they be likely to rest in their doings, and the sooner will they see the vanity of all that they do. So that persons will exceedingly miss it, if ever they neglect to do any duty either to God or man, whether it be any duty of religion, justice, or charity, under a notion of its exposing them to trust in their own righteousness. It is very true, that it is a common thing for persons, when they earnestly seek salvation, to trust in the pains that they take: but yet commonly those that go on in a more slight way, trust a great deal more securely to their dull services, than he that is pressing into the kingdom of God does to his earnestness. Men's slackness in religion, and their trust in their own righteousness, strengthen and establish one another. Their trust in what they have done, and what they now do, settles them in a slothful rest and ease, and hinders their being sensible of their need of rousing up themselves and pressing forward. And on the other hand, their negligence

tends so to benumb them, and keep them in such ignorance of themselves, that the most miserable refuges are stupidly rested in as sufficient. Therefore we see, that when persons have been going on for a long time in such a way, and God afterwards comes more thoroughly to awaken them, and to stir them up to be in good earnest, he shakes all their old foundations, and rouses them out of their old resting-places; so that they cannot quiet themselves with those things that formerly kept them secure.

I would now proceed to give some directions how you should press into the kingdom of God.

**1.** Be directed to sacrifice every thing to your soul's eternal interest. Let seeking this be so much your bent, and what you are so resolved in, that you will make every thing give place to it. Let nothing stand before your resolution of seeking the kingdom of God. Whatever it be that you used to look upon as a convenience, or comfort, or ease, or thing desirable on any account, if it stands in the way of this great concert, let it be dismissed without hesitation; and if it be of that nature that it is likely always to be a hinderance, then wholly have done with it, and never entertain any expectation from it more. If in time past you have, for the sake of worldly gain, involved yourself in more care and business than you find to be consistent with your being so thorough in the business of religion as you ought to be, then get into some other way, though you suffer in your worldly interest by it. Or if you have heretofore been conversant with company that you have reason to think have been and will be a snare to you, and a hinderance to this great design in any wise, break off from their society, however it may expose you to reproach from your old companions, or let what will be the effect of it. Whatever it be that stands in the way of your most advantageously seeking salvation — whether it be some dear sinful pleasure, or strong carnal appetite, or credit and honour, or the goodwill of some persons whose friendship you desire, and whose esteem and liking you have highly valued — and though there be danger, if you do as you ought, that you shall be looked upon by them as odd and ridiculous, and become contemptible in their eyes — or if it be your ease and indolence, and aversion to continual labour; or your outward convenience in any respect, whereby you might avoid difficulties of one kind or other — let all go; offer up all such things together, as it were, in one sacrifice, to the interest of your soul. Let nothing stand in competition

with this, but make every thing to fall before it. If the flesh must be crossed, then cross it, spare it not, crucify it, and do not be afraid of being too cruel to it.

“They that are Christ’s, have crucified the flesh,  
with the affections and lusts.” ( ~~8124~~ Galatians 5:24)

Have no dependence on any worldly enjoyment whatsoever. Let salvation be the one thing with you. This is what is certainly required of you: and this is what many stick at; this giving up other things for salvation, is a stumbling-block that few get over. While others pressed into the kingdom of God at the preaching of John the Baptist, Herod was pretty much stirred up by his preaching. It is said, he heard him, and observed him, and did many things; but when he came to tell him that he must part with his beloved Herodias, here he stuck; this he never would yield to, ~~4178~~ Mark 7:18-20. The rich young man was considerably concerned for salvation; and accordingly was a very strict liver in many things: but when Christ came to direct him to go and sell all that he had, and give to the poor, and come and follow him, he could not find in his heart to comply with it, but went away sorrowful. He had great possessions, and set his heart much on his estate, and could not bear to part with it. It may be, if Christ had directed him only to give away a considerable part of his estate, he would have done it; yea, perhaps, if he had bid him part with half of it, he would have complied with it: but when he directed him to throw up all, he could not grapple with such a proposal. Herein the straitness of the gate very much consists; and it is on this account that so many seek to enter in, and are not able. There are many that have a great mind to salvation, and spend part of their time in wishing that they had it, but they will not comply with the necessary means.

**2.** Be directed to forget the things that are behind; that is, not to keep thinking and making much of what you have done, but let your mind be wholly intent on what you have to do. In some sense you ought to look back; you should look back on your sins.

“See thy way in the valley, know what thou hast done.”  
( ~~2423~~ Jeremiah 2:23.)

You should look back on the wretchedness of your religious performances, and consider how you have fallen short in them; how exceedingly polluted all your duties have been, and how justly God might reject and loathe them, and you for them. But you ought not to spend your time in looking back, as many persons do, thinking how much they have done for their salvation; what great pains they have taken, how that they have done what they can, and do not see how they can do more; how long a time they have been seeking, and how much more they have done than others, and even than such and such who have obtained mercy. They think with themselves how hardly God deals with them, that he does not extend mercy to them, but turns a deaf ear to their cries; and hence discourage themselves, and complain of God. Do not thus spend your time in looking on what is past, but look forward, and consider what is before you; consider what it is that you can do, and what it is necessary that you should do, and what God calls you still to do, in order to your own salvation. The apostle, in the 3rd chapter to the Philippians, tells us what things he did while a Jew, how much he had to boast of, if any could boast; but he tells us, that he forgot those things, and all others that were behind, and reached forth towards the things that were before, pressing forwards towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

**3.** Labour to get your heart thoroughly disposed to go on and hold out to the end. Many that seem to be earnest have not a heart thus disposed. It is a common thing for persons to appear greatly affected for a little while; but all is soon past away, and there is no more to be seen of it. Labour therefore to obtain a thorough willingness and preparation of spirit, to continue seeking, in the use of your utmost endeavours, without limitation; and do not think your whole life too long. And in order to this, be advised to two things.

**(1.)** Remember that if ever God bestows a mercy upon you, he will use his sovereign pleasure about the time when. He will bestow it on some in a little time, and on others not till they have sought it long. If other persons are soon enlightened and comforted, while you remain long in darkness, there is no other way but for you to wait. God will act arbitrarily in this matter, and you cannot help it. You must even be content to wait, in a way of laborious and earnest striving, till his time comes. If you refuse, you will but undo yourself; and when you shall

hereafter find yourself undone, and see that your case is past remedy, how will you condemn yourself for foregoing a great probability of salvation, only because you had not patience to hold out, and were not willing to be at the trouble of a persevering labour! And what will it avail before God or your own conscience to say that you could not bear to be obliged to seek salvation so long, when God bestowed it on others that sought it but for a very short time? Though God may have bestowed the testimonies of his favour on others in a few days or hours after they have begun earnestly to seek it, how does that alter the case as to you, if there proves to be a necessity of your laboriously seeking many years before you obtain them? Is salvation less worth taking a great deal of pains for, because, through the sovereign pleasure of God, others have obtained it with comparatively little pains? If there are two persons, the one of which has obtained converting grace with comparative ease, and another that has obtained it after continuing for many years in the greatest of most earnest labours after it, how little difference does it make at last, when once salvation is obtained! Put all the labour and pains, the long-continued difficulties and strugglings, of the one in the scale against salvation, and how little does it subtract; and put the ease with which the other has obtained in the scale with salvation, and how little does it add! What is either added or subtracted is lighter than vanity, and a thing worthy of no consideration, when compared with that infinite benefit that is obtained. Indeed if you were ten thousand years, and all that time should strive and press forward with as great earnestness as ever a person did for one day, all this would bear no proportion to the importance of the benefit; and it will doubtless appear little to you, when once you come to be in actual possession of eternal glory, and to see what that eternal misery is which you have escaped. You must not think much of your pains, and of the length of time; you must press towards the kingdom of God, and do your utmost to hold out to the end, and learn to make no account of it when you have done. You must undertake the business of seeking salvation upon these terms, and with no other expectations than this, that if ever God bestows mercy it will be in his own time; and not only so, but also that when you have done all, God will not hold himself obliged to show you mercy at last.

(2.) Endeavour now thoroughly to weigh in your mind the difficulty, and to count the cost of perseverance in seeking salvation. You that are now setting out in this business, (as there are many here who have very lately set about it; — Praised be the name of God that he has stirred you up to it!) be exhorted to attend this direction. Do not undertake in this affair with any other thought but of giving yourself wholly to it for the remaining part of your life, and going through many and great difficulties in it. Take heed that you do not engage secretly upon this condition, that you shall obtain in a little time, promising yourself that it shall be within this present season of the pouring out of God's Spirit, or with any other limitation of time whatsoever. Many, when they begin, (seeming to set out very earnestly,) do not expect that they shall need to seek very long, and so do not prepare themselves for it. And therefore, when they come to find it otherwise, and meet with unexpected difficulty, they are found unguarded, and easily overthrown. But let me advise you all who are now seeking salvation, not to entertain any self-flattering thoughts; but weigh the utmost difficulties of perseverance, and be provided for them, having your mind fixed in it to go through them, let them be what they will. Consider now beforehand, how tedious it would be, with utmost earnestness and labour, to strive after salvation for many years, in the mean time receiving no joyful or comfortable evidence of your having obtained. Consider what a great temptation to discouragement there probably would be in it; how apt you would be to yield the case; how ready to think that it is in vain for you to seek any longer, and that God never intends to show you mercy, in that he has not yet done it; how apt you would be to think with yourself, "What an uncomfortable life do I live! how much more unpleasantly do I spend my time than others that do not perplex their minds about the things of another world, but are at ease, and take the comfort of their worldly enjoyments!" Consider what a temptation there would probably be in it, if you saw others brought in that began to seek the kingdom of heaven long after you, rejoicing in a hope and sense of God's favour, after but little pains and a short time of awakening; while you, from day to day, and from year to year, seemed to labour in vain. Prepare for such temptations now. Lay in beforehand for such

trials and difficulties, that you may not think any strange thing has happened when they come.

I hope that those who have given attention to what has been said, have by this time conceived, in some measure, what is signified by the expression in the text, and after what manner they ought to press into the kingdom of God. Here is this to induce you to a compliance with what you have been directed to; if you sit still, you die; if you go backward, behold you shall surely die; if you go forward, you may live. And though God has not bound himself to any thing that a person does while destitute of faith, and out of Christ, yet there is great probability that in a way of hearkening to this counsel you will live; and that by pressing onward, and persevering, you will at last, as it were by violence, take the kingdom of heaven. Those of you who have not only heard the directions given, but shall through God's merciful assistance, practice according to them, are those that probably will overcome. These we may well hope at last to see standing with the Lamb on mount Sion, clothed in white robes, with palms in their hands; when all your labour and toil will be abundantly compensated, and you will not repent that you have taken so much pains, and denied yourself so much, and waited so long. This self-denial, this waiting, will then look little, and vanish into nothing in your eyes, being all swallowed up in the first minute's enjoyment of that glory that you will then possess, and will uninterruptedly possess and enjoy to all eternity.

4th direction. Improve the present season of the pouring out of the Spirit of God on this town. Prudence in any affair whatsoever consists very much in minding and improving our opportunities. If you would have spiritual prosperity, you must exercise prudence in the concerns of your souls, as well as in outward concerns when you seek outward prosperity. The prudent husband-man will observe his opportunities; he will improve seed-time and harvest; he will make his advantage of the showers and shines of heaven. The prudent merchant will discern his opportunities; he will not be idle on a market-day; he is careful not to let slip his seasons for enriching himself: So will those who prudently seek the fruits of righteousness, and the merchandise of wisdom, improve their opportunities for their eternal wealth and happiness.

God is pleased at this time, in a very remarkable manner, to pour out his Spirit amongst us; (glory be to his name!) You that have a mind to obtain converting grace, and to go to heaven when you die, now is your season! Now, if you have any sort of prudence for your own salvation, and have not a mind to go to hell, improve this season! Now is the accepted time. Now is the day of salvation! You that in time past have been called upon, and have turned a deaf ear to God's voice, and long stood out and resisted his commands and counsels, hear God's voice to-day, while it is called to day! Do not harden your hearts at such a day as this! Now you have a special and remarkable price put into your hands to get wisdom, if you have but a heart to improve it.

God hath his certain days or appointed seasons of exercising both mercy and judgment. There are some remarkable times of wrath, laid out by God for his awful visitation, and the executions of his anger; which times are called days of vengeance, <sup><215></sup>Proverbs 6:34. Wherein God will visit for sin, <sup><123></sup>Exodus 32:34. And so, on the contrary, God has laid out in his sovereign counsels seasons of remarkable mercy, wherein he will manifest himself in the exercises of his grace and loving-kindness, more than at other times. Such times in Scripture are called by way of eminency, accepted times, and days of salvation, and also days of God's visitation; because they are days wherein God will visit in a way of mercy; as <sup><124></sup>Luke 19:44.

“And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children with thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.”

It is such a time now in this town; it is with us a day of God's gracious visitation. It is indeed a day of grace with us as long as we live in this world, in the enjoyment of the means of grace; but such a time as this is especially, and in a distinguishing manner, a day of grace. There is a door of mercy always standing open for sinners; but at such a day as this, God opens an extraordinary door.

We are directed to seek the Lord while he may be found, and to call upon him while he is near, <sup><251></sup>Isaiah 55:6. If you that are hitherto Christless, be not strangely besotted and infatuated, you will by all means improve such an opportunity as this to get heaven, when heaven is brought so near, when the fountain is opened in the midst of us in so extraordinary a

manner. Now is the time to obtain a supply of the necessities of your poor perishing souls! This is the way for sinners that have a mind to be converted before they die, when God is dealing forth so liberally and bountifully amongst us; when conversion and salvation work is going on amongst us from sabbath to sabbath, and many are pressing into the kingdom of God! Now do not stay behind, but press in amongst the rest! Others have been stirred up to be in good earnest, and have taken heaven by violence; be entreated to follow their example, if you would have a part of the inheritance with them, and would not be left at the great day, when they are taken!

How should it move you to consider that you have this opportunity now in your hands! You are in the actual possession of it! If it were past, it would not be in your power to recover it, or in the power of any creature to bring it back for you; but it is not past; it is now, at this day. Now is the accepted time, even while it is called to-day! Will you sit still at such a time? Will you sleep in such a harvest? Will you deal with a slack hand, and stay behind out of mere sloth, or love to some lust, or lothness to grapple with some small difficulty, or to put yourself a little out of your way, when so many are flowing to the goodness of the Lord? You are behind still; and so you will be in danger of being left behind, when the whole number is completed that are to enter in, if you do not earnestly bestir yourself! To be left behind at the close of such a season as this, will be awful — next to being left behind on that day when God's saints shall mount up as with wings to meet the Lord in the air — and will be what will appear very threatening of it.

God is now calling you in an extraordinary manner: and it is agreeable to the will and word of Christ, that I should now, in his name, call you, as one set over you, and sent to you to that end; so it is his will that you should hearken to what I say, as his voice. I therefore beseech you in Christ's stead now to press into the kingdom of God! Whoever you are, whether young or old, small or great; if you are a great sinner, if you have been a backslider, if you have quenched the Spirit, be who you will, do not stand making objections, but arise, apply yourself to your work! Do what you have to do with your might. Christ is calling you before, and holding forth his grace, and everlasting benefits, and wrath is pursuing you behind; wherefore fly for your life, and look not behind you!

But here I would particularly direct myself to several sorts of persons.

**I.** To those sinners who are in a measure awakened, and are concerned for their salvation. You have reason to be glad that you have such an opportunity, and to prize it above gold. To induce you to prize and improve it, consider several things.

**1.** God has doubtless a design now to deal forth saving blessings to a number. God has done it to some already, and it is not probable that he has yet finished his work amongst us: we may well hope still to see others brought out of darkness into marvellous light. And therefore,

**2.** God comes this day, and knocks at many persons' doors, and at your door among the rest. God seems to be come in a very unusual manner amongst us, upon a gracious and merciful design; a design of saving a number of poor miserable souls out of a lost and perishing condition, and of bringing them into a happy state and eternal glory! This is offered to you, not only as it has always been in the word and ordinances, but by the particular influences of the Spirit of Christ awakening you! This special offer is made to many amongst us; and you are not passed over. Christ has not forgot you; but has come to your door; and there as it were stands waiting for you to open to him. If you have wisdom and discretion to discern your own advantage, you will know that now is your opportunity.

**3.** How much more easily converting grace is obtained at such a time, than at other times! The work is equally easy with God at all times; but there is far less difficulty in the way as to men at such a time, than at other times. It is, as I said before, a day of God's gracious visitation; a day that he has as it were set apart for the more liberally and bountifully dispensing of his grace; a day wherein God's hand is opened wide. Experience shows it. God seems to be more ready to help, to give proper convictions, to help against temptations, and let in divine light. He seems to carry on his work with a more glorious discovery of his power, and Satan is more chained up than at other times. Those difficulties and temptations that persons before stuck at, from year to year, they are soon helped over. The work of God is carried on with greater speed and swiftness, and there are often instances of sudden conversion at such a time. So it was in the apostles' days, when there was a time of the most extraordinary pouring out of the Spirit that ever was. How quick and sudden were conversions in those

days! Such instances as that of the jailer abounded then, in fulfilment of that prophecy, <sup><2800></sup>Isaiah 66:7, 8. “Before she travailed, she brought forth: before her pain came, she was delivered of a man-child. Who hath heard such a thing? Who hath seen such things? For as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children.” So it is in some degree, whenever there is an extraordinary pouring out of the Spirit of God; more or less so, in proportion to the greatness of that effusion. There is seldom such quick work made of it at other times. Persons are not so soon delivered from their various temptations and entanglements, but are much longer wandering in a wilderness, and groping in darkness. And yet,

**4.** There are probably some here present that are now concerned about their salvation, that never will obtain. It is not to be supposed that all that are now moved and awakened will ever be savingly converted. Doubtless there are many now seeking that will not be able to enter. When has it been so in times past, when there has been times of great outpourings of God’s Spirit, but that many who for a while have inquired with others what they should do to be saved, have failed, and afterwards grown hard and secure? All of you that are now awakened have a mind to obtain salvation, and probably hope to get a title to heaven, in the time of this present moving of God’s Spirit: but yet, (though it be awful to be spoken, and awful to be thought,) we have no reason to think any other, than that some of you will burn in hell to all eternity. You all are afraid of hell, and seem at present disposed to take pains to be delivered from it; and yet it would be unreasonable to think any other, than that some of you will have your portion in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone. Though there are so many that seem to obtain so easily, having been but a little while under convictions, yet, for all that, some never will obtain. Some will soon lose the sense of things they now have; though their awakenings seem to be very considerable for the present, they will not hold; they have not hearts disposed to hold on through very many difficulties. Some that have set out for heaven, and hope as much as others to obtain, are indeed but slighty and slack, even now, in the midst of such a time as this. And others, who for the present seem to be more in earnest, will probably, before long, decline and fail, and gradually return to be as they were before. The convictions of some seem to be great, while that which is the occasion of their convictions is new; which, when that begins to grow old, will

gradually decay and wear off Thus, it may be, the occasion of your awakening has been the hearing of the conversion of some person, or seeing so extraordinary a dispensation of Providence as this in which God now appears amongst us; but by and by the newness and freshness of these things will be gone, and so will not affect your mind as now they do; and it may be your convictions will go away with it.

Though this be a time wherein God doth more liberally bestow his grace, and so a time of greater advantage for obtaining it; yet there seems to be, upon some accounts, greater danger of backsliding, than when persons are awakened at other times. For commonly such extraordinary times do not last long; and then when they cease, there are multitudes that lose their convictions as it were together.

We speak of it as a happy thing, that God is pleased to cause such a time amongst us, and so it is indeed: but there are some to whom it will be no benefit; it will be an occasion of their greater misery; they will wish they had never seen this time; it will be more tolerable for those that never saw it, or any thing like it, in the day of judgment, than for them. It is an awful consideration, that there are probably those here, whom the great Judge will hereafter call to a strict account about this very thing, why they no better improved this opportunity, when he set open the fountain of his grace, and so loudly called upon them, and came and strove with them in particular, by the awakening influences of his Spirit; and they will have no good account to give to the Judge, but their mouths will be stopped, and they will stand speechless before him.

You had need therefore to be earnest, and very resolved in this affair, that you may not be one of those who shall thus fail, that you may so fight, as not uncertainly, and so run, as that you may win the prize.

**5.** Consider in what sad circumstances times of extraordinary effusion of God's Spirit commonly leave persons, when they leave them unconverted. They find them in a doleful, because in a natural, condition; but commonly leave them in a much more doleful condition. They are left dreadfully hardened, and with a great increase of guilt, and their souls under a more strong dominion and possession of Satan. And frequently seasons of extraordinary advantage for salvation, when they pass over persons, and they do not improve them, nor receive any good in them, seal their


damnation. As such seasons leave them, God for ever leaves them, and gives them up to judicial hardness. ~~CPH~~ Luke 19:41, 42. “And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.”

**6.** Consider, that it is very uncertain whether you will ever see such another time as this. If there should be such another time. it is very uncertain whether you will live to see it. Many that are now concerned for their salvation amongst us, will probably be in their graves, and it may be in hell, before that time; and if you should miss this opportunity, it may be so with you. And what good will that do you, to have the Spirit of God poured out upon earth, in the place where you once lived, while you are tormented in hell? What will it avail you, that others are crying, What shall I do to be saved? while you are shut up for ever in the bottomless pit, and are wailing and gnashing your teeth in everlasting burnings?

Wherefore improve this opportunity, while God is pouring out his Spirit, and you are on earth, and while you dwell in that place where the Spirit of God is thus poured out, and you yourself have the awakening influences of it, that you may never wail and gnash your teeth in hell, but may sing in heaven for ever, with others that are redeemed from amongst men, and redeemed amongst us.

**7.** If you should see another such time, it will be under far greater disadvantages than now. You will probably then be much older, and will have more hardened your heart; and so will be under less probability of receiving good. Some persons are so hardened in sin, and so left of God, that they can live through such a time as this, and not be much awakened or affected by it; they can stand their ground, and be but little moved. And so it may be with you, by another such time, if there should be another amongst us, and you should live to see it. The case in all probability will be greatly altered with you by that time. If you should continue Christless and graceless till then, you will be much further from the kingdom of God, and much deeper involved in snares and misery; and the devil will probably have a vastly greater advantage against you, to tempt and confound you.

**8.** We do not know but that God is now gathering in his elect, before some great and sore judgment. It has been God's manner before he casts off a visible people, or brings some great and destroying judgments upon them, first to gather in his elect, that they may be secure. So it was before the casting off the Jews from being God's people. There was first a very remarkable pouring out of the Spirit and gathering in of the elect, by the preaching of the apostles and evangelists, as we read in the beginning of the Acts: but after this harvest and its gleanings were over, the rest were blinded, and hardened; the gospel had little success amongst them, and the nation was given up, and cast off from being God's people, and their city and land was destroyed by the Romans in a terrible manner; and they have been cast off by God now for a great many ages, and still remain a hardened and rejected people. So we read in the beginning of the 7th chapter of the Revelations, that God, when about to bring destroying judgments on the earth, first sealed his servants in the forehead. He set his seal upon the hearts of the elect, gave them the saving influences and indwelling of his Spirit, by which they were sealed to the day of redemption.

 Revelation 7:1-3. "And after these things, I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads."

And this may be the case now, that God is about, in a great measure, to forsake this land, and give up this people, and to bring most awful and overwhelming judgments upon it, and that he is now gathering in his elect, to secure them from the calamity. The state of the nation, and of this land, never looked so threatening of such a thing as at this day. The present aspect of things exceedingly threatens vital religion, and even those truths that are especially the foundation of it, out of this land. If it should be so, how awful will the case be with those that shall be left, and not brought in, while God continues the influences of his Spirit, to gather in those that are to be redeemed from amongst us?

**9.** If you neglect the present opportunity, and be finally unbelieving, those that are converted in this time of the pouring out of God's Spirit will rise up in judgment against you. Your neighbours, your relations, acquaintance, or companions that are converted, will that day appear against you. They will not only be taken while you are left, mounting up with joy to meet the Lord in the air — at his right hand with glorious saints and angels, while you are at the left with devils — but how they will rise up in judgment against you. However friendly you have been together, and have taken pleasure in one another's company, and have often familiarly conversed together, they will then surely appear against you. They will rise up as witnesses, and will declare what a precious opportunity you had, and did not improve; how you continued unbelieving, and rejected the offers of a Saviour, when those offers were made in so extraordinary a manner, and when so many others were prevailed upon to accept of Christ; how you was negligent and slack, and did not know the things that belonged to your peace, in that your day. And not only so, but they shall be your judges, as assessors with the great Judge; and as such will appear against you; they will be with the Judge in passing sentence upon you.

“Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world?”

(~~1~~ 1 Corinthians 6:2.)

Christ will admit them to the honour of judging the world with him:

“They shall sit with Christ in his throne,” (~~1~~ Revelation 3:21.)

They shall sit with Christ in his throne of government, and they shall sit with him in his throne of judgment, and shall be judges with him when you are judged, and as such shall condemn you.

**10.** And lastly, You do not know that you shall live through the present time of the pouring out of God's Spirit. You may be taken away in the midst of it, or you may be taken away in the beginning of it; as God in his providence is putting you in mind, by the late instance of death in a young person in the town. God has of late been very awful in his dealings with us, in the repeated deaths of young persons amongst us. This should stir every one up to be in the more haste to press into the kingdom of God, that so you may be safe whenever death comes. This is a blessed season and opportunity; but you do not know how little of it you may have. You

may have much less of it than others; may by death be suddenly snatched away from all advantages that are here enjoyed for the good of souls. Therefore make haste, and escape for thy life. One moment's delay is dangerous; for wrath is pursuing, and divine vengeance hanging over every uncovered person.

Let these considerations move every one to be improving this opportunity, that while others receive saving good, and are made heirs of eternal glory, you may not be left behind, in the same miserable doleful circumstances in which you came into the world, a poor captive to sin and Satan, a lost sheep, a perishing, undone creature, sinking down into everlasting perdition; that you may not be one of them spoken of, <sup>2470</sup>Jeremiah 17:6. "That shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good comes." If you do not improve this opportunity, remember I have told you, you will hereafter lament it; and if you do not lament it in this world, then I will leave it with you to remember it throughout a miserable eternity.

**II.** I would address myself to such as yet remain unawakened. It is an awful thing that there should be any one person remaining secure amongst us at such a time as this; but yet it is to be feared that there are some of this sort. I would here a little expostulate with such persons.

**1.** When do you expect that it will be more likely that you should be awakened and wrought upon than now? You are in a Christless condition; and yet without doubt intend to go to heaven; and therefore intend to be converted some time before you die; but this is not to be expected till you are first awakened, and deeply concerned about the welfare of your soul, and brought earnestly to seek God's converting grace. And when do you intend that this shall be? How do you lay things out in your own mind, or what projection have you about this matter? Is it ever so likely that a person will be awakened, as at such a time as this? How do we see many, who before were secure, now roused out of their sleep, and crying, What shall I do to be saved? But you are yet securer Do you flatter yourself that it will be more likely you should be awakened when it is a dull and dead time? Do you lay matters out thus in your own mind, that though you are senseless when others are generally awakened, that yet you shall be awakened when others are generally senseless? Or do you hope to see

another such time of the pouring out of God's Spirit hereafter? And do you think it will be more likely that you should be wrought upon then, than now? And why do you think so? Is it because then you shall be so much older than you are now, and so that your heart will be grown softer and more tender with age? or because you will then have stood out so much longer against the calls of the gospel, and all means of grace? Do you think it more likely that God will give you the needed influences of his Spirit then, than now, because then you will have provoked him so much more, and your sin and guilt will be so much greater? And do you think it will be any benefit to you, to stand it out through the present season of grace, as proof against the extraordinary means of awakening there are? Do you think that this will be a good preparation for a saving work of the Spirit hereafter?

**2.** What means do you expect to be awakened by? As to the awakening awful things of the word of God, you have had those set before you times without number, in the most moving manner that the dispensers of the word have been capable of. As to particular solemn warnings, directed to those that are in your circumstances, you have had them frequently, and have them now from time to time. Do you expect to be awakened by awful providences? Those also you have lately had, of the most awakening nature, one after another. Do you expect to be moved by the deaths of others? We have lately had repeated instances of these. There have been deaths of old and young: the year has been remarkable for the deaths of young persons in the bloom of life; and some of them very sudden deaths. Will the conversion of others move you? There is indeed scarce any thing that is found to have so great a tendency to stir persons up as this: and this you have been tried with of late in frequent instances; but are hitherto proof against it. Will a general pouring out of the Spirit, and seeing a concern about salvation amongst all sorts of people, do it? This means you now have, but without effect. Yea, you have all these things together; you have the solemn warnings of God's word, and awful instances of death, and the conversion of others, and see a general concern about salvation: but all together do not move you to any great concern about your own precious, immortal, and miserable soul. Therefore consider by what means it is that you expect ever to be awakened.

You have heard that it is probable some who are now awakened, will never obtain salvation; how dark then does it look upon you that- remain stupidly unawakened! Those who are not moved at such a time as this, come to adult age, have reason to fear whether they are not given up to judicial hardness. I do not say they have reason to conclude it, but they have reason to fear it. How dark doth it look upon you, that God comes and knocks at so many persons' doors, and misses yours t that God is giving the strivings of his Spirit so generally amongst us, while you are left senseless!


**3.** Do you expect to obtain salvation without ever seeking it? If you are sensible that there is a necessity of your seeking in order to obtaining, and ever intend to seek, one would think you could not avoid it at such a time as this. Inquire therefore, whether you intend to go to heaven, living all your days a secure, negligent, careless life. — Or,

**4.** Do you think you can bear the damnation of hell? Do you imagine that you can tolerably endure the devouring fire, and everlasting burnings? Do you hope that you shall be able to grapple with the vengeance of God Almighty, when he girds himself with strength, and clothes himself with wrath? Do you think to strengthen yourself against God, and to be able to make your part good with him?

“Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?”

( 1 Corinthians 10:22.)

Do you flatter yourself that you shall find out ways for your ease and support, and to make it out tolerably well, to bear up your spirit in those everlasting burnings that are prepared for the devil and his angels?

 Ezekiel 22:14. “Can thine heart endure, or can thine hands be strong, in the days that I shall deal with thee?” — It is a difficult thing to conceive what such Christless persons think, that are unconcerned at such a time.

**III.** I would direct myself to them who are grown considerably into years, and are yet in a natural condition. I would now take occasion earnestly to exhort you to improve this extraordinary opportunity, and press into the kingdom of God. You have lost many advantages that once you had, and now have not the same advantages that others have. The case is very different with you from what it is with many of your neighbours.

You, above all, had need to improve such an opportunity. Now is the time for you to bestir yourself, and take the kingdom of heaven! — Consider,

**1.** Now there seems to be a door opened for old sinners. Now God is dealing forth freely to all sorts: his hand is opened wide, and he does not pass by old ones so much as he used to do. You are not under such advantages as others who are younger; but yet, so wonderfully has God ordered it, that now you are not destitute of great advantage. Though old in sin, God has put a new and extraordinary advantage into your hands. O! improve this price you have to get wisdom! You that have been long seeking to enter in at the strait gate and yet remain without, now take your opportunity and press in! You that have been long in the wilderness, fighting with various temptations, labouring under discouragements, ready to give up the case, and have been often tempted to despair, now, behold the door that God opens for you! Do not give way to discouragements now; this is not a time for it. Do not spend time in thinking that you have done what you can already, and that you are not elected, and in giving way to other perplexing, weakening, disheartening temptations. Do not waste away this precious opportunity in such a manner. You have no time to spare for such things as these; God calls you now to something else. Improve this time in seeking and striving for salvation, and not in that which tends to hinder it. — It is no time now for you to stand talking with the devil; but hearken to God, and apply yourself to that which he does now so loudly call you to.

Some of you have often lamented the loss of past opportunities, particularly the loss of the time of youth, and have been wishing that you had so good an opportunity again; and have been ready to say, “O! if I was young again, how would I improve such an advantage!” That opportunity which you have had in time past is irrecoverable; you can never have it again: but God can give you other advantages of another sort, that are very great, and he is so doing at this day. He is now putting a new opportunity into your hands; though not of the same kind with that which you once had, and have lost, yet in some respects as great of another kind. If you lament your folly in neglecting and losing past opportunities, then do not be guilty of the folly of neglecting the opportunity which God now gives you. This opportunity you could not have purchased, if you would have given all that you had in the world for it. But God is putting it into

your hands himself, of his own free and sovereign mercy, without your purchasing it. Therefore when you have it, do not neglect it.

**2.** It is a great deal more likely with respect to such persons than others, that this is their last time. There will be a last time of special offer of salvation to impenitent sinners. —

“God’s Spirit shall not always strive with man,” (~~Gen~~ Genesis 6:3.)

God sometimes continues long knocking at the doors of wicked men’s hearts; but there are the last knocks, and the last calls that ever they shall have. And sometimes God’s last calls are the loudest; and then if sinners do not hearken, he finally leaves them. How long has God been knocking at many of your doors that are old in sin! It is a great deal more likely that these are his last knocks. You have resisted God’s Spirit in times past, and have hardened your heart once and again; but God will not be thus dealt with always. There is danger, that if now, after so long a time, you will not hearken, he will utterly desert you, and leave you to walk in your own counsels.

It seems by God’s providence, as though God had yet an elect number amongst old sinners in this place, that perhaps he is now about to bring in. It looks as though there were some that long lived under Mr. Stoddard’s ministry, that God has not utterly cast off, though they stood it out under such great means as they then enjoyed. It is to be hoped that God will now bring in a remnant from among them. But it is the more likely that God is now about finishing with them, one way or ocher, for their having been so long the subjects of such extraordinary means. You have seen former times of the pouring out of God’s Spirit upon the town, when others were taken and you left, others were called out of darkness into marvellous light, and were brought into a glorious and happy state, and you saw not good when good came. How dark will your circumstances appear, if you shall also stand it out through this opportunity, and still be left behind! Take heed that you be not of those spoken of, ~~Heb~~ Hebrews 6:7, 8. that are like the “earth that has rain coming oft upon it, and only bears briers and thorns.” As we see there are some pieces of ground, the more showers of rain fall upon them, the more fruitful seasons there are, the more do the briers, and other useless and hurtful plants, that are rooted in them, grow and flourish. Of such ground the apostle says, “It is rejected,

and is nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned.” The way that the husband-man takes with such ground, is, to see fire to it, to burn up the growth of it. — If you miss this opportunity, there is danger that you will be utterly rejected, and thee your end will be to be burned. And if this is to be, it is to be feared, that you are not far from, but nigh unto, cursing.

Those of you that are already grown old in sin, and are now under awakenings, when you feel your convictions begin to go off, if ever that should be, then remember what you have now been told; it may well then strike you to the heart!

**IV.** I would direct the advice to those that are young, and now under their first special convictions. I would earnestly urge such to improve this opportunity, and press into the kingdom of God. — Consider two things,

**1.** You have all manner of advantages now centering upon you. It is a time of great advantage for all; but your advantages are above others. There is no other sort of persons that have now so great and happy an opportunity as you have. — You have the great advantage that is common to all who live in this place, viz. That now it is a time of the extraordinary pouring out of the Spirit of God. And have you not that great advantage, the awakening influences of the Spirit of God on you in particular? and besides, you have this peculiar advantage, that you are now in your youth. And added to this, you have another unspeakable advantage, that you are now under your first convictions. Happy is he that never has hardened his heart, and blocked up his own way to heaven by backsliding, and has now the awakening influences of God’s Spirit, if God does but enable him thoroughly to improve them! Such above all in the world bid fair for the kingdom of God. God is wont on such, above any kind of persons, as it were easily and readily to bestow the saving grace and comforts of his Spirit. Instances of speedy and sudden conversion are most commonly found among such. Happy are they that have the Spirit of God with them, and never have quenched it, if they did but know the price they have in their hands!

If you have a sense of your necessity of salvation, and the great worth and value of it, you will be willing to take the surest way to it, or that which has the greatest probability of success; and that certainly is, thoroughly to improve your first convictions. If you do so, it is not likely that you will


fail; there is the greatest probability that you will succeed. — What is it not worth, to have such an advantage in one's hands for obtaining eternal life? The present season of the pouring out of God's Spirit, is the first that many of you who are now under awakenings have ever seen, since you came to years of understanding. On which account, it is the greatest opportunity that ever you have had, and probably by far the greatest that ever you will have. There are many here present who wish they had such an opportunity, but they never can obtain it; they cannot buy it for money; but you have it in your possession, and can improve it if you will. But yet,

**2.** There is on some accounts greater danger that such as are in your circumstances will fail of thoroughly improving their convictions, with respect to steadfastness and perseverance, than others. Those that are young are more unstable than elder persons. They who never had convictions before, have less experience of the difficulty of the work they have engaged in; they are more ready to think that they shall obtain salvation easily, and are more easily discouraged by disappointments; and young persons have less reason and consideration to fortify them against temptations to backsliding. You should therefore labour now the more to guard against such temptations. By all means make but one work of seeking salvation! Make thorough work of it the first timer There are vast disadvantages that they bring themselves under, who have several turns of seeking with great intermissions. By such a course, persons exceedingly wound their own souls, and entangle themselves in many snares. Who are those that commonly meet with so many difficulties, and are so long labouring in darkness and perplexity, but those who have had several turns at seeking salvation; who have one while had convictions, and then have quenched them, and then have set about the work again, and have backslidden again, and have gone on after that manner? The children of Israel would not have been forty years in the wilderness, if they had held their courage, and had gone on as they set out; but they were of an unstable mind, and were for going back again into Egypt. — Otherwise, if they had gone right forward without discouragement, as God would have led them, they would have soon entered and taken possession of Canaan. They had got to the very borders of it when they turned back, but were thirty-eight years after that, before they got through the wilderness.

Therefore, as you regard the interest of your soul, do not run yourself into a like difficulty, by unsteadiness, intermission, and backsliding; but press right forward, from henceforth, and make but one work of seeking, converting, and pardoning grace, however great, and difficult, and long a work that may be.

# DISCOURSE 3

## RUTH'S RESOLUTION


And Ruth said, Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God. (  Ruth 1:16)

THE historical things in this book of Ruth, seem to be inserted in the canon of the Scripture, especially on two accounts:

**First**, Because Christ was of Ruth's posterity. The Holy Ghost thought fit to take particular notice of that marriage of Boaz with Ruth, whence sprang the Saviour of the world. We may often observe it, that the Holy Spirit who indited the Scriptures, often takes notice of little things, or minute occurrences, that do but remotely relate to Jesus Christ.

**Secondly**, Because this history seems to be typical of the calling of the

Gentile church, and indeed of the conversion of every believer. Ruth was not originally of Israel, but was a Moabitess, an alien from the commonwealth of Israel: but she forsook her own people, and the idols of the Gentiles, to worship the God of Israel, and to join herself to that people. Herein she seems to be a type of the Gentile church, and also of every sincere convert. Ruth was the remote mother of Christ; he came of her posterity: so the church is Christ's mother, as she is represented, Revelation 12 at the beginning. And so also is every true Christian his mother.

“Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.” (  Matthew 12:50)

Christ is what the soul is in travail with, at the new birth. Ruth forsook all her natural relations, and her own Country, the land of her nativity, and all

her former possessions there, for the sake of the God of Israel; as every true Christian forsakes all for Christ.

“Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy Father’s house.” (<sup>3950</sup> Psalm 45:10.)

Naomi was now returning out of the land of Moab, into the land of Israel, with her two daughters-in-law, Orpah and Ruth; who will represent to us two sorts of professors of religion: Orpah, those who indeed make a fair profession, and seem to set out well, but continue only for a while, and then turn back; Ruth, those who are sound and sincere, and therefore are stedfast and persevering in their way. Naomi, in the preceding verses, represents to her daughters the difficulties of their leaving their own country to go with her. And in this verse may be observed,

**1.** The remarkable conduct and behaviour of Ruth on this occasion; with what inflexible resolution she cleaves to Naomi, and follows her. When Naomi first arose to return from the country of Moab into the land of Israel, Orpah and Ruth both set out with her; and Naomi exhorts them both to return. And both wept, and seemed as if they could not bear the thoughts of leaving her, and appeared as if they were resolved to go with her. Verse 10. “And they said unto her, Surely we will return with thee unto thy people.” Then Naomi says to them again, It Turn again, my daughters, go your way,” etc. And then they were greatly affected again, and Orpah returned and went back. Now Ruth’s stedfastness in her purpose had a greater trial, but yet is not overcome: “She clave unto her,” verse 14. Then Naomi speaks to her again, verse 15. “Behold, thy sister-in-law is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods; return thou after thy sister-in-law.” And then she shows her immovable resolution in the text and following verse.

**2.** I would particularly observe that wherein the virtuousness of this her resolution consists, viz. that it was for the sake of the God of Israel, and that she might be one of his people, that she was thus resolved to cleave to Naomi: Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.” It was for God’s sake that she did thus; and therefore her so doing is afterwards spoken of as a virtuous behaviour in her, chapter 2:11, 12. “And Boaz answered and said unto her, It hath fully been showed me, all that thou hast done unto thy mother-in-law since the death of thine husband; and

how thou hast left thy father, and thy mother, and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto all people which thou knewest not heretofore. The Lord recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust.” She left her father and mother, and the land of her nativity, to come and trust under the shadow of God’s wings; and she had indeed a full reward given her, as Boaz wished; for besides immediate spiritual blessings to her own soul, and eternal rewards in another world, she was rewarded with plentiful and prosperous outward circumstances in the family of Boaz. And God raised up David and Solomon of her seed, and established the crown of Israel (the people that she chose before her own people) in her posterity; and, which is much more, of her seed he raised up Jesus Christ, in whom all the families of the earth are blessed.

From the words thus opened, I observe this for the subject of my present discourse: — “When those that we have formerly been conversant with, are turning to God, and joining themselves to his people, it ought to be our firm resolution, that we will not leave them; but that their people shall be our people, and their God our God.”

It sometimes happens, that of those who have been conversant one with another — who have dwelt together as neighbours, and have been often together as companions, or united in their relation, and have been together in darkness, bondage, and misery, in the service of Satan — some are enlightened, and have their minds changed, are made to see the great evil of sin, and have their hearts turned to God. They are influenced by the Holy Spirit of God, to leave their company that are on Satan’s side, and to join themselves with that blessed company that are with Jesus Christ. They are made willing to forsake the tents of wickedness, to dwell in the land of uprightness with the people of God.

And sometimes this proves a final parting or separation between them and those with whom they have been formerly conversant. Though it may be no parting in outward respects, they may still dwell, and converse one with another; yet in other respects, it sets them at a great distance. One is a child of God, and the other his enemy; one is in a miserable, and the other in a happy, condition; one is a citizen of the heavenly Zion, the other is under condemnation to hell. They are no longer together in those

respects wherein they used to be together. They used to be of one mind to serve sin, and do Satan's work; now they are of contrary minds. They used to be together in worldliness and sinful vanity; now they are of exceeding different dispositions. They are separated as they are in different kingdoms; the one remains in the kingdom of darkness, the other is translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son. And sometimes they are finally separated in these respects: while one dwells in the land of Israel, and in the house of God; the other, like Orpah, lives and dies in the land of Moab.

Now it is lamentable, it is awful being parted so. It is doleful, when of those who have formerly been together in sin, some turn to God, and join themselves with his people, that it should prove a parting between them and their former companions and acquaintance. It should be our firm and inflexible resolution in such a case, that it shall be no parting, but that we will follow them, that their people shall be our people, and their God our God; and that for the following reasons:

**I.** Because their God is a glorious God. There is none like him, who is infinite in glory and excellency. He is the most high God, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders. His name is excellent in all the earth, and his glory is above the heavens. Among the gods there is none like unto him; there is none in heaven to be compared to him, nor are there any among the sons of the mighty that can be likened unto him. Their God is the fountain of all good, and an inexhaustible fountain; he is an all-sufficient God, able to protect and defend them, and do all things for them. He is the King of glory, the Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle: a strong rock, and a high tower. There is none like the God of Jeshurun, who rideth on the heaven in their help, and in his excellency on the sky: the eternal God is their refuge, and underneath are everlasting arms. He is a God who hath all things in his hands, and does whatsoever he pleases: he killeth and maketh alive; he bringeth down to the grave and bringeth up; he maketh poor and maketh rich: the pillars of the earth are the Lord's. Their God is an infinitely holy God; there is none holy as the Lord. And he is infinitely good and merciful. Many that others worship and serve as gods, are cruel beings, spirits that seek the ruin of souls; but this is a God that delighteth in mercy; his grace is infinite, and endures for ever. He is love itself, an infinite fountain and ocean of it.

Such a God is their God! Such is the excellency of Jacob! Such is the God of them who have forsaken their sins and are converted! They have made a wise choice who have chosen this for their God. They have made a happy exchange indeed, that have exchanged sin, and the world, for such a God!

They have an excellent and glorious Saviour, who is the only-begotten Son of God; the brightness of his Father's glory; one in whom God from eternity had infinite delight; a Saviour of infinite love; one that has shed his own blood, and made his soul an offering for their sins, and one that is able to save them to the uttermost.

**II.** Their people are an excellent and happy people. God has renewed them, and stamped his own image upon them, and made them partakers of his holiness. They are more excellent than their neighbours, <sup><102></sup>Proverbs 12:26. Yea, they are the excellent of the earth, <sup><101></sup>Psalms 16:3. They are lovely in the sight of the angels; and they have their souls adorned with, those graces that in the sight of God himself are of great price.

The people of God are the most excellent and happy society in the world. That God whom they have chosen for their God, is their Father; he has pardoned all their sins, and they are at with him; and he has admitted them to all the privileges of his children. As they have devoted themselves to God, so he has given himself to them. He is become their salvation, and their portion: his power and mercy, and all his attributes, are theirs. They are in a safe state, free from all possibility of perishing: Satan has no power to destroy them. God carries them on eagle's wings, far above Satan's reach, and above the reach of all the enemies of their souls, God is with them in this world; they have his gracious presence. God is for them; who then can be against them? As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so Jehovah is round about them. God is their shield, and their exceeding great reward; and their fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ: and they have the divine promise and oath, that in the world to come they shall dwell for ever in the glorious presence of God.

It may well be sufficient to induce us to resolve to cleave to those that forsake their sins and idols to join themselves with this people, that God is with them,

“Thus saith the Lord of hosts, in those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying is with We will go with you; for we have heard that God you.”

(~~3823~~ Zechariah 8:23)

So should persons, as it were, take hold of the skirt of their neighbours and companions that have turned to God, and resolve that they will go with them, because God is with them.

**III.** Happiness is no where else to be had, but in their God, and with their people. There are that are called gods many, and lords many. Some make gods of their pleasures; some choose Mammon for their god; some make gods of their own supposed excellences, or the outward advantages they have above their neighbours: some choose one thing for their god, and others another. But men can be happy in no other but the God of Israel: he is the only fountain of happiness. Other gods cannot help in calamity; nor can any of them afford what the poor empty soul stands in need of. Let men adore those other pas never so much, and call upon them never so earnestly, and serve them never so diligently, they will nevertheless remain poor, wretched, unsatisfied, undone creatures. All other people are miserable, but that people whose God is the Lord. — The world is divided into two societies: the people of God, the little flock of Jesus Christ, that company that we read of, ~~3804~~ Revelation 14:4. “These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins: these are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth: these were redeemed from among men, being the first-fruits unto God, and to the Lamb:” and, thou that belong to the kingdom of darkness, that are without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers from the covenant of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world. All that are of this latter company are wretched and undone; they are the enemies of God, and under his wrath and condemnation. They are the devil’s slaves, that serve him blindfold, and are befooled and ensnared by him, and hurried along in the broad way to eternal perdition.

**IV.** When those that we have formerly been conversant with are turning to

God and to his people, their example ought to influence us. Their example should be looked upon as the call of God to us, to do as they have done. God, when he changes the heart of one, calls upon another; especially does he loudly call on those that have been their friends and acquaintance. We have been influenced by their examples in evil; and shall we cease to follow them, when they make the wisest choice that ever they made, and do the best thing that ever they did? If we have been companions with them in worldliness, in vanity, in unprofitable and sinful conversation, it will be a hard case, if there must be a parting now, because we are not willing to be companions with them in holiness and true happiness. Men are greatly influenced by seeing one another's prosperity in other things. If those whom they have been much conversant with, grow rich, and obtain any great earthly advantages, it awakens their ambition, and eager desire after the like prosperity: how much more should they be influenced, and stirred up to follow them, and be like them, when they obtain that spiritual and eternal happiness, that is of infinitely more worth, than all the prosperity and glory of this world!

**V.** Our resolutions to cleave to and follow those that are turning to God, and joining themselves to his people, ought to be fixed and strong, because of the great difficulty of it. If we will cleave to them, and have their God for our God, and their people for our people, we must mortify and deny all our lusts, and cross every evil appetite and inclination, and for ever part with all sin. But our lusts are many and violent. Sin is naturally exceeding dear to its; to part with it is compared to plucking out our right eyes. Men may refrain from wonted ways of sin for a little while, and may deny their lusts in a partial degree, with less difficulty; but it is heart-rending work, finally to part with all sin, and to give our dearest lusts a bill of divorce, utterly to send them away. But this we must do, if we would follow those that are truly turning to God: yea, we must not only forsake sin, but must, in a sense, forsake all the world,

“Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.” (~~463~~ Luke 14:33)


That is, he must forsake all in his heart, and must come to a thorough disposition and readiness actually to quit all for God, and the glorious spiritual privileges of his people, whenever the case may require it; and

that without any prospect of any thing of the like nature, or any worldly thing whatsoever, to make amends for it; and all to go into a strange country, a land that has hitherto been unseen; like Abraham, who being called of God, “went out of his own country, and from his kindred, and from his father’s house, for a land that God should show him, not knowing whither he went.”

Thus, it was a hard thing for Ruth to forsake her native country, her father and mother, her kindred and acquaintance, and all the pleasant things she had in the land of Moab, to dwell in the land of Israel, where she never had been. Naomi told her of the difficulties once and again. They were too hard for her sister Orpah; the consideration of them turned her back after she was set out. Her resolution was not firm enough to overcome them. But so firmly resolved was Ruth, that she brake through all; she was stedfast in it, that, let the difficulty be what it would, she would not leave her mother-in-law. So persons had need to be very firm in their resolution to conquer the difficulties that are in the way of cleaving to them who are indeed turning from sin to God.

Our cleaving to them, and having their God for our God, and their people for our people, depends on our resolution and choice; and that in two respects.

**1.** The firmness of resolution in using means in order to it, is the way to have means effectual. There are means appointed in order to our becoming some of the true Israel, and having their God far our God; and the thorough use of these means is the way to have success; but not a slack or slighty use of them. And that we may be thorough, there is need of strength of resolution, a firm and inflexible disposition and bent of mind to be universal in the use of means, and to do what we do with our might, and to persevere in it.

“The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence,  
and the violent take it by force.” ( Matthew 11:12.)

**2.** A choosing of their God, and their people, with a full determination, and with the whole soul, is the condition of an union with them. God gives every man his choice in this matter: as Orpah and Ruth had their choice, whether they would go with Naomi into the land of Israel, or stay in the

land of Moab. A natural man may choose deliverance from hell; but no man doth ever heartily choose God and Christ, and the spiritual benefits that Christ has purchased, and the happiness of God's people, till he is converted. On the contrary, he is averse to them; he has no relish of them; and is wholly ignorant of their inestimable worth and value.

Many carnal men seem to choose these things, but do it not really; as Orpah seemed at first to choose to forsake Moab to go into the land of Israel: but when Naomi came to set before her the difficulty of it, she went back; and thereby showed that she was not fully determined in her choice, and that her whole soul was not in it as Ruth's was.

### APPLICATION.

The use that I shall make of what has been said, is to move sinners to this resolution, with respect to those amongst us that have lately turned to God, and joined themselves to the flock of Christ. Through the abundant mercy and grace of God to us in this place, it may be said of many of that are in a Christless condition, that you have lately been left by those that were formerly with you in such a state. Some of those with whom you have formerly been conversant, have lately forsaken a life of sin and the service of Satan, and have turned to God, and fled to Christ, and joined themselves to that blessed company that are with him. They formerly were with you in sin and in misery; but now they are with you no more in that state or manner of life. They are changed, and have fled from the wrath to come; they have chosen a life of holiness here, and the enjoyment of God hereafter. They were formerly your associates in bondage, and were with you in Satan's business; but now you have their company no longer in these things. Many of you have seen those you live with, under the same roof, turning from being any longer with you in sin, to be with the people of Jesus Christ. Some of you that are husbands, have had your wives; and some of you that are wives, have had your husbands; some of you that are children, have had your parents; and parents have had your children; many of you have had your brothers and sisters; and many your near neighbours, and acquaintance, and special friends; many of you that are young have had your companions: I say, many of you have had those that you have been thus concerned with, leaving you, forsaking that doleful life and wretched state in which you still continue. God, of his

good pleasure and wonderful grace, hath lately caused in this place multitudes to forsake their old abodes in the land of Moab, and under the gods of Moab, and go into the land of Israel, to put their trust under the wings of the Lord God of Israel. Though you and they have been nearly related, and have dwelt together, or have been often together and intimately acquainted, they have been taken, and you hitherto left! O let it not be the foundation of a final parting! But earnestly follow them; be firm in your resolution in this matter. Do not as Orpah did, who, though at first she made as though she would follow Naomi, yet when she had the difficulty set before her, went back: but say as Ruth, “I will not leave thee; but where thou goest, I will go: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.” Say as she said, and do as she did. Consider the excellency of their God, and their Saviour, and the happiness of their people, the blessed state that they are in, and the doleful state you are in.

You are old sinners, who have lived long in the service of Satan, have lately seen some that have travelled with you in the paths of sin these many years, turning to God. They with you enjoyed great means and advantages, had calls and warnings with you, and with you passed through remarkable times of the pouring out of God’s Spirit in this place, and hardened their hearts and stood it out with you, and with you have grown old in sin; yet you have seen some of them turning to God, *i.e.* you have seen those evidences of it in them, whence you may rationally judge that it is so. O! let it not be a final parting! You have been thus long together in sin, and under condemnation; let it be your firm resolution, that, if possible, you will be with them still, now they are in a holy and happy state, and that you will follow them into the holy and pleasant land. — You that tell of your having been seeking salvation for many years, (though, without doubt, in a poor dull way, in comparison of what you ought to have done,) have seen some old sinners and old seekers, as you are, obtaining mercy. God has lately roused them from their dulness, and caused them to alter their hand, and put them on more thorough endeavours; and they have now, after so long a time, heard God’s voice, and have fled for refuge to the rock of ages. Let this awaken earnestness and resolution in you. Resolve that you will not leave them.

You who are in your youth, how many have you seen of your age and standing, that have of late hopefully chosen God for their God, and Christ

for their Saviour! You have followed them in sin, and have perhaps followed them into vain company; and will you not now follow them to Christ? — And you who are children, know that there have lately been some of your sort who have repented of their sins, loved the Lord Jesus Christ, and trusted in him, and are become God's children, as we have reason to hope: let it stir you up to resolve to your utmost to seek and cry to God, that you may have the like change made in your hearts, that their people may be your people, and their God your God.

You who are great sinners, who have made yourselves distinguishingly guilty the wicked practices you have lived in, know that there are some of your sort who have lately (as we have reason to hope) had their hearts broken for sin, and have forsaken it, and trusted in the blood of Christ for the pardon of it. They have chosen a holy life, and have betaken themselves to the ways of wisdom: let it excite and encourage you resolutely to cleave to them, and earnestly to follow them.

Let the following things be considered:

**1.** That your soul is as precious as theirs. It is immortal as theirs is; and stands in as much need of happiness, and can as ill bear eternal misery. You was born in the same miserable condition that they were, having the same wrath of God abiding on you. You must stand before the same Judge; who will be as strict in judgment with you as with them; and your own righteousness will stand you in no more stead before him than theirs; and therefore you stand in as absolute necessity of a Saviour as they. Carnal confidences can no more answer your end than theirs; nor can this world or its enjoyments serve to make you happy without God and Christ, more than them. When the bridegroom comes, the foolish virgins stand in as much need of oil as the wise, Matthew 25 at the beginning.

**2.** Unless you follow them in their turning to God, their conversion will be a foundation of an eternal separation between you and them. You will be indifferent interests, and in exceeding different states, as long as you live; they the children of God, and you the children of Satan; and you will be parted in another world; when you come to die, there will be a vast separation made between you. ~~And~~ Luke 16:26. “And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you, cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would

come from thence.” And you will be parted at the day of judgment. You will be parted at Christ’s first appearance in the clouds of heaven. While they are caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, to be ever with the Lord, you will remain below, confined to this cursed ground, that is kept in store, reserved unto fire, against the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men. You will appear separated from them, while you stand before the great judgment-seat, they being at the right hand, while you are set at the left. <sup><415></sup>Matthew 25:32, 33. “And before him shall he gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats; and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.” And you shall then appear in exceeding different circumstances: while you stand with devils, in the image and deformity of devils, and in ineffable horror and amazement, they shall appear in glory, sitting on thrones, as assessors with Christ, and as such passing judgment upon you, <sup><416></sup>1 Corinthians 6:2. And what shame and confusion will then cover you, when so many of your contemporaries, your equals, your neighbours, relations, and companions, shall be honoured, and openly acknowledged, and confessed by the glorious Judge of the universe, and Redeemer of saints, and shall be seen by you sitting with him in such glory. You shall appear to have neglected your salvation, and not to have improved your opportunities, and rejected the Lord Jesus Christ, the same person that will then appear as your great Judge, and you shall be the subjects of wrath, and, as it were, trodden down in eternal contempt and disgrace.

“Some shall rise to everlasting life, an some to shame and  
everlasting contempt.” (<sup><417></sup>Daniel 12:2)

And what a wide separation will the sentence then passed and executed make between you and them! When you shall be sent away out of the presence of the Judge with indignation and abhorrence, as cursed and loathsome creatures they shall be sweetly accosted and invited into his glory as his dear friends, and the blessed of his Father! When you, with all that vast throng of wicked and accursed men and devils, shall descend with loud lamentings, and horrid shrieks, into that dreadful gulf of fire and brimstone, and shall be swallowed up in that great and everlasting furnace; they shall joyfully, and with sweet songs of glory and praise, ascend with Christ, and all that beauteous and blessed company of saints and angels,

into eternal felicity, in the glorious presence of God, and the sweet embraces of his love. You and they shall spend eternity in such a separation, and immensely different circumstances! You have been intimately acquainted and nearly related, closely united and mutually conversant in this world; and you have taken delight in each other's company! And shall it be — after you have been together a great while, each of you in undoing yourselves, enhancing your guilt, and heaping up wrath — that their so wisely changing their minds and their course, and choosing such happiness for themselves, should now at length be the beginning of such an exceeding and everlasting separation between you and them? now awful will it be to be parted so!

**3.** Consider the great encouragement that God gives you, earnestly to strive for the same blessing that others have obtained. There is great encouragement in the word of God to sinners to seek salvation, in the revelation we have of the abundant provision made for the salvation even of the chief of sinners, and in the appointment of so many means to be used with and by sinners, in order to their salvation; and by the blessing which God in his word connects with the means of his appointment. There is hence great encouragement for all, at all times, that will be thorough in using of these means. But now God gives extraordinary encouragement in his providence, by pouring out his Spirit so remarkably amongst us, and bringing savingly home to himself all sorts, young and old, rich and poor, wise and unwise, sober and vicious, old self-righteous seekers and profligate livers: no sort are exempt. There is at this day amongst us the loudest call, and the greatest encouragement, and the widest door opened to sinners, to escape out of a state of sin and condemnation, that perhaps God ever granted in New England. Who is there that has an immortal soul, so sottish as not to improve such an opportunity, and that will not bestir himself with all his might? How unreasonable is negligence, and how exceeding unreasonable is discouragement, at such a day as this! Will you be so stupid as to neglect your soul now? Will any mortal amongst us be so unreasonable as to lag behind, or look back in discouragement, when God opens such a door? Let every person be thoroughly awake! Let every one encourage himself now to press forward, and fly for his life!

**4.** Consider how earnestly desirous they that have obtained are that you should follow them, and that their people should be your people, and their God your God. They desire that you should partake of that great good which God has given them, and that unspeakable and eternal blessedness which he has promised them. They wish and long it. If you do not go with them, and are not still of their company, it will not be for want of their willingness, but your own. That of Moses to Hobab is the language of every true saint of your acquaintance to you.

“We are journeying unto the place of which the Lord said, I will give it you: come thou with us, and we will do thee good; for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel.” (<sup>4019</sup>Numbers 10:29)

As Moses, when on his journey through the wilderness, following the pillar of cloud and fire, invited Hobab — with whom he had been acquainted in the land of Midian, where Moses had formerly dwelt with him — to go with him and his people to Canaan, to partake with them in the good that God had promised them; so do those of your friends and acquaintance invite you, out of a land of darkness and wickedness, where they have formerly been with you, to go with them to the heavenly Canaan. The company of saints, the true church of Christ, invite you. The lovely bride calls you to the marriage supper. She hath authority to invite guests to her own wedding; and You ought to look on her invitation and desire, as the call of Christ the bridegroom; for it is the voice of his Spirit in her, <sup>6277</sup>Revelation 22:17. The Spirit and the bride say, Come.” Where seems to be a reference to what has been said, chapter 19:7-9. “The marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted, that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, blessed are they which are called to the marriage-supper of the Lamb.” It is with respect to this her marriage-supper that she, from the motion of the Spirit of the Lamb in her, says, Come. So that you are invited on all hands; all conspire to call you. God the Father invites you: this is the King who has made a marriage for his Son; and he sends forth his servants, the ministers of the gospel, to invite the guests. And the Son himself invites you: it is he that speaks, <sup>6677</sup>Revelation 17:17. “And let him that heareth say, Come; and let him that is athirst, come; and whosoever will, let him come.” He tells us who he is in the foregoing verse, “I Jesus,

the root and offspring of David, the bright and morning star.” And God’s ministers invite you, and all the church invites you; and there will be joy in the presence of the angels of God that hour that you accept the invitation.

**5.** Consider what a doleful company will be left after this extraordinary time of mercy is over. We have reason to think that there will be a number left. We read that when Ezekiel’s healing waters increased so abundantly, and the healing effect of them was so very general; yet there were certain places, where the waters came, that never were healed. Ezekiel 47 9-11. “And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live. And there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed, and every thing shall live whither the river cometh. And it shall come to pass, that the fishers shall stand upon it, from En-gedi even unto Eneglaim; they shall be a place to spread forth nets: there fish shall according to their kinds, as the fish of the great sea, exceeding many. But the miry places thereof, and the marishes thereof, shall not be healed, they shall be given to salt.” And even in the apostles’ times, when there was such wonderful success of the gospel wherever they came, there were some that did not believe.

“And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life, believed.” (Acts 13:48.)

And chapter 28:24. “And some believed, and some believed not.” So we have no reason to expect but there will be some left amongst us. It is to be hoped it will be but a small company: but what a doleful company will it be! How darkly and awfully will it look upon them! If you shall be of that company, how well may your friends and relations lament over you, and bemoan your dark and dangerous circumstances! If you would not be one of them, make haste, delay not, and look not behind you. Shall all sorts obtain, shall every one press into the kingdom of God, while You stay loitering behind in a doleful undone condition? Shall every one take heaven, while you remain with no other portion but this world? Now take up that resolution, that if it be possible you will cleave to them that have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before them. Count the cost of a thorough, violent, and perpetual pursuit of salvation, and forsake all, as

Ruth forsook her own country, and all her pleasant enjoyments in it. Do not do as Orpah did; who set out, and then was discouraged, and went back: but hold out with Ruth through all discouragement and opposition. When you consider others that have chosen the better part, let that resolution be ever firm with you: “Where thou goest, I will go; where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.”

## DISCOURSE 4

### THE JUSTICE OF GOD IN THE DAMNATION OF SINNERS

— That every mouth may be stopped — (~~418~~ Romans 3:9)

THE main subject of the doctrinal part of this epistle is the free grace of God in the salvation of men by Jesus Christ; especially as it appears in the doctrine of justification by faith alone. And the more clearly to evince this doctrine, and show the reason of it, the apostle, in the first place, establishes that point, that no flesh living can be justified by the deeds of the law. And to prove it, he is very large and particular in showing that all mankind, not only the Gentiles, but Jews, are under sin, and so under the condemnation of the law; which is what he insists upon from the beginning of the epistle to this place. He first begins with the Gentiles; and in the first chapter shows that they are under sin, by setting forth the exceeding corruptions and horrid wickedness that overspread the Gentile world: and then through the second chapter, and the former part of his third chapter, to the text and following verse, he shows the same of the Jews, that they also are in the same circumstances with the Gentiles in this regard. They had a high thought of themselves, because they were God's covenant people, and circumcised, and the children of Abraham. They despised the Gentiles as polluted, condemned, and accursed; but looked on themselves, on account of their external privileges, and ceremonial and moral righteousness, as a pure and holy people, and the children of God; as the apostle observes in the second chapter. It was therefore strange doctrine to them, that they also were unclean and guilty in God's sight, and under the condemnation and curse of the law. The apostle therefore, on account of their strong prejudices against such doctrine, the more particularly insists upon it, and shows that they are no better than the Gentiles; as in the 9th verse of this chapter, "What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise; for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin." And, to convince them of it, he produces certain passages out of their own law, or the Old Testament, (to

whose authority they pretended a great regard,) from the 9th verse to our text. And it may be observed, that the apostle, first, cites certain passages to prove that all mankind are corrupt, (verse 10-12.) “As it is written, There is none righteous, no not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God: They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable, there is none that doeth good, no not one.” Secondly, The passages he cites next, are to prove, that not only are all corrupt, but each one wholly corrupt, as it were all over unclean, from the crown of the head to the soles of his feet; and therefore several particular parts of the body are mentioned, the throat, the tongue, the lips, the mouth, the feet, (verse 13-15.) “Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips; whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: their feet are swift to shed blood.” And, Thirdly, He quotes other passages to show, that each one is not only all over corrupt, but corrupt to a desperate degree, (verse 16-18.) by affirming the most pernicious tendency of their wickedness; “Destruction and misery are in their ways.” And then by denying all goodness or godliness in them; “And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes.” And then, lest the Jews should think these passages of their law do not concern them, and that only the Gentiles are intended in them, the apostle shows in the text, not only that they are not exempt, but that they especially must be understood: “Now we know that whatsoever things the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law.” By those that are under the law are meant the Jews; and the Gentiles by those that are without law; as appears by the 12th verse of the preceding chapter. There is special reason to understand the law, as speaking to and of them, to whom it was immediately given. And therefore the Jews would be unreasonable in exempting themselves. And if we examine the places of the Old Testament whence these passages are taken, we shall see plainly that special respect is had to the wickedness of the people of that nation, in every one of them. So that the law shuts all up in universal and desperate wickedness, that every mouth may be stopped; the mouths of the Jews, as well as of the Gentiles, notwithstanding all those privileges by which they were distinguished from the Gentiles.

The things that the law says, are sufficient to stop the mouths of all mankind, in two respects:

- 1.** To stop them from boasting of their righteousness, as the Jews were wont to do; as the apostle observes in the 23rd verse of the preceding chapter. — That the apostle has respect to stopping their mouths in this respect, appears by the 27th verse of the context, “Where is boasting then? It is excluded.” The law stops our mouths from making any plea for life, or the favour of God, or any positive good, from our own righteousness.
- 2.** To stop them from making any excuse for ourselves, or objection against the execution of the sentence of the law, or the infliction of the punishment that it threatens. That this is intended, appears by the words immediately following, “That all the world may become guilty before God.” That is, that they may appear to be guilty, and stand convicted before God, and justly liable to the condemnation of his law, as guilty of death, according to the Jewish way of speaking.

And thus the apostle proves, that no flesh can be justified in God’s sight by the deeds of the law; as he draws the conclusion in the following verse; and so prepares the way for establishing the great doctrine of justification by faith alone, which he proceeds to do in the following part of the chapter, and of the epistle.

## DOCTRINE

“It is just with God eternally to cast off and destroy sinners.” — For this is the punishment which the law condemns to. — The truth of his doctrine may appear by the joint consideration of two things, viz. Man’s sinfulness, and God’s sovereignty.

**I.** It appears from the consideration of man’s sinfulness. And that, whether we consider the infinitely evil nature of all sin, or how much sin men are guilty of.

**1.** If we consider the infinite evil and heinousness of sin in general, it is not unjust in God to inflict what punishment is deserved; because the very notion of deserving any punishment is, that it may be justly inflicted. A deserved punishment and a just punishment are the same thing. To say

that one deserves such a punishment, and yet to say that he does not justly deserve it, is a contradiction; and if he justly deserves it, then it may be justly inflicted.

Every crime or fault deserves a greater or less punishment, in proportion as the crime itself is greater or less. If any fault deserves punishment, then so much the greater the fault, so much the greater is the punishment deserved. The faulty nature of any thing is the formal ground and reason of its desert of punishment; and therefore the more any thing hath of this nature, the more punishment it deserves. And therefore the terribleness of the degree of punishment, let it be never so terrible, is no argument against the justice of it, if the proportion does but hold between the heinousness of the crime and the dreadfulness of the punishment; so that if there be any such thing as a fault infinitely heinous, it will follow that it is just to inflict a punishment for it that is infinitely dreadful.

A crime is more or less heinous, according as we are under greater or less obligations to the contrary. This is self-evident; because it is herein that the criminalness or faultiness of any thing consists, that it is contrary to what we are obliged or bound to, or what ought to be in us. So the faultiness of one being hating another, is in proportion to his obligation to love him. The crime of one being despising and casting contempt on another, is proportionately more or less heinous, as he was under greater or less obligations to honour him. The fault of disobeying another, is greater or less, as any one is under greater or less obligations to obey him. And therefore if there be any being that we are under infinite obligations to love, and honour, and obey, the contrary towards him must be infinitely faulty.

Our obligation to love, honour, and obey any being, is in proportion to his loveliness, honourableness, and authority; for that is the very meaning of the words. When we say any one is very lovely, it is the same as to say, that he is one very much to be loved. Or if we say such a one is more honourable than another, the meaning of the words is, that he is one that we are more obliged to honour. If we say any one has great authority over us, it is the same as to say, that he has great right to our subjection and obedience.

But God is a being infinitely lovely, because he hath infinite excellency and beauty. To have infinite excellence and beauty, is the same thing as to have infinite loveliness. He is a being of infinite greatness, majesty, and glory; and therefore he is infinitely honourable. He is infinitely exalted above the greatest potentates of the earth, and highest angels in heaven; and therefore he is infinitely more honourable than they. His authority over us is infinite; and the ground of his right to our obedience is infinitely strong; for he is infinitely worthy to be obeyed himself, and we have an absolute, universal, and infinite dependence upon him.


So that sin against God, being a violation of infinite obligations, must be a crime infinitely heinous, and so deserving infinite punishment. — Nothing is more agreeable to the common sense of mankind, than that sins committed against any one, must be proportionately heinous to the dignity of the being offended and abused; as it is also agreeable to the word of God, <sup>(4025)</sup>1 Samuel 2:25. “If one man sin against another, the Judge shall judge him;” (*i.e.* shall judge him, and inflict a finite punishment, such as finite judges can inflict;) “but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall entreat for him?” This was the aggravation of sin that made Joseph afraid of it, <sup>(4130)</sup>Genesis 39:9. “How shall I commit this great wickedness, and sin against God?” This was the aggravation of David’s sin, in comparison of which he esteemed all others as nothing, because they were infinitely exceeded by it. <sup>(4530)</sup>Psalms 52:4. “Against thee, thee only have I sinned.” — The eternity of the punishment of ungodly men renders it infinite: and it renders it no more than infinite; and therefore renders it no more than proportionable to the heinousness of what they are guilty of.

If there be any evil or faultiness in sin against God, there is certainly infinite evil: for if it be any fault at all, it has an infinite aggravation, viz. that it is against an infinite object. If it be ever so small upon other accounts, yet if it be any thing, it has one infinite dimension; and so is an infinite evil. Which may be illustrated by this: if we suppose a thing to have infinite length, but no breadth and thickness, (a mere mathematical line,) it is nothing: but if it have any breadth and thickness, though never so small, and infinite length, the quantity of it is infinite; it exceeds the quantity of any thing, however broad, thick, and long, wherein these dimensions are all finite.

So that the objections made against the infinite punishment of sin, from the necessity, or rather previous certainty, of the futuration of sin, arising from the unavoidable original corruption of nature, if they argue any thing, argue against any faultiness at all: for if this necessity or certainty leaves any evil at all in sin, that fault must be infinite by reason of the infinite object.

But every such objector as would argue from hence, that there is no fault at all in sin, confutes himself, and shows his own insincerity in his objection. For at the same time that he objects, that men's acts are necessary, and that this kind of necessity is inconsistent with faultiness in the act, his own practice shows that he does not believe what he objects to be true: otherwise why does he at all blame men? Or why are such persons at all displeased with men, for abusive, injurious, and ungrateful acts towards them? Whatever they pretend, by this they show that indeed they do believe that there is no necessity in men's acts that is inconsistent with blame. And if their objection be this, that this previous certainty is by God's own ordering, and that where God orders an antecedent certainty of acts, he transfers all the fault from the actor on himself; their practice shows, that at the same time they do not believe this, but fully believe the contrary: for when they are abused by men, they are displeased with men, and not with God only.

The light of nature teaches all mankind, that when an injury is voluntary it is faulty, without any consideration of what there might be previously to determine the futuration of that evil act of the will. And it really teaches this as much to those that object and cavil most as to others; as their universal practice shows. By which it appears, that such objections are insincere and perverse. Men will mention others' corrupt nature when they are injured, as a thing that aggravates their crime, and that wherein their faultiness partly consists. How common is it for persons, when they look on themselves greatly injured by another, to inveigh against him, and aggravate his baseness, by saying, "He is a man of a most perverse spirit: he is naturally of a selfish, niggardly, or proud and haughty temper: he is one of a base and vile disposition." And yet men's natural and corrupt dispositions are mentioned as an excuse for them, with respect to their sins against God, as if they rendered them blameless.

2. That it is just with God eternally to cast off wicked men, may more abundantly appear, if we consider how much sin they are guilty of. From what has been already said, it appears, that if men were guilty of sin but in one particular, that is sufficient ground of their eternal rejection and condemnation. If they are sinners, that is enough. Merely this, might be sufficient to keep them from ever lifting up their heads, and cause them to smite on their breasts, with the publican that cried, “God be merciful to me a sinner.” But sinful men are full of sin; principles and acts of sin: their guilt is like great mountains, heaped one upon another, till the pile is grown up to heaven. They are totally corrupt, in every part, in all their faculties; in all the principles of their nature, their understanding, and wills; and in all their dispositions and affections. Their heads, their hearts, are totally depraved; all the members of their bodies are only instruments of sin; and all their senses, seeing, hearing, tasting, etc., are only inlets and outlets of sin, channels of corruption. There is nothing but sin, no good at all.  Romans 7:18. “In me, that is, in my flesh, dwells no good thing.” There is all manner of wickedness. There are the seeds of the greatest and blackest crimes. There are principles of all sorts of wickedness against men; and there is all wickedness against God. There is pride; there is enmity; there is contempt; there is quarrelling; there is atheism; there is blasphemy. There are these things in exceeding strength; the heart is under the power of them, is sold under sin, and is a perfect slave to it. There is hard-heartedness, hardness greater than that of a rock, or an adamant-stone. There is obstinacy and perverseness, incorrigibleness and inflexibleness in sin, that will not be overcome by threatenings or promises, by awakenings or encouragements, by judgments or mercies, neither by that which is terrifying nor that which is winning. The very blood of God our Saviour will not win the heart of a wicked man.

And there are actual wickednesses, without number or measure. There are breaches of every command, in thought, word, and deed: a life full of sin; days and nights filled up with sin; mercies abused and frowns despised; mercy and justice, and all the divine perfections, trampled on; and the honour of each person in the Trinity trod in the dirt. Now if one sinful word or thought has so much evil in it, as to deserve eternal destruction, how do they deserve to be eternally cast off and destroyed, that are guilty of so much sin!

**II.** If with man's sinfulness, we consider God's sovereignty, it may serve further to clear God's justice in the eternal rejection and condemnation of sinners, from men's cavils and objections. I shall not now pretend to determine precisely, what things are, and what things are not, proper acts and exercises of God's holy sovereignty; but only, that God's sovereignty extends to the following things.

**1.** That such is God's sovereign power and right, that he is originally under no obligation to keep men from sinning; but may in his providence permit and leave them to sin. He was not obliged to keep either angels or men from falling. It is unreasonable to suppose, that God should be obliged, if he makes a reasonable creature capable of knowing his will, and receiving a law from him, and being subject to his moral government, at the same time to make it impossible for him to sin, or break his law. For if God be obliged to this, it destroys all use of any commands, laws, promises, or threatenings, and the very notion of any moral government of God over those reasonable creatures. For to what purpose would it be, for God to give such and such laws, and declare his holy will to a creature, and annex promises and threatenings to move him in his duty, and make him careful to perform it, if the creature at the same time has this to think of, that God is obliged to make it impossible for him to break his laws? How can God's threatenings move to care or watchfulness, when, at the same time, God is obliged to render it impossible that he should be exposed to the threatenings? Or, to what purpose is it for God to give a law at all? For according to this supposition, it is God, and not the creature, that is under law. It is the lawgiver's care, and not the subject's, to see that his law is obeyed; and this care is what the lawgiver is absolutely obliged to! If God be obliged never to permit a creature to fall, there is an end of all divine laws, or government, or authority of God over the creature; there can be no manner of use of these things.

God may permit sin, though the being of sin will certainly ensue on that permission: and so, by permission, he may dispose and order the event. If there were any such thing as chance, or mere contingency, and the very notion of it did not carry a gross absurdity, (as might easily be shown that it does,) it would have been very unfit that God should have left it to mere chance, whether man should fall or no. For chance, if there should be any such thing, is undesigning and blind. And certainly it is more fit that an

event of so great importance, and which is attended with such an infinite train of great consequences, should be disposed and ordered by infinite wisdom, than that it should be left to blind chance.

If it be said, that God need not have interposed to render it impossible for man to sin, and yet not leave it to mere contingency or blind chance neither; but might have left it with man's free will, to determine whether to sin or no: I answer, if God did leave it to man's free will, without any sort of disposal, or ordering [or rather, adequate cause] in the case, whence it should be previously certain how that free will should determine, then still that first determination of the will must be merely contingent or by chance. It could not have any antecedent act of the will to determine it; for I speak now of the very first act or motion of the will, respecting the affair that may be looked upon as the prime ground and highest source of the event. To suppose this to be determined by a foregoing act is a contradiction. God's disposing this determination of the will by his permission, does not at all infringe the liberty of the creature. It is in no respect any more inconsistent with liberty, than mere chance or contingency. For if the determination of the will be from blind, undesigning chance, it is no more from the agent himself, or from the will itself, than if we suppose, in the case, a wise, divine disposal by permission.

**2.** It was fit that it should be at the ordering of the divine wisdom and good pleasure, whether every particular man should stand for himself, or whether the first father of mankind should be appointed as the moral and federal head and representative of the rest. If God has not liberty in this matter to determine either of these two as he pleases, it must be because determining that the first father of man should represent the rest, and not that every one should stand for himself, is injurious to mankind. For if it be not injurious, how is it unjust? But it is not injurious to mankind; for there is nothing in the nature of the case itself, that makes it better that each man should stand for himself, than that all should be represented by their common father; as the least reflection or consideration will convince any one. And if there be nothing in the nature of the thing that makes the former better for mankind than the latter, then it will follow, that they are not hurt in God's choosing and appointing the latter, rather than the former; or, which is the same thing, that it is not injurious to mankind.

**3.** When men are fallen, and become sinful, God by his sovereignty has a right to determine about their redemption as he pleases. He has a right to determine whether he will redeem any or not. He might, if he had pleased, have left all to perish, or might have redeemed all. Or, he may redeem some, and leave others; and if he doth so, he may take whom he pleases, and leave whom he pleases. To suppose that all have forfeited his favour, and deserved to perish, and to suppose that he may not leave any one individual of them to perish, implies a contradiction; because it supposes that such a one has a claim to God's favour, and is not justly liable to perish; which is contrary to the supposition.

It is meet that God should order all these things according to his own pleasure. By reason of his greatness and glory, by which he is infinitely above all, he is worthy to be sovereign, and that his pleasure should in all things take place. He is worthy that he should make himself his end, and that he should make nothing but his own wisdom his rule in pursuing that end, without asking leave or counsel of any, and without giving account of any of his matters. It is fit that he who is absolutely perfect, and infinitely wise, and the Fountain of all wisdom, should determine every thing [that he effects] by his own will, even things of the greatest importance. It is meet that he should be thus sovereign, because he is the first being, the eternal being, whence all other beings are. He is the Creator of all things; and all are absolutely and universally dependent on him; and therefore it is meet that he should act as the sovereign possessor of heaven and earth.

### APPLICATION

In the improvement of this doctrine, I would chiefly direct myself to sinners who are afraid of damnation, in a use of conviction. This may be matter of conviction to you, that it would be just and righteous with God eternally to reject and destroy you. This is what you are in danger of. You who are a Christless sinner, are a poor condemned creature: God's wrath still abides upon you; and the sentence of condemnation lies upon you. You are in God's hands, and it is uncertain what he will do with you. You are afraid what will become of you. You are afraid that it will be your portion to suffer eternal burnings; and your fears are not without grounds; you have reason to tremble every moment. But be you never so much afraid of it, let eternal damnation be never so dreadful, yet it is just. God

may nevertheless do it, and be righteous, and holy, and glorious. Though eternal damnation be what you cannot bear, and how much soever your heart shrinks at the thoughts of it, yet God's justice may be glorious in it. The dreadfulness of the thing on your part, and the greatness of your dread of it, do not render it the less righteous on God's part. If you think otherwise, it is a sign that you do not see yourself, that you are not-sensible what sin is, nor how much of it you have been guilty of. Therefore for your conviction, be directed,

First, To look over your past life: inquire at the mouth of conscience, and hear what that has to testify concerning it. Consider what you are, what light you have had, and what means you have lived under: and yet how you have behaved yourself! What have those many days and nights you have lived been filled up with? How have those years that have rolled over your heads, one after another, been spent? What has the sun shone upon you for, from day to day, while you have improved his light to serve Satan by it? What has God kept your breath in your nostrils for, and given you meat and drink, that you have spent your life and strength, supported by them, in opposing God, and rebellion against him?

How many sorts of wickedness have you not been guilty of! How manifold have been the abominations of your life! What profaneness and contempt of God has been exercised by you! How little regard have you had to the Scriptures, to the word preached, to sabbaths, and sacraments! How profanely have you talked, many of you, about those things that are holy! After what manner have many of you kept God's holy day, not regarding the holiness of the time, nor caring what you thought of in it! Yea, you have not only spent the time in worldly, vain, and unprofitable thoughts, but immoral thoughts; pleasing yourself with the reflection on past acts of wickedness, and in contriving new acts. Have not you spent much holy time in gratifying your lusts in your imaginations; yea, not only holy time, but the very time of God's public worship, when you have appeared in God's more immediate presence? How have you not only not attended to the worship, but have in the mean time been feasting your lusts, and wallowing yourself in abominable uncleanness! How many sabbaths have you spent, one after another, in a most wretched manner! Some of you not only in worldly and wicked thoughts, but also a very wicked outward behaviour! When you on sabbath-days have got along

with your wicked companions, how has holy time been treated among you! What kind of conversation has there been! Yea, how have some of you, by a very indecent carriage, openly dishonoured and cast contempt on the sacred services of God's house, and holy day! And what you have done some of you alone, what wicked practices there have been in secret, even in holy time, God and your own consciences know.

And how have you behaved yourself in the time of family prayer! And what a trade have many of you made of absenting yourselves from the worship of the families you belong to, for the sake of vain company! And how have you continued in the neglect of secret prayer! therein wilfully living in a known sin, going abreast against as plain a command as any in the Bible! Have you not been one that has cast off fear, and restrained prayer before God?

What wicked carriage have some of you been guilty of towards your parents! How far have you been from paying that honour to them which God has required! Have you not even harboured ill-will and malice towards them? and when they have displeased you, have wished evil to them? yea, and shown your vile spirit in your behaviour? and it is well if you have not mocked them behind their backs; and, like the accursed Ham and Canaan, as it were, derided your parents' nakedness instead of covering it, and hiding your eyes from it. Have not some of you often disobeyed your parents, yea, and refused to be subject to them? Is it not a wonder of mercy and forbearance, that the proverb has not before now been accomplished on you,

“The eye that mocketh at his father, and refuseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it?” (~~200~~ Proverbs 30:17.)

What revenge and malice have you been guilty of towards your neighbours! How have you indulged this spirit of the devil, hating others, and wishing evil to them, rejoicing when evil befell them, and grieving at others' prosperity, and lived in such a way for a long time! Have not some of you allowed a passionate furious spirit, and behaved yourselves in your anger more like wild beasts than like Christians?

What covetousness has been in many of you! Such has been your inordinate love of the world, and care about the things of it, that it has taken up your heart; you have allowed no room for God and religion; you have minded the world more than your eternal salvation. For the vanities of the world you have neglected reading, praying, and meditation; for the things of the world you have broken the sabbath; for the world you have spent a great deal of your time in quarrelling. For the world you have envied and hated your neighbour; for the world you have cast God, and Christ, and heaven, behind your back; for the world you have sold your own soul. You have as it were drowned your soul in worldly cares and desires; you have' been a mere earthworm, that is never in its element but when grovelling and buried in the earth.

How much of a spirit of pride has appeared in you, which is in a peculiar manner the spirit and condemnation of the devil! How have some of you vaunted yourselves in your apparel! others in their riches! others in their knowledge and abilities! How has it galled you to see others above you! How much has it gone against the grain for you to give others their due honour! And how have you shown your pride by setting up your wills in opposing others, and stirring up and promoting division, and a party spirit in public affairs.

How sensual have you been! Are there not some here that have debased themselves below the dignity of human nature, by wallowing in sensual filthiness, as swine in the mire, or as filthy vermin feeding with delight on rotten carrion? What intemperance have some of you been guilty of! How much of your precious time have you spent away at the tavern, and in drinking companies, when you ought to have been at home seeking God and your salvation in your families and closets!

And what abominable lasciviousness have some of you been guilty of! How have you indulged yourself from day to day, and from night to night, in all manner of unclean imaginations! Has not your soul been filled with them, till it has become a hold of foul spirits, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird? What foul-mouthed persons have some of you been, often in lewd and lascivious talk and unclean songs, wherein were things not fit to be spoken! And such company, where such conversation has been carried on, has been your delight. And with what unclean acts and

practices have you defiled yourself! God and your own consciences know what abominable lasciviousness you have practiced in things not fit to be named, when you have been alone; when you ought to have been reading, or meditating, or on your knees before God in secret prayer. And how have you corrupted others, as well as polluted yourselves! What vile uncleanness have you practiced in company! What abominations have you been guilty of in the dark! Such as the apostle doubtless had respect to in ~~HRD~~ Ephesians 5:12.

“For it is a shame even to speak of those things  
that are done of them in secret.”

Some of you have corrupted others, and done what in you lay to undo their souls, (if you have not actually done it,) and by your vile practices and example have made room for Satan, invited his presence, and established his interest, in the town where you have lived.

What lying have some of you been guilty of, especially in your childhood! And have not your heart and lips often disagreed since you came to riper years? What fraud, and deceit, and unfaithfulness, have many of you practiced in your own dealings with your neighbours, of which your own heart is conscious, if you have not been noted by others.

And how have some of you behaved yourselves in your family relations! How have you neglected your children's souls! And not only so, but have corrupted their minds by your bad examples; and instead of training them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, have rather brought them up in the devil's service!

How have some of you attended that sacred ordinance of the Lord's supper without any manner of serious preparation, and in a careless slightly frame of spirits, and chiefly to comply with custom! Have you not ventured to put the sacred symbols of the body and blood of Christ into your mouth, while at the same time you lived in ways of known sins, and intended no other than still to go on in the same wicked practices? And, it may be, have sat at the Lord's table with rancour in your heart against some of your brethren that you have sat therewith. You have come even to that holy feast of love among God's children, with the leaven of

malice and envy in your heart; and so have eat and drank judgment to yourself.

What stupidity and sottishness has attended your course of wickedness; which has appeared in your obstinacy under awakening dispensations of God's word and providence. And how have some of you backslidden after you have set out in religion, and quenched God's Spirit after he had been striving with you! And what unsteadiness, and slothfulness, and long misimprovement of God's strivings with you, have you been chargeable with!

Now, can you think when you have thus behaved yourself, that God is obliged to show you mercy? Are you not after all this ashamed to talk of its being hard with God to cast you off? Does it become one who has lived such a life to open his mouth to excuse himself, to object against God's justice in his condemnation, or to complain of it as hard in God not to give him converting and pardoning grace, and make him his child, and bestow on him eternal life? or to talk of his duties and great pains in religion, as if such performances were worthy to be accepted, and to draw God's heart to such a creature? If this has been your manner, does it not show how little you have considered yourself, and how little a sense you have had of your own sinfulness?

Secondly, Be directed to consider, if God should eternally reject and destroy you, what an agreeableness and exact mutual answerableness there would be between God so dealing with you, and your spirit and behaviour. There would not only be an equality, but a similitude. God declares, that his dealings with men shall be suitable to their disposition and practice.

~~PSALM~~ Psalm 18:25, 26. "With the merciful man, thou wilt show thyself merciful; with an upright man, thou wilt show thyself upright; with the pure, thou wilt show thyself pure; and with the froward, thou wilt show thyself froward." How much soever you dread damnation, and are affrighted and concerned at the thoughts of it; yet if God should indeed eternally damn you, you would be met with but in your own way; you would be dealt with exactly according to your own dealing. Surely it is but fair that you should be made to buy in the same measure in which you sell.

Here I would particularly show, — 1. That if God should eternally destroy you, it would be agreeable to your treatment of God. a. That it

would be agreeable to your treatment of Jesus Christ. 3. That it would be agreeable to your behaviour towards your neighbours. 4. That it would be according to your own foolish behaviour towards yourself.

**I.** If God should for ever cast you off, it would be exactly agreeable to your treatment of him. That you may be sensible of this, consider,

**1.** You never have exercised the least degree of love to God; and therefore it would be agreeable to your treatment of him if he should never express any love to you. When God converts and saves a sinner, it is a wonderful and unspeakable manifestation of divine love. When a poor lost soul is brought home to Christ, and has all his sins forgiven him, and is made a child of God, it will take up a whole eternity to express and declare the greatness of that love. And why should God be obliged to express such wonderful love to you, who never exercised the least degree of love to him in all your life? You never have loved God, who is infinitely glorious and lovely; and why then is God under obligation to love you, who are all over deformed and loathsome as a filthy worm, or rather a hateful viper? You have no benevolence in your heart towards God; you never rejoiced in God's happiness; if he had been miserable, and that had been possible, you would have liked it as well as if he were happy; you would not have cared how miserable he was, nor mourned for it, any more than you now do for the devil's being miserable. And why then should God be looked upon as obliged to take so much care for your happiness, as to do such great things for it, as he doth for those that are saved? Or why should God be called hard, in case he should not be careful to save you from misery? You care not what becomes of God's glory; you are not distressed how much soever his honour seems to suffer in the world: and why should God care any more for your welfare? Has it not been so, that if you could but promote your private interest, and gratify your own lusts, you cared not how much the glory of God suffered? And why may not God advance his own glory in the ruin of your welfare, not caring how much your interest suffers by it? You never so much as stirred one step, sincerely making the glory of God your end, or acting from real respect to him; and why then is it hard if God do not do such great things for you, as the changing of your nature, raising you from spiritual death to life, conquering the powers of darkness for you, translating you out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of his dear Son, delivering you from eternal misery, and

bestowing upon you eternal glory? You were not willing to deny yourself for God; you never cared to put yourself out of your way for Christ; whenever any thing cross or difficult came in your way, that the glory of God was concerned in, it has been your manner to shun it, and excuse yourself from it. You did not care to hurt yourself for Christ, whom you did not see worthy of it; and why then must it be looked upon as a hard and cruel thing, if Christ has not been pleased to spill his blood and be tormented to death for such a sinner.

**2.** You have slighted God; and why then may not God justly slight you? When sinners are sensible in some measure of their misery, they are ready to think it hard that God will take no more notice of them; that he will see them in such a lamentable distressed condition, beholding their burdens and tears, and seem to slight it, and manifest no pity to them. Their souls they think are precious: it would be a dreadful thing if they should perish, and burn in hell for ever. They do not see through it, that God should make so light of their salvation. But then, ought they not to consider, that as their souls are precious, so is God's honour precious? The honour of the infinite God, the great God of heaven and earth, is a thing of as great importance, (and surely may justly be so esteemed by God,) as the happiness of you, a poor little worm. But yet you have slighted that honour of God, and valued it no more than the dirt under your feet. You have been told that such and such things were contrary to the will of a holy God, and against his honour; but you cared not for that. God called upon you, and exhorted you to be more tender of his honour; but you went on without regarding him. Thus have you slighted God! And yet, is it hard that God should slight you? Are you more honourable than God, that he must be obliged to make much of you, how light soever you make of him and his glory?

And you have not only slighted God in time past, but you slight him still. You indeed now make a presence and show of honouring him in your prayers, and attendance on other external duties, and by sober countenance, and seeming devoutness in your words and behaviour; but it is all mere dissembling. That downcast look and seeming reverence, is not from any honour you have to God in your heart, though you would have God take it so. You who have not believed in Christ, have not the least jot of honour to God; that show of it is merely forced, and what you are

driven to by fear, like those mentioned in ~~Psalm~~ Psalm 66:3. “Through the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies submit themselves to thee.” In the original it is, “shall lie unto thee;” that is, yield feigned submission, and dissemble respect and honour to thee. There is a rod held over you that makes you seem to pay such respect to God. This religion and devotion, even the very appearance of it, would soon be gone, and all vanish away, if that were removed. Sometimes it may be you weep in your prayers, and in your hearing sermons, and hope God will take notice of it, and take it for some honour; but he sees it to be all hypocrisy. You weep for yourself; you are afraid of hell; and do you think that that is worthy of God to take much notice of you, because you can cry when you are in danger of being damned; when at the same time you indeed care nothing for God’s honour.

Seeing you thus disregard so great a God, is it a heinous thing for God to slight you, a little, wretched, despicable creature; a worm, a mere nothing, and less than nothing; a vile insect, that has risen up in contempt against the Majesty of heaven and earth?

**3.** Why should God be looked upon as obliged to bestow salvation upon you, when you have been so ungrateful for the mercies he has bestowed upon you already? God has tried you with a great deal of kindness, and he never has sincerely been thanked by you for any of it. God has watched over you, and preserved you, and provided for you, and followed you with mercy all your days; and yet you have continued sinning against him. He has given you food and raiment, but you have improved both in the service of sin. He has preserved you while you slept; but when you awoke, it was to return to the old trade of sinning. God, notwithstanding this ingratitude, has still continued his mercy; but his kindness has never won your heart, or brought you to a more

grateful behaviour towards him. It may be you have received many remarkable mercies, recoveries from sickness, or preservations of your life when exposed by accidents, when if you had died, you would have gone directly to hell; but you never had any true thankfulness for any of these mercies. God has kept you out of hell, and continued your day of grace, and the offers of salvation, so long a time; while you did not regard your own salvation so much as in secret to ask God for it. And now God has greatly added to his mercy to you, by giving you the strivings of his Spirit,

whereby a most precious opportunity for your salvation is in your hands. But what thanks has God received for it? What kind of returns have you made for all this kindness? As God has multiplied mercies, so have you multiplied provocations.

And yet now are you ready to quarrel for mercy, and to find fault with God, not only that he does not bestow more mercy, but to contend with him, because he does not bestow infinite mercy upon you, heaven with all it contains, and even himself, for your eternal portion. What ideas have you of yourself, that you think God is obliged to do so much for you, though you treat him ever so ungratefully for his kindness wherewith you have been followed all the days of your life.

**4.** You have voluntarily chosen to be with Satan in his enmity and opposition to God; how justly therefore might you be with him in his punishment! You did not choose to be on God's side, but rather chose to side with the devil, and have obstinately continued in it, against God's often repeated calls and counsels. You have chosen rather to hearken to Satan than to God, and would be with him in his work. You have given yourself up to him, to be subject to his power and government, in opposition to God; how justly therefore may God also give you up to him, and leave you in his power, to accomplish your ruin! Seeing you have yielded yourself to his will, to do as he would have you, surely God may leave you in his hands to execute his will upon you. If men will be with God's enemy, and on his side, why is God obliged to redeem them out of his hands, when they have done his work? Doubtless you would be glad to serve the devil, and be God's enemy while you live, and then to have God your friend, and deliver you from the devil, when you come to die. But will God be unjust if he deals otherwise by you? No, surely! It will be altogether and perfectly just, that you should have your portion with him with whom you have chosen to work; and that you should be in his possession to whose dominion you have yielded yourself; and if you cry to God for deliverance, he may most justly give you that answer,

“Go to the gods which you have chosen.” ( Judges 10:14.)

**5.** Consider how often you have refused to hear God's calls to you, and how just it would therefore be, if he should refuse to hear you when you call upon him. You are ready, it may be, to complain that you have often

prayed, and earnestly begged of God to show you mercy, and yet have no answer to prayer: One says, I have been constant in prayer for so many years, and God has not heard me. Another says, I have done what I can; I have prayed as earnestly as I am able; I do not see how I can do more; and it will seem hard if after all I am denied. But do you consider how often God has called, and you have denied him? God has called earnestly and for a long time; he has called and called again in his word, and in his providence, and you have refused. You were not uneasy for fear you should not show regard enough to his calls. You let him call as loud and as long as he would; for your part, you had no leisure to attend to what he said; you had other business to mind; you had these and those lusts to gratify and please, and worldly concerns to attend; you could not afford to stand considering of what God had to say to you. When the ministers of Christ have stood and pleaded with you, in his name, sabbath after sabbath, and have even spent their strength in it, how little were you moved! It did not alter you, but you went on still as you used to do; when you went away, you returned again to your sins, to your lasciviousness, to your vain mirth, to your covetousness, to your intemperance, and that has been the language of your heart and practice, <sup><BRD></sup>Exodus 5:2. "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice?" Was it no crime for you to refuse to hear when God called? And yet is it now very hard that God does not hear your earnest calls, and that though your calling on God be not from any respect to him, but merely from self-love? The devil would beg as earnestly as you, if he had any hope to get salvation by it, and a thousand times as earnestly, and yet be as much of a devil as he is now. Are your calls more worthy to be heard than God's? Or is God more obliged to regard what you say to him, than you to regard his commands, counsels, and invitations to you? What can be more justice than this, <sup><BRD></sup>Proverbs 1:24, etc. "Because I have called, and ye refused, I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I will also laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me."

**6.** Have you not taken encouragement to sin against God, on that very presumption, that God would show you mercy when you sought it? And may not God justly refuse you that mercy that you have presumed upon? You have flattered yourself, that though you did so, yet God would show you mercy when you cried earnestly to him for it: how righteous therefore would it be in God, to disappoint such a wicked presumption! It was upon that very hope that you dared to affront the Majesty of heaven so dreadfully as you have done; and can you now be so sottish as to think that God is obliged not to frustrate that hope?

When a sinner takes encouragement to neglect secret prayer which God has commanded, to gratify his lusts, to live a carnal vain life, to thwart God, to run upon him, and condemn him to his face, thinking with himself, “If I do so, God would not damn me; he is a merciful God, and therefore when I seek his mercy he will bestow it upon me;” must God be accounted hard because he will not do according to such a sinner’s presumption?

Cannot he be excused from showing such a sinner mercy when he is pleased to seek it, without incurring the charge of being unjust? if this be the case, God has no liberty to vindicate his own honour and majesty; but must lay himself open to all manner of affronts, and yield himself up to the abuses of vile men, though they disobey, despise, and dishonour him, as much as they will; and when they have done, his mercy and pardoning grace must not be in his own power and at his own disposal, but he must be obliged to dispense it at their call. He must take these bold and vile contemners of his Majesty, when it suits them to ask it, and must forgive all their sins, and not only so, but must adopt them into his family, and make them his children, and bestow eternal glory upon them. What mean, low, and strange thoughts have such men of God, who think thus of him! Consider, that you have injured God the more, and have been the worse enemy to him, for his being a merciful God. So have you treated that attribute of God’s mercy! How just is it therefore that you never should have any benefit of that attribute!

There is something peculiarly heinous in sinning against the mercy of God more than other attributes. There is such base and horrid ingratitude, in being the worse to God because he is a being of infinite goodness and grace, that it above all things renders wickedness vile and detestable. This

ought to win us, and engage us to serve God better; but instead of that, to sin against him the more, has something inexpressibly bad in it, and does in a peculiar manner enhance guilt, and incense wrath; as seems to be intimated, ~~4111~~ Romans 2:4, 5. “Or despises” thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.”

The greater the mercy of God is, the more should you be engaged to love him, and live to his glory. But it has been contrariwise with you; the consideration of the mercies of God being so exceeding great, is the thing wherewith you have encouraged yourself in sin. You have heard that the mercy of God was without bounds, that it was sufficient to pardon the greatest sinner, and you have upon that very account ventured to be a very great sinner. Though it was very offensive to God, though you heard that God infinitely hated sin, and that such practices as you went on in were exceeding contrary to his nature, will, and glory, yet that did not make you uneasy; you heard that he was a very merciful God, and had grace enough to pardon you, and so cared not how offensive your sins were to him. How long have some of you gone on in sin, and what great sins have some of you been guilty of, on that presumption! Your own conscience can give testimony to it, that this has made you refuse God’s calls, and has made you regardless of his repeated commands. Now, how righteous would it be if God should swear in his wrath, that you should never be the better for his being infinitely merciful!

Your ingratitude has been the greater, that you have not only abused the attribute of God’s mercy, taking encouragement from it to continue in sin, but you have also presumed that God would exercise infinite mercy to you in particular; which consideration should have especially endeared God to you. You have taken encouragement to sin the more, from that consideration, that Christ came into the world and died to save sinners; such thanks has Christ had from you, for enduring such a tormenting death for his enemies! Now, how justly might God refuse that you should ever be the better for his Son’s laying down his life. It was because of these things that you put off seeking salvation. You would take the pleasures of sin still longer, hardening yourself because mercy was infinite, and it

would not be too late, if you sought it afterwards; now, how justly may God disappoint you in this, and so order it that it shall be too late.

**7.** How have some of you risen up against God, and in the frame of your minds opposed him in his sovereign dispensations! And how justly upon that account might God oppose you, and set himself against you! You never yet would submit to God; never willingly comply, that God should have dominion over the world, and that he should govern it for his own glory, according to his own wisdom. You, a poor worm, a potsherd, a broken piece of an earthen vessel, have dared to find fault and quarrel with God. <sup><24819></sup>Isaiah 45:9. “Woe to him that strives with his Maker. Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth: shall the clay say to him that fashioned it, What makest thou?” But yet you have ventured to do it. <sup><819></sup>Romans 9:20. “Who art thou, O man, that repliest against God?” But yet you have thought you were big enough; you have taken upon you to call God to an account, why he does thus and thus; you have said to Jehovah, What doest thou?

If you have been restrained by fear from openly venting your opposition and enmity of heart against God’s government, yet it has been in you; you have not been quiet in the frame of your mind; you have had the heart of a viper within, and have been ready to spit your venom at God. It is well if sometimes you have not actually done it, by tolerating blasphemous thoughts and malignant risings of heart against him; yea, and the frame of your heart in some measure appeared in impatient and fretful behaviour. — Now, seeing you have thus opposed God, how just is it that God should oppose you! Or is it because you are so much better, and so much greater than God, that it is a crime for him to make that opposition against you which you make against him? Do you think that the liberty of making opposition is your exclusive prerogative, so that you may be an enemy to God, but God must by no means be an enemy to you, but must be looked upon under obligation nevertheless to help you, and save you by his blood, and bestow his best blessings upon you?

Consider how in the frame of your mind you have thwarted God in those very exercises of mercy towards others that you are seeking for yourself. God exercising his infinite grace towards your neighbours, has put you into an ill frame, and it may be, set you in a tumult of mind. How justly

therefore may God refuse ever to exercise that mercy towards you! Have you not thus opposed God showing mercy to others, even at the very time when you pretended to be earnest with God for pity and help for yourself? yea, and while you were endeavouring to get something wherewith to recommend yourself to God? And will you look to God still with a challenge of mercy, and contend with him for it notwithstanding? Can you who have such a heart, and have thus behaved yourself, come to God for any other than mere sovereign mercy?

**II.** If you should for ever be cast off by God, it would be agreeable to your treatment of Jesus Christ. It would have been just with God if he had cast you off for ever, without ever making you the offer of a Saviour. But God hath not done that; he has provided a Saviour for sinners, and offered him to you, even his own Son Jesus Christ, who is the only Saviour of men. All that are not forever cast off are saved by him. God offers men salvation through him, and has promised us, that if we come to him, we shall not be cast off. But you have treated, and still treat, this Saviour after such a manner, that if you should be eternally cast off by God, it would be most agreeable to your behaviour towards him; which appears by this, viz. “That you reject Christ, and will not have him for your Saviour.”

If God offers you a Saviour from deserved punishment, and you will not receive him, then surely it is just that you should go without a Saviour. Or is God obliged, because you do not like this Saviour, to provide you another? He has given an infinitely honourable and glorious person, even his only-begotten Son, to be a sacrifice for sin, and so provided salvation; and this Saviour is offered to you: now if you refuse to accept him, is God therefore unjust if he does not save you? Is he obliged to save you in a way of your own choosing, because you do not like the way of his choosing? Or will you charge Christ with injustice because he does not become your Saviour, when at the same time you will not have him when he offers himself to you, and beseeches you to accept of him as your Saviour?

I am sensible that by this time many persons are ready to object against this. If all should speak what they now think, we should hear a murmuring all over the meeting-house, and one and another would say, “I cannot see how this can be, that I am not willing that Christ should be my Saviour,

when I would give all the world that he was my Saviour: how is it possible that I should not be willing to have Christ for my Saviour, when this is what I am seeking after, and praying for, and striving for, as for my life?"

Here therefore I would endeavour to convince you, that you are under a gross mistake in this matter. And, first, I would endeavour to show the grounds of your mistake. And, 2ndly, To demonstrate to you, that you have rejected, and do wilfully reject, Jesus Christ.

**1st**, That you may see the weak grounds of your mistake, consider,

**1.** There is a great deal of difference between a willingness not to be damned, and a being willing to receive Christ for your Saviour. You have the former; there is no doubt of that: no" body supposes that you love misery so as to choose an eternity of it; and so doubtless you are willing to be saved from eternal misery. But that is a very different thing from being willing to come to Christ: persons very commonly mistake the one for the other, but they are quite two things. You may love the deliverance, but hate the deliverer. You tell of willingness; but consider what is the object of that willingness. It does not respect Christ; the way of salvation by him is not at all the object of it; but it is wholly terminated on your escape from misery. The inclination of your will goes no further than self, it never reaches Christ. You are willing not to be miserable; that is, you love yourself, and there your will and choice terminate. And it is but a vain presence and delusion to say or think, that you are willing to accept of Christ.

**2.** There is certainly a great deal of difference between a forced compliance and a free willingness. Force and freedom cannot consist together. Now that willingness, whereby you think you are willing to have Christ for a Saviour, is merely a forced thing. Your heart does not go out after Christ of itself, but you are forced and driven to seek an interest in him. Christ has no share at all in your heart; there is no manner of closing of the heart with him. This forced compliance is not what Christ seeks of you; he seeks a free and willing acceptance,

"Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power."

(~~Psalm~~ Psalm 110:3.)

He seeks not that you should receive him against your will, but with a free will. He seeks entertainment in your heart and choice. And if you refuse thus to receive Christ, how just is it that Christ should refuse to receive you! How reasonable are Christ's terms, who offers to save all those that willingly, or with a good will, accept of him for their Saviour! Who can rationally expect that Christ should force himself upon any man to be his Saviour? Or what can be looked for more reasonable, than that all who would be saved by Christ, should heartily and freely entertain him? And surely it would be very dishonourable for Christ to offer himself upon lower terms. — But I would now proceed,

**2ndly**, To show that you are not willing to have Christ for a Saviour. To convince you of it, consider,

**1.** How it is possible that you should be willing to accept of Christ as a Saviour from the desert of a punishment that you are not sensible you have deserved. If you are truly willing to accept of Christ as a Saviour, it must be as a sacrifice to make atonement for your guilt. Christ came into the world on this errand, to offer himself as an atonement, to answer for our desert of punishment. But how can you be willing to have Christ for a Saviour from a desert of hell, if you be not sensible that you have a desert of hell? If you have not really deserved everlasting burnings in hell, then the very offer of an atonement for such a desert is an imposition upon you. If you have no such guilt upon you, then the very offer of a satisfaction for that guilt is an injury, because it implies in it a charge of guilt that you are free from. Now therefore it is impossible that a man who is not convinced of his guilt can be willing to accept of such an offer; because he cannot be willing to accept the charge which the offer implies. A man who is not convinced that he has deserved so dreadful a punishment, cannot willingly submit to be charged with it. If he thinks he is willing, it is but a mere forced, feigned business; because in his heart he looks upon himself greatly injured; and therefore he cannot freely accept of Christ, under that notion of a Saviour from the desert of such a punishment; for such an acceptance is an implicit owning that he does deserve such a punishment.

I do not say, but that men may be willing to be saved from an undeserved punishment; they may rather not suffer it than suffer it. But a man cannot

be willing to accept one at God's hands, under the notion of a Saviour from a punishment deserved from him which he thinks he has not deserved; it is impossible that any one should freely allow a Saviour under that notion. Such an one cannot like the way of salvation by Christ; for if he thinks he has not deserved hell, then he will think that freedom from hell is a debt; and therefore cannot willingly and heartily receive it as a free gift. — If a king should condemn a man to some tormenting death, which the condemned person thought himself not deserving of, but looked upon the sentence as unjust and cruel, and the king, when the time of execution drew nigh, should offer him his pardon, under the notion of a very great act of grace and clemency, the condemned person never could willingly and heartily allow it under that notion, because he judged himself unjustly condemned.

Now by this it is evident that you are not willing to accept of Christ as your Saviour; because you never yet had such a sense of your own sinfulness, and such a conviction of your great guilt in God's sight, as to be indeed convinced that you lay justly condemned to the punishment of hell. You never were convinced that you had forfeited all favour, and were in God's hands, and at his sovereign and arbitrary disposal, to be either destroyed or saved, just as he pleased. You never yet were convinced of the sovereignty of God. Hence are there so many objections arising against the justice of your punishment from original sin, and from God's decrees, from mercy shown to others, and the like.

**2.** That you are not sincerely willing to accept of Christ as your Saviour, appears by this, That you never have been convinced that he is sufficient for the work of your salvation. You never had a sight or sense of any such excellency or worthiness in Christ, as should give such great value to his hood and his mediation with God, as that it was sufficient to be accepted for such exceeding guilty creatures, who have so provoked God, and exposed themselves to such amazing wrath. Saying it is so, and allowing it to be as others say, is a very different thing from being really convinced of it, and a being made sensible of it in your own heart. The sufficiency of Christ depends upon, or rather consists in, his excellency. It is because he is so excellent a person that his blood is of sufficient value to atone for sin, and it is hence that his obedience is so worthy in God's sight; it is also hence that his intercession is so prevalent; and therefore those that never

had any spiritual sight or sense of Christ's excellency, cannot be sensible of his sufficiency.

And that sinners are not convinced that Christ is sufficient for the work he has undertaken, appears most manifestly when they are under great convictions of their sin, and danger of God's wrath. Though it may be before they thought they could allow Christ to be sufficient, (for it is easy to allow any one to be sufficient for our defence at a time when we see no danger,) yet when they come to be sensible of their guilt and God's wrath, what discouraging thoughts do they entertain! How are they ready to draw towards despair, as if there were no hope or help for such wicked creatures as they! The reason is, They have no apprehension or sense of any other way that God's majesty can be vindicated, but only in their misery. To tell them of the blood of Christ signifies nothing, it does not relieve their sinking, despairing hearts. This makes it most evident that they are not convinced that Christ is sufficient to be their Mediator. — And as long as they are unconvinced of this, it is impossible they should be willing to accept of him as their Mediator and Saviour. A man in distressing fear will not willingly betake himself to a fort that he judges not sufficient to defend him from the enemy. A man will not willingly venture out into the ocean in a ship that he suspects is leaky, and will sink before he gets through his voyage.

**3.** It is evident that you are not willing to have Christ for your Saviour, because you have so mean an opinion of him, that you durst not trust his faithfulness. One that undertakes to be the Saviour of souls had need be faithful; for if he fails in such a trust, how great is the loss! But you are not convinced of Christ's faithfulness; as is evident, because at such times as when you are in a considerable measure sensible of your guilt and God's anger, you cannot be convinced that Christ is willing to accept of you, or that he stands ready to receive you, if you should come to him, though Christ so much invites you to come to him, and has so fully declared that he will not reject you, if you do come; as particularly,

“Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.”

( John 6:37.)

Now, there is no man can be heartily willing to trust his eternal welfare in the hands of an unfaithful person, or one whose faithfulness he suspects.

**4.** You are not willing to be saved in that way by Christ, as is evident, because you are not willing that your own goodness should be set at nought. In the way of salvation by Christ men's own goodness is wholly set at nought; there is no account at all made of it. Now you cannot be willing to be saved in a way wherein your own goodness is set at nought, as is evident, since you make much of it yourself. You make much of your prayers and pains in religion, and are often thinking of them; how considerable do they appear to you, when you look back upon them! And some of you are thinking how much more you have done than others, and expecting some respect or regard that God should manifest to what you do. Now, if you make so much of what you do yourself, it is impossible that you should be freely willing that God should make nothing of it. As we may see in other things; if a man is proud of a great estate, or if he values himself much upon his honourable office, or his great abilities, it is impossible that he should like it, and heartily approve of it, that others should make light of these things and despise them.

Seeing therefore it is so evident, that you refuse to accept of Christ as your Saviour, why is Christ to be blamed that he does not save you? Christ has offered himself to you to be your Saviour in time past, and he continues offering himself still, and you continue to reject him, and yet complain that he does not save you. — So strangely unreasonable, and inconsistent with themselves, are gospel sinners!

But I expect there are many of you that still object. Such an objection as this, is probably now in the hearts of many here present.

**Object.** If I am not willing to have Christ for my Saviour, I cannot make myself willing. — But I would give an answer to this objection by laying down two things, that must be acknowledged to be exceeding evident.

**1.** It is no excuse, that you cannot receive Christ of yourself, unless you would if you could. This is so evident of itself, that it scarce needs any proof. Certainly if persons would not if they could, it is just the same thing as to the blame that lies upon them, whether they can or cannot. If you were willing, and then found that you could not, your being unable would alter the case, and might be some excuse; because then the defect would not be in your will, but only in your ability. But as long as you will not, it is no matter, whether you have ability or no ability.

If you are not willing to accept of Christ, it follows that you have no sincere willingness to be willing; because the will always necessarily approves of and rests in its own acts. To suppose the contrary would be to suppose a contradiction; it would be to suppose that a man's will is contrary to itself, or that he wills contrary to what he himself wills. As you are not willing to come to Christ, and cannot make yourself willing, so you have no sincere desire to be willing; and therefore may most justly perish without a Saviour. There is no excuse at all for you; for say what you will about your inability, the seat of your blame lies in your perverse will, that is an enemy to the Saviour. It is in vain for you to tell of your want of power, as long as your will is found defective. If a man should hate you, and smite you in the face, but should tell you at the same time, that he hated you so much, that he could not help choosing and willing so to do, would you take it the more patiently for that? Would not your indignation be rather stirred up the more?

**2.** If you would be willing if you could, that is no excuse, unless your willingness to be willing be sincere. That which is hypocritical, and does not come from the heart, but is merely forced, ought wholly to be set aside, as worthy of no consideration; because common sense teaches, that what is not hearty, but hypocritical, is indeed nothing, being only a show of what is not; but that which is good for nothing, ought to go for nothing. But if you set aside all that is not free, and call nothing a willingness, but a free hearty willingness, then see how the case stands, and whether or no you have not lost all your excuse for standing out against the calls of the gospel. You say you would make yourself willing to accept if you could; but it is not from any good principle that you are willing for that. It is not from any free inclination, or true respect to Christ, or any love to your duty, or any spirit of obedience. It is not from the influence of any real respect, or tendency in your heart, towards any thing good, or from any other principle than such as is in the hearts of devils, and would make them have the same sort of willingness in the same circumstances. It is therefore evident, that there can be no goodness in that would be willing to come to Christ: and that which has no goodness, cannot be an excuse for any badness. If there be no good in it, then it signifies nothing, and weighs nothing, when put into the scales to counterbalance that which is bad.

Sinners therefore spend their time in foolish arguing and objecting, making much of that which is good for nothing, making those excuses that are not worth offering. It is in vain to keep making objections. You stand justly condemned. blame lies at your door: Thrust it off from you as often as you will, it will return upon you. Sew fig-leaves as long as you will, your nakedness will appear. You continue wilfully and wickedly rejecting Jesus Christ, and will not have him for your Saviour, and therefore it is sottish madness in you to charge Christ with injustice that he does not save you.

Here is the sin of unbelief! Thus the guilt of that great sin lies upon you! If you never had thus treated a Saviour, you might most justly have been damned to all eternity: it would but be exactly agreeable to your treatment of God. But besides this, when God, notwithstanding, has offered you his own dear Son, to save you from this endless misery you had deserved, and not only so, but to make you happy eternally in the enjoyment of himself, you have refused him, and would not have him for your Saviour, and still refuse to comply with the offers of the gospel; what can render any person more inexcusable? If you should now perish for ever, what can you have to say?

Hereby the justice of God in your destruction appears in two respects:

**1.** It is more abundantly manifest that it is just that you should be destroyed. Justice never appears so conspicuous as it does after refused and abused mercy. Justice in damnation appears abundantly the more clear and bright, after a wilful rejection of offered salvation. What can an offended prince do more than freely offer pardon to a condemned malefactor? And if he refuses to accept of it, will any one say that his execution is unjust?

**2.** God's justice will appear in your greater destruction. Besides the guilt that you would have had if a Saviour never had been offered, you bring that great additional guilt upon you, of most ungratefully refusing offered deliverance. What more base and vile treatment of God can there be, than for you, when justly condemned to eternal misery, and ready to be executed, and God graciously sends his own Son, who comes and knocks at your door with a pardon in his hand, and not only a pardon, but a deed of eternal glory; I say, what can be worse, than for you, out of dislike and enmity against God and his Son, to refuse to accept those benefits at his

hands? How justly may the anger of God be greatly incensed and increased by it! when a sinner thus ungratefully rejects mercy, his last error is worse than the first; this is more heinous than all his former rebellion, and may justly bring down more fearful wrath upon him.

The heinousness of this sin of rejecting a Saviour especially appears in two things:

- 1.** The greatness of the benefits offered: which appears in the greatness of the deliverance, which is from inexpressible degrees of corruption and wickedness of heart and life, the least degree of which is infinitely evil; and from misery that is everlasting; and in the greatness and glory of the inheritance purchased and offered. ~~scrip~~ Hebrews 2:3. “How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation.”
- 2.** The wonderfulness of the way in which these benefits are procured and offered. That God should lay help on his own Son, when our case was so deplorable that help could be had in no mere creature; and that he should undertake for us, and should come into the world, and take upon him our nature, and should not only appear in a low state of life, but should die such a death, and endure such torments and contempt for sinners while enemies, how wonderful is it! And what tongue or pen can set forth the greatness of the ingratitude, baseness, and perverseness there is in it, when a perishing sinner that is in the most extreme necessity of salvation, rejects it, after it is procured in such a way as this! That so glorious a person should be thus treated, and that when he comes on so gracious an errand! That he should stand so long offering himself and calling and inviting, as he has done to many of you, and all to no purpose, but all the while be set at nought! Surely you might justly be cast into hell without one more offer of a Saviour! yea, and thrust down into the lowest hell! Herein you have exceeded the very devils; for they never rejected the offers of such glorious mercy; no, nor of any mercy at all. This will be the distinguishing condemnation of gospel-sinners,

“He that believeth not, is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God.”

(~~scrip~~ John 3:18.)

— That outward smoothness of your carriage towards Christ, that appearance of respect to him in your looks, your speeches, and gestures, do not argue but that you set him at nought in your heart. There may be much of these outward shows of respect, and yet you be like Judas, that betrayed the Son of man with a kiss; and like those mockers that bowed the knee before him, and at the same time spat in his face.

**III.** If God should for ever cast you off and destroy you, it would be agreeable to your treatment of others. — It would be no other than what would be exactly answerable to your behaviour towards your fellow-creatures, that have the same human nature, and are naturally in the same circumstances with you, and that you ought to love as yourself. And that appears especially in two things.

**1.** You have many of you been opposite in your spirit to the salvation of others. There are several ways that natural men manifest a spirit of opposition against the salvation of souls. It sometimes appears by a fear that their companions, acquaintance, and equals, will obtain mercy, and so become unspeakably happier than they. It is sometimes manifested by an uneasiness at the news of what others have hopefully obtained. It appears when persons envy others for it, and dislike them the more, and disrelish their talk, and avoid their company, and cannot bear to hear their religious discourse, and especially to receive warnings and counsels from them. And it oftentimes appears by their backwardness to entertain charitable thoughts of them, and by their being brought with difficulty to believe that they have obtained mercy, and a forwardness to listen to any thing that seems to contradict it. The devil hated to own Job's sincerity, ~~<BOOK~~ Job 1:7, etc., and chapter 2 verses 3, 4, 5. There appears very often much of this spirit of the devil in natural men. Sometimes they are ready to make a ridicule of others' pretended godliness: they speak of the ground of others' hopes, as the enemies of the Jews did of the wall that they built.

“Now Tobiah the Ammonite was by him, and he said, That which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone-wall.” (~~<BOOK~~ Nehemiah 4:3.)

There are many that join with Sanballat and Tobiah, and are of the same spirit with them. There always was, and always will be, an enmity betwixt the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman. It appeared in Cain,

who hated his brother, because he was more acceptable to God than himself; and it appears still in these times, and in this place. There are many that are like the elder brother, who could not bear that the prodigal when he returned should be received with such joy and good entertainment, and was put into a fret by it, both against his brother that had returned, and his father that made him so welcome. Luke 15.

Thus have many of you been opposed to the salvation of others, who stand in as great necessity of it as you. You have been against their being delivered from everlasting misery, who can bear it no better than you; not because their salvation would do you any hurt, or their damnation help you, any otherwise than as it would gratify that vile spirit that is so much like the spirit of the devil, who, because he is miserable himself, is unwilling that others should be happy. How just therefore is it that God should be opposed to your salvation? If you have so little love or mercy in you as to begrudge your neighbour's salvation, whom you have no cause to hate, but the law of God and nature requires you to love, why is God bound to exercise such infinite love and mercy to you, as to save you at the price of his own blood? you, whom he is no way bound to love, but who have deserved his hatred a thousand and a thousand times? You are not willing that others should be converted, who have behaved themselves injuriously towards you; and yet, will you count it hard if God does not bestow converting grace upon you that have deserved ten thousand times as ill of God, as ever any of your neighbours have of you? You are opposed to God's showing mercy to those that you think have been vicious persons, and are very unworthy of such mercy. Is others' unworthiness a just reason why God should not bestow mercy on them? and yet will God be heard, if, notwithstanding all your unworthiness, and the abominableness of your spirit and practice in his sight, he does not show you mercy? You would have God bestow liberally on you, and upbraid not; but yet when he shows mercy to others, you are ready to upbraid as soon as you hear of it: you immediately are thinking with yourself how ill they have behaved themselves; and it may be your mouths on this occasion are open, enumerating and aggravating the sins they have been guilty of. You would have God bury all your faults, and wholly blot out all your transgressions; but yet if he bestows mercy on others, it may be you will take that occasion to rake up all their old faults

that you can think of. You do not much reflect on and condemn yourself for your baseness and unjust spirit towards others, in your opposition to their salvation; you do not quarrel with yourself, and condemn yourself for this; but yet you in your heart will quarrel with God, and fret at his dispensations, because you think he seems opposed to showing mercy to you. One would think that the consideration of these things should for ever stop your mouth.

**2.** Consider how you have promoted others' damnation. Many of you, by the bad examples you have set, by corrupting the minds of others, by your sinful conversation, by leading them into or strengthening them in sin, and by the mischief you have done in human society other ways that might be mentioned, have been guilty of those things that have tended to others' damnation. You have heretofore appeared on the side of sin and Satan, and have strengthened their interest, and have been many ways accessory to others' sins, have hardened their hearts, and thereby have done what has tended to the ruin of their souls. — Without doubt there are those here present who have been in a great measure the means of others' damnation. One man may really be a means of others' damnation as well as salvation. Christ charges the scribes and Pharisees with this,

“Ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering, to go in.”  
(<sup>4123</sup> Matthew 23:13.)

We have no reason to think that this congregation has none in it who are cursed from day to day by poor souls that are roaring out in hell, whose damnation they have been the means of, or have greatly contributed to. — There are many who contribute to their own children's damnation, by neglecting their education, by setting them bad examples, and bringing them up in sinful ways. They take some care of their bodies, but take little care of their poor souls; they provide for them bread to eat, but deny them the bread of life, that their famishing souls stand in need of. And are there no such parents here who have thus treated their children? If their children be not gone to hell, no thanks to them; it is not because they have not done what has tended to their destruction. Seeing therefore you have had no more regard to others' salvation, and have promoted their damnation, how justly might God leave you to perish yourself!

**IV.** If God should eternally cast you off, it would but be agreeable to your own behaviour towards yourself; and that in two respects:

**1.** In being so careless of your own salvation. You have refused to take care for your salvation, as God has counselled and commanded you from time to time; and why may not God neglect it, now you seek it of him? Is God obliged to be more careful of your happiness, than you are either of your own happiness or his glory? Is God bound to take that care for you, out of love to you, that you will not take for yourself, either from love to yourself, or regard to his authority? How long, and how greatly, have you neglected the welfare of your precious soul, refusing to take pains and deny yourself, or put yourself a little out of your way for your salvation, while God has been calling upon you! Neither your duty to God, nor love to your own soul, were enough to induce you to do little things for your own eternal welfare; and yet do you now expect that God should do great things, putting forth almighty power, and exercising infinite mercy for it? You were urged to take care for your salvation, and not to put it off. You were told that was the best time before you grew older, and that it might be, if you would put it off, God would not hear you afterwards; but yet you would not hearken; you would run the venture of it. Now how justly might God order it so, that it should be too late, leaving you to seek in vain! You were told that you would repent of it if you delayed; but you would not hear: how justly therefore may God give you cause to repent of it, by refusing to show you mercy now! If God sees you going on in ways contrary to his commands and his glory, and requires you to forsake them, and tells you that they tend to the destruction of your own soul, and therefore counsels you to avoid them, and you refuse; how just would it be if God should be provoked by it, henceforward to be as careless of the good of your soul as you are yourself!

**2.** You have not only neglected your salvation, but you have wilfully taken direct courses to undo yourself. You have gone on in those ways and practices which have directly tended to your damnation, and have been perverse and obstinate in it. You cannot plead ignorance; you had all the light set before you that you could desire. God told you that you were undoing yourself; but yet you would do it. He told you that the path you were going in led to destruction, and counselled you to avoid it; but you would not hearken. How justly therefore may God leave you to be

undone! You have obstinately persisted to travel in the way that leads to hell for a long time, contrary to God's continual counsels and commands, till it may be at length you are got almost to your journey's end, and are come near to hell's gate, and so begin to be sensible of your danger and misery; and now account it unjust and hard if God will not deliver you! You have destroyed yourself, and destroyed yourself wilfully, contrary to God's repeated counsels, yea, and destroyed yourself in fighting against God. Now therefore, why do you blame any but yourself if you are destroyed? If you will undo yourself in opposing God, and while God opposes you by his calls and counsels, and, it may be too, by the convictions of his Spirit, what can you object against it, if God now leaves you to be undone? You would have your own way, and did not like that God should oppose you in it, and your way was to ruin your own soul; how just therefore is it, if, now at length, God ceases to oppose you, and falls in with you, and lets your soul be ruined; and as you would destroy yourself, so should put to his hand to destroy you too! The ways you went on in had a natural tendency to your misery: if you would drink poison in opposition to God, and in contempt of him and his advice, who can you blame but yourself if you are poisoned, and so perish? If you would run into the fire against all restraints both of God's mercy and authority, you must even blame yourself if you are burnt.

Thus I have proposed some things for your consideration, which, if you are not exceeding blind, senseless, and perverse, will stop your mouth, and convince you that you stand justly condemned before God; and that he would in no wise deal hardly with you, but altogether justly, in denying you any mercy, and in refusing to hear your prayers, though you pray never so earnestly, and never so often, and continue in it never so long. God may utterly disregard your tears and moans, your heavy heart, your earnest desires, and great endeavours; and he may cast you into eternal destruction, without any regard to your welfare, denying you converting grace, and giving you over to Satan, and at last cast you into the lake that bums with fire and brimstone, to be there to eternity, having no rest day or night, for ever glorifying his justice upon you in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb.

**Object.** But here many may still object, (for I am sensible it is a hard thing to stop sinners' mouths,) "God shows mercy to others that have done these things as well as I, yea, that have done a great deal worse than I."

**Ans.** 1. That does not prove that God is any way bound to show mercy to you, or them either. If God bestows it on others, he does not so because he is bound to bestow it: he might if he had pleased, with glorious justice, have denied it them. If God bestows it on some, that does not prove that he is bound to bestow it on any; and if he is bound to bestow it on none, then he is not bound to bestow it on you. God is in debt to none; and if he gives to some that he is not in debt to, because it is his pleasure, that does not bring him into debt to others. It alters not the case as to you, whether others have it, or have it not: you do not deserve damnation the less, if mercy never had been bestowed on any at all. ~~Ans~~ Matthew 20:15. "Is thine eye evil, because I am good?"

**2.** If this objection be good, then the exercise of God's mercy is not in his own right, and his grace is not his own to give. That which God may not dispose of as he pleases, is not his own: for that which is one's own, is at his own disposal: but if it be not God's own, then he is not capable of making a gift or present of it to any one; it is impossible to give what is a debt. — What is it that you would make of God? Must the great God be tied up, that he must not use his own pleasure in bestowing his own gifts, but if he bestows them on one, must be looked upon obliged to bestow them on another? Is not God worthy to have the same right, with respect to the gifts of his grace, that a man has to his money or goods? Is it because God is not so great, and should be more in subjection than man, that this cannot be allowed him? If any of you see cause to show kindness to a neighbour, do all the rest of your neighbours come to you, and tell you, that you owe them so much as you have given to such a man? But this is the way that you deal with God, as though God were not worthy to have as absolute a property in his goods as you have in yours.

At this rate God cannot make a present of any thing; he has nothing of his own to bestow: if he has a mind to show peculiar favour to some, or to lay some particular persons under peculiar obligations to him, he cannot do it; because he has no special gift at his own disposal. If this be the case, why do you pray to God to bestow saving grace upon you? If God does not do

fairly to deny it you, because he bestows it on others, then it is not worth your while to pray for it, but you may go and tell him that he has bestowed it on others as bad or worse than you, and so demand it of him as a debt. And at this rate persons never need to thank God for salvation, when it is bestowed; for what occasion is there to thank God for that which was not at his own disposal, and that he could not fairly have denied? The thing at bottom is, that men have low thoughts of God, and high thoughts of themselves; and therefore it is that they look upon God as having so little right, and they so much.

“Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?”

(~~485~~ Matthew 20:15.)

**3.** God may justly show greater respect to others than to you, for you have shown greater respect to others than to God. You have rather chosen to offend God than men. God only shows a greater respect to others, who are by nature your equals, than to you; but you have shown a greater respect to those that are infinitely inferior to God than to him. You have shown a greater regard to wicked men than to God; you have honoured them more, loved them better, and adhered to them rather than to him. Yea, you have honoured the devil, in many respects, more than God: you have chosen his will and his interest, rather than God’s will and his glory: you have chosen a little worldly pelf, rather than God: you have set more by a vile lust than by him: you have chosen these things, and rejected God. You have set your heart on these things, and cast God behind your back: and where is the injustice if God is pleased to show greater respect to others than to you, or if he chooses others and rejects you? You have shown great respect to vile and worthless things, and no respect to God’s glory; and why may not God set his love on others, and have no respect to your happiness? You have shown great respect to others, and not to God, whom you are laid under infinite obligations to respect above all; and why may not God show respect to others, and not to you, who never have laid him under the least obligation?

And will you not be ashamed, notwithstanding all these things, still to open your mouth, to object and cavil about the decrees of God, and other things that you cannot fully understand. Let the decrees of God be what they will, that alters not the case as to your liberty, any more than if God

had only foreknown. And why is God to blame for decreeing things? Especially since he decrees nothing but good. How unbecoming an infinitely wise Being would it have been to have made a world, and let things run at random, without disposing events, or fore-ordering how they should come to pass? And what is that to you, how God has fore-ordered things, as long as your constant experience teaches you that it does not hinder your doing what you choose to do. This you know, and your daily practice and behaviour amongst men declares that you are fully sensible of it, with respect to yourself and others. Still to object, because there are some things in God's dispensations above your understanding, is exceedingly unreasonable. Your own conscience charges you with great guilt, and with those things that have been mentioned, let the secret things of God be what they will. Your conscience charges you with those vile dispositions, and that base behaviour towards God, that you would at any time most highly resent in your neighbour towards you, and that not a whit the less for any concern those secret counsels and mysterious dispensations of God may have in the matter. It is in vain for you to exalt yourself against an infinitely great, and holy, and just God. If you continue in it, it will be to your eternal shame and confusion, when hereafter you shall see at whose door all the blame of your misery lies.

I will finish what I have to say to natural men in the application of this doctrine, with a caution not to improve the doctrine to discouragement. For though it would be righteous in God for ever to cast you off, and destroy you, yet it would also be just in God to save you, in and through Christ, who has made complete satisfaction for all sin. ~~4125~~ Romans 3:25, 26. "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Yea, God may, through this Mediator, not only justly, but honourably, show you mercy. The blood of Christ is so precious, that it is fully sufficient to pay the debt you have contracted, and perfectly to vindicate the Divine Majesty from all the dishonour cast upon it, by those many great sins of yours that have been mentioned. It was as great, and indeed a much greater thing, for Christ to die, than it would have been for you and all mankind to have burnt in hell to all eternity. Of such dignity and

excellency is Christ in the eyes of God, that, seeing he has suffered so much for poor sinners, God is willing to be at peace with them, however vile and unworthy they have been, and on how many accounts soever the punishment would be just. So that you need not be at all discouraged from seeking mercy, for there is enough in Christ.

Indeed it would not become the glory of God's majesty to show mercy to you, so sinful and vile a creature, for any thing that you have done; for such worthless and despicable things as your prayers, and other religious performances. It would be very dishonourable and unworthy of God so to do, and it is in vain to expect it. He will show mercy only on Christ's account, and that, according to his sovereign pleasure, on whom he pleases, when he pleases, and in what manner he pleases. You cannot bring him under obligation by your works; do what you will, he will not look on himself obliged. But if it be his pleasure, he can honourably show mercy through Christ to any sinner of you all, not one in this congregation excepted. — Therefore here is encouragement for you still to seek and wait, notwithstanding all your wickedness; agreeable to Samuel's speech to the children of Israel, when they were terrified with the thunder and rain that God sent, and when guilt stared them in the face,

“Fear not; ye have done all this wickedness; yet turn not aside from following the Lord, but serve the Lord with all your heart.”  
(<sup>4921</sup>1 Samuel 12:20.)

I would conclude this discourse by putting the godly in mind of the freeness and wonderfulness of the grace of God towards them. For such were the same of you. — The case was just so with you as you have heard; you had such a wicked heart, you lived such a wicked life, and it would have been most just with God for ever to have cast you off; but he has had mercy upon you; he hath made his glorious grace appear in your everlasting salvation. You had no love to God; but yet he has exercised unspeakable love to you. You have contemned God, and set light by him; but so great a value has God's grace set on you and your happiness, that you have been redeemed at the price of the blood of his own Son. You chose to be with Satan in his service; but yet God hath you a joint heir with Christ of his glory. You were ungrateful for past mercies; yet God not only continued those mercies, but bestowed unspeakably greater

mercies upon you. You refused to hear when God called; yet God heard you when you called. You abused the infiniteness of God's mercy to encourage yourself in sin against him; yet God has manifested the infiniteness of that mercy, in the exercises of it towards you. You have rejected Christ, and set him at nought; and yet he is become your Saviour. You have neglected your own salvation; but God has not neglected it. You have destroyed yourself; but yet in God has been your help. God has magnified his free grace towards you, and not to others; because he has chosen you, and it hath pleased him to set his love upon you.

O! what cause is here for praiser What obligations you are under to bless the Lord who hath dealt bountifully with you, and magnify his holy name. What cause for you to praise God in humility, to walk humbly before him.

“That thou mayest remember and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more, because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God!”

( Ezekiel 16:63.)

You shall never open your mouth in boasting, or self-justification; but lie the lower before God for his mercy to you. You have reason, the more abundantly, to open your mouth in God's praises, that they may be continually in your mouth, both here and to all eternity, for his rich, unspeakable, and sovereign mercy to you, whereby he, and he alone, hath made you to differ from others.

# DISCOURSE 5

## THE EXCELLENCY OF CHRIST

And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof. And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne, and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain —.

(~~Rev~~ Revelation 5:5, 6)

THE visions and revelations the apostle John had of the future events of God's providence, are here introduced with a vision of the book of God's decrees, by which those events were fore-ordained. This is represented (verse 1.) as a book in the right hand of him who sat on the throne, "written within and on the back side, and sealed with seven seals." Books, in the form in which they were wont of old to be made, were broad leaves of parchment or paper, or something of that nature, joined together at one edge, and so rolled up together, and then sealed, or some way fastened together, to prevent their unfolding and opening. Hence we read of the roll of a book, ~~Jer~~ Jeremiah 36:2. It seems to have been such a book that John had a vision of here; and therefore it is said to be, written within and on the back side," *i.e.* on the inside pages, and also on one of the outside pages, viz. that which was rolled in, in rolling the book up together. And it is said to be "sealed with seven seals," to signify that what was written in it was perfectly hidden and secret; or that God's decrees of future events are sealed, and shut up from all possibility of being discovered by creatures, till God is pleased to make them known. We find that seven is often used in Scripture as the number of perfection, to signify the superlative or most perfect degree of any thing; which probably arose from this, that on the seventh day God beheld the works of creation finished, and rested and rejoiced in them, as being complete and perfect.

When John saw this book, he tells us, he "saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals

thereof? And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon.” And that he wept much, because “no man was found worthy to open and read the book, neither to look thereon.” And he tells us how his tears were dried up, viz. that “one of the elders said unto him, Weep not; Behold the Lion of the tribe of Judah hath prevailed,” etc. as in the text. Though no man nor angel, nor any mere creature, was found either able to loose the seals, or worthy to be admitted to the privilege of reading the book; yet this was declared, for the comfort of this beloved disciple, that Christ was found both able and worthy. And we have an account in the succeeding chapters how he actually did it, opening the seals in order, first one, and then another, revealing what God had decreed should come to pass hereafter. And we have an account in this chapter, of his coming and taking the book out of the right hand of him that sat on the throne, and of the joyful praises that were sung to him in heaven and earth on that occasion.

Many things might be observed in the words of the text; but it is to my present purpose only to take notice of appellation here given to Christ. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah.

**1.** He seems to be called of the tribe of Judah, in allusion to what Jacob said in his blessing of the tribes on his death-bed; who, when he came to bless Judah, compares him to a lion, <sup>OLD</sup>Genesis 49:9. “Judah is a lion’s whelp; from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up?” And also to the standard of the camp of Judah in the wilderness, on which was displayed a lion, according to the ancient tradition of the Jews. It is much on account of the valiant acts of David that the tribe of Judah, of which David was, is in Jacob’s prophetic blessing compared to a lion; but more especially with an eye to Jesus Christ, who also was of that tribe, and was descended of David, and is in our text called “the Root of David;” and therefore Christ is here called “the Lion of the tribe of Judah.”

**2.** He is called a Lamb. John was told of a Lion that had prevailed to open the book, and probably expected to see a lion in his vision; but while he is expecting, behold a Lamb appears to open the book, an exceeding diverse kind of creature from a lion. A lion is a devourer, one that is wont to make terrible slaughter of others; and no creature more easily falls a prey to him

than a lamb. And Christ is here represented not only as a Lamb, a creature very liable to be slain, but a “Lamb as it had been slain,” that is, with the marks of its deadly wounds appearing on it.

That which I would observe from the words, for the subject of my present discourse, is this, viz.

“There is an admirable conjunction of diverse excellencies in Jesus Christ.”

The lion and the lamb, though very diverse kinds of creatures have each their peculiar excellencies. The lion excels in strength, and in the majesty of his appearance and voice: the lamb excels in meekness and patience, besides the excellent nature of the creature as good for food, and yielding that which is fit for our clothing, and being suitable to be offered in sacrifice to God. But we see that Christ is in the text compared to both; because the diverse excellencies of both wonderfully meet in him, — In handling this subject I would,

**First**, Show wherein there is an admirable conjunction of diverse Excellencies in Christ.

**Secondly**, How this admirable conjunction of excellencies appear in Christ’s acts.

And then make application.

**First**, I would show wherein there is an admirable conjunction of diverse excellencies in Jesus Christ. Which appears in three things:

**I.** There is a conjunction of such excellencies in Christ, as, in our manner of conceiving, are very diverse one from another.

**II.** There is in him a conjunction of such really diverse excellencies, as otherwise would have seemed to us utterly incompatible in the same subject.

**III.** Such diverse excellencies are exercised in him towards men that otherwise would have seemed impossible to be exercised towards the same object.

**I.** There is a conjunction of such excellencies in Christ, as, in our manner of conceiving, are very diverse one from another. Such are the various divine perfections and excellencies that Christ is possessed of.

Christ, is a divine person; and therefore has all the attributes of God.

The difference between these is chiefly relative, and in our manner of conceiving them. And those which, in this sense, are most diverse, meet in the person of Christ. I shall mention two instances.

**1.** These do meet in Jesus Christ infinite highness and infinite condescension. Christ, as he is God, is infinitely great and high above all. He is higher than the kings of the earth, for he is King of kings, and Lord of lords. He is higher than the heavens, and higher than the highest angels of heaven. So great is he, that all men, all kings and princes, are as worms of the dust before him; all nations are as the drop of the bucket, and the light dust of the balance; yea, and angels themselves are as nothing before him. He is so high, that he is infinitely above any need of us; above our reach, that we cannot be profitable to him; and above our conceptions, that we cannot comprehend him. <sup><1804></sup>Proverbs 30:4. “What is his name, and what is his Son’s name, if thou canst tell?” Our understandings, if we stretch them never so far, cannot reach up to his divine glory. <sup><1818></sup>Job 11:8. “It is high as heaven, what canst thou do?” Christ is the Creator and great Possessor of heaven and earth. He is sovereign Lord of all. He rules over the whole universe, and doth whatsoever pleaseth him. His knowledge is without bound. His wisdom is perfect, and what none can circumvent. His power is infinite, and none can resist him. His riches are immense and inexhaustible. His majesty is infinitely awful.

And yet he is one of infinite condescension. None are so low or inferior, but Christ’s condescension is sufficient to take a gracious notice of them. He condescends not only to the angels, humbling himself to behold the things that are done in heaven, but he also condescends to such poor creatures as men; and that not only so as to take notice of princes and great men, but of those that are of meanest rank and degree, “the poor of the world,” <sup><1915></sup>James 2:5. Such as are commonly despised by their fellow-creatures, Christ does not despise. <sup><1013></sup>1 Corinthians 1:28. “Base things of the world, and things that are despised, hath God chosen.” Christ condescends to take notice of beggars, <sup><1602></sup>Luke 16:22. and people of the

most despised nations. In Christ Jesus is neither “Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free,” <sup><5181></sup>Colossians 3:11. He that is thus high, condescends to take a gracious notice of little children, <sup><1094></sup>Matthew 19:14. “Suffer little children to come unto me.” Yea, which is more, his condescension is sufficient to take a gracious notice of the most unworthy, sinful creatures, those that have no good deservings, and those that have infinite ill-deservings.

Yea, so great is his condescension, that it is not only sufficient to take some gracious notice of such as these, but sufficient for every thing that is an act of condescension. His condescension is great enough to become their friend; to become their companion, to unite their souls to him in spiritual marriage. it is enough to take their nature upon him, to become one of them, that he may be one with them. Yea, it is great enough to abase himself yet lower for them, even to expose himself to shame and spitting; yea, to yield up himself to an ignominious death for them. And what act of condescension can be conceived of greater? Yet such an act as this, has his condescension yielded to, for those that are so low and mean, despicable and unworthy!

Such a conjunction of infinite highness and low condescension, in the same person, is admirable. We see, by manifold instances, what a tendency a high station has in men, to make them to be of a quite contrary disposition. If one worm be a little exalted above another, by having more dust, or a bigger dunghill, how much does he make of himself! What a distance does he keep from those that are below him! And a little condescension is what he expects should be made much of, and greatly acknowledged. Christ condescends to wash our feet; but how would great men, (or rather the bigger worms,) account themselves debased by acts of far less condescension!


**2.** There meet in Jesus Christ, infinite justice and infinite grace. As Christ is a divine person, he is infinitely holy and, just; hating sin, and disposed to execute condign punishment for sin. He is the Judge of the world, and the infinitely just Judge of it, and will not at all acquit the wicked, or by any means clear the guilty.

And yet he is infinitely gracious and merciful. Though his justice be so strict with respect to all sin, and every breach of the law, yet he has grace

sufficient for every sinner, and even the chief of sinners. And it is not on sufficient for the most unworthy to show them mercy, a bestow some good upon them, but to bestow the greatest good; yea, it is sufficient to bestow all good upon them, and to do all things for them. There is no benefit or blessing that they can receive, so great but the grace of Christ is sufficient to bestow it on the greatest sinner that ever lived. And not only so, but so great is his grace, that nothing is too much as the means of this good. It is sufficient not only to do great things, but also to suffer in order to it; and not only to suffer, but to suffer most extremely even unto death, the most terrible of natural evils; and not only death, but the most ignominious and tormenting, and every way the most terrible that men could inflict; yea, and greater sufferings than men could inflict, who could only torment the body. He had sufferings in his soul, that were the more immediate fruits of the wrath of God against the sins of those he undertakes for.

**II.** There do meet in the person of Christ such really diverse excellencies, which otherwise would have been thought utterly incompatible in the same subject; such as are conjoined in no other person whatever, either divine, human, or angelical; and such as neither men nor angels would ever have imagined could have met together in the same person, had it not been seen in the person of Christ. I would give some instances.

**1.** In the person of Christ do meet together infinite glory and lowest humility. Infinite glory, and the virtue of humility, meet in no other person but Christ. They meet in no created person; for no created person has infinite glory; and they meet in no other divine person but Christ. For though the divine nature be infinitely abhorrent to pride, yet humility is not properly predicable of God the rather, and the Holy Ghost, that exists only in the divine nature; because it is proper excellency only of a created nature; for it consists radically in a sense of a comparative lowness and littleness before God, or the great distance between God and the subject of this virtue; but it would be a contradiction to suppose any such thing in God.

But in Jesus Christ, who is both God and man, those two diverse excellencies are sweetly united. He is a person infinitely exalted in glory and dignity.  Philippians 2:6. "Being in the form of God, he thought it

not robbery to be equal with God.” There is equal honour due to him with the Father. <sup><B></sup>John 5:23 — “That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.” God himself says to him, “Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever,” <sup><B></sup>Hebrews 1:8. And there is the same supreme respect and divine worship paid to him by the angels of heaven, as to God the Father,(verse 6.) “Let all the angels of God worship him.”

But however he is thus above all, yet he is lowest of all in humility. There never was so great an instance of this virtue among either men or angels, as Jesus. None ever was so sensible of the distance between God and him, or had a heart so lowly before God, as the man Christ Jesus. <sup><B></sup>Matthew 11:29. What a wonderful spirit of humility appeared in him, when he was here upon earth, in all his behaviour! In his contentment in his mean outward condition, contentedly living in the family of Joseph the carpenter, and Mary his mother, for thirty years together, and afterwards choosing outward meanness, poverty, and contempt, rather than earthly greatness; in his washing his disciples’ feet, and in all his speeches and deportment towards them; in his cheerfully sustaining the form of a servant through his whole life, and submitting to such immense humiliation at death!

**2.** In the person of Christ do meet together infinite majesty and transcendent meekness. These again are two qualifications that meet together in no other person but Christ. Meekness, properly so called, is a virtue proper only to the creature: we scarcely ever find meekness mentioned as a divine attribute in Scripture; at least not in the New Testament; for thereby seems to be signified, a calmness and quietness of spirit; arising from humility in mutable beings that are naturally liable to be put into a ruffle by the assaults of a tempestuous and injurious world. But Christ being both God and man, hath both infinite majesty and superlative meekness.

Christ was a person of infinite majesty. It is he that is spoken of,

“Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty,  
with thy glory and thy majesty.” (<sup><B></sup>Psalm 45:3.)

It is he that is mighty, that rideth on the heavens, and his excellency on the sky. It is he that is terrible out of his holy places; who is mightier than the

noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea: before whom a fire goeth, and burneth up his enemies round about; at whose presence the earth quakes, and the hills melt; who sitteth on the circle of the earth, and all the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; who rebukes the sea, and maketh it dry, and drieth up the rivers; whose eyes are as a flame of fire; from whose presence, and from the glory of whose power, the wicked shall be punished with everlasting destruction; who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, who hath heaven for his throne, and the earth for his footstool, and is the high and lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and of whose dominion there is no end.

And yet he was the most marvellous instance of meekness, and humble quietness of spirit, that ever was; agreeable to the prophecies of him,

◀1206 Matthew 21:4, 5. “All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saving, Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.” And, agreeable to what Christ declares of himself,

◀1129 Matthew 11:29. “I am meek and lowly in heart.” And agreeable to what was manifest in his behaviour: for there never was such an instance seen on earth, of a meek behaviour, under injuries and reproaches, and towards enemies; who, when he was reviled, reviled not again. He had a wonderful spirit of forgiveness, was ready to forgive his worst enemies, and prayed for them with fervent and effectual prayers. With what meekness did he appear in the ring of soldiers that were contemning and mocking him; he was silent, and opened not his mouth, but went as a lamb to the slaughter. Thus is Christ a Lion in majesty, and a Lamb in meekness.

**3.** There meet in the person of Christ the deepest reverence towards God and equality with God. Christ, when on earth, appeared full of holy reverence towards the Father. He paid the most reverential worship to him, praying to him with postures of reverence. Thus we read of his “kneeling down and praying,” ◀224 Luke 22:41. This became Christ, as one who had taken on him the human nature; but at the same time he existed in the divine nature; whereby his person was in all respects equal to the person of the Father. God the Father hath no attribute or perfection that the Son hath not, in equal degree, and equal glory. These things meet in no other person but Jesus Christ.

**4.** There are conjoined in the person of Christ infinite worthiness of good, and the greatest patience under sufferings of evil. He was perfectly innocent, and deserved no suffering. He deserved nothing from God by any guilt of his own; and he deserved no ill from men. Yea, he was riot only harmless and undeserving of suffering, but he was infinitely worthy; worthy of the infinite love of the Father, worthy of infinite and eternal happiness, and infinitely worthy of all possible esteem, love, and service from all men. And yet he was perfectly patient under the greatest sufferings that ever were endured in this world.

“He endured the cross, despising the shame.” (~~scrip~~ Hebrews 12:2.)

He suffered not from his Father for his faults, but ours; and he suffered from men not for his faults, but for those things on account of which he was infinitely worthy of their love and honour; which made his patience the more wonderful and the more glorious. ~~scrip~~ 1 Peter 2:20, etc. “For what glory is it, if when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently, but if when ye do well, and suite for it, ye take it patiently; this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called; because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.” There is no such conjunction of innocence, worthiness, and patience under sufferings, as in the person of Christ.

**5.** In the person of Christ are conjoined an exceeding spirit of obedience, with supreme dominion over heaven and earth. Christ is the Lord of all things in two respects: he is so, as God — man and Mediator; and thus his dominion is appointed, and given him of the Father. Having it by delegation from God, he is as it were the Father’s vicegerent. But he is Lord of all things in another respect, viz. as he is (by his original nature) God; and so he is by natural right the Lord of all, and supreme over all as much as the Father. Thus, he has dominion over the world, not by delegation, but in his own right. He is not an under God, as the Arians suppose, but, to all intents and purposes, supreme God.

And yet in the same person is found the greatest spirit of obedience to the commands and laws of God that ever was in the universe; which was manifest in his obedience here in this world. <sup><B4B></sup>John 14:31. “As the Father gave me commandment, even so I do.” <sup><B5D></sup>John 15:10. “as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in his love.” The greatness of his obedience appears in its perfection, and in his obeying commands of such exceeding difficulty. Never any one received commands from God of such difficulty, and that were so great a trial of obedience, as Jesus Christ. One of God’s commands to him was, that he should yield himself to those dreadful sufferings that he underwent. See <sup><B6B></sup>John 10:18. “No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself.” — “This commandment received I of my Father.” And Christ was thoroughly obedient to this command of God. <sup><B6B></sup>Hebrews 5:8. “Though he were a Son, yet he learned obedience by the things that he suffered.” <sup><B6B></sup>Philippians 2:8. “He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” Never was there such an instance of obedience in man or angel as this, though he was at the same time supreme Lord of both angels and men.

**6.** In the person of Christ are conjoined absolute sovereignty and perfect resignation. This is another unparalleled conjunction. Christ, as he is God, is the absolute sovereign of the world; the sovereign disposer of all events. The decrees of God are all his sovereign decrees; and the work of creation, and all God’s works of providence, are his sovereign works. It is he that worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will. <sup><B6C></sup>Colossians 1:16, 17. “By him, and through him, and to him, are all things.” <sup><B6D></sup>John 5:17. “The Father worketh hitherto, and I work.” <sup><B6B></sup>Matthew 8:3. “I will, be thou clean.”

But yet Christ was the most wonderful instance of resignation that ever appeared in the world. He was absolutely and perfectly resigned when he had a near and immediate prospect of his terrible sufferings, and the dreadful cup that he was to drink. The idea and expectation of this made his soul exceeding sorrowful, even unto death, and put him into such an agony, that his sweat was as it were great drops or clots of blood, falling down to the ground. But in such circumstances he was wholly resigned to the will of God. <sup><B6B></sup>Matthew 26:39. “O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.” Verse 42.

“O my Father, if this cup may not pass from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.”

**7.** In Christ do meet together self-sufficiency, and an entire trust and reliance on God; which is another conjunction peculiar to the person of Christ. As he is a divine person, he is self-sufficient, standing in need of nothing. All creatures are dependent on him, but he is dependent on none, but is absolutely independent. His proceeding from the Father, in his eternal generation or filiation, argues no proper dependence on the will of the Father; for that proceeding was natural and necessary, and not arbitrary. But yet Christ entirely trusted in God: his enemies say that of him, “He trusted in God that he would deliver him,” <sup><174></sup>Matthew 27:43. And the apostle testifies, <sup><173></sup>1 Peter 2:23. “That he committed himself to God.”

**III.** Such diverse excellencies are expressed in him towards men, that otherwise would have seemed impossible to be exercised towards the same object; as particularly these three, justice, mercy, and truth. The same that are mentioned <sup><175></sup>Psalms 75:10. “Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other.” The strict justice of God, and even his revenging justice, and that against the sins of men, never was so gloriously manifested as in Christ. He manifested an infinite regard to the attribute of God’s justice, in that, when he had a mind to save sinners, he was willing to undergo such extreme sufferings, rather than that their salvation should be to the injury of the honour of that attribute. And as he is the Judge of the world, he doth himself exercise strict justice; he will not clear the guilty, nor at all acquit the wicked in judgment. Yet how wonderfully is infinite mercy towards sinners displayed in him! And what glorious and ineffable grace and love have been and are exercised by him, towards sinful men! Though he be the just Judge of a sinful world, yet he is also the Saviour of the world. Though he be a consuming fire to sin, yet he is the light and life of sinners. <sup><176></sup>Romans 3:25, 26. “Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.”

So the immutable truth of God, in the threatenings of his law against the sins of men, was never so manifested as it is in Jesus Christ; for there never was any other so a great a trial of the unalterableness of the truth of God in those threatenings, as when sin came to be imputed to his own Son. And then in Christ has been seen already an actual complete accomplishment of those threatenings, which never has been nor will be seen in any other instance; because the eternity that will be taken up in fulfilling those threatenings on others, never will be finished. Christ manifested an infinite regard to this truth of God in his sufferings. And, in his judging the world, he makes the covenant of works, that contains those dreadful threatenings, his rule of judgment. He will see to it, that it is not infringed in the least jot or tittle: he will do nothing contrary to the threatenings of the law, and their complet; fulfilment. And yet in him we have many great and precious promises, promises of perfect deliverance from the penalty of the law. And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life. And in him are all the promises of God, yea, and Amen.

Having thus shown wherein there is an admirable conjunction of excellencies in Jesus Christ, I now proceed,

**Secondly**, To show how this admirable conjunction of excellencies appears in Christ's acts.

**1.** It appears in what Christ did in taking on him our nature. In this act, his infinite condescension wonderfully appeared, that he who was God should become man; that the word should be made flesh, and should take on him a nature infinitely below his original nature! And it appears yet more remarkably in the low circumstances of his incarnation: he was conceived in the womb of a poor young woman, whose poverty appeared in this, when she came to offer sacrifices of her purification, she brought what was allowed of in the law only in case of poverty; as <sup><112></sup>Luke 2:24.

“According to what is said in the law of the Lord, a pair of turtle-doves, or two young pigeons.”

This was allowed only in case the person was so poor that she was not able to offer a lamb. <sup><113></sup>Leviticus 12:8.

And though his infinite condescension thus appeared in the manner of his incarnation, yet his divine dignity also appeared in it; for though he was conceived in the womb of a poor virgin, yet he was conceived there by the power of the Holy Ghost. And his divine dignity also appeared in the holiness of his conception and birth. Though he was conceived in the womb of one of the race of mankind, yet he was conceived and born without sin; as the angel said to the blessed Virgin,

“The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God.”

( Luke 1:35.)

His infinite condescension marvellously appeared in the manner of his birth. He was brought forth in a stable, because there was no room for them in the inn. The inn was taken up by others, that were looked upon as persons of greater account. The blessed Virgin, being poor and despised, was turned or shut out. Though she was in such necessitous circumstances, yet those that counted themselves her betters would not give place to her; and therefore, in the time of her travail, she was forced to betake herself to a stable; and when the child was born, it was wrapped in swaddling-clothes, and laid in a manger. There Christ lay a little infant; and there he eminently appeared as a lamb. But yet this feeble infant, born thus in a stable, and laid in a manger, was born to conquer and triumph over Satan, that roaring lion. He came to subdue the mighty powers of darkness, and make a show of them openly; and so to restore peace on earth, and to manifest God's good-will towards men, and to bring glory to God in the highest; according as the end of his birth was declared by the joyful songs of the glorious hosts of angels appearing to the shepherds at the same time that the infant lay in the manger; whereby his divine dignity was manifested.

**II.** This admirable conjunction of excellencies appears in the acts and various passages of Christ's life. Though Christ dwelt in mean outward circumstances, whereby his condescension and humility especially appeared, and his majesty was veiled; yet his divine dignity and glory did in many of his acts shine through the veil, and it illustriously appeared, that he was not only the Son of man, but the great God.

Thus, in the circumstances of his infancy, his outward meanness appeared; yet there was something then to show forth his divine dignity, in the wise men's being stirred up to come from the east to give honour to him, their being led by a miraculous star, and coming and falling down and worshipping him, and presenting him with gold, frankincense, and myrrh. His humility and meekness wonderfully appeared in his subjection to his mother and reputed father when he was a child. Herein he appeared as a lamb. But his divine glory broke forth and shone when, at twelve years old, he disputed with doctors in the temple. In that he appeared, in some measure, as the Lion of the tribe of Judah.

And so, after he entered on his public ministry, his marvellous humility and meekness was manifested in his choosing to appear in such mean outward circumstances; and in being contented in them, when he was so poor that he had not where to lay his head, and depended on the charity of some of his followers for his subsistence; as appears by Luke 8 at the beginning. How meek, condescending, and familiar his treatment of his disciples; his discourses with them, treating them as a father his children; yea, as friends and companions. How patient, bearing such affliction and reproach, and so many injuries from the scribes and Pharisees, and others. In these things he appeared as a Lamb. And yet he at the same time did in many ways show forth his divine majesty and glory, particularly in the miracles he wrought, which were evidently divine works, and manifested omnipotent power, and so declared him to be the Lion of the tribe of Judah. If his wonderful and miraculous works plainly showed him to be the God of nature; in that it appeared by them that he had all nature in his hands, and could lay an arrest upon it, and stop and change its course as he pleased. In healing the sick, and opening the eyes of the blind, and unstopping the ears of the deaf, and healing the lame; he showed that he was the God that framed the eye, and created the ear, and was the author of the frame of man's body. By the dead's rising at his command, it appeared that he was the author and fountain of life, and that "God the Lord, to whom belong the issues from death." By his walking on the sea in a storm, when the waves were raised, he showed himself to be that God spoken of in ~~ROM~~ Job 9:8. "That treadeth on the waves of the sea." By his stilling the storm, and calming the rage of the sea, by his powerful command, saying, "Peace, be still," he showed that he has the command of

the universe, and that he is that God who brings things to pass by the word of his power, who speaks and it is done, who commands and it stands fast; <sup>PSALM</sup> Psalm 55:7. “Who stilleth the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves.” And Psalm 107: 29. “That maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still.” And Psalm 89:8, 9. “O Lord God of hosts, who is a strong Lord like unto thee, or to thy faithfulness round about thee? Thou rulest the raging of the sea: when the waves thereof arise, thou stillest them.” Christ, by casting out devils, remarkably appeared as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, and show that he was stronger than the roaring lion, that seeks whom he may devour. He commanded them to come out, and they were forced to obey. They were terribly afraid of him; they fall down before him, and beseech him not to torment them. He forces a whole legion of them to forsake their hold, by his powerful word; and they could not so much as enter into the swine without his leave. He showed the glory of his omniscience, by telling the thoughts of men; as we have often an account. Herein he appeared to be that God spoken of <sup>AMOS</sup> Amos 4:13.

“That declareth unto man what is his thought.”

Thus, in the midst of his meanness and humiliation, his divine glory appeared in his miracles,

“This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory.” (<sup>JOHN</sup> John 2:11.)

And though Christ ordinarily appeared without outward glory, and in great obscurity, yet at a certain time he threw off the veil, and appeared in his divine majesty, so far as it could be outwardly manifested to men in this frail state, when he was transfigured in the mount. The apostle Peter, <sup>PETER</sup> 2 Peter 1:16, 17. was an “eye-witness of his majesty, when he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; which voice that came from heaven they heard, when they were with him in the holy mount.”

And at the same time that Christ was wont to appear in such meekness, condescension, and humility, in his familiar discourses with his disciples, appearing therein as the Lamb of God; he was also wont to appear as The

Lion of the tribe of Judah, with divine authority and majesty, in his so sharply rebuking the scribes and Pharisees, and other hypocrites.

**III.** This admirable conjunction of excellencies remarkably appears in his offering up himself a sacrifice for sinners in his last sufferings. As this was the greatest thing in all the works of redemption, the greatest act of Christ in that work; so in this act especially does there appear that admirable conjunction of excellencies that has been spoken of. Christ never so much appeared as a lamb, as when he was slain: “He came like a lamb to the slaughter,” <sup>251</sup>Isaiah 53:7. Then he was offered up to God as a lamb without blemish, and without spot: then especially did he appear to be the anti-type of the lamb of the passover: <sup>252</sup>1 Corinthians 5:7. “Christ our Passover sacrificed for us.” And yet in that act he did in an especial manner appear as “the Lion of the tribe of Judah;” yea, in this above all other acts, in many respects, as may appear in the following things.

**1.** Then was Christ in the greatest degree of his humiliation, and yet by that, above all other things, his divine glory appears. Christ’s humiliation was great, in being born in such a low condition, of a poor virgin, and stable. His humiliation was great, in being subject to Joseph the carpenter, and Mary his mother, afterwards living in poverty, so as not to have where head; and in suffering such manifold and bitter re as he suffered, while he went about preaching and working miracles. But his humiliation was never so great as it was in his last sufferings, beginning with his agony in the garden, till he expired on the cross. Never was I subject to such ignominy as then; never did he suffer so much pain in his body, or so much sorrow in his soul; never was he in so great an exercise of his condescension, humility, meekness, and patience, as he was in these last sufferings; never was his divine glory and majesty covered with so thick and dark a veil; never did he so empty himself and make himself of no reputation, as at this time. And yet, never was his divine glory so manifested, by any act of his, as in yielding himself up to these sufferings. When the fruit of it came to appear, and the mystery and ends of it to be unfolded in its issue, then did the glory of it appear; then did it appear as the most glorious act of Christ that ever he exercised towards the creature. This act of his is celebrated by the angels and hosts of heaven with peculiar praises, as that which is above all others glorious, as you may see in the context (verse 9, etc.) “And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art

worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts, and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.”

**2.** He never in any act gave so great a manifestation of love to God, and yet never so manifested his love to those that were enemies to God, as in that act. Christ never did any thing whereby his love to the Father was so eminently manifested, as in his laying down his life, under such inexpressible sufferings, in obedience to his command, and for the vindication of the honour of his authority and majesty; nor did ever any mere creature give such a testimony of love to God as that was. And yet this was the greatest expression of his love to sinful men who were enemies to God;

“When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God,  
by the death of his Son.” (✠ Romans 5:10.)

The greatness of Christ’s love to such, appears in nothing so much as in its being dying love. That blood of Christ which fell in great drops to the ground, in his agony, was shed from love to God’s enemies, and his own. That shame and spitting, that torment of body, and that exceeding sorrow, even unto death, which he endured in his soul, was what he underwent from love to rebels against God, to save them from hell, and to purchase for them eternal glory. Never did Christ so eminently show his regard to God’s honour, as in offering up himself a victim to justice. And yet in this above all, he manifested his love to them who dishonoured God I so as to bring such guilt on themselves, that nothing less than his blood could atone for it.

**3.** Christ never so eminently appeared for divine justice, and yet never suffered so much, from divine justice, as when he offered up himself a sacrifice for our sins. In Christ’s great sufferings, did his infinite regard to the honour of God’s justice distinguishingly appear; for it was from regard

to that that he thus humbled himself. And yet in these sufferings, Christ was the mark of the vindictive expressions of that very justice of God. Revenging justice then spent all its force upon him, on account of our guilt; which made him sweat blood, and cry out upon the cross, and probably rent his vitals — broke his heart, the fountain of blood, or some other blood vessels — and by the violent fermentation turned his blood to water. For the blood and water that issued out of his side, when pierced by the spear, seems to have been extravasated blood; and so there might be a kind of literal fulfilment of ~~Psalm~~ Psalm 22:14.

“I am poured out like water, and all in my bones are out of joint:  
my heart is like wax, it is melted in the midst of my bowels.”

And this was the way and means by which Christ stood up for the honour of God’s justice, viz. by thus suffering its terrible executions. For when he had undertaken for sinners, and had substituted himself in their room, divine justice could have its due honour no other way than by his suffering its revenges. — In this the diverse excellencies that met in the person of Christ appeared, viz. his infinite regard to God’s justice, and such love to those that have exposed themselves to it, as induced him thus to yield himself a sacrifice to it.

**4.** Christ’s holiness never so illustriously shone forth as it did in his last sufferings; and yet he never was to such a degree treated as guilty. Christ’s holiness never had such a trial as it had then; and therefore never had so great a manifestation. When it was tried in this furnace, it came forth as gold, or as silver purified seven times. His holiness then above all appeared in his stedfast pursuit of the honour of God, and in his obedience to him. For his yielding himself unto death was transcendently the greatest act of obedience that ever was paid to God by anyone since the foundation of the world.

And yet then Christ was in the greatest degree treated as a wicked person would have been. He was apprehended and bound as a malefactor. His accusers represented him as a most wicked wretch. In his sufferings before his crucifixion, he was treated as if he had been the worst and vilest of mankind; and then, he was put to a kind of death, that none but the worst sort of malefactors were wont to stiffer, those that were most abject in their persons, and guilty of the blackest crimes. And he suffered as though

guilty from God himself, by reason of our guilt imputed to him; for he who knew no sin, was made sin for us; he was made subject to wrath, as if he had been sinful himself. He was made a curse for us.

Christ never so greatly manifested his hatred of sin, as against God, as in his dying to take away the dishonour that in had done to God; and yet never was he to such a degree subject to the terrible effects of God's hatred of sin, and wrath against it, as he was then. In this appears those diverse excellencies meeting in Christ, viz. love to God, and grace to sinners.

**5.** He never was so dealt with, as unworthy, as in his last sufferings; and yet it is chiefly on account of them that he is accounted worthy. He was therein dealt with as if he had not been worthy to live: they cry out, "Away with him! away with him! Crucify him." <sup><GEN></sup> John 19:15. And they prefer Barabbas before him. And he suffered from the Father, as one whose demerits were infinite, by reason of our demerits that were laid upon him. And yet it was especially by that act of his subjecting himself to those sufferings, that he merited, and on the account of which chiefly he was accounted worthy of the glory of his exaltation. <sup><PHI></sup> Philippians 2:8, 9. "He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death; wherefore God hath highly exalted him." And we see that it is on this account chiefly, that he is extolled as worthy by saints and angels in the context; "Worthy," say they, "is the Lamb that was slain." This shows an admirable conjunction in him of infinite dignity, and infinite condescension and love to the infinitely unworthy.

**6.** Christ in his last sufferings suffered most extremely from those towards whom he was then manifesting his greatest act of love. He never suffered so much from his Father, (though not from any hatred to him, but from hatred to our sins,) for he then forsook him, or took away the comforts of his presence; and then "it pleased the Lord to bruise him, and put him to grief," as <sup><ISA></sup> Isaiah 53:10. And yet never gave so great a manifestation of love to God as then, as has been already observed. So Christ never suffered so much from the hands of men as he did then; and yet never was in so high an exercise of love to men. He never was so ill-treated by his disciples; who were so unconcerned about his sufferings, that they would not watch with him one hour, in his agony; and when he was apprehended,

all forsook him and fled, except Peter, who denied him with oaths and curses. And yet then he was suffering, shedding his blood, and pouring in it his soul unto death for them. Yea, he probably was then shedding his blood for some of them that shed his blood; for whom he prayed while they were crucifying him; and who were probably afterwards brought home to Christ by Peter's preaching. (Compare <sup><423></sup>Luke 23:34. <sup><423></sup>Acts 2:23; 36, 37, 41. and chapter 3:17. and chapter 4:4.) This shows an admirable meeting of justice and grace in the redemption of Christ.

**7.** It was in Christ's last sufferings, above all, that he was delivered up to the power of his enemies; and yet by these above all, he obtained victory over his enemies. Christ never was so in his enemies' hands, as in the time of his last sufferings. They sought his life before; but from time to time they were restrained, and Christ escaped out of their hands; and this reason is given for it, that his time was not yet come. But now they were suffered to work their will upon him; he was in a great degree delivered up to the malice and cruelty of both wicked men and devils. And therefore when Christ's enemies came to apprehend him, he says to them,

“When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hand against me: but this is your hour, and the power of darkness.”  
(<sup><423></sup>Luke 22:53.)

And yet it was principally by means of those sufferings but he conquered and overthrew his enemies. Christ never so effectually bruised Satan's head, as when Satan bruised his heel. The weapon with which Christ warred against the devil, and obtained a most complete victory and, glorious triumph over him, was the cross, the instrument and weapon with which he thought he had overthrown Christ, and brought on him shameful destruction. <sup><423></sup>Colossians 2:14, 15. “Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances, — nailing it to his cross: and having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.” In his last sufferings, Christ sapped the very foundations of Satan's kingdom; he conquered his enemies in their own territories, and beat them with their own weapons; as David cut off Goliath's head with his own sword. The devil had, as it were, swallowed up Christ, as the whale did Jonah; but it was deadly poison to him; he gave him a mortal wound in his own bowels. He was soon sick of his morsel, and was forced to do by him as the whale

did by Jonah. To this day he is heart-sick of what he then swallowed as his prey. In those sufferings of Christ was laid the foundation of all that glorious victory he has already obtained over Satan, in the overthrow of his heathenish kingdom in the Roman empire, and all the success the gospel has had since; and also of all his future and still more glorious victory that is to be obtained in the earth. Thus Samson's riddle is most eminently fulfilled,

“Out of the eater came forth meat,  
and out of the strong came forth sweetness.” (<sup>1744</sup>Judges 14:14.)


And thus the true Samson does more towards the destruction of his enemies at his death than in his life; in yielding up himself to death, he pulls down the temple of Dagon, and destroys many thousands of his enemies, even while they are making themselves sport in his sufferings; and so he whose type was the ark, pulls down Dagon, and breaks off his head and hands in his own temple, even while he is brought in there as Dagon's captive.

Thus Christ appeared at the same time, and in the same act, as both a lion and a lamb. He appeared as a lamb in the hands of his cruel enemies; as a lamb in the paws, and between the devouring jaws, of a roaring lion; Yea, he was a lamb actually slain by this lion: and yet at the same time, as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, he conquers and triumphs over Satan; destroying his own devourer; as Samson did the lion that roared upon him, when he rent him as he would a kid. And in nothing has Christ appeared so much as a lion, in glorious strength destroying his enemies, as when he was brought as a lamb to the slaughter. In his greatest weakness he was most strong; and when he suffered most from his enemies, he brought the greatest confusion on his enemies. — Thus this admirable conjunction of diverse excellencies was manifest in Christ, in his offering up himself to God in his last sufferings.

**IV.** It is still manifest in his acts, in his present state of exaltation in heaven. Indeed, in his exalted state, he most eminently appears in manifestation of those excellencies, on the account of which he is compared to a lion; but still he appears as a lamb;

“And I looked, and lo, a Lion stood on mount Sion;”  
 (  Revelation 14:1.)

as in his state of humiliation he chiefly appeared as a lamb, and yet did not appear without manifestation of his divine majesty and power, as the Lion of the tribe of Judah. Though Christ be now at the right-hand of God, exalted as King of heaven, and Lord of the universe; yet as he still is in the human nature, he still excels in humility. Though the man Christ Jesus be the highest of all creatures in heaven, yet he as much excels them all in humility as he doth in glory and dignity; for none sees so much of the distance between God and him as he does. And though he now appears in such glorious majesty and dominion in heaven, Yet he appears as a lamb in his condescending, mild, and sweet treatment of his saints there; for he is a Lamb still, even amidst the throne of his exaltation; and he that is the Shepherd of the whole flock is himself a Lamb, and goes before them in heaven as such.

“For the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.” (  Revelation 7:17.)

Though in heaven every knee bows to him, and though the angels fall down before him adoring him, yet he treats his saints with infinite condescension, mildness, and endearment. And in his acts towards the saints on earth, he still appears as a lamb, manifesting exceeding love and tenderness in his intercession for them, as one that has had experience of affliction and temptation. He has not forgot what these things are; nor has he forgot how to pity those that are subject to them. And he still manifests his lamb-like excellencies, in his dealings with his saints on earth, in admirable forbearance, love, gentleness, and compassion. Behold him instructing, supplying, supporting, and comforting them; often coming to them, and manifesting himself to them by his Spirit, that he may sup with them, and they with him. Behold him admitting them to sweet communion, enabling them with boldness and confidence to come to him, and solacing their hearts. And in heaven Christ still appears, as it were with the marks of his wounds upon him; and so appears as a Lamb as it had been slain; as he was represented in vision to St. John, in the text,

when he appeared to open the book sealed with seven seals, which is part of the glory of his exaltation.

**5.** And lastly, this admirable conjunction of excellencies will be manifest in Christ's acts at the last judgment. He then, above all other times, will appear as the Lion of the tribe of Judah in infinite greatness and majesty, when he shall come in the glory of his Father, with all the holy angels, and the earth shall tremble before him, and the hills shall melt. This is he (~~Rev~~ Revelation 20:11.) "that shall sit on a great white throne, before whose face the earth and heaven shall flee away." He will then appear in the most dreadful and amazing manner to the wicked. The devils tremble at the thought of that appearance; and when it shall be, the kings, and the rest men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bond-man, and every free-man, shall hide themselves in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains, and shall cry to the mountains and rocks to fall on them, to hide them from the Face and wrath of the Lamb. And none can declare or conceive of the amazing manifestations of wrath in which he will then appear towards these; or the trembling and astonishment, the shrieking and gnashing of teeth, with which they shall stand before his judgment-seat, and receive the terrible sentence of his wrath.

And yet he will at the same time appear as a Lamb to his saints; he will receive them as friends and brethren, treating them with infinite mildness and love. There shall be nothing in him terrible to them; but towards them he will clothe himself wholly with sweetness and endearment. The church shall be then admitted to him as his bride; that shall be her wedding-day. The saints shall all be sweetly invited to come with him to inherit the kingdom, and reign in it with him to all eternity.

### APPLICATION.

**1.** From this doctrine we may learn one reason why Christ is called by such a variety of names, and held forth under such a variety of representations, in Scripture. It is the better to signify and exhibit to us that variety of excellencies that meet together and are conjoined in him. Many appellations are mentioned together in one verse, ~~Isa~~ Isaiah 9:6. "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be

upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.” It shows a wonderful conjunction of excellencies, that the same person should be a Son, born and given, and yet be the everlasting Father, without beginning or end; that he should be a Child, and yet be he whose name is Counsellor, mid the mighty God; and well may his name, in whom such things are conjoined, be called Wonderful.

By reason of the same wonderful conjunction, Christ is represented by a great variety of sensible things, that are on some amount excellent. Thus in some places he is called a Sun, as <sup><341></sup>Malachi 4:2. in others a Star, <sup><347></sup>Numbers 24:17. And he is especially represented by the Morningstar, as being that which excels all other stars in brightness, and is the forerunner of the day, <sup><326></sup>Revelation 22:16. And, as in our text, he is compared to a lion in one verse, and a lamb in the next, so sometimes he is compared to a roe or a young hart, another creature most diverse from a lion. So in some places he is called a rock, in others he is compared to a pearl. In own places he is called a man of war, and the Captain of our Salvation, in other places he is represented as a bridegroom. In the second chapter of Canticles, the 1st verse, he is compared to a rose and lily, that are sweet and beautiful flowers; in the men verse but one, he is compared to a tree bearing sweet fruit. In <sup><351></sup>Isaiah 53:2. he is called a Root out of a dry ground; but elsewhere, instead of that, he is called the Tree of Life, that grows (not in a dry or barren ground, but) “in the midst of the paradise of God,” <sup><317></sup>Revelation 2:7.

**II.** Let the consideration of this wonderful meeting of diverse excellencies in Christ induce you to accept of him, and close with him as your Saviour. As all manner of excellencies meet in him, so there are concurring in him all manner of arguments and motives, to move you to choose him for your Saviour, and every thing that tends to encourage poor sinners to come and put their trust in him: his fulness and all-sufficiency as a Saviour gloriously appear in that variety of excellencies that has been spoken of.

Fallen man is in a state of exceeding great misery, and is helpless in it; he is a poor weak creature, like an infant cast out in its blood in the day that it is born. But Christ is the Lion of the tribe of Judah; he is strong, though we are weak; he hath prevailed to do that for us which no creature else

could do. Fallen man is a mean despicable creature, a contemptible worm; but Christ, who has undertaken for us, is infinitely honourable and worthy. Fallen man is polluted, but Christ is infinitely holy; fallen man is hateful, but Christ is infinitely lovely; fallen man is the object of God's indignation, but Christ is infinitely dear to him. We have dreadfully provoked God, but Christ has performed that righteousness which is infinitely precious in God's eyes.

And here is not only infinite strength and infinite worthiness, but infinite condescension, and love and mercy, as great as power and dignity. If you are a poor, distressed sinner, whose heart is ready to sink for fear that God never will have mercy on you, you need not be afraid to go to Christ, for fear that he is either unable or unwilling to help you. Here is a strong foundation, and an inexhaustible treasure, to answer the necessities of your poor soul; and here is infinite grace and gentleness to invite and imbolden a poor, unworthy, fearful soul to come to it. If Christ accepts of you, you need not fear but that you will be safe; for he is a strong Lion for your defence. And if you come, you need not fear but that you shall be accepted; for he is like a Lamb to all that come to him, and receives them with infinite grace and tenderness. It is true he has awful majesty; he is the great God, and infinitely high above you; but there is this to encourage and imbolden the poor sinner, that Christ is man as well as God; he is a creature, as well as the Creator; and he is the most humble and lowly in heart of any creature in heaven or earth. This may well make the poor unworthy creature bold in coming to him. You need not hesitate one moment; but may run to him, and cast yourself upon him. You will certainly be graciously and meekly received by him. Though he is a lion, he will only be a lion to your enemies; but he will be a lamb to you. It could not have been conceived, had it riot been so in the person of Christ. that there could have been so much in any Saviour, that is inviting and tending to encourage sinners to trust in him. Whatever your circumstances are you need not be afraid to come to such a Saviour as this. Be you never so wicked a creature, here is worthiness enough; be you never so poor, and mean, and ignorant a creature, there is no danger of being despised; for though he be so much greater than you, he is so immensely more humble than you. Any one of you that is a father or mother, will not despise one of your own children that coma to you in distress: much less danger is

there of Christ despising you, if you in your heart come to him. Here let we a little expostulate with the poor, burdened, distressed soul.

**1.** What we you afraid of, that you dare net venture your soul upon Christ? Are you afraid that he cannot save you; that he is not strong enough to conquer the enemies of your soul? But how can you desire one stronger then the “mighty God?” as Christ is called, ~~2900~~ Isaiah 9:6. Is there need of greater than infinite strength? Are you afraid that he will not be willing to steep so low as to take any gracious notice of you? But then, took an him, as he stood in the ring of soldiers, exposing his blessed face to buffeted and spit upon by them! Behold him bound with his back uncovered to those that smote him! And behold him hanging on this cross! Do you think that he that had condescension enough to stoop to time things, and that for his crucifiers, will be unwilling to accept of you if you come to him? Or, are you afraid that if he does accept of you, that God the Father will not accept of him for you? But consider, will God reject his own Son, in whom his infinite delight is, and has been, from all eternity, and who is so united to him, that if he should reject him he would reject himself?

**2.** What is there that you can desire should be in a Saviour, that is not in Christ? Or, wherein should you desire a Saviour should be otherwise than Christ is? What excellency is there wanting? What is there that is great or good; what is there that is venerable or winning; what is there that is adorable or endearing; or, what can you think of that would be encouraging, which is not to be found in the person of Christ? Would you have your Saviour to be great and honourable, because you are not willing to be beholden to a mean Person? And, is not Christ a person honourable enough to be worthy that you should be dependent on him; is he not a person high enough to be appointed to so honourable a work as your salvation? Would you not only have a Saviour of high degree, but would you have him, notwithstanding his exaltation and dignity, to be made also of low degree, that he might have experience of afflictions and trials, that he might learn by the things that he has suffered, to pity them that suffer and are tempted? And has not Christ been made low enough for you? and has he not suffered enough? Would you not only have him possess experience of the afflictions you now suffer, but a also of that amazing wrath that you fear hereafter, that be may know how to those that are in

danger, and afraid of it? This Christ had experience of, which experience gave him a greater sense of it, a thousand times, than you have, or any man living has. Would you have your Saviour to be one who is near to God, that so his mediation might be prevalent with him? And can you desire him to be nearer to God than Christ is, who is his only-begotten Son, of the same essence with the Father? And would you not only have him near to God, but also near to you, that you may have free access to him? And would you have him nearer to you than to be in the same nature, united to you by a spiritual union, so close as to be fully represented by the union of the wife to the husband, of the branch to the vine, of the member to the head; yea, so as to be one spirit? For so he will be united to you, if you accept of him. Would you have a Saviour that has given some great and extraordinary testimony of mercy and love to sinners, by something that he has done, as well as by what he says? And can you think or conceive of greater things than Christ has done? Was it not a great thing for him, who was God, to take upon him human nature; to be not only God, but man thenceforward to all eternity? But would you look upon suffering for sinners to be a yet greater testimony of love to sinners, than merely doing, though it be ever so extraordinary a thing that he has done? And would you desire that a Saviour should suffer more than Christ has suffered for sinners? What is there wanting, or what would you add if you could, to make him more fit to be your Saviour? But further, to induce you to accept of Christ as your Saviour, consider two things particularly.

**(1.)** How much Christ appears as the Lamb of God in his invitations to you to come to him and trust in him. With what sweet grace and kindness does he, from time to time, call and invite you; as <sup>2080</sup>Proverbs 8:4. “Unto you, O men, I call, and my voice is to the sons of men.” And <sup>2081</sup>Isaiah 55:1, 2, 3. “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price.” How gracious is he here in inviting every one that thirsts, and in so repeating his invitation over and over, “Come ye to the waters; come, buy and eat; yea, come!” Mark the excellency of that entertainment which he invites you to accept of, “Come, buy wine and milk!” your poverty, having nothing to pay for it, shall be no objection, — Come, he that hath no money, come without money, and without price!” What

gracious arguments and expostulations he uses with you! “Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.” As much as to say, It is altogether needless for you to continue labouring and toiling for that which can never serve your turn, seeking rest in the world, and in your own righteousness: — I have made abundant provision for you, of that which is really good, and will fully satisfy your desires, and answer your end, and stand ready to accept of you: you need not be afraid; if you will come to me, I will engage to see all your wants supplied, and you made a happy creature. As he promises in the third verse, “Incline your ear, and come unto me: Hear, and your soul shall live, and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.”

And so, Proverbs 9 at the beginning. How gracious and sweet is the invitation there! “Who so is simple, let him turn in hither;” let you be never so poor, ignorant, and blind a creature, you shall be welcome. And in the following words, Christ sets forth the provision that he has made for you, “Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled.” You are in a poor famishing state, and have nothing wherewith to feed your perishing soul; you have been seeking something, but yet remain destitute. Hearken, how Christ calls you to eat of his bread, and to drink of the wine that he hath mingled! And how much like a lamb does Christ appear in <sup>4123</sup>Matthew 11:28-30. “Come unto me, all ye that labour and am heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest to your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light!” O thou poor distressed soul! whoever thou art, consider that Christ mentions thy very case, when he calls to them who labour and are heavy laden! How he repeatedly promises you rest if you come to him! In the 28th verse he says, “I will give you rest.” And in the 29th verse, “Ye shall find rest to your souls.” This is what you want. This is the thing you have been so long in vain seeking after. O how sweet would rest be to you, if you could but obtain it! Come to Christ, and you shall obtain it. And hear how Christ, to encourage you, represents himself as a lamb! He tells you, that he is meek and lowly in heart; and are you afraid to come to such a one?

And again, <sup>(618)</sup>Revelation 3:20. “Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and I will sup with him, and be with me.” Christ condescends not only to call you to him, but he comes to you; he comes to your door, and there knocks. He might send an officer and seize you as a rebel and vile malefactor; but instead of that, he comes and knocks at your door, and seeks that you would receive him into your house, as your Friend and Saviour. And he not only knocks at your door, but he stands there waiting, while you are backward and unwilling. And not only so, but he makes promises what he will do for you, if you will admit him, what privileges he will admit you to; he will sup with you, and you with him.” And again, <sup>(620)</sup>Revelation 22:16, 17. “I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star. And the Spirit and the bride say come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.” How does Christ here graciously set before you his own winning attractive excellency! And how does he condescend to declare to you not only his own invitation, but the invitation of the Spirit and the bride, if by any means he might encourage you to come! And how does he invite every one that will, that they may “take of the water of life freely,” that they may take it as a free gift, however precious it be, and though it be the water of life!

**(2.)** If you do come to Christ, he will appear as a Lion, in his glorious power and dominion, to defend you. All those excellencies of his, in which he appears as a lion, shall be yours, and shall be employed for you in your defence, (or your safety, and to promote your glory; he will be as a lion to fight against your enemies. He that touch you, or offends you, will provoke his wrath, as he that stirs up a lion. Unless your enemies can conquer this Lion, they shall not be able to destroy or hurt you; unless they are stronger than he, they shall not be able to hinder your happiness.

“For thus hath the Lord spoken unto me, Like as the lion and the young lion roaring on his prey, when a multitude of shepherds is called forth against him, he will not be afraid of their voice, not abase himself for the noise of them; so shall the Lord of hosts come down, to fight for mount Zion, and for the hill thereof.”

(<sup>(230)</sup>Isaiah 31:4.)


**III.** Let what has been said be improved to induce you to love the Lord Jesus Christ, and choose him for your friend and portion. As there is such an admirable meeting of diverse excellencies in Christ, so there is every thing in him to render him worthy of your love and choice, and to win and engage it. Whatsoever there is or can be desirable in a friend, is in Christ, and that to the highest degree that can be desired.

Would you choose for a friend a person of great dignity? It is a thing taking with men to have those for their friends who are much above them; because they look upon themselves honoured by the friendship of such. Thus, how would it be with an inferior maid to be of the dear love of some great and excellent prince. But Christ is infinitely above you, and above all the earth; for he is the King of kings. So honourable a person as this offers himself to you, in the nearest and dearest friendship.

And would you choose to have a friend not only great but good? In Christ infinite greatness and infinite goodness meet together, and receive lustre and glory one from another. His greatness is rendered lovely by his goodness. The greater any one is without goodness so much the greater evil; but when infinite goodness is joined with greatness, it renders it a glorious and adorable greatness. So on the other hand, his infinite goodness receives lustre from his greatness. He that is of great understanding and ability, and is withal of a good and excellent disposition, is deservedly more esteemed than a lower and lesser being, with the same kind of inclination and good will. Indeed goodness is excellent in whatever subject it be found; it is beauty and excellency itself, and renders all excellent that are possessed of it; and yet most excellent when joined with greatness. The very same excellent qualities of gold render the body in which they are inherent more precious, and of greater value, when joined with greater than when with lesser dimensions. And how glorious is the sight, to me him who is the great Creator and supreme Lord of heaven and earth, full of condescension, tender pity and mercy, towards the mean and unworthy! His almighty power, and infinite majesty and self-sufficiency, render his exceeding love and grace the more surprising. And how do his condescension and compassion endear his majesty, power, and dominion, and render those attributes pleasant, that would otherwise only terrible! Would you not desire that your friend, though great and honourable, should be of such condescension and grace, and so to have the way opened

to free access to him, that his exaltation above you might not hinder your free enjoyment of his friendship? — And would you choose not only that the infinite greatness and majesty of your friend should be, as it were, mollified and sweetened with condescension and grace; but would you also desire to have your friend brought nearer to you? Would you choose a friend far above you, and yet as it were upon a level with you too?

Though it be taking with men to have a near and dear friend of superior dignity, yet there is also an inclination in them to have their friend a sharer with them in circumstances is Christ. Though he be the great God, yet he has, as it were, brought himself down to be upon a level with you, so as to become man as you are, that he might not only be your Lord, but your brother, and that he might be the more fit to be a companion for such a worm of the dust. This is one end of Christ' staking upon him a man's nature, that his people might be under advantages for a more familiar converse with him, than the infinite distance of the divine nature would allow of. And upon this account the church longed for Christ's incarnation, Cant. 8:1. "O that thou wert my brother, that sucked the breasts of my mother! when I should find thee without, I would kiss thee, yea, I should not be dispised." One design of God in the gospel, is to bring us to make God the object of our undivided respect, that he may engross our regard every way, that whatever natural inclination there is in our souls, he may be the centre of it; that God may be all in all. But there is an inclination in the creature, not only to the adoration of a Lord and Sovereign, but to complacence in some one as a friend to love and delight in some one that may be conversed with as a companion. And virtue and holiness do not destroy or weaken this inclination of our nature. But so hath God contrived in the affair of our redemption, that a divine person may be the object even of this inclination of our nature. And in order hereto, such an one is come down to us; and has taken our nature, and is become one of us, and calls himself our friend, brother, and companion.

"For my brethren and companions' sake, will I now say, Peace be within thee." ( Psalm 122:8.)

But is it not enough in order to invite and encourage you to free access to a friend so great and high, that he is one of infinite condescending grace, and also has taken your own nature, and is become man? But would you, further to imbolden and win you have him a man of wonderful meekness

and humility? Why, such an one is Christ! He is not only become man for you, but far the meekest and most humble of all men, the greatest instance of these sweet virtues that ever was, or will be. And besides these, he has all other human excellencies in the highest perfection. These, indeed, are no proper addition to his divine excellencies. Christ has Do more excellency in his person, since his incarnation, than he had before; for divine excellency is infinite, and cannot be added to. Yet his human excellencies are additional manifestation of his glory and excellency to us, and are additional recommendations of him to our esteem and love, who are of finite comprehension. Though his human excellencies are but communications and reflections of his divine; and though this light, as reflected, falls infinitely short of the divine fountain of light in its immediate glory; yet the reflection shines not without its proper advantages, as presented to our view and affection. The glory of Christ in the qualifications of his human nature, appears to us in excellencies that are of our own kind, and are exercised in our own way and manner; and so, in some respects, are peculiarly fitted to invite our acquaintance and draw our affection. The glory of Christ as it appears in his divinity, though far brighter, more dazzles our eyes, and exceeds the strength of our sight or our comprehension; but as it shines in the human excellencies of Christ, it is brought more to a level with our conceptions, and suitableness to our nature and manner, yet retaining a semblance of the same divine beauty and a savour of the same divine sweetness. But as both divine and human excellencies meet together in Christ, they set off and recommend each other to us. It tends to endear the divine majesty and holiness of Christ to us, that these are attributes of one in our nature, one of us, who is become our brother, and is the meekest and humblest of men. It encourages us to look upon these divine perfections, however high and great; since we have some, near concern in, and liberty freely to enjoy them. And on the other hand, how much more glorious and surpassing do the meekness, the humility, obedience, resignation, and other human excellencies of Christ appear, when we consider that they are in so great a person, as the eternal Son of God, the Lord of heaven and earth!

By your choosing Christ for your friend and pardon, you will obtain these two infinite benefits.

**1.** Christ will give himself to you, with all those various excellencies that meet in him, to your full and everlasting enjoyment. He will ever after treat you as his dear friend; and you shall ere long be where he is, and shall behold his glory, and dwell with him, in most free and intimate communion and enjoyment.

When the saints get to heaven, they shall not merely see Christ, and have to do with him as subjects and servants with a glorious and gracious Lord and Sovereign, but Christ will entertain them as friends and brethren. This we may learn from the manner of Christ's conversing with his disciples here on earth: though he was; their sovereign Lord, and did not refuse, but required, their supreme respect and adoration, yet he did not treat them as earthly wont to do their subjects. He did not keep them at an awful distance; but all along conversed with them with the most friendly familiarity, as a father amongst a company children, yea, as with brethren. So he did with the twelve, and so he did with Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. He told his disciples, that he did not call them servants, but friends; and we read of one of them that leaned on his bosom: and doubtless he will not treat his disciples with less freedom and endearment in heaven. He will not keep them at a greater distance for his being in a state of exaltation; but he will rather take them into a state of exaltation with him. This will be the improvement Christ will make of his own glory, to make his beloved friends partakers with him, to glorify them in his glory, as he says to his Father, <sup>1722</sup>John 17:22, 23. "And the glory which thou hast given me, have I given them, that they may be one even as we are one; I in them," etc. We to consider, that though Christ is greatly exalted, yet he is exalted, not as a private person for himself only, but as his people's head; he is exalted in their name, and upon their account, as the first fruits, and as representing the whole harvest. He is not exalted that he may be at a greater distance from them, but that they may be exalted with him. The exaltation and honour of the head is not to make a greater distance between the head and the members; but the members have the same relation and union with the head they had before, and are honoured with the head; and instead of the distance being greater, the union shall be nearer and more perfect. When believers get to heaven, Christ will conform them to himself; as he is set down in his Father's throne, so they shall sit down with him on his throne and shall in their measure be made like him.

When Christ was going to heaven, he comforted his disciples with the thought, that after a while, he would come again and take them to himself, that they might be with him. And we are not to so that when the disciples got to heaven they found him keeping a greater distance than he used to do. No, doubtless, he embraced them as friends, and welcomed them to his and their Father's house, and to his and their glory. They who had been his friends in this world, who had been together with him here, and had together partaken of sorrows, and troubles, are now welcomed by him to rest, and to partake of glory with him. He took them and led them into his chambers, and showed them all his glory; as he prayed, <sup><8724></sup>John 17:24. "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me, that they may behold the glory which thou hast given me." And he led them to his living fountains of waters, and made them partake of his delights; as he prays, <sup><8713></sup>John 17:13. "That my joy may be fulfilled in themselves;" and set them down with him at his table in his kingdom, and made them partake with him of his dainties, according to his promise, <sup><2231></sup>Luke 22:30. and led them into his banqueting house, and made them to drink new wine with him in the kingdom of his heavenly Father, as he foretold them when he instituted The Lord's supper, <sup><4829></sup>Matthew 26:29.

Yea, the saints' conversation with Christ in heaven shall not only be as intimate, and their access to him as free, as of the disciples on earth, but in many respects much more so; for in heaven, that vital union shall be perfect, which is exceeding imperfect here. While the saints are in this world, there are great remains of sin and darkness, to separate or disunite them from Christ, which shall then all be removed. This is not a time for that full acquaintance, and those glorious manifestations of love, which Christ designs for his people hereafter; which seems to be signified by his speech to Mary Magdalene, when ready to embrace him, when she met him after his resurrection;

"Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not;  
for I am not yet ascended to my Father." (<sup><817></sup>John 20:17.)

When the saints shall see Christ's glory and exaltation in heaven, it will indeed possess their hearts with the greater admiration and adoring respect, but will not awe them into any separation, but will serve only to heighten their surprise and joy, when they find Christ condescending to


admit them to such intimate access, and so freely and fully communicating himself to them. So that if we choose Christ for our friend and portion, we shall hereafter be so received to him, that there shall be nothing to hinder the fullest enjoyment of him, to the satisfying the utmost cravings of our souls. We may take our full swing at gratifying our spiritual appetite after these holy pleasures. Christ will then say, as in Cant. v.1. “Eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.” And never be any end of this happiness, or any thing to interrupt our enjoyment of it, or in the least to molest us in it!

**2.** By your being united to Christ, you will have a more glorious union with and enjoyment of God the Father, otherwise could be. For hereby the saints’ relation to God becomes much nearer; they are the children of God in a higher manner than otherwise could be. For, being members of God’s own Son, they are in a sort partakers of his relation to the Father: they are not only sons of God by regeneration, but by a kind of communion in the sonship of the eternal Son. This seems to be intended, <sup><800></sup>Galatians 4:4, 5, 6. “God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that are under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abbe, Father.” The church is the daughter of God, not only as he hath begotten her by his word and Spirit, but as she is the spouse of his eternal Son.

So we, being members of the Son, are partakers in our measure of the Father’s love to the Son, and complacence in him. <sup><8173></sup>John 17:23. “I in them, and thou in me, — Thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me.” And verse 26. “That the love wherewith thou but loved me may be in them.” And chapter 16:27. “The Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God.” So we shall, according to our capacities, be partakers of the Son’s enjoyment of God, and have his joy fulfilled in ourselves, <sup><8173></sup>John 17:13. And by this means we shall come to an immensely higher, more intimate and full enjoyment of God, than otherwise could have been. For there is doubtless an infinite intimacy between the Father and the Son; which is expressed by his the bosom of the Father. And saints being in him, shall, in their measure and manner, partake with him, in it, and of the blessedness of it.

And thus is the affair of our redemption ordered, that thereby we are brought to an immensely room exalted kind of union with God, and enjoyment of him, both the Father and the Son, than otherwise could have been. For

Christ being united to the human nature, we have advantage for a more free and full enjoyment of him, than we could have had if he had remained only in the divine nature. So again, we being united to a divine person, as his members, can have a more intimate union and intercourse with God the Father who is only in the divine nature, than otherwise could be. Christ, who is a divine person, by taking on him our nature, descends from the infinite distance and height above us, and is brought nigh to us; whereby we have advantage for the full enjoyment of him. And, on the other hand, we, by being in Christ a divine person, do as it were ascend up to God, through the infinite distance, and have hereby advantage for the full enjoyment of him also.

This was the design of Christ, that he, and his Father, and his people be united in one.  John 17:21-23. “That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou hast given me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one.” Christ has brought it to pass, that those whom the Father has given him should be brought into the household of God; that he and his Father, and his people, should be as one society, one family; that the church should be as it were admitted into the society of the blessed Trinity.

# TWO SERMONS

## GOD GLORIFIED

### IN MAN'S DEPENDENCE

*[Preached on the Public Lecture in Boston, July 8, 1731; and published at the desire of several ministers and others in Boston who heard it. This was the first piece published by Mr. Edwards.]*

***“That no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.”*** ~~1~~<sup>1</sup> *Corinthians 1:29, 30, 31*

THOSE Christians to whom the apostle directed this epistle, dwelt in a part of the world where human wisdom was in great repute; as the apostle observes in the 22nd verse of this chapter, “The Greeks seek after wisdom.” Corinthiansthe city was not far from Athens, that had been for many ages the most famous seat of philosophy and learning in the world. The apostle therefore observes to them, how God by the gospel destroyed, and brought to naught, their wisdom. The learned Grecians, and their great philosophers, by all their wisdom did not know God, they were not able to find out the truth in divine things. But, after they had done their utmost to no effect, it pleased God at length to reveal himself by the gospel, which they accounted foolishness. He “chose the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty, and the base things of the world, and things that are despised, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught the things that are.” And the apostle informs them in the text why he thus did, That no flesh should glory in his presence, etc. In which words may be observed,

**1.** What God aims at in the disposition of things in the affair of redemption, viz. that man should not glory in himself, but alone in God;

That no flesh should glory in his presence, — that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

**2.** How this end is attained in the work of redemption, viz. by that absolute and immediate dependence which men have upon God in that work, for all their good. Inasmuch as,

**First,** All the good that they have is in and through Christ; He is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. All the good of the fallen and redeemed creature is concerned in these four things, and cannot be better distributed than into them; but Christ is each of them to us, and we have none of them any otherwise than in him. He is made of God unto us wisdom: in him are all the proper good and true excellency of the understanding. Wisdom was a thing that the Greeks admired; but Christ is the true light of the world; it is through him alone that true wisdom is imparted to the mind. It is in and by Christ that we have righteousness: it is by being in him that we are justified, have our sins pardoned, and are received as righteous into God's favor. It is by Christ that we have sanctification: we have in him true excellency of heart as well as of understanding; and he is made unto us inherent as well as imputed righteousness. It is by Christ that we have redemption, or the actual deliverance from all misery, and the bestowment of all happiness and glory. Thus we have all our good by Christ, who is God.

**Secondly,** Another instance wherein our dependence on God for all our good appears, is this, That it is God that has given us Christ, that we might have these benefits through him; he of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, etc.

**Thirdly,** It is of him that we are in Christ Jesus, and come to have an interest in him, and so do receive those blessings which he is made unto us. It is God that gives us faith whereby we close with Christ.

So that in this verse is shown our dependence on each person in the Trinity for all our good. We are dependent on Christ the Son of God, as he is our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. We are dependent on the Father, who has given us Christ, and made him to be these things to us. We are dependent on the Holy Ghost, for it is of him

that we are in Christ Jesus; it is the Spirit of God that gives faith in him, whereby we receive him, and close with him.


## DOCTRINE

“God is glorified in the work of redemption in this, that there appears in it so absolute and universal a dependence of the redeemed on him.” — Here I propose to show, 1st, That there is an absolute and universal dependence of the redeemed on God for all their good. And, 2dly, That God hereby is exalted and glorified in the work of redemption.


**I.** There is an absolute and universal dependence of the redeemed on God. The nature and contrivance of our redemption is such, that the redeemed are in every thing directly, immediately, and entirely dependent on God: they are dependent on him for all, and are dependent on him every way.

The several ways wherein the dependence of one being may be upon another for its good, and wherein the redeemed of Jesus Christ depend on God for all their good, are these, viz. That they have all their good of him, and that they have all through him, and that they have all in him: That he is the cause and original whence all their good comes, therein it is of him; and that he is the medium by which it is obtained and conveyed, therein they have it through him; and that he is the good itself given and conveyed, therein it is in him. Now those that are redeemed by Jesus Christ do, in all these respects, very directly and entirely depend on God for their all.

First, The redeemed have all their good of God. God is the great author of it. He is the first cause of it; and not only so, but he is the only proper cause. It is of God that we have our Redeemer. It is God that has provided a Savior for us. Jesus Christ is not only of God in his person, as he is the only-begotten Son of God, but he is from God, as we are concerned in him, and in his office of Mediator. He is the gift of God to us: God chose and anointed him, appointed him his work, and sent him into the world. And as it is God that gives, so it is God that accepts the Savior. He gives the purchaser, and he affords the thing purchased.

It is of God that Christ becomes ours, that we are brought to him, and are united to him. It is of God that we receive faith to close with him, that we may have an interest in him.  Ephesians 2:8.

“For by grace ye are saved, through faith;  
and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.”

It is of God that we actually receive all the benefits that Christ has purchased. It is God that pardons and justifies, and delivers from going down to hell; and into his favor the redeemed are received, when they are justified. So it is God that delivers from the dominion of sin, cleanses us from our filthiness, and changes us from our deformity. It is of God that the redeemed receive all their true excellency, wisdom, and holiness; and that two ways, viz. as the Holy Ghost by whom these things are immediately wrought is from God, proceeds from him, and is sent by him; and also as the Holy Ghost himself is God, by whose operation and indwelling the knowledge of God and divine things, a holy disposition and all grace, are conferred and upheld. And though means are made use of in conferring grace on men's souls, yet it is of God that we have these means of grace, and it is he that makes them effectual. It is of God that we have the Holy Scriptures; they are his word. It is of God that we have ordinances, and their efficacy depends on the immediate influence of his Spirit. The ministers of the gospel are sent of God, and all their sufficiency is of him. —  2 Corinthians 4:7.

“We have this treasure in earthen vessels,  
that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.”

Their success depends entirely and absolutely on the immediate blessing and influence of God.

**1.** The redeemed have all from the grace of God. It was of mere grace that God gave us his only-begotten Son. The grace is great in proportion to the excellency of what is given. The gift was infinitely precious, because it was of a person infinitely worthy, a person of infinite glory; and also because it was of a person infinitely near and dear to God. The grace is great in proportion to the benefit we have given us in him. The benefit is doubly infinite, in that in him we have deliverance from an infinite, because an eternal, misery, and do also receive eternal joy and glory. The grace in bestowing this gift is great in proportion to our unworthiness to whom it is given; instead of deserving such a gift, we merited infinitely ill of God's hands. The grace is great according to the manner of giving, or in proportion to the humiliation and expense of the method and means by

which a way is made for our having the gift. He gave him to dwell amongst us; he gave him to us incarnate, or in our nature; and in the like though sinless infirmities. He gave him to us in a low and afflicted state; and not only so, but as slain, that he might be a feast for our souls.

The grace of God in bestowing this gift is most free. It was what God was under no obligation to bestow. He might have rejected fallen man, as he did the fallen angels. It was what we never did any thing to merit; it was given while we were yet enemies, and before we had so much as repented. It was from the love of God who saw no excellency in us to attract it; and it was without expectation of ever being requited for it. And it is from mere grace that the benefits of Christ are applied to such and such particular persons. Those that are called and sanctified are to attribute it alone to the good pleasure of God's goodness, by which they are distinguished. He is sovereign, and hath mercy on whom he will have mercy.

Man hath now a greater dependence on the grace of God than he had before the fall. He depends on the free goodness of God for much more than he did then. Then he depended on God's goodness for conferring the reward of perfect obedience; for God was not obliged to promise and bestow that reward. But now we are dependent on the grace of God for much more; we stand in need of grace, not only to bestow glory upon us, but to deliver us from hell and eternal wrath. Under the first covenant we depended on God's goodness to give us the reward of righteousness; and so we do now; but we stand in need of God's free and sovereign grace to give us that righteousness; to pardon our sin, and release us from the guilt and infinite demerit of it.

And as we are dependent on the goodness of God for more now than under the first covenant, so we are dependent on a much greater, more free and wonderful goodness. We are now more dependent on God's arbitrary and sovereign good pleasure. We were in our first estate dependent on God for holiness. We had our original righteousness from him; but then holiness was not bestowed in such a way of sovereign good pleasure as it is now. Man was created holy, for it became God to create holy all his reasonable creatures. It would have been a disparagement to the holiness of God's nature, if he had made an intelligent creature unholy. But now when fallen man is made holy, it is from mere and arbitrary grace; God may for ever

deny holiness to the fallen creature if he pleases, without any disparagement to any of his perfections.

And we are not only indeed more dependent on the grace of God, but our dependence is much more conspicuous, because our own insufficiency and helplessness in ourselves is much more apparent in our fallen and undone state, than it was before we were either sinful or miserable. We are more apparently dependent on God for holiness, because we are first sinful, and utterly polluted, and afterward holy. So the production of the effect is sensible, and its derivation from God more obvious. If man was ever holy and always was so, it would not be so apparent, that he had not holiness necessarily, as an inseparable qualification of human nature. So we are more apparently dependent on free grace for the favor of God, for we are first justly the objects of his displeasure, and afterwards are received into favor. We are more apparently dependent on God for happiness, being first miserable, and afterwards happy. It is more apparently free and without merit in us, because we are actually without any kind of excellency to merit, if there could be any such thing as merit in creature excellency. And we are not only without any true excellency, but are full of, and wholly defiled with, that which is infinitely odious. All our good is more apparently from God, because we are first naked and wholly without any good, and afterwards enriched with all good.

**2.** We receive all from the power of God. Man's redemption is often spoken of as a work of wonderful power as well as grace. The great power of God appears in bringing a sinner from his low state, from the depths of sin and misery, to such an exalted state of holiness and happiness.

☞ Ephesians 1:19.

**“And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power.”**

We are dependent on God's power through every step of our redemption. We are dependent on the power of God to convert us, and give faith in Jesus Christ, and the new nature. It is a work of creation: “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature,” ☞ 2 Corinthians 5:17. “We are created in Christ Jesus,” ☞ Ephesians 2:10. The fallen creature cannot attain to true holiness, but by being created again. ☞ Ephesians 4:24. “And that ye put

on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.” It is a raising from the dead. <sup><50D></sup>Colossians 2:12-13.

“Wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.”

Yea, it is a more glorious work of power than mere creation, or raising a dead body to life, in that the effect attained is greater and more excellent. That holy and happy being, and spiritual life, which is produced in the work of conversion, is a far greater and more glorious effect, than mere being and life. And the state from whence the change is made — a death in sin, a total corruption of nature, and depth of misery — is far more remote from the state attained, than mere death or non-entity.

It is by God’s power also that we are preserved in a state of grace. <sup><50E></sup>1 Peter 1:5. “Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.” As grace is at first from God, so it is continually from him, and is maintained by him, as much as light in the atmosphere is all day long from the sun, as well as at first dawning, or sun-rising. — Men are dependent on the power of God for every exercise of grace, and for carrying on that work in the heart, for subduing sin and corruption, increasing holy principles, and enabling to bring forth fruit in good works. Man is dependent on divine power in bringing grace to its perfection, in making the soul completely amiable in Christ’s glorious likeness, and filling of it with a satisfying joy and blessedness; and for the raising of the body to life, and to such a perfect state, that it shall be suitable for a habitation and organ for a soul so perfected and blessed. These are the most glorious effects of the power of God, that are seen in the series of God’s acts with respect to the creatures.

Man was dependent on the power of God in his first estate, but he is more dependent on his power now; he needs God’s power to do more things for him, and depends on a more wonderful exercise of his power. It was an effect of the power of God to make man holy at the first: but more remarkably so now, because there is a great deal of opposition and difficulty in the way. It is a more glorious effect of power to make that holy that was so depraved, and under the dominion of sin, than to confer holiness on that which before had nothing of the contrary. It is a more glorious work of power to rescue a soul out of the hands of the devil, and

from the powers of darkness, and to bring it into a state of salvation, than to confer holiness where there was no prepossession or opposition.

☞ Luke 11:21-22.

“When a strong man armed keepeth his palace,  
his goods are in peace; but when a stronger than he shall come  
upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armor,  
wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils.”

So it is a more glorious work of power to uphold a soul in a state of grace and holiness, and to carry it on till it is brought to glory, when there is so much sin remaining in the heart resisting, and Satan with all his might opposing, than it would have been to have kept man from falling at first, when Satan had nothing in man. — Thus we have shown how the redeemed are dependent on God for all their good, as they have all of him.

Secondly, They are also dependent on God for all, as they have all through him. God is the medium of it, as well as the author and fountain of it. All we have, wisdom, the pardon of sin, deliverance from hell, acceptance into God’s favor, grace and holiness, true comfort and happiness, eternal life and glory, is from God by a Mediator; and this Mediator is God; which Mediator we have an absolute dependence upon, as he through whom we receive all. So that here is another way wherein we have our dependence on God for all good. God not only gives us the Mediator, and accepts his mediation, and of his power and grace bestows the things purchased by the Mediator; but he the Mediator is God.

Our blessings are what we have by purchase; and the purchase is made of God, the blessings are purchased of him, and God gives the purchaser; and not only so, but God is the purchaser. Yea God is both the purchaser and the price; for Christ, who is God, purchased these blessings for us, by offering up himself as the price of our salvation. He purchased eternal life by the sacrifice of himself. ☞ Hebrews 7:27. “He offered up himself.” And 9:26. “He hath appeared to take away sin by the sacrifice of himself.” Indeed it was the human nature that was offered; but it was the same person with the divine, and therefore was an infinite price.

As we thus have our good through God, we have a dependence on him in a respect that man in his first estate had not. Man was to have eternal life

then through his own righteousness; so that he had partly a dependence upon what was in himself; for we have a dependence upon that through which we have our good, as well as that from which we have it; and though man's righteousness that he then depended on was indeed from God, yet it was his own, it was inherent in himself; so that his dependence was not so immediately on God. But now the righteousness that we are dependent on is not in ourselves, but in God. We are saved through the righteousness of Christ: He is made unto us righteousness; and therefore is prophesied of, ◀2316 Jeremiah 23:6, under that name, "the Lord our righteousness." In that the righteousness we are justified by is the righteousness of Christ, it is the righteousness of God. ◀182 2 Corinthians 5:21. "That we might be made the righteousness of God in him." — Thus in redemption we have not only all things of God, but by and through him, ◀1816 1 Corinthians 8:6.

"But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him."

Thirdly, The redeemed have all their good in God. We not only have it of him, and through him, but it consists in him; he is all our good. — The good of the redeemed is either objective or inherent. By their objective good, I mean that extrinsic object, in the possession and enjoyment of which they are happy. Their inherent good is that excellency or pleasure which is in the soul itself. With respect to both of which the redeemed have all their good in God, or which is the same thing, God himself is all their good.

**1.** The redeemed have all their objective good in God. God himself is the great good which they are brought to the possession and enjoyment of by redemption. He is the highest good, and the sum of all that good which Christ purchased. God is the inheritance of the saints; he is the portion of their souls. God is their wealth and treasure, their food, their Life, their dwelling- place, their ornament and diadem, and their everlasting honor and glory. They have none in heaven but God; he is the great good which the redeemed are received to at death, and which they are to rise to at the end of the world. The Lord God is the light of the heavenly Jerusalem; and is the "river of the water of life" that runs, and "the tree of life that grows, in the midst of the paradise of God." The glorious excellencies and beauty of God will be what will for ever entertain the minds of the saints, and the

love of God will be their everlasting feast. The redeemed will indeed enjoy other things; they will enjoy the angels, and will enjoy one another; but that which they shall enjoy in the angels, or each other, or in any thing else whatsoever that will yield them delight and happiness, will be what shall be seen of God in them.

**2.** The redeemed have all their inherent good in God. Inherent good is twofold; it is either excellency or pleasure. These the redeemed not only derive from God, as caused by him, but have them in him. They have spiritual excellency and joy by a kind of participation of God. They are made excellent by a communication of God's excellency. God puts his own beauty, *i.e.* his beautiful likeness, upon their souls. They are made partakers of the divine nature, or moral image of God, ~~GOOD~~ 2 Peter 1:4. They are holy by being made partakers of God's holiness. ~~GOOD~~ Hebrews 12:10. The saints are beautiful and blessed by a communication of God's holiness and joy, as the moon and planets are bright by the sun's light. The saint hath spiritual joy and pleasure by a kind of effusion of God on the soul. In these things the redeemed have communion with God; that is, they partake with him and of him.

The saints have both their spiritual excellency and blessedness by the gift of the Holy Ghost, and his dwelling in them. They are not only caused by the Holy Ghost, but are in him as their principle. The Holy Spirit becoming an inhabitant, is a vital principle in the soul. He, acting in, upon, and with the soul, becomes a fountain of true holiness and joy, as a spring is of water, by the exertion and diffusion of itself. ~~GOOD~~ John 4:14.

“But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.”

Compared with chap. 7:38-39.

“He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water; but this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive.”

The sum of what Christ has purchased for us, is that spring of water spoken of in the former of those places, and those rivers of living water spoken of in the latter. And the sum of the blessings, which the redeemed

shall receive in heaven, is that river of water of life that proceeds from the throne of God and the Lamb, <sup><621></sup>Revelation 22:1. Which doubtless signifies the same with those rivers of living water, explained, <sup><413></sup>John 7:38-39, which is elsewhere called the “river of God’s pleasures.” Herein consists the fullness of good, which the saints receive of Christ. It is by partaking of the Holy Spirit, that they have communion with Christ in his fullness. God hath given the Spirit, not by measure unto him; and they do receive of his fullness, and grace for grace. This is the sum of the saints’ inheritance; and there- fore that little of the Holy Ghost which believers have in this world, is said to be the earnest of their inheritance, <sup><412></sup>2 Corinthians 1:22. “Who hath also sealed us, and given us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.” And chap. 5:5.

“Now he that hath wrought us for the self-same thing, is God,  
who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.”

And <sup><413></sup>Ephesians 1:13-14.

“Ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest  
of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession.”

The Holy Spirit and good things are spoken of in Scripture as the same; as if the Spirit of God communicated to the soul, comprised all good things, <sup><407></sup>Matthew 7:11.

“How much more shall your heavenly Father  
give good things to them that ask him?”

In Luke it is, chap. 11:13.

“How much more shall your heavenly Father  
give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?”

This is the sum of the blessings that Christ died to procure, and the subject of gospel-promises. <sup><414></sup>Galatians 3:13-14.

“He was made a curse for us, that we might receive  
the promise of the Spirit through faith.”

The Spirit of God is the great promise of the Father, <sup><424></sup>Luke 24:49. “Behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you.” The Spirit of God therefore is called “the Spirit of promise,” <sup><401></sup>Ephesians 1:33. This

promised thing Christ received, and had given into his hand, as soon as he had finished the work of our redemption, to bestow on all that he had redeemed; <sup><423></sup>Acts 2:13. “Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye both see and hear.” So that all the holiness and happiness of the redeemed is in God. It is in the communications, indwelling, and acting of the Spirit of God. Holiness and happiness is in the fruit, here and hereafter, because God dwells in them, and they in God.

Thus God has given us the Redeemer, and it is by him that our good is purchased. So God is the Redeemer and the price; and he also is the good purchased. So that all that we have is of God, and through him, and in him. <sup><613></sup>Romans 11:36. “For of him, and through him, and to him, or in him, are all things.” The same in the Greek that is here rendered to him, is rendered in him, <sup><886></sup>1 Corinthians 8:6.

**II.** God is glorified in the work of redemption by this means, viz. By there being so great and universal a dependence of the redeemed on him.

**1.** Man hath so much the greater occasion and obligation to notice and acknowledge God’s perfections and all-sufficiency. The greater the creature’s dependence is on God’s perfections, and the greater concern he has with them, so much the greater occasion has he to take notice of them. So much the greater concern any one has with and dependence upon the power and grace of God, so much the greater occasion has he to take notice of that power and grace. So much the greater and more immediate dependence there is on the divine holiness, so much the greater occasion to take notice of and acknowledge that. So much the greater and more absolute dependence we have on the divine perfections, as belonging to the several persons of the Trinity, so much the greater occasion have we to observe and own the divine glory of each of them. That which we are most concerned with, is surely most in the way of our observation and notice; and this kind of concern with any thing, viz. dependence, does especially tend to command and oblige the attention and observation. Those things that we are not much dependent upon, it is easy to neglect; but we can scarce do any other than mind that which we have a great dependence on. By reason of our so great dependence on God, and his perfections, and in

so many respects, he and his glory are the more directly set in our view, which way soever we turn our eyes.

We have the greater occasion to take notice of God's all-sufficiency, when all our sufficiency is thus every way of him. We have the more occasion to contemplate him as an infinite good, and as the fountain of all good. Such a dependence on God demonstrates his all-sufficiency. So much as the dependence of the creature is on God, so much the greater does the creature's emptiness in himself appear; and so much the greater the creature's emptiness, so much the greater must the fullness of the Being be who supplies him. Our having all of God, shows the fullness of his power and grace; our having all through him, shows the fullness of his merit and worthiness; and our having all in him, demonstrates his fullness of beauty, love, and happiness. And the redeemed, by reason of the greatness of their dependence on God, have not only so much the greater occasion, but obligation to contemplate and acknowledge the glory and fullness of God. How unreasonable and ungrateful should we be, if we did not acknowledge that sufficiency and glory which we absolutely, immediately, and universally depend upon!

**2.** Hereby is demonstrated how great God's glory is considered comparatively, or as compared with the creature's. By the creature being thus wholly and universally dependent on God, it appears that the creature is nothing, and that God is all. Hereby it appears that God is infinitely above us; that God's strength, and wisdom, and holiness, are infinitely greater than ours. However great and glorious the creature apprehends God to be, yet if he be not sensible of the difference between God and him, so as to see that God's glory is great, compared with his own, he will not be disposed to give God the glory due to his name. If the creature in any respects sets himself upon a level with God, or exalts himself to any competition with him, however he may apprehend that great honor and profound respect may belong to God from those that are at a greater distance, he will not be so sensible of its being due from him. So much the more men exalt themselves, so much the less will they surely be disposed to exalt God. It is certainly what God aims at in the disposition of things in redemption, (if we allow the Scriptures to be a revelation of God's mind, ) that God should appear full, and man in himself empty, that God should appear all, and man nothing. It is God's

declared design that others should not “glory in his presence;” which implies that it is his design to advance his own comparative glory. So much the more man “glories in God’s presence,” so much the less glory is ascribed to God.

**3.** By its being thus ordered, that the creature should have so absolute and universal a dependence on God, provision is made that God should have our whole souls, and should be the object of our undivided respect. If we had our dependence partly on God, and partly on something else, man’s respect would be divided to those different things on which he had dependence. Thus it would be if we depended on God only for a part of our good, and on ourselves, or some other being, for another part: or if we had our good only from God, and through another that was not God, and in something else distinct from both, our hearts would be divided between the good itself, and him from whom, and him through whom, we received it. But now there is no occasion for this, God being not only he from or of whom we have all good, but also through whom, and is that good itself, that we have from him and through him. So that whatsoever there is to attract our respect, the tendency is still directly towards God; all unites in him as the center.

## USE

**1.** We may here observe the marvelous wisdom of God, in the work of redemption. God hath made man’s emptiness and misery, his low, lost, and ruined state, into which he sunk by the fall, an occasion of the greater advancement of his own glory, as in other ways, so particularly in this, that there is now much more universal and apparent dependence of man on God. Though God be pleased to lift man out of that dismal abyss of sin and woe into which he was fallen, and exceedingly to exalt him in excellency and honor, and to a high pitch of glory and blessedness, yet the creature hath nothing in any respect to glory of; all the glory evidently belongs to God, all is in a mere, and most absolute, and divine dependence on the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. And each person of the Trinity is equally glorified in this work: there is an absolute dependence of the creature on every one for all: all is of the Father, all through the Son, and all in the Holy Ghost. Thus God appears in the work of redemption as all

in all. It is fit that he who is, and there is none else, should be the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the all and the only, in this work.

**2.** Hence those doctrines and schemes of divinity that are in any respect opposite to such an absolute and universal dependence on God, derogate from his glory, and thwart the design of our redemption. And such are those schemes that put the creature in God's stead, in any of the mentioned respects, that exalt man into the place of either Father, Son, or Holy Ghost, in any thing pertaining to our redemption. However they may allow of a dependence of the redeemed on God, yet they deny a dependence that is so absolute and universal. They own an entire dependence on God for some things, but not for others; they own that we depend on God for the gift and acceptance of a Redeemer, but deny so absolute a dependence on him for the obtaining of an interest in the Redeemer. They own an absolute dependence on the Father for giving his Son, and on the Son for working out redemption, but not so entire a dependence on the Holy Ghost for conversion, and a being in Christ, and so coming to a title to his benefits. They own a dependence on God for means of grace, but not absolutely for the benefit and success of those means; a partial dependence on the power of God, for obtaining and exercising holiness, but not a mere dependence on the arbitrary and sovereign grace of God. They own a dependence on the free grace of God for a reception into his favor, so far that it is without any proper merit, but not as it is without being attracted, or moved with any excellency. They own a partial dependence on Christ, as he through whom we have life, as having purchased new terms of life, but still hold that the righteousness through which we have life is inherent in ourselves, as it was under the first covenant. Now whatever scheme is inconsistent with our entire dependence on God for all, and of having all of him, through him, and in him, it is repugnant to the design and tenor of the gospel, and robs it of that which God accounts its luster and glory.

**3.** Hence we may learn a reason why faith is that by which we come to have an interest in this redemption; for there is included in the nature of faith, a sensible acknowledgment of absolute dependence on God in this affair. It is very fit that it should be required of all, in order to their having the benefit of this redemption, that they should be sensible of, and acknowledge, their dependence on God for it. It is by this means that God

hath contrived to glorify himself in redemption; and it is fit that he should at least have this glory of those that are the subjects of this redemption, and have the benefit of it. — Faith is a sensibleness of what is real in the work of redemption; and the soul that believes doth entirely depend on God for all salvation, in its own sense and act. Faith abases men, and exalts God; it gives all the glory of redemption to him alone. It is necessary in order to saving faith, that man should be emptied of himself, be sensible that he is “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.” Humility is a great ingredient of true faith: he that truly receives redemption, receives it as a little child, <sup>Mark 10:15</sup>.

“Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of heaven  
as a little child, he shall not enter therein.”

It is the delight of a believing soul to abase itself and exalt God alone: that is the language of it, <sup>Psalm 115:1</sup>. “Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to thy name give glory.”

**4.** Let us be exhorted to exalt God alone, and ascribe to him all the glory of redemption. Let us endeavor to obtain, and increase in, a sensibleness of our great dependence on God, to have our eye to him alone, to mortify a self-dependent and self-righteous disposition. Man is naturally exceeding prone to exalt himself, and depend on his own power or goodness; as though from himself he must expect happiness. He is prone to have respect to enjoyments alien from God and his Spirit, as those in which happiness is to be found. — But this doctrine should teach us to exalt God alone; as by trust and reliance, so by praise. Let him that glorieth, glory in the Lord. Hath any man hope that he is converted, and sanctified, and that his mind is endowed with true excellency and spiritual beauty? that his sins are forgiven, and he received into God’s favor, and exalted to the honor and blessedness of being his child, and an heir of eternal life? let him give God all the glory; who alone makes him to differ from the worst of men in this world, or the most miserable of the damned in hell. Hath any man much comfort and strong hope of eternal life, let not his hope lift him up, but dispose him the more to abase himself, to reflect on his own exceeding unworthiness of such a favor, and to exalt God alone. Is any man eminent in holiness, and abundant in good works, let him take nothing of

the glory of it to himself, but ascribe it to him whose “workmanship we are, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.”

# SINNERS IN THE HANDS OF AN ANGRY GOD

ENFIELD, CONNECTICUT JULY 8, 1741

*“Their foot shall slide in due time.”* <sup><1625></sup>Deuteronomy 32:35

In this verse is threatened the vengeance of God on the wicked unbelieving Israelites, who were God’s visible people, and who lived under the means of grace; but who, notwithstanding all God’s wonderful works towards them, remained (as verse 28.) void of counsel, having no understanding in them. Under all the cultivations of heaven, they brought forth bitter and poisonous fruit; as in the two verses next preceding the text. — The expression I have chosen for my text, their foot shall slide in due time, seems to imply the following things, relating to the punishment and destruction to which these wicked Israelites were exposed.

**1.** That they were always exposed to destruction; as one that stands or walks in slippery places is always exposed to fall. This is implied in the manner of their destruction coming upon them, being represented by their foot sliding. The same is expressed, <sup><1728></sup>Psalms 72:18.

“Surely thou didst set them in slippery places;  
thou castedst them down into destruction.”

**2.** It implies, that they were always exposed to sudden unexpected destruction. As he that walks in slippery places is every moment liable to fall, he cannot foresee one moment whether he shall stand or fall the next; and when he does fall, he falls at once without warning: Which is also expressed in <sup><1728></sup>Psalms 73:18, 19.

“Surely thou didst set them in slippery places;  
thou castedst them down into destruction:  
How are they brought into desolation as in a moment!”

**3.** Another thing implied is, that they are liable to fall of themselves, without being thrown down by the hand of another; as he that stands or walks on slippery ground needs nothing but his own weight to throw him down.

**4.** That the reason why they are not fallen already and do not fall now is only that God's appointed time is not come. For it is said, that when that due time, or appointed time comes, their foot shall slide. Then they shall be left to fall, as they are inclined by their own weight. God will not hold them up in these slippery places any longer, but will let them go; and then, at that very instant, they shall fall into destruction; as he that stands on such slippery declining ground, on the edge of a pit, he cannot stand alone, when he is let go he immediately falls and is lost.

The observation from the words that I would now insist upon is this. — "There is nothing that keeps wicked men at any one moment out of hell, but the mere pleasure of God." — By the mere pleasure of God, I mean his sovereign pleasure, his arbitrary will, restrained by no obligation, hindered by no manner of difficulty, any more than if nothing else but God's mere will had in the least degree, or in any respect whatsoever, any hand in the preservation of wicked men one moment. — The truth of this observation may appear by the following considerations.

**1.** There is no want of power in God to cast wicked men into hell at any moment. Men's hands cannot be strong when God rises up. The strongest have no power to resist him, nor can any deliver out of his hands. — He is not only able to cast wicked men into hell, but he can most easily do it. Sometimes an earthly prince meets with a great deal of difficulty to subdue a rebel, who has found means to fortify himself, and has made himself strong by the numbers of his followers. But it is not so with God. There is no fortress that is any defense from the power of God. Though hand join in hand, and vast multitudes of God's enemies combine and associate themselves, they are easily broken in pieces. They are as great heaps of light chaff before the whirlwind; or large quantities of dry stubble before devouring flames. We find it easy to tread on and crush a worm that we see crawling on the earth; so it is easy for us to cut or singe a slender thread that any thing hangs by: thus easy is it for God, when he pleases, to cast his enemies down to hell. What are we, that we should think to

stand before him, at whose rebuke the earth trembles, and before whom the rocks are thrown down?

**2.** They deserve to be cast into hell; so that divine justice never stands in the way, it makes no objection against God's using his power at any moment to destroy them. Yea, on the contrary, justice calls aloud for an infinite punishment of their sins. Divine justice says of the tree that brings forth such grapes of Sodom, "Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?" ~~Q370~~ Luke 13:7. The sword of divine justice is every moment brandished over their heads, and it is nothing but the hand of arbitrary mercy, and God's mere will, that holds it back.

**3.** They are already under a sentence of condemnation to hell. They do not only justly deserve to be cast down thither, but the sentence of the law of God, that eternal and immutable rule of righteousness that God has fixed between him and mankind, is gone out against them, and stands against them; so that they are bound over already to hell. ~~Q380~~ John 3:18. "He that believeth not is condemned already." So that every unconverted man properly belongs to hell; that is his place; from thence he is, ~~Q385~~ John 8:23. "Ye are from beneath:" And thither he is bound; it is the place that justice, and God's word, and the sentence of his unchangeable law assign to him.

**4.** They are now the objects of that very same anger and wrath of God, that is expressed in the torments of hell. And the reason why they do not go down to hell at each moment, is not because God, in whose power they are, is not then very angry with them; as he is with many miserable creatures now tormented in hell, who there feel and bear the fierceness of his wrath. Yea, God is a great deal more angry with great numbers that are now on earth: yea, doubtless, with many that are now in this congregation, who it may be are at ease, than he is with many of those who are now in the flames of hell.

So that it is not because God is unmindful of their wickedness, and does not resent it, that he does not let loose his hand and cut them off. God is not altogether such an one as themselves, though they may imagine him to be so. The wrath of God burns against them, their damnation does not slumber; the pit is prepared, the fire is made ready, the furnace is now hot, ready to receive them; the flames do now rage and glow. The glittering

sword is whet, and held over them, and the pit hath opened its mouth under them.

**5.** The devil stands ready to fall upon them, and seize them as his own, at what moment God shall permit him. They belong to him; he has their souls in his possession, and under his dominion. The scripture represents them as his goods, <sup><111></sup>Luke 11:12. The devils watch them; they are ever by them at their right hand; they stand waiting for them, like greedy hungry lions that see their prey, and expect to have it, but are for the present kept back. If God should withdraw his hand, by which they are restrained, they would in one moment fly upon their poor souls. The old serpent is gaping for them; hell opens its mouth wide to receive them; and if God should permit it, they would be hastily swallowed up and lost.

**6.** There are in the souls of wicked men those hellish principles reigning, that would presently kindle and flame out into hell fire, if it were not for God's restraints. There is laid in the very nature of carnal men, a foundation for the torments of hell. There are those corrupt principles, in reigning power in them, and in full possession of them, that are seeds of hell fire. These principles are active and powerful, exceeding violent in their nature, and if it were not for the restraining hand of God upon them, they would soon break out, they would flame out after the same manner as the same corruptions, the same enmity does in the hearts of damned souls, and would beget the same torments as they do in them. The souls of the wicked are in scripture compared to the troubled sea, <sup><251></sup>Isaiah 57:20. For the present, God restrains their wickedness by his mighty power, as he does the raging waves of the troubled sea, saying, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further;" but if God should withdraw that restraining power, it would soon carry all before it. Sin is the ruin and misery of the soul; it is destructive in its nature; and if God should leave it without restraint, there would need nothing else to make the soul perfectly miserable. The corruption of the heart of man is immoderate and boundless in its fury; and while wicked men live here, it is like fire pent up by God's restraints, whereas if it were let loose, it would set on fire the course of nature; and as the heart is now a sink of sin, so if sin was not restrained, it would immediately turn the soul into fiery oven, or a furnace of fire and brimstone.

**7.** It is no security to wicked men for one moment, that there are no visible means of death at hand. It is no security to a natural man, that he is now in health, and that he does not see which way he should now immediately go out of the world by any accident, and that there is no visible danger in any respect in his circumstances. The manifold and continual experience of the world in all ages, shows this is no evidence, that a man is not on the very brink of eternity, and that the next step will not be into another world. The unseen, unthought of ways and means of persons going suddenly out of the world are innumerable and inconceivable. Unconverted men walk over the pit of hell on a rotten covering, and there are innumerable places in this covering so weak that they will not bear their weight, and these places are not seen. The arrows of death fly unseen at noon-day; the sharpest sight cannot discern them. God has so many different unsearchable ways of taking wicked men out of the world and sending them to hell, that there is nothing to make it appear, that God had need to be at the expense of a miracle, or go out of the ordinary course of his providence, to destroy any wicked man, at any moment. All the means that there are of sinners going out of the world, are so in God's hands, and so universally and absolutely subject to his power and determination, that it does not depend at all the less on the mere will of God, whether sinners shall at any moment go to hell, than if means were never made use of, or at all concerned in the case.

**8.** Natural men's prudence and care to preserve their own lives, or the care of others to preserve them, do not secure them a moment. To this, divine providence and universal experience do also bear testimony. There is this clear evidence that men's own wisdom is no security to them from death; that if it were otherwise we should see some difference between the wise and politic men of the world, and others, with regard to their liableness to early and unexpected death: but how is it in fact? <sup>2016</sup> Ecclesiastes 2:16. "How dieth the wise man? even as the fool."

**9.** All wicked men's pains and contrivande which they use to escape hell, while they continue to reject Christ, and so remain wicked men, do not secure them from hell one moment. Almost every natural man that hears of hell, flatters himself that he shall escape it; he depends upon himself for his own security; he flatters himself in what he has done, in what he is now doing, or what he intends to do. Every one lays out matters in his

own mind how he shall avoid damnation, and flatters himself that he contrives well for himself, and that his schemes will not fail. They hear indeed that there are but few saved, and that the greater part of men that have died heretofore are gone to hell; but each one imagines that he lays out matters better for his own escape than others have done. He does not intend to come to that place of torment; he says within himself, that he intends to take effectual care, and to order matters so for himself as not to fail.

But the foolish children of men miserably delude themselves in their own schemes, and in confidence in their own strength and wisdom; they trust to nothing but a shadow. The greater part of those who heretofore have lived under the same means of grace, and are now dead, are undoubtedly gone to hell; and it was not because they were not as wise as those who are now alive: it was not because they did not lay out matters as well for themselves to secure their own escape. If we could speak with them, and inquire of them, one by one, whether they expected, when alive, and when they used to hear about hell, ever to be the subjects of misery: we doubtless, should hear one and another reply, “No, I never intended to come here: I had laid out matters otherwise in my mind; I thought I should contrive well for myself — I thought my scheme good. I intended to take effectual care; but it came upon me unexpected; I did not look for it at that time, and in that manner; it came as a thief — Death outwitted me: God’s wrath was too quick for me. Oh, my cursed foolishness! I was flattering myself, and pleasing myself with vain dreams of what I would do hereafter; and when I was saying, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction came upon me.”

**10.** God has laid himself under no obligation, by any promise to keep any natural man out of hell one moment. God certainly has made no promises either of eternal life, or of any deliverance or preservation from eternal death, but what are contained in the covenant of grace, the promises that are given in Christ, in whom all the promises are yea and amen. But surely they have no interest in the promises of the covenant of grace who are not the children of the covenant, who do not believe in any of the promises, and have no interest in the Mediator of the covenant.

So that, whatever some have imagined and pretended about promises made to natural men's earnest seeking and knocking, it is plain and manifest, that whatever pains a natural man takes in religion, whatever prayers he makes, till he believes in Christ, God is under no manner of obligation to keep him a moment from eternal destruction.

So that, thus it is that natural men are held in the hand of God, over the pit of hell; they have deserved the fiery pit, and are already sentenced to it; and God is dreadfully provoked, his anger is as great towards them as to those that are actually suffering the executions of the fierceness of his wrath in hell, and they have done nothing in the least to appease or abate that anger, neither is God in the least bound by any promise to hold them up one moment; the devil is waiting for them, hell is gaping for them, the flames gather and flash about them, and would fain lay hold on them, and swallow them up; the fire pent up in their own hearts is struggling to break out: and they have no interest in any Mediator, there are no means within reach that can be any security to them. In short, they have no refuge, nothing to take hold of; all that preserves them every moment is the mere arbitrary will, and uncovenanted, unobliged forbearance of an incensed God.

### APPLICATION

The use of this awful subject may be for awakening unconverted persons in this congregation. This that you have heard is the case of every one of you that are out of Christ. — That world of misery, that take of burning brimstone, is extended abroad under you. There is the dreadful pit of the glowing flames of the wrath of God; there is hell's wide gaping mouth open; and you have nothing to stand upon, nor any thing to take hold of; there is nothing between you and hell but the air; it is only the power and mere pleasure of God that holds you up.

You probably are not sensible of this; you find you are kept out of hell, but do not see the hand of God in it; but look at other things, as the good state of your bodily constitution, your care of your own life, and the means you use for your own preservation. But indeed these things are nothing; if God should withdraw his hand, they would avail no more to

keep you from falling, than the thin air to hold up a person that is suspended in it.

Your wickedness makes you as it were heavy as lead, and to tend downwards with great weight and pressure towards hell; and if God should let you go, you would immediately sink and swiftly descend and plunge into the bottomless gulf, and your healthy constitution, and your own care and prudence, and best contrivance, and all your righteousness, would have no more influence to uphold you and keep you out of hell, than a spider's web would have to stop a falling rock. Were it not for the sovereign pleasure of God, the earth would not bear you one moment; for you are a burden to it; the creation groans with you; the creature is made subject to the bondage of your corruption, not willingly; the sun does not willingly shine upon you to give you light to serve sin and Satan; the earth does not willingly yield her increase to satisfy your lusts; nor is it willingly a stage for your wickedness to be acted upon; the air does not willingly serve you for breath to maintain the flame of life in your vitals, while you spend your life in the service of God's enemies. God's creatures are good, and were made for men to serve God with, and do not willingly subserve to any other purpose, and groan when they are abused to purposes so directly contrary to their nature and end. And the world would spew you out, were it not for the sovereign hand of him who hath subjected it in hope. There are the black clouds of God's wrath now hanging directly over your heads, full of the dreadful storm, and big with thunder; and were it not for the restraining hand of God, it would immediately burst forth upon you. The sovereign pleasure of God, for the present, stays his rough wind; otherwise it would come with fury, and your destruction would come like a whirlwind, and you would be like the chaff of the summer threshing floor.

The wrath of God is like great waters that are dammed for the present; they increase more and more, and rise higher and higher, till an outlet is given; and the longer the stream is stopped, the more rapid and mighty is its course, when once it is let loose. It is true, that judgment against your evil works has not been executed hitherto; the floods of God's vengeance have been withheld; but your guilt in the mean time is constantly increasing, and you are every day treasuring up more wrath; the waters are constantly rising, and waxing more and more mighty; and there is nothing


but the mere pleasure of God, that holds the waters back, that are unwilling to be stopped, and press hard to go forward. If God should only withdraw his hand from the flood-gate, it would immediately fly open, and the fiery floods of the fierceness and wrath of God, would rush forth with inconceivable fury, and would come upon you with omnipotent power; and if your strength were ten thousand times greater than it is, yea, ten thousand times greater than the strength of the stoutest, sturdiest devil in hell, it would be nothing to withstand or endure it.

The bow of God's wrath is bent, and the arrow made ready on the string, and justice bends the arrow at your heart, and strains the bow, and it is nothing but the mere pleasure of God, and that of an angry God, without any promise or obligation at all, that keeps the arrow one moment from being made drunk with your blood. Thus all you that never passed under a great change of heart, by the mighty power of the Spirit of God upon your souls; all you that were never born again, and made new creatures, and raised from being dead in sin, to a state of new, and before altogether unexperienced light and life, are in the hands of an angry God. However you may have reformed your life in many things, and may have had religious affections, and may keep up a form of religion in your families and closets, and in the house of God, it is nothing but his mere pleasure that keeps you from being this moment swallowed up in everlasting destruction. However unconvinced you may now be of the truth of what you hear, by and by you will be fully convinced of it. Those that are gone from being in the like circumstances with you, see that it was so with them; for destruction came suddenly upon most of them; when they expected nothing of it, and while they were saying, Peace and safety: now they see, that those things on which they depended for peace and safety, were nothing but thin air and empty shadows.

The God that holds you over the pit of hell, much as one holds a spider, or some loathsome insect over the fire, abhors you, and is dreadfully provoked: his wrath towards you burns like fire; he looks upon you as worthy of nothing else, but to be cast into the fire; he is of purer eyes than to bear to have you in his sight; you are ten thousand times more abominable in his eyes, than the most hateful venomous serpent is in ours. You have offended him infinitely more than ever a stubborn rebel did his prince; and yet it is nothing but his hand that holds you from falling into

the fire every moment. It is to be ascribed to nothing else, that you did not go to hell the last night; that you were suffered to awake again in this world, after you closed your eyes to sleep. And there is no other reason to be given, why you have not dropped into hell since you arose in the morning, but that God's hand has held you up. There is no other reason to be given why you have not gone to hell, since you have sat here in the house of God, provoking his pure eyes by your sinful wicked manner of attending his solemn worship. Yea, there is nothing else that is to be given as a reason why you do not this very moment drop down into hell.

O sinner! Consider the fearful danger you are in: it is a great furnace of wrath, a wide and bottomless pit, full of the fire of wrath, that you are held over in the hand of that God, whose wrath is provoked and incensed as much against you, as against many of the damned in hell. You hang by a slender thread, with the flames of divine wrath flashing about it, and ready every moment to singe it, and burn it asunder; and you have no interest in any Mediator, and nothing to lay hold of to save yourself, nothing to keep off the flames of wrath, nothing of your own, nothing that you ever have done, nothing that you can do, to induce God to spare you one moment. — And consider here more particularly,

**1.** Whose wrath it is: it is the wrath of the infinite God. If it were only the wrath of man, though it were of the most potent prince, it would be comparatively little to be regarded. The wrath of kings is very much dreaded, especially of absolute monarchs, who have the possessions and lives of their subjects wholly in their power, to be disposed of at their mere will.  Proverbs 20:2.

**“The fear of a king is as the roaring of a lion: Whoso provoketh him to anger, sinneth against his own soul.”**

The subject that very much enrages an arbitrary prince, is liable to suffer the most extreme torments that human art can invent, or human power can inflict. But the greatest earthly potentates in their greatest majesty and strength, and when clothed in their greatest terrors, are but feeble, despicable worms of the dust, in comparison of the great and almighty Creator and King of heaven and earth. It is but little that they can do, when most enraged, and when they have exerted the utmost of their fury. All the kings of the earth, before God, are as grasshoppers; they are

nothing, and less than nothing: both their love and their hatred is to be despised. The wrath of the great King of kings, is as much more terrible than theirs, as his majesty is greater. <sup><011></sup>Luke 12:4, 5.

“And I say unto you, my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that, have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom you shall fear: fear him, which after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell: yea, I say unto you, Fear him.”

2. It is the fierceness of his wrath that you are exposed to. We often read of the fury of God; as in <sup><254></sup>Isaiah 59:18.

“According to their deeds,  
accordingly he will repay fury to his adversaries.”

So <sup><265></sup>Isaiah 66:15.

“For behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with his chariots  
like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury,  
and his rebuke with flames of fire.”

and in many other places. So, <sup><095></sup>Revelation 19:15, we read of “the wine press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.” The words are exceeding terrible. If it had only been said, “the wrath of God,” the words would have implied that which is infinitely dreadful: but it is “the fierceness and wrath of God.” The fury of God! the fierceness of Jehovah! Oh, how dreadful that must be! Who can utter or conceive what such expressions carry in them! But it is also “the fierceness and wrath of almighty God.” As though there would be a very great manifestation of his almighty power in what the fierceness of his wrath should inflict, as though omnipotence should be as it were enraged, and exerted, as men are wont to exert their strength in the fierceness of their wrath. Oh! then, what will be the consequence! What will become of the poor worms that shall suffer it! Whose hands can be strong? And whose heart can endure? To what a dreadful, inexpressible, inconceivable depth of misery must the poor creature be sunk who shall be the subject of this!

Consider this, you that are here present, that yet remain in an unregenerate state. That God will execute the fierceness of his anger, implies, that he will inflict wrath without any pity. When God beholds the ineffable

extremity of your case, and sees your torment to be so fastly disproportioned to your strength, and sees how your poor soul is crushed, and sinks down, as it were, into an infinite gloom; he will have no compassion upon you, he will not forbear the executions of his wrath, or in the least lighten his hand; there shall be no moderation or mercy, nor will God then at all stay his rough wind; he will have no regard to your welfare, nor be at all careful lest you should suffer too much in any other sense, than only that you shall not suffer beyond what strict justice requires. Nothing shall be withheld, because it is so hard for you to bear.

<sup>2088</sup>Ezekiel 8:18.


“Therefore will I also deal in fury: mine eye shall not spare,  
neither will I have pity; and though they cry in mine ears with a  
loud voice, yet I will not hear them.”

Now God stands ready to pity you; this is a day of mercy; you may cry now with some encouragement of obtaining mercy. But when once the day of mercy is past, your most lamentable and dolorous cries and shrieks will be in vain; you will be wholly lost and thrown away of God, as to any regard to your welfare. God will have no other use to put you to, but to suffer misery; you shall be continued in being to no other end; for you will be a vessel of wrath fitted to destruction; and there will be no other use of this vessel, but to be filled full of wrath. God will be so far from pitying you when you cry to him, that it is said he will only “laugh and mock,”


<sup>2025</sup>Proverbs 1:25, 26, etc.

How awful are those words, <sup>2370</sup>Isaiah 63:3, which are the words of the great God. “I will tread them in mine anger, and will trample them in my fury, and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment.” It is perhaps impossible to conceive of words that carry in them greater manifestations of these three things, viz. contempt, and hatred, and fierceness of indignation. If you cry to God to pity you, he will be so far from pitying you in your doleful case, or showing you the least regard or favor, that instead of that, he will only tread you under foot. And though he will know that you cannot bear the weight of omnipotence treading upon you, yet he will not regard that, but he will crush you under his feet without mercy; he will crush out your blood, and make it fly, and it shall be sprinkled on his garments, so as to stain all his

raiment. He will not only hate you, but he will have you in the utmost contempt: no place shall be thought fit for you, but under his feet to be trodden down as the mire of the streets.


3. The misery you are exposed to is that which God will inflict to that end, that he might show what that wrath of Jehovah is. God hath had it on his heart to show to angels and men, both how excellent his love is, and also how terrible his wrath is. Sometimes earthly kings have a mind to show how terrible their wrath is, by the extreme punishments they would execute on those that would provoke them. Nebuchadnezzar, that mighty and haughty monarch of the Chaldean empire, was willing to show his wrath when enraged with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego; and accordingly gave orders that the burning fiery furnace should be heated seven times hotter than it was before; doubtless, it was raised to the utmost degree of fierceness that human art could raise it. But the great God is also willing to show his wrath, and magnify his awful majesty and mighty power in the extreme sufferings of his enemies.  Romans 9:22.

“What if God, willing to show his wrath,  
and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering  
the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction?”

And seeing this is his design, and what he has determined, even to show how terrible the unrestrained wrath, the fury and fierceness of Jehovah is, he will do it to effect. There will be something accomplished and brought to pass that will be dreadful with a witness. When the great and angry God hath risen up and executed his awful vengeance on the poor sinner, and the wretch is actually suffering the infinite weight and power of his indignation, then will God call upon the whole universe to behold that awful majesty and mighty power that is to be seen in it.  Isaiah 33:12-14.

“And the people shall be as the burnings of lime, as thorns cut up  
shall they be burnt in the fire. Hear ye that are far off, what I have  
done; and ye that are near, acknowledge my might. The sinners in  
Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites, ”

etc.

Thus it will be with you that are in an unconverted state, if you continue in it; the infinite might, and majesty, and terribleness of the omnipotent God shall be magnified upon you, in the ineffable strength of your torments. You shall be tormented in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb; and when you shall be in this state of suffering, the glorious inhabitants of heaven shall go forth and look on the awful spectacle, that they may see what the wrath and fierceness of the Almighty is; and when they have seen it, they will fall down and adore that great power and majesty.  Isaiah 66:23, 24.

“And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord. And they shall go forth and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me; for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched, and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.”

**4.** It is everlasting wrath. It would be dreadful to suffer this fierceness and wrath of Almighty God one moment; but you must suffer it to all eternity. There will be no end to this exquisite horrible misery. When you look forward, you shall see a long for ever, a boundless duration before you, which will swallow up your thoughts, and amaze your soul; and you will absolutely despair of ever having any deliverance, any end, any mitigation, any rest at all. You will know certainly that you must wear out long ages, millions of millions of ages, in wrestling and conflicting with this almighty merciless vengeance; and then when you have so done, when so many ages have actually been spent by you in this manner, you will know that all is but a point to what remains. So that your punishment will indeed be infinite. Oh, who can express what the state of a soul in such circumstances is! All that we can possibly say about it, gives but a very feeble, faint representation of it; it is inexpressible and inconceivable: For “who knows the power of God’s anger?”

How dreadful is the state of those that are daily and hourly in the danger of this great wrath and infinite misery! But this is the dismal case of every soul in this congregation that has not been born again, however moral and strict, sober and religious, they may otherwise be. Oh that you would consider it, whether you be young or old! There is reason to think, that

there are many in this congregation now hearing this discourse, that will actually be the subjects of this very misery to all eternity. We know not who they are, or in what seats they sit, or what thoughts they now have. It may be they are now at ease, and hear all these things without much disturbance, and are now flattering themselves that they are not the persons, promising themselves that they shall escape. If we knew that there was one person, and but one, in the whole congregation, that was to be the subject of this misery, what an awful thing would it be to think of! If we knew who it was, what an awful sight would it be to see such a person! How might all the rest of the congregation lift up a lamentable and bitter cry over him! But, alas! instead of one, how many is it likely will remember this discourse in hell? And it would be a wonder, if some that are now present should not be in hell in a very short time, even before this year is out. And it would be no wonder if some persons, that now sit here, in some seats of this meeting-house, in health, quiet and secure, should be there before tomorrow morning. Those of you that finally continue in a natural condition, that shall keep out of hell longest will be there in a little time! your damnation does not slumber; it will come swiftly, and, in all probability, very suddenly upon many of you. You have reason to wonder that you are not already in hell. It is doubtless the case of some whom you have seen and known, that never deserved hell more than you, and that heretofore appeared as likely to have been now alive as you. Their case is past all hope; they are crying in extreme misery and perfect despair; but here you are in the land of the living and in the house of God, and have an opportunity to obtain salvation. What would not those poor damned hopeless souls give for one day's opportunity such as you now enjoy!

And now you have an extraordinary opportunity, a day wherein Christ has thrown the door of mercy wide open, and stands in calling and crying with a loud voice to poor sinners; a day wherein many are flocking to him, and pressing into the kingdom of God. Many are daily coming from the east, west, north and south; many that were very lately in the same miserable condition that you are in, are now in a happy state, with their hearts filled with love to him who has loved them, and washed them from their sins in his own blood, and rejoicing in hope of the glory of God. How awful is it to be left behind at such a day! To see so many others feasting, while you are pining and perishing! To see so many rejoicing and singing

for joy of heart, while you have cause to mourn for sorrow of heart, and howl for vexation of spirit! How can you rest one moment in such a condition? Are not your souls as precious as the souls of the people at Suffield, where they are flocking from day to day to Christ?

Are there not many here who have lived long in the world, and are not to this day born again? and so are aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and have done nothing ever since they have lived, but treasure up wrath against the day of wrath? Oh, sirs, your case, in an especial manner, is extremely dangerous. Your guilt and hardness of heart is extremely great. Do you not see how generaity persons of your years are passed over and left, in the present remarkable and wonderful dispensation of God's mercy? You had need to consider yourselves, and awake thoroughly out of sleep. You cannot bear the fierceness and wrath of the infinite God. — And you, young men, and young women, will you neglect this precious season which you now enjoy, when so many others of your age are renouncing all youthful vanities, and flocking to Christ? You especially have now an extraordinary opportunity; but if you neglect it, it will soon be with you as with those persons who spent all the precious days of youth in sin, and are now come to such a dreadful pass in blindness and hardness. — And you, children, who are unconverted, do not you know that you are going down to hell, to bear the dreadful wrath of that God, who is now angry with you every day and every night? Will you be content to be the children of the devil, when so many other children in the land are converted, and are become the holy and happy children of the King of kings?

And let every one that is yet out of Christ, and hanging over the pit of hell, whether they be old men and women, or middle aged, or young people, or little children, now hearken to the loud calls of God's word and providence. This acceptable year of the Lord, a day of such great favor to some, will doubtless be a day of as remarkable vengeance to others. Men's hearts harden, and their guilt increases apace at such a day as this, if they neglect their souls; and never was there so great danger of such persons being given up to hardness of heart and blindness of mind. God seems now to be hastily gathering in his elect in all parts of the land; and probably the greater part of adult persons that ever shall be saved, will be brought in now in a little time, and that it will be as it was on the great out-pouring of

the Spirit upon the Jews in the apostles' days; the election will obtain, and the rest will be blinded. If this should be the case with you, you will eternally curse this day, and will curse the day that ever you was born, to see such a season of the pouring out of God's Spirit, and will wish that you had died and gone to hell before you had seen it. Now undoubtedly it is, as it was in the days of John the Baptist, the ax is in an extraordinary manner laid at the root of the trees, that every tree which brings not forth good fruit, may be hewn down and cast into the fire.

Therefore, let every one that is out of Christ, now awake and fly from the wrath to come. The wrath of Almighty God is now undoubtedly hanging over a great part of this congregation. Let every one fly out of Sodom: "Haste and escape for your lives, look not behind you, escape to the mountain, lest you be consumed."

# FIVE SERMONS

ON

DIFFERENT OCCASIONS,

SEPARATELY PUBLISHED IN MR. EDWARDS LIFE-TIME.

## SERMON 1

*A Divine And Supernatural Light Immediately Imparted To The Soul, By The Spirit Of God, Shown To Be Both A Scriptural And Rational Doctrine.*

[Preached at Norhampton, and published at the desire of some of the hearers, in the year 1734.]

And Jesus answered and said unto him, blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which sits in heaven. (~~1637~~ Matthew 16:17)

Christ addresses those words to Peter upon occasion of his professing his faith in him as the Son of God. Our Lord was inquiring of his disciples, whom men said that he was, not that he needed to be informed, yet only to introduce and give occasion to what follows. They answer that some said he was John the Baptist and some Elias and others Jeremias, or one of the prophets. When they had thus given an account whom others said that he was Christ asks them, whom they said that he was! Simon Peter, whom we find always zealous and forward, was the first to answer: he readily replied to the question, Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God.

Upon this occasion, Christ says as he does to him and of him in the text: in which we may observe,

**1.** That Peter is pronounced blessed on this account. — Blessed art thou — “Thou art a happy man, that thou art not ignorant of this, that I am Christ, the Son of the living God. Thou art distinguishingly happy. Others are blinded, and have dark and deluded apprehensions, as you have now given an account, some thinking that I am Elias, and some that I am Jeremias, and some one thing. and some another, but none of them thinking right, all of them misled. Happy art thou, that art so distinguished as to know the truth in tints matter.”

**2.** The evidence of this his happiness declared, viz. That God, and he only, had revealed it to him. This is an evidence of his being blessed,

First, As it shows how peculiarly favoured he was of God above others: q.d. “How highly favoured art thou, that others, wise and great men, the scribes, Pharisees, and Rulers, and the nation in general, are left in darkness, to follow their own misguided apprehensions; and that thou shouldst be singled out, as it were, by name, that my heavenly Father should thus set his love on thee, Simon Bar-Jona. — This argues thee blessed, that thou shouldst thus be the object of God’s distinguishing love.”

Secondly, It evidences his blessedness also, as it intimates that this knowledge is above arty that flesh and blood can reveal. “This is such knowledge as only my Father which is in heaven can give: it is too high and excellent to be communicated by such means as other knowledge is. Thou art blessed, that thou knowest what God alone can teach thee.”

The original of this knowledge is here declared, both negatively and positively. Positively as God is here declared the author of it. Negatively, as it is declared, that flesh and blood had not revealed it. God is the author of all knowledge and understanding whatsoever. He is the author of all moral prudence, and of the skill that men have in their secular business. Thus it is said of all in Israel that were wise-hearted and skilled in embroidering, that God had filled them with the spirit of wisdom.

~~Exo~~ Exodus 28:3.

God is the author of such know-ledge; yet so that flesh and blood reveals it. Mortal men are capable of imparting the knowledge of human arts and sciences, and skill in temporal affairs. God is the author of such knowledge

by those means: flesh and blood is employed as the mediate or second cause of it: he conveys it by the power and influence of natural means. But this spiritual knowledge spoken of in the text, is what God is the author of and none else: he reveals it, an, flesh and blood reveals it not. He imparts this knowledge immediately, not making use of any intermediate natural causes, as he does in other knowledge.

What had passed in the preceding discourse naturally occasioned Christ to observe this; because the disciples had been telling how others did not know him, but were generally mistaken about him, divided and confounded in their opinions of him: but Peter had declared his assured faith, that he was the Son of God. Now it was natural to observe, how it was not flesh and blood that had revealed it to him, but God; for If this knowledge were dependent on natural causes or means, how came it to pass that they a company of poor fishermen, illiterate men, and persons of low education, attained to the knowledge of the truth while the scribes and Pharisees, men of vastly higher advantages, and greater knowledge and sagacity in other matters, remained in ignorance? This could be owing only to the gracious distinguishing influence and revelation of the Spirit of God. Hence, what I would make the subject of my present discourse from these words, is this

## DOCTRINE,

That there is such a thing as a spiritual and divine light, immediately imparted to the soul by God, of a different nature from any that is obtained by natural means. — And on this subject I would,

**I.** Show what this divine light is.

**II.** How it is given immediately by God, and not obtained by natural means.

**III.** Show the truth of the doctrine.

And then conclude with a brief improvement.

**I.** I would show what this spiritual and divine light is. And in order to it, would show,

*First*, In a few things what it is not. And here,

**1.** Those convictions that natural men may have of their sin and misery, is not this spiritual and divine light. Men in a natural condition may have convictions of the guilt that lies upon them, and of the anger of God, and their danger of divine vengeance. Such convictions are from the light of truth. That some sinners have a greater conviction of their guilt and misery than others, is because some have more light or more of an apprehension of truth than others. And this light and conviction may be from the Spirit of God; the Spirit convinces men of sin: but yet nature is much more concerned in it than in the communication of that spiritual and divine light that is spoken of in the doctrine; it is from the Spirit of God only as assisting natural principles, and not as infusing any new principles. Common grace differs from special, in that it influences only by assisting of nature; and not by imparting grace, or bestowing any thing above nature. The light that is obtained is wholly natural, or of no superior kind to what mere nature attains to, though more of that kind he obtained than would be obtained if men were left wholly to themselves: or, in other word), common grace only assists the faculties of the soul to do that more fully which they do by nature, as natural conscience or reason will by mere nature make a man sensible of guilt, and will accuse and condemn him when he has done amiss. Conscience is a principle natural to men; and the work that it doth naturally, or of itself, is to give an apprehension of right and wrong, and to suggest to the mind the relation that there is between right and wrong and a retribution. The Spirit of God, in those convictions which unregenerate men sometimes have, assists conscience to do this work in a further degree than it would do if they were left to themselves. He helps it against those things that tend to stupify it, and obstruct its exercise. But in the renewing and sanctifying work of the Holy Ghost, those things are wrought in the soul that are above nature, and of which there is nothing of the like kind in the soul by nature; and they are caused to exist in the soul habitually, and according to such a stated constitution or law that lays such a foundation for exercises in a continued course as is called a principle of nature. Not only are remaining principles assisted to do their work more freely and fully but those principles are restored that were utterly destroyed by the fall; and the mind thenceforward habitually exerts those acts that the dominion of sin had made it as wholly destitute of as a dead body is of vital acts.

The Spirit of God acts in a very different manner in the one case, from what he doth in the other. He may indeed act upon the mind of a natural man, but he acts in the mind of a saint as an indwelling vital principle. He acts upon the mind of an unregenerate person as an extrinsic occasional agent; for in acting upon them, he doth not unite himself to them; for notwithstanding all his influences that they may possess, they are still sensual, having not the Spirit. Jude 19. But he unites himself with the mind of a saint, takes him for his temple, actuates and influences him as a new supernatural principle of life and action. There is this difference, that the Spirit of God, in acting in the soul of a godly man, exerts and communicates himself there in his own proper nature. Holiness is the proper nature of the Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit operates in the minds of the godly, by uniting himself to them, and living in them, exerting his own nature in the exercise of their faculties. The Spirit of God may act upon a creature, and yet not in acting communicate himself. The Spirit of God may act upon inanimate creatures as, the Spirit moved upon the face of the waters, in the beginning of the creation; so the Spirit of God may act upon the minds of men many ways, and communicate himself no more than when he acts upon an inanimate creature. For instance, he may excite thoughts in them, may assist their natural reason and understanding, or may assist other natural principles, and this without any union with the soul, but may act, as it were, upon an external object. But as he acts in his holy influences and spiritual operations, he acts in a way of peculiar communication of himself; so that the subject is thence denominated spiritual.

**2.** This spiritual and divine light does not consist in any impression made upon the imagination. It is no impression upon the mind, as though one saw any thing with the bodily eyes. It is no imagination or idea of an outward light or glory, or any beauty of form or countenance, or a visible lustre or brightness of any object. The imagination may be strongly impressed with such things; but this is not spiritual light. Indeed when the mind has a lively discovery of spiritual things, and is greatly affected by the power of divine light, it may, and probably very commonly doth, much affect the imagination; so that impressions of an outward beauty or brightness may accompany those spiritual discoveries. But spiritual light is not that impression upon the imagination, but an exceedingly different

shiny. Natural men may have lively impressions on their imaginations, and we cannot determine but that the devil, who transforms himself into an angel of light, may cause imaginations of an outward beauty, or visible glory, and of sounds and speeches, and other such things; but these are things of a vastly inferior nature to spiritual

**3.** This spiritual light is not the suggesting of any new truths or propositions not contained in the word of God. This suggesting of new truths or doctrines to the mind, independent of any antecedent revelation of those propositions, either in word or writing, is inspiration; such as the prophets and apostles had, and such as some enthusiasts pretend to. But this spiritual light that I am speaking of, is quite a different thing from inspiration. It reveals no new doctrine, it suggests no new proposition to the mind, it teaches no new thing of God, or Christ, or another world, not taught in the Bible, but only gives a due apprehension of those things that are taught in the word of God.

**4.** It is not every affecting view that men have of religious things that is this spiritual and divine light. Men by mere principles of nature are capable of being affected with things that have a special relation to religion as well as other things. A person by mere nature, for instance, may be liable to be affected with the story of Jesus Christ, and the sufferings he underwent, as well as by any other tragical story. he may be the more affected with it from the interest he conceives mankind to have in it. Yea, he may be affected with it without believing it; as well as a man may be affected with what he reads in a romance, or sees acted in a stage-play. he may be affected with a lively and eloquent description of many pleasant things that attend the state of the blessed in heaven, as well as his imagination be entertained by a romantic description of the pleasantness of fairy land, or the like. And a common belief of the truth of such things, from education or otherwise, may help forward their affection. We read in Scripture of many that were greatly affected with things of a religious nature, who yet are there represented as wholly graceless, and many of them very ill men. A person therefore may have affecting views of the things of religion, and yet be very destitute of spiritual light. Flesh and blood may be the author of this: one man may give another an affecting view of divine things with but common assistance; but God alone can give a spiritual discovery of them. — But I proceed to show,

*Secondly*, Positively what this spiritual and divine light is.

And it may be thus described: A true sense of the divine excellency of the things revealed in the word of God, and a conviction of the truth and reality of them thence arising. This spiritual light primarily consists in the former of these, viz. A real sense and apprehension of the divine excellency of things revealed in the word of God. A spiritual and saving conviction of the truth and reality of these things, arises from such a sight of their divine excellency and glory; so that this conviction of their truth is an effect and natural consequence of this sight of their divine glory. There is therefore in this spiritual light,

**1.** A true sense of the divine and superlative excellency of the things of religion, a real sense of the excellency of God and Jesus Christ, and of the work of redemption and the ways and works of God revealed in the gospel. There is a divine and superlative glory in these things; an excellency that is of a vastly higher kind, and more sublime nature, than in other things; a glory greatly distinguishing them from all that is earthly and temporal. He that is spiritually enlightened truly apprehends and sees it, or has a sense of it. He does not merely rationally believe that God is glorious, but he has a sense of the gloriousness of God in his heart. There is not only a rational belief that God is holy, and that holiness is a good thing, but there is a sense of the loveliness of God's holiness. There is not only a speculatively judging that God is gracious, but a sense how amiable God is on account of the beauty of this divine attribute.

There is a twofold knowledge of good of which God has made the mind of man capable. The first, that which is merely notional, as when a person only speculatively judges that any thing is, which, by the agreement of mankind, is called good or excellent, viz. that which is most to general advantage, and between which and a reward there is a suitableness, — and the like. And the other is, that which consists in the sense of the heart, as when the heart is sensible of pleasure and delight in the presence of the idea of it. In the former is exercised merely the speculative faculty, or the understanding, in distinction from the will or disposition of the soul. In the latter, the will, or inclination, or heart are mainly concerned.

Thus there is a difference between having an opinion that God is holy and gracious, and having a sense of the loveliness and beauty of that holiness

and grace. There is a difference between having a rational judgment that honey is sweet, and having a sense of its sweetness. A man may have the former that knows not how honey tastes, but a man cannot have the latter unless he has an idea of the taste of honey in his mind. So there is a difference between believing that a person is beautiful, and having a sense of his beauty. The former may be obtained by hearsay but the latter only by seeing the countenance. When the heart is sensible of the beauty and amiableness of a thing it necessarily feels pleasure in the apprehension. It is implied in a person's being heartily sensible of the loveliness of a thing, that the idea of it is pleasant to his soul; which is a far different thing from having a rational opinion that it is excellent.

**2.** There arises from this sense of the divine excellency of things contained in the word of God, a conviction of the truth and reality of them; and that either indirectly or directly.

*First*, Indirectly and that two ways.

**1.** As the prejudices of the heart, against the truth of divine things, are hereby removed; so that the mind becomes susceptible of the due force of rational arguments for their truth. The mind of man is naturally full of prejudices against divine truth. It is full of enmity against the doctrines of the gospel; which is a disadvantage to those arguments that prove their truth, and causes them to lose their force upon the mind. But when a person has discovered to him the divine excellency of Christian doctrines, this destroys the enmity, removes those prejudices, sanctifies the reason, and causes it to be open to the force of arguments for their truth.

Hence was the different effect that Christ's miracles had to convince the disciples, from what they had to convince the scribes and Pharisees. Not that they had a stronger reason, or had their reason more improved; but their reason was sanctified, and those blinding prejudices, that the scribes and Pharisees were under, were removed by the sense they had of the excellency of Christ, and his doctrine.

**2.** It not only removes the hindrances of reason, but positively helps reason. It makes even the speculative notions more lively. It engages the attention of the mind, with more fixedness and intenseness to that kind of objects, which causes it to have a clearer view of them, and enables it more

clearly to see their mutual relations, and occasions it to take more notice of them. The ideas themselves that otherwise are dim and obscure, are by this means impressed with the greater strength, and have a light cast upon them; so that the mind can better judge of them. As he that beholds objects on the face of the earth, when the light of the sun is cast upon them, is under greater advantage to discern them in their true forms and natural relations, than he that sees them in a dim twilight.

The mind being sensible of the excellency of divine objects, dwells upon them with delight; and the powers of the soul are more awakened and enlivened to employ themselves in the contemplation of them, and exert themselves more fully and much more to purpose. The beauty of the objects draws on the faculties, and draws forth their exercises; so that reason itself is under far greater advantages for its proper and free exercises, and to attain its proper end, free of darkness and delusion. — But,

Secondly, A true sense of the divine excellency of the things of God's word doth more directly and immediately convince us of their truth; and that because the excellency of these things is so superlative. There is a beauty in them so divine and God-like, that it greatly and evidently distinguishes them from things merely human, or that of which men are the inventors and authors, a glory so high and great, that when clearly seen, commands assent to their divine reality. When there is an actual and lively discovery of this beauty and excellency, it will not allow of any such thought as that it is the fruit of men's invention. This is a kind of intuitive and immediate evidence. They believe the doctrines of God's word to be divine, because they see a divine, and transcendent, and most evidently distinguishing glory in them; such a glory as, if clearly seen, does not leave room to doubt of their being of God, and not of men.

Such a conviction of the truths of religion as this, arising from a sense of their divine excellency, is included in saving faith. And this original of it, is that by which it is most essentially distinguished from that common assent, of which unregenerate men are capable.

**II.** I proceed now to the second thing proposed, viz. To show how this light is immediately given by God, and not obtained by natural means. And here,

1. It is not intended that the natural faculties are not used in it. They are the subject of this light; and in such a manner, that they are not merely passive, but active in it. God, in letting in this light into the soul, deals with man according to his nature, and makes use of his rational faculties. But yet this light is not the less immediately from God for that, the faculties are made use of as the subject, and not as the cause. As the use we make of our eyes in beholding various objects, when the sun arises, is not the cause of the light that discovers those objects to us.
2. It is not intended that outward means have no concern in this affair. It is not in this affair, as in inspiration where new truths are suggested: for by this light is given only a due apprehension of the same truths that are revealed in the word of God; and therefore it is not given without the word. The gospel is employed in this affair. This light is the “light of the glorious gospel of Christ,” ~~2~~ 2 Corinthians 4:4. The gospel is as a glass, by which this light is conveyed to us. ~~1~~ 1 Corinthians 13:12. “Now we see through a glass.” But
3. When it is said that this light is given immediately by God, and that obtained by natural means, hereby is intended, that it is given by God without making use of any means that operate by their own power or natural force. God makes use of means, but it is not as mediate causes to produce this effect. There are not truly any second causes of it, but it is produced by God immediately. The word of God is no proper cause of this effect, but is made use of only to convey to the mind the subject-matter of this saving instruction: and this indeed it doth convey to us by natural force or influence. It conveys to our minds these doctrines, it is the cause of a notion of them in our heads, but not of the sense of their divine excellency in our hearts. Indeed a person cannot have spiritual light without the word. But that does not argue, that the word properly causes that light. The mind cannot see the excellency of any doctrine, unless that doctrine be first in the mind, but seeing the excellency of the doctrine may be immediately from the Spirit of God, though the conveying of the doctrine or proposition itself may be by the word. So that the notions which are the subject-matter of this light, are conveyed to the mind by the word of God; but that due sense of the heart, wherein this light formally consists, is immediately by the Spirit of God. As for instance, the notion that there is a Christ, and that Christ is holy and gracious, is conveyed to

the mind by the word of God, but the sense of the excellency of Christ by reason of that holiness and grace, is nevertheless immediately the work of the Holy Spirit. — I come now,

**III.** To show the truth of the doctrine, that is, to show that there is such a thing as that spiritual light that has been described, thus immediately let into the mind by God. And here I would show briefly, that this doctrine is both scriptural and rational.

First, It is scriptural. My text is not only full to the purpose, but it is a doctrine with which the Scripture abounds. We are there abundantly taught, that the saints differ from the ungodly in this, that they have the knowledge, of God, and a sight of God, and of Jesus Christ. I shall mention but few texts out of many: <B1B> 1 John 3:6. “Whosoever sinneth, hath not seen him, nor known him.” 3 John 11. “He that doth good, is of God: but he that doth evil, hath not seen Gods’ <B1B> John 14:19. “The world seeth me no more, but ye see me.” <B1B> John 17:3. “And this is eternal life, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.” This knowledge, or sight of God and Christ, cannot be a mere speculative knowledge, because it is spoken of as that wherein they differ from the ungodly. And be these scriptures it must not only be a different knowledge in degree and circumstances, and different in its effects; but it must be entirely different in nature and kind.

And this light and knowledge is always spoken of as immediately given of God, <B1B> Matthew 11:25-27. “At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.” Here this effect is ascribed exclusively to the arbitrary operation and gift of God bestowing this knowledge on whom he will, and distinguishing those with it who have the least natural advantage or means for knowledge, even babes, when it is denied to the wise and prudent. And imparting this knowledge is here appropriated to the Son of God, as his sole prerogative. And again,

“For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ.” (~~400~~ 2 Corinthians 4:6.)

This plainly shows, that there is a discovery of the divine superlative glory and excellency of God and Christ, peculiar to the saints; and also, that it is as immediately from God, as light from the sun: and that it is the immediate effect of his power and will. For it is compared to God’s creating the light by his powerful word in the beginning of the creation, and is said to be by the Spirit of the Lord, in the 18th verse of the preceding chapter. God is spoken of as giving the knowledge of Christ in conversion, as of what before was hidden and unseen, ~~815~~ Galatians 1:15,16. “But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me.” — The Scripture also speaks plainly of such a knowledge of the word of God, as has been described, as the immediate gift of God;

“Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.” (~~1338~~ Psalm 119:18.)

What could the psalmist mean, when he begged of God to open his eyes? Was he ever blind? Might he not have resort to the law and see every word and sentence in it when he pleased? And what could he mean by those wondrous things? Were they the wonderful stories of the creation, and deluge, and Israel’s passing through the Red sea, and the like? Were not his eyes open to read these strange things when he would? Doubtless by wondrous things in God’s law he had respect to those distinguishing and wonderful excellencies, and marvellous manifestations of the divine perfections and glory, contained in the commands and doctrines of the word, and those works and counsels of God that were there revealed. So the Scripture speaks of a knowledge of God’s dispensation and covenant of mercy and way of grace towards his people, as peculiar to the saints, are given only by God,

“The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will show them his covenant.” (~~1254~~ Psalm 25:14.)

And that a true and saving belief of the truth of religion is that which arises from such a discovery, is also what the Scripture teaches. As ~~8160~~ John 6:40.

“And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one who seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life;” where it is plain that a true faith is what arises from a spiritual sight of Christ. And, <sup><B76></sup>John 17:6, 7, 8. “I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gayest me out of the world. — Now they have known that all Things whatsoever thou hast given me, are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gayest me, and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me,” where Christ’s manifesting God’s name to the disciples, or giving them the knowledge of God, has that whereby they knew that Christ’s doctrine was of God, and that Christ himself proceeded from him, and was sent by him. Again, <sup><B24></sup>John 12:44, 45, 46. “Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me. And he that seeth me, seeth him that sent me. I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me, should not abide in darkness.” There believing in Christ, and spiritually seeing him, are parallel.

Christ condemns the Jews, that they did not know that he was the Messiah, and that his doctrine was true, from an inward distinguishing taste and relish of what was divine, in <sup><B25></sup>Luke 12:56, 57. He having blamed the Jews, that though they could discern the face of the sky and of the earth, and signs of the weather, that they could not discern those times — or as it is expressed in Matthew, the signs of those times — adds, “yea, and why even of your own selves, judge ye not what is right?” *i.e.* without extrinsic signs. Why have ye not that sense of true excellency, whereby Ye may distinguish that which is holy and divine? Why have ye not that savour of the things of God, by which you may see the distinguishing glory, and evident divinity, of me and my doctrine?

The apostle Peter mentions it as what gave him and his companions good and well-grounded assurance of the truth of the gospel, that they had seen the divine glory of Christ.

“For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty.” (<sup><B76></sup>2 Peter 1:16.)

The apostle has respect to that visible glory of Christ which they saw in his transfiguration: that glory was so divine, having such an ineffable

appearance and semblance of divine holiness, majesty, and grace, I that it evidently denoted him to be a divine person. But if a sight of Christ's outward glory might give a rational assurance of his divinity, why may not an apprehension of his spiritual glory do so too? Doubtless Christ's spiritual glory is in itself as distinguishing, and as plainly shows his divinity, as his outward glory, — nay, a great deal more: for his spiritual glory is that wherein his divinity consists: and the outward glory of his transfiguration showed him to be divine, only as it was a remarkable image or representation of that spiritual glory. Doubtless, therefore, he that has had a clear sight of the spiritual glory of Christ, may say, I have not followed cunningly devised fables, but have been an eye-witness of his majesty, upon as good grounds as the apostle, when he had respect to the outward glory of Christ that he had seen. But this brings me to what was proposed next, viz. to show that,

Secondly, This doctrine is rational.

**1.** It is rational to suppose, that there is really such an excellency in divine things — so transcendent and exceedingly different from what is in other things — that, if it were seen, would most evidently distinguish them. We cannot rationally doubt but that things divine, which appertain to the Supreme Being, are vastly different from things that are human, that there is a high, glorious, and God-like excellency in them, that does most remarkably difference them from the things that are of men, insomuch that if the difference were but seen, it would have a convincing, satisfying influence upon any one, that they are divine. What treason can be offered against it? unless we would argue, that God is not remarkably distinguished in glory from men.

If Christ should now appear to any one as he did on the mount at his transfiguration; or if he should appear to the world in his heavenly glory, as he will do at the day of judgment; without doubt, his glory and majesty would be such as would satisfy every one, that he was a divine person, and that religion was true: and it would be a most reasonable and well-grounded conviction too. And why may there not be that stamp of divinity, or divine glory, on the word of God, on the scheme and doctrine of the gospel, that may be in like manner distinguishing and as rationally convincing, provided it be but seen? It is rational to suppose, that when

God speaks to the world, there should be something in his word vastly different from men's word. Supposing that God never had spoken to the world, but we had notice that he was about to reveal himself from heaven, and speak to us immediately himself, or that he should give us a book of his own indicting; after what manner should we expect that he would speak? Would it not be rational to suppose, that his speech would be exceeding different from men's speech, that there should be such an excellency and sublimity in his word, such a stamp of wisdom, holiness, majesty, and other divine perfections, that the word of men, yea of the wisest of men, should appear mean and base in comparison of it?

Doubtless it would be thought rational to expect this, and unreasonable to think otherwise. When a wise man speaks in the exercise of his wisdom, there is something in every thing he says, that is very distinguishable from the talk of a little child. So, without doubt, and much more, is the speech of God to be distinguished from thee of the wisest of men; agreeable to

~~2028~~ Jeremiah 23:28, 29. God having there been reprovng the false prophets that prophesied in his name, and pretended that what they spake was his word, when indeed it was their own word, says, "The prophet that bath a dream, let him tell a dream, and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully: what is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord. Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord: and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces."

**2.** If there be such a distinguishing excellency in divine things; it is rational to suppose that there may be such a thing as seeing it. What should hinder but that it may be seen? It is no argument, that there is no such distinguishing excellency, or that it cannot be seen, because some do not see it, though they may be discerning men in temporal matters. It is not rational to suppose, if there be any such excellency in divine things, that wicked men should see it. Is it rational to suppose, that those whose minds are full of spiritual pollution, and under the power of filthy lusts, should have any relish or sense of divine beauty or excellency; or that their minds should be susceptible of that light that is in its own nature so pure and heavenly? It need not seem at all strange, that sin should so blind the mind, seeing that men's particular natural tempers and dispositions will so much blind them in secular matters; as when men's natural temper is melancholy, jealous, fearful, proud, or the like.

**3.** It is rational to suppose, that this knowledge should be given immediately by God, and not be obtained by natural means. Upon what account should it seem unreasonable, that there should be any immediate communication between God and the creature? It is strange that men should make any matter of difficulty of it. Why should not he that made all things, still have something immediately to do with the things that he has made! Where lies the great difficulty, if we own the being of a God, and that he created all things out of nothing, of allowing some immediate influence of God on the creation still! And if it be reasonable to suppose it with respect to any part of the creation, it is especially so with respect to reasonable intelligent creatures, who are next to God in the gradation of the different orders of beings, and whose business is most immediately with God, and reason teaches that man was made to serve and glorify his Creator. And if it be rational to suppose that God immediately communicates himself to man in any affair, it is in this. It is rational to suppose that God would reserve that knowledge and wisdom, which is of such a divine and excellent nature, to be bestowed immediately by himself and that it should not be left in the power of second causes. Spiritual wisdom and grace is the highest and most excellent gift that ever God bestows on any creature: in this the highest excellency and perfection of a rational creature consists. It is also immensely the most important of all divine gifts: it is that wherein man's happiness consists, and on which his everlasting welfare depends. How rational is it to suppose that God, however he has left lower gifts to second causes, and in some sort in their power, yet should reserve this most excellent, divine, and important of all divine communications, in his own hands, to be bestowed immediately by himself, as a thing too great for second causes to be concerned in? It is rational to suppose, that this blessing should be immediately from God, for there is no gift or benefit that is in itself so nearly related to the divine nature. Nothing which the creature receives is so much a participation of the Deity: it is a kind of emanation of God's beauty, and is related to God as the light is to the sun. It is therefore congruous and fit, that when it is given of God, it should be immediately from himself, and by himself, according to his own sovereign will.

It is rational to suppose, that it should be beyond man's power to obtain this light by the mere strength of natural reason; for it is not a thing that

belongs to reason, to see the beauty and loveliness of spiritual things; it is not a speculative thing, but depends on the sense of the heart. Reason indeed is necessary in order to it, as it is by reasons only that we are become the subjects of the means of it; which means I have already shown to be necessary in order to it, though they have no proper causal influence in the affair. It is by reason that we become possessed of a notion of those doctrines that are the subject-matter of this divine light, or knowledge; and reason may many ways be indirectly and remotely an advantage to it. Reason has also to do in the acts that are immediately consequent on this discovery: for seeing the truth of religion from hence, is by reason; though it be but by one step, and the inference he immediately: so reason has to do in that accepting of and trusting in Christ, that is consequent on it. But if we take reason strictly — not for the faculty of mental perception in general, but for ratiocination, or a power of inferring by arguments — the perceiving of spiritual beauty and excellency no more belongs to reason, than it belongs to the sense of feeling to perceive colours, or to the power of seeing to perceive the sweetness of food. It is out of reason's province to perceive the beauty or loveliness of any thing: such a perception does not belong to that faculty. Reason's work is to perceive truth and not excellency. It is not ratiocination that gives men the perception of the beauty and amiableness of a countenance, though it may be many ways indirectly an advantage to it; yet it is no more reason that immediately perceives it, than it is reason that perceives the sweetness of honey: it depends on the sense of the heart. — Reason may determine that a countenance is beautiful to others, it may determine that honey is sweet to others, but it will never give me a perception of its sweetness.

I will conclude with a very brief improvement of what has been said.

**First,** This doctrine may lead us to reflect on the goodness of God, that has so ordered it, that a saving evidence of the truth of the gospel is such, as is attainable by persons of mean capacities and advantages, as well as those that are of the greatest parts and learning. If the evidence of the gospel depended only on history, and such reasonings as learned men only are capable of, it would be above the reach of far the greatest part of mankind. But persons with an ordinary degree of knowledge are capable, without a long and subtle train of reasoning, to see the divine excellency of the things of religions they are capable of being taught by the Spirit of

God, as well as learned men. The evidence that is this way obtained, is vastly better and more satisfying, than all that can be obtained by the arguings of those that are most learned, and greatest masters of reason. And babes are as capable of knowing these things, as the wise and prudent; and they are often hid from these when they are revealed to those. <sup><402></sup>1 Corinthians 1:26, 27. “For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world.”

**Secondly**, This doctrine may well put us upon examining ourselves, whether we have ever had this divine light let into our souls. If there be such a thing, doubtless it is of great importance whether we have thus been taught by the Spirit of God; whether the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, hath shined unto us, giving us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ; whether we have seen the Son and believed on him, or have that faith which arises from a spiritual sight of Christ.

**Thirdly**, All may hence be exhorted, earnestly to seek this spiritual light. To influence and move to it, the following things may be considered.

- 1.** This is the most excellent and divine wisdom that any creature is capable of. It is more excellent than any human learning; it is far more excellent than all the knowledge of the greatest philosophers or statesmen. Yea, the least glimpse of the glory of God in the face of Christ doth more exalt and ennoble the soul, than all the knowledge of those that have the greatest speculative understanding in divinity without grace. This knowledge has the most noble object that can be, viz. the divine glory and excellency of God and Christ. The knowledge of these objects that wherein consists the most excellent knowledge of the angels, yea, of God himself.
- 2.** This knowledge is that which is above all others sweet and joyful. Men have a great deal of pleasure in human knowledge, in studies of natural things; but this is nothing to that joy which arises from this divine light shining into the soul. This light gives a view of those things that are immensely the most exquisitely beautiful, and capable of delighting the eye of the understanding. This spiritual light is the dawning of the light of glory in the heart. There is nothing so powerful as this to support persons

in affliction, and to give the mind peace and brightness in this stormy and dark world.

**3.** This light is such as effectually influences the inclination, and changes the nature of the soul. It assimilates our nature to the divine nature, and changes the soul into an image of the same glory that is beheld.

“But we all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from pillory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” (✠2 Corinthians 3:18.)

This knowledge will wean from the world, and raise the inclination to heavenly things. It will turn the heart to God as the fountain of good, and to choose him for the only portion. This light, and this only, will bring the soul to a saving close with Christ. It conforms the heart to the gospel, mortifies its enmity and opposition against the scheme of salvation therein revealed: it causes the heart to embrace the joyful tidings, and entirely to adhere to, and acquiesce in the revelation of Christ as our Saviour: it causes the whole soul to accord and symphonize with it, admitting it with entire credit and respect, cleaving to it with full inclination and affection; and it effectually disposes the soul to give up itself entirely to Christ.

**4.** This light, and this only, has its fruit in an universal holiness of life. No merely notional or speculative understanding of the doctrines of religion will ever bring to this. But this light, as it reaches the bottom of the heart, and changes the nature, so it will effectually dispose to an universal obedience. It shows God as worthy to be obeyed and served. It draws forth the heart in a sincere love to God, which is the only principle of a true, gracious, and universal obedience; and it convinces of the reality of those glorious rewards that God has promised to them that obey him.

## SERMON 2

### THE CHURCH'S MARRIAGE TO HER SONS, AND TO HER GOD.

[Preached at the instalment of the Revelation Samuel Buel, as pastor of the church and congregation at East Hampton on Long Island, Sept. 19, 1746.]

Thy land shall be married. for as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee: and as the bride-groom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall they God rejoiceth over thee. (~~2314~~ Isaiah 62:4,5.)

In thy midst of many blessed promises that God makes to his church — in this and the preceeding and following chapters — of advancement to a state of great peace comfort, honour, and joy after long-continued affliction, we have the sum of all contained in these two verses. in the 4th verse God says to his church, “Thou shalt no more be termed, Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzi-bah, and thy land, Reulah” for the Lord delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married.” When it said, “Thy land shall be married,” we are to understand, “the body of thy people, thy whole race,” the land — by a metonymy, very usual in Scripture — being put for the people that inhabit the land. — The 5th verse explains how this should be accomplished in two things, viz. in being married to her sons, and married to her God.

**1.** It is promised that she should be married to her sons, or that her sons should marry her? “For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee.” Or, as the words might have been more literally translated from the original: “As a young man is married to a virgin, so shall thy sons be married to thee.” Some by this understand a promise, that the posterity of the captivated Jews should return again from Babylon to the land of Canaan, and should be, as it were, married or wedded to their own land; *i.e.* They should be re-united to their own land, and should have great comfort

and joy in it, as a young man in a virgin that he marries. But when it is said, "So shall thy sons marry thee." God does not direct his speech to the land itself, but to the church whose land it was; the pronoun thee being applied to the same mystical person in this former part of the verse, as in the words immediately following in the latter part of the same sentence, "And as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride so shall thy God rejoice over thee.) It is the church, and not the hills and valleys of the land of Canaan, that is God's bride, or the Lamb's wife. It is also manifest, that when God says, "So shall thy sons marry thee," he continues to speak to her to whom he had spoken in the three preceding verses, but there it is not the land of Canaan, but the church, that he speaks to when he says, "The Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name. Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God. Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken," etc. And to represent the land itself as a bride, and the subject of espousals and marriage, would be a figure of speech very unnatural, and not known in Scripture, but for the church of God to be thus represented is very usual from the beginning to the end of the Bible. And then it is manifest that the return of the Jews to the land of Canaan from the Babylonish captivity, is not the event mainly intended by the prophecy of which these words are a part. That was not the time fulfilled in the 2nd verse of tiers chapter, "And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall named." That was not the time spoken of in the preceding chapters, with which this chapter is one continued prophecy. That was not the time spoken of in the last words of the foregoing chapter, when the Lord would cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all nations. nor was it the time spoken of in the 5th, 6th and 9th verses of that chapter, when "strangers should stand and feed the flocks of God's people, and the sons of the alien should be their ploughmen, and vine-dressers; hut they should be named the priests of the Lord, and men should call them the ministers of God; when they should eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory boast themselves, and their seed should be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the people, and all that should see them should acknowledge them, that they are the seed which the Lord hath blessed." Nor was that the time spoken

of in the chapter preceding that “when the abundance of the sea should be converted unto the church, when the isles should wait for God, and the ships of Tarshish to bring her sons from far. and their silver and gold with them, when the forces of the Gentiles and their kings should be brought, when the church should suck the milk of the Gentiles, and suck the breast of kings, and when that nation and kingdom that would not serve her should perish and be utterly wasted: and when the sun should be no more her light by day, neither for brightness should the moon give light unto her, but the Lord should be unto her an everlasting light and her God her glory and her sun should no more go down, nor her moon withdraw itself, because the Lord should be her everlasting light, and the days of her mourning should be ended.” These things manifestly have respect to the christian church in her most perfect and glorious state on earth in the last ages of the world, when the church should be so far from being confined to the land of Canaan, that she should fill the whole earth, and all lands should be alike holy.

These words in the text, “As a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee,” I choose rather, with others, to understand as expressive of the church’s union with her faithful pastors, and the great benefits she should receive from them. God’s ministers, though they are set to be the instructors, guides, and fathers of God’s people, yet are also the sons of the church,

“I raised up of your sons for prophets, and of your young men  
for Nazarites.” (~~3021~~ Amos 2:11.)

Such as these, when faithful, are those precious sons of Zion comparable to fine gold spoken of, ~~2900~~ Lamentations 4:2, 7. “Her Nazarites were purer than snow, they were whiter than milk.” And as he that marries a young virgin becomes the guide of her youth, so these sons of Zion are represented as taking her by the hand as her guide,

“There is none to guide her among all the sons whom she hath  
brought forth, neither is there any that taketh her by the hand of all  
the sons that she hath brought up.” (~~2918~~ Isaiah 51:18.)

That by these sons of the church is meant ministers of the gospel, is confirmed by the next verse to the text, “I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem.”

That the sons of the church should be married to her as a young man to a virgin, is a mystery not unlike many others held forth in the word of God, concerning the relation between Christ and his people, and their relation to him and to one another. Christ is David’s Lord and yet his Son, and both the Root and Offspring of David. Christ is a Son born and a Child given, and yet the everlasting Father. The church is Christ’s mother, Cant. 3:11. and 8:1. and yet his spouse, his sister, and his child. Believers are Christ’s mother and yet his sister and brother. Ministers are the sons of the church, and yet are her fathers. The apostle speaks of himself, as the father of the members of the church of Corinth, and also the mother of the Galatians, travailing in birth with them, ~~400~~ Galatians 4:19.

**2.** The second and chief fulfillment of the promise consists in the church being married to Christ: “And as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee.” Not that we are to understand that the church has many husbands, or that Christ is one husband, and ministers are other husbands strictly speaking. For though ministers are here spoken of as being married to the church, yet it is not as his competitors, or as standing in a conjugal relation to his bride in any wise parallel with his. For the church properly has but one husband she is not an adulteress, but a virgin, who is devoted wholly to the Lamb, and who follows him whithersoever he goes. But ministers espouse the church entirely as Christ’s ambassadors, as representing him and standing in his stead, being sent forth by him to be married to her in his name, that by this means she may be married to him. As when a prince marries a foreign lady by proxy, the prince’s ambassador marries her, but not in his own name but in the name of his master, that he may be the instrument of bringing her into a true conjugal relation to him. This is agreeable to what the apostle says,

“I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy; for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.” (~~400~~ 2 Corinthians 11:2.)

Here the apostle represents himself as being, as it were, the husband of the church of Corinth; for it is the husband that is jealous when the wife

commits adultery, and yet he speaks of himself as having espoused them, not in his own name, but in that name of Christ, and for him, and him only, and as his ambassador, sent forth to bring them home a chaste virgin to him. Ministers are in the text represented as married to the church in the same sense that elsewhere of the church. The here they are represented as fathers of the church has but one father, even God, and ministers are fathers as his ambassadors, so the church has but one shepherd, <sup><306></sup>John 10:16 “There shall be one fold and one shepherd;” but yet ministers, as Christ’s ambassadors, church has but one Saviour, but yet ministers, as his ambassadors and instruments, are called her saviours; <sup><307></sup>1 Timothy 4:16. “In doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee.” Obadiah 21. “And saviours shall come upon mount Zion.” The church has but one Priest; but yet in <sup><308></sup>Isaiah 66:21. speaking of the ministers of the Gentile nations, it is said, “I will take of them for priests and Levites.” The church has but one Judge, for the Father hath committed all judgment to the Son; yet Christ tells his apostles, that they shall sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

When the text speaks first of ministers marrying the church, and then of Christ’s rejoicing over her as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, the former is manifestly spoken of as being in order to the latter; even in order to the joy and happiness that the church shall have in her true bridegroom. The preaching of the gospel is in this context spoken of three times successively, as the great means of bringing about the prosperity and joy of the church; once, in the first verse, “For Zion’s sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem’s sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth;” and then in the text; and lastly in the two following verses, “I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night. Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence; and give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.”

The text thus opened affords these two propositions proper for our consideration on the solemn occasion of this day.

**I.** The uniting of faithful ministers with Christ's people in the ministerial office, when done in a due manner, is like a young man's marrying a virgin.

**II.** This union of ministers with the people of Christ is in order to their being brought to the blessedness of a more glorious union, in which Christ shall rejoice offer them, as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride.


**I. PROP.** The uniting of a faithful minister with Christ's people in the ministerial office, when done in a due manner, is like a young man's marrying a virgin.

I say, the uniting of a faithful minister with Christ's people, and in a due manner: for we must suppose that the promise God makes to the church in the text, relates to such ministers, and such a manner of union with the church; because this is promised to the church as a part of her latter-day glory, and as a benefit that should be granted her by God. as the fruit of his great love to her, and an instance of her great spiritual prosperity and happiness in her purest and most excellent state on earth. But it would be no such instance of God's great favour and the church's happiness, to have unfaithful ministers entering into office in an undue and improper manner. They are evidently faithful ministers that are spoken of in the next verse, where the same are doubtless spoken of as in the text; "I have set watchmen on thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night." And they are those that shall be introduced into the ministry at a time of its extraordinary purity, order, and beauty, wherein (as is said in the first, second' and third verses) her "righteousness should go forth as brightness, and the Gentiles should see her righteousness, and all kings her glory, and she should be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of her God."

When I speak of the uniting of a faithful minister with Christ's people in a due manner, I do not mean a due manner only with regard to external order; but its being truly done in a holy manner, with sincere upright aims and intentions, with a right disposition, and proper frames of mind in those that are concerned, and particularly in the minister that takes office, and God's people to whom he is united, each exercising in this affair a proper regard to God and one another. — Such an uniting of a faithful minister

with the people of God in the ministerial office, is in some respects like a young man marrying a virgin.

**1.** When a duly qualified person is properly invested with the ministerial character, and does in a due manner take upon him the sacred work and office of a minister of the gospel, he does, in some sense, espouse the church of Christ in general. For though he do not properly stand in a pastoral relation to the whole church of Christ through the earth, and is far from becoming an universal pastor; yet thenceforward he has a different concern with the church of Christ in general, and its interests and welfare, than other persons have that are laymen, and should be regarded otherwise by all the members of the Christian church. Wherever he is providentially called to preach the word of God, or minister in holy things, he ought to be received as a minister of Christ, and the messenger of the Lord of hosts to them. And every one that takes on him this office as he ought to do, espouses the church of Christ, as he espouses the interest of the church in a manner that is peculiar. He is under obligations, as a minister of the christian church, beyond other men to love the church as Christ her true bridegroom hath loved her, and to prefer Jerusalem above his chief joy and to imitate Christ, the great shepherd and bishop of souls and husband of the church, in his care and tender concern for her welfare, and earnest and constant labours to promote it, as he has opportunity. And as he, in taking office, devotes himself to the service of Christ in his church, so he gives himself to the church, to be hers, in that love, tender care, constant endeavored and earnest labour for her provision, comfort, and welfare, that is proper to his office, as a minister of Providence, as long as he lives, as a young man gives himself to a virgin when he marries her. And the church of Christ in general as constituted of true saints through the world, (though they do not deliver up themselves to any one particular minister, as universal pastor, yet,) cleave to and embrace the ministry of the church with endeared affection, high honour, and esteem, for Christ's sake. They joyfully commit and subject themselves to them; they resolve to honour and help them, to be guided by them and obey them so long as in the world; as the bride cloth in marriage deliver up herself to her husband. And the ministry in general, or the whole number of faithful ministers, being all united in the same work as fellow-labourers, and conspiring to the same design as fellow-helpers, to the grace of God, may be considered as one

mystical person, that espouses the church as a young man espouses a virgin: as the many elders of the church of Ephesus are represented as one mystical person,  Revelation 2:1. and all called the angel of the church of Ephesus: and as the faithful ministers of Christ in general, all over the world, seem to be represented as one mystical person, and called an angel,

“And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell upon the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.”

( Revelation 14:6.)

But

**2.** More especially is the uniting of a faithful minister with a particular Christian people, as their pastor, when done in a due manner, like a young man marrying a virgin. — It is so with respect to the union itself, the concomitants of the union, and the fruits of it.

**(1.)** The union itself is in several respects like that which is between a young man and a virgin whom he marries.

It is so with respect to mutual regard and affection. A faithful minister, that is in a Christian manner united to a Christian people as their pastor, has his heart united to them in the most ardent and tender affection. And they, on the other hand, have their hearts united to him, esteeming him very highly in love for his work's sake, and receiving him with honour and reverence and willing, subjecting themselves to him, and committing themselves to his care, as being, under Christ, their head and guide.

And such a pastor and people are like a young man and virgin united in marriage, with respect to the purity of their regard one to another. The young man elves himself to his bride in purity, as undebauched by meretricious embraces, and she also presents herself to him a chaste virgins So in such an union of a minister and people as we are speaking of, the parties united are pure and holy in their affection and regard one to another. The minister's heart is united to the people, not for filthy lucre, or any worldly advantage, but with a pure benevolence to them, and desire of their spiritual welfare and prosperity, and complacency in them as the children of God and followers of Christ Jesus. And, on the other hand, they love and honour him with a holy affection and esteem; and not

merely as having their admiration raised, and their carnal affection moved, by having their curiosity, and other fleshly principles, gratified by a florid eloquence, and the excellency of speech and man's wisdom; but receiving him as the messenger of the Lord of hosts, coming to them on a divine and infinitely important errand, and with those holy qualifications that resemble the virtues of the Lamb of God.

And as the bridegroom and bride give themselves to each other in covenant; so it is in that union we are speaking of between a faithful pastor and a Christian people. The minister, by solemn vows, devotes himself to the people, to improve his time and strength, and spend and be spent for them, so long as God in his providence shall continue the union; and they, on the other hand, in a holy covenant commit the care of their souls, and subject themselves, to him.

(2.) The union between a faithful minister and a christian people, is like that between a young man and virgin in their marriage, with respect to the concomitants of it.

When such a minister and such a people are thus united, it is attended with great joy. The minister joyfully devoting himself to the service of his Lord in the work of the ministry, as a work that he delights in; and also joyfully uniting himself to the society of the saints that he is set over, as having complacency in them, for his dear Lord's sake, whose people they are; and willingly and joyfully, on Christ's call, undertaking the labours and difficulties of the service of their souls. And they, on the other hand, joyfully receiving him as a precious gift of their ascended Redeemer. Thus a faithful minister and a Christian people are each other's joy,

“That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed.” (~~15:32~~ Romans 15:32.)

“As you have acknowledged us in part, that we are your rejoicing, even as ye are ours.” (~~1:14~~ 2 Corinthians 1:14.)

Another concomitant of this union, wherein it resembles that which becomes a young man and virgin united in marriage, is mutual helpfulness, and a constant care and endeavour to promote each other's good and comfort. The minister earnestly and continually seeks the profit and comfort of the souls of his people, and to guard and defend them from

every thing that might annoy them, and studies and labours to promote their spiritual peace and prosperity. They, on the other hand, make it their constant care to promote his comfort, to make the burden of his difficult work easy, to avoid those things that might add to the difficulty of it, and that might justly be grievous to his heart. They do what in them lies to encourage his heart, and strengthen his hands in his work; and are ready to say to him, when called to exert himself in the more difficult parts of his work, as the people of old to Ezra the priest, when they saw him bowed down under the burden of a difficult affair,

“Arise, for this matter belongeth to thee: we also will be with thee: be of good courage. and do it.” (Ezra 10:4.)

They spare no pains nor cost to make their pastor's outward circumstances easy and comfortable, and free from pinching necessities and distracting cares, and to put him under the best advantages to follow his great work fully and successfully.

Such a pastor and people, as it is between a couple happily united in a conjugal relation, have a mutual sympathy with each other; a fellow-feeling of each other's burdens and calamities, and a communion in each other's prosperity and joy. When the people suffer in their spiritual interest, the pastor suffers: he is afflicted when he sees their souls in trouble and darkness; he feels their wounds, and he looks on their prosperity and comfort as his own. 2 Corinthians 11:29. “Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?” 2 Corinthians 7:13. “We were comforted in your comfort.” And, on the other hand, the people feel their pastor's burdens, and rejoice in his prosperity and consolations; see Philippians 4:14. and 2 Corinthians 2:3.

**(3.)** This union is like that which is between a young man and a virgin in its fruits.

One fruit of it is mutual benefit: they become meet helps one for another. The people receive great benefit by the minister, as he is their teacher to communicate spiritual instructions and counsels to them, and is set to watch over them to defend them from those enemies and calamities they are liable to; and so is, under Christ, to be both their guard, as the husband is of the wife. And as the husband provides the wife with food

and clothing; so the pastor, as Christ's steward, makes provision for his people, and brings forth out of his treasure things new and old, gives every one his portion of meat in due season, and is made the instrument of spiritually clothing and adorning their souls. And, on the other hand, the minister receives benefit from the people, as they minister greatly to his spiritual good by that holy converse to which their union to him as his flock leads them. The conjugal relation leads the persons united therein to the most intimate acquaintance and conversation with each other, so the union there is between a faithful pastor and a Christian people, leads them to intimate conversation about things of A spiritual nature. It leads the people most freely and fully to open the case of their souls to the pastor, and leads him to deal most freely, closely, and thoroughly with them in things pertaining thereto. And this conversation not only tends to their benefit, but also greatly to his. And the pastor receives benefit from the people outwardly, as they take care of and order his outward accommodations. For his support and comfort, and do as it were spread and serve his table for him.

Another fruit of this union, wherein it resembles the conjugal, is a spiritual offspring. There is wont to arise from the union of such a pastor and people a spiritual race of children. These new-born children of God are in the scripture represented both as the children of ministers, as those who have begotten them through the gospel, and also as the children of the church, who is represented as their mother that hath brought them forth, and at whose breasts they are nourished; as in <sup>250</sup>Isaiah 54:1. and 66:11. <sup>400</sup>Galatians 4:26. <sup>400</sup>1 Peter 2:2. and many other places.

Having thus briefly shown how the uniting of faithful ministers with Christ's people in the ministerial office, when done in a due manner, is like a young man marrying a virgin, I proceed now to the

**II.** PROP. viz. That this union of ministers with the people of Christ, is in order to their being brought to the blessedness of a more glorious union, in which Christ shall rejoice over them as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride.

**1.** The saints are, and shall be, the subjects of this blessedness. Of all the various kinds of union of sensible and temporal things that are used in Scripture to represent the relation there is between Christ and his church;

that which is between bridegroom and bride, or husband and wife, is much the most frequently made use of both in the Old and New Testament. The Holy Ghost seems to take a peculiar delight in this, as a similitude fit to represent the strict, intimate, and blessed union that is between Christ and his saints. The apostle intimates, that one end why God appointed marriage, and established so near a relation as that between husband and wife, was, that it might be a type of the union that is between Christ and his church in ~~the~~ Ephesians 5:30, 31, 32. “For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined to his wife; and they two shall be one flesh.” — For this cause *i.e.* because we are members of Christ’s body, of his flesh, and of his bones, God appointed that man and wife should be so joined together as to be one flesh, to represent this high and blessed union between Christ and his church. The apostle explains himself in the next words, “This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.” This institution of marriage, making the man and his wife one flesh, is a great mystery, *i.e.* there is a great and glorious mystery hid in the design of it: and the apostle tells us what that glorious mystery is, “I speak concerning Christ and the church;” as much as to say, the mystery I speak of, is that blessed union that is between Christ and his church, which I spoke of before.

This is a blessed union indeed, of which that between a faithful minister and a christian people is but a shadow. Ministers are not the proper husbands of the church, though their union to God’s people, as Christ’s ambassadors, in several respects resembles the conjugal relation: but Christ is the true husband of the church, to whom the souls of the saints are espoused indeed, and to whom they are united as his flesh and his bones, yea and one spirit; to whom they have given themselves in an everlasting covenant, and whom alone they have to, love, honour, obey, and trust in, as their spiritual husband, whom alone they reserve themselves for as chaste virgins, and whom they follow whithersoever he goeth. There are many ministers in the church of Christ, and there may be several pastors of one particular church: but the church has but one husband, all others are rejected and despised in comparison of him; he is among the sons as the apple-tree among the trees of the wood; they all are barren and worthless, he only is the fruitful tree; and therefore, leaving all others, the church

betakes herself to him alone, and sits under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit is sweet to her taste; she takes up her full and entire rest in him, desiring no other. — The relation between a minister and people shall be dissolved, and may be dissolved before death; but the union between Christ and his church shall never be dissolved, neither before death nor by death, but shall endure through all eternity: “The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but Christ’s conjugal love and kindness shall not depart from his church; neither shall the covenant of his peace, the marriage-covenant, be removed,” <sup><280</sup> Isaiah 54:1. — the union between a faithful minister and a christian people is but a partial resemblance even of the marriage union, it is like marriage only in some particulars: but with respect to the union between Christ and his church, marriage is but a partial resemblance, yea, a faint shadow. Every thing desirable and excellent in the union between an earthly bridegroom and bride, is to be found in the union between Christ and his church, and that in an infinitely greater perfection and more glorious manner. — There is infinitely more to be found in it than ever was found between the happiest couple in a conjugal relation or could be found if the bride and bridegroom had not only the innocence of Adam and Eve, but the perfection of angels.

Christ and his saints, standing in such a relation as this one to another, the saints must needs be unspeakably happy. Their mutual joy in each other is answerable to the nearness of their relation and strictness of their union. Christ rejoices over the church as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, and she rejoices in him as the bride rejoices in the bridegroom. My text has respect to the mutual joy that Christ and his church should have in each other: for though the joy of Christ over his church only is mentioned, yet it is evident that this is here spoken of and promised as the great happiness of the church, and therefore supposes her joy in him.

The mutual joy of Christ and his church is like that of bridegroom and bride, in that they rejoice in each other, as those whom they have chosen above others, for their nearest, most intimate, and everlasting friends and companions. The church is Christ’s chosen, Isaiah 12:9. “I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away:” chapter 48:10. “I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction.” How often are God’s saints called his elect or chosen ones! He has chosen them, not to be mere servants, but friends; <sup><285</sup> John 15:15. “I call you not servants; — but I have called you friends.” And

though Christ be the Lord of glory, infinitely above men and angels, yet he has chosen the elect to be his companions; and has taken upon him their nature; and so in some respect, as it were, leveled himself with them, that he might be their brother and companion. Christ, as well as David, calls the saints his brethren and companions,

“For my brethren and companions sake I will now say,  
Peace be within thee.” (~~ACTS~~ Psalm 122:8.)

So in the book of Canticles, he calls his church his sister and spouse. Christ hath loved and chosen his church as his peculiar friend, above others;

“The Lord hath chosen Jacob unto himself, and Israel for his  
peculiar treasure.” (~~HEB~~ Psalm 135:4.)

As the bridegroom chooses the bride for his peculiar friend, above all others in the world; so Christ has chosen his church for a peculiar nearness to him, as his flesh and his bone, and the high honour and dignity of espousals above all others, rather than the fallen angels, yea, rather than the elect angels. For verily in this respect, “he taketh not hold of angels, but he taketh hold of the seed of Abraham;” as the words are in the original ~~HEB~~ Hebrews 2:16. He has chosen his church above the rest of mankind, above all the heathen nations, and those that are without the visible church, and above all other professing Christians; Cant. 6:9. “My dove, my undefiled is but one; she is the only one of her mother, she is the choice one of her that bare her.” Thus Christ rejoices over his church, as obtaining in her that which he has chosen about e all the rest of the creation, and as sweetly resting in his choice; ~~HEB~~ Psalm 132:13, 14. “The Lord hath chosen Zion: he hath desired it. — This is my rest for ever.”

On the other hand, the church chooses Christ above all others: he is in her eyes the chief among ten thousands, fairer than the sons of men: she rejects the suit of all his rivals, for his sake: her heart relinquishes the whole world he is her pearl of great price, for which she parts with all, and rejoices in him, as the choice and rest of her soul.

Christ and his church, like the bridegroom and bride, rejoice in each other, as having a special propriety in each other. All things are Christ’s, but he has a special propriety in his church. There is nothing in heaven or earth

among all the creatures, that is his, in that high and excellent manner that the church is his: they are open called his portion and inheritance, they are said, <sup><614></sup>Revelation 14:4. to be “the first-fruits to God and the Lamb.” As of old, the first fruit was that part of the harvest that belonged to God, and was to be offered to him, so the saints are the first fruits of God’s creatures, being that part which is in a peculiar manner Christ’s portion, above all the rest of the creation,

“Of his own will begat he us by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures.” (<sup><5018></sup>James 1:18.)

And Christ rejoices in his church as in that which is peculiarly his,

“I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy; in my people.” (<sup><2519></sup>Isaiah 65:19.)

The church has also a peculiar propriety in Christ: though other things are hers, yet nothing is hers in that manner that her spiritual bridegroom is hers. Great and glorious as he is, yet he, with all his dignity and glory, is wholly given to her, to be fully possessed and enjoyed by her, to the utmost degree that she is capable of: therefore we have her so often saying in the language of exultation and triumph. “My beloved is mine, and I am his.” Cant. 2:16. and 6:3. and 7:10.

Christ and his church, like the bridegroom and bride rejoice in each other, as those that are the objects of each other’s most tender and ardent love. The love of Christ to his church is altogether unparalleled: the height and depth and length and breadth of it pass knowledge: for he loved the church, and gave himself for it; and his love to her proved stronger than death. And on the other hand, she loves him with a supreme affection; nothing stands in competition with him in her heart: she loves him with all her heart. The whole soul is offered up to him in the flame of love. And Christ rejoices, and has sweet rest and delight in his love to the church, <sup><3087></sup>Zephaniah 3:17. “The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty: he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy: he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing.” So the church, in the exercises of her love to Christ, rejoices with unspeakable joy; <sup><4007></sup>1 Peter 1:7, 8. “Jesus Christ: whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.”

Christ and his church rejoice in each other's beauty. The church rejoices in Christ's divine beauty and glory. She, as it were, sweetly solaces herself in the light of the glory of the Sun of righteousness, and the saints say one to another, as in Isaiah 2: "O house of Jacob, come ye let us walk in the light of the Lord." The perfection's and virtues of Christ are as a perfumed ointment to the church that make his very name to be to her as ointment poured forth; Cant. 1:3. "Because of the savour of thy good ointments thy name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love thee." And Christ delights and rejoices in the beauty of the church, the beauty which he hath put upon her: her Christian graces are ointments of great price in his sight, <sup>1</sup> Peter 3:4. And he is spoken of as greatly desiring her beauty, <sup>1</sup> Psalm 14:11. Yea, he himself speaks of his heart as ravished with her beauty Cant. 4:9. "Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse: thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck."

Christ and his church, as the bridegroom and bride, rejoice in each other's love. Wine is spoken of, Psalm civ. 15. as that which maketh glad man's heart: but the church of Christ is spoken of as rejoicing in the love of Christ, as that which is more pleasant and refreshing than wine, Cant. 1:4. "The king hath brought me into his chambers: we will be glad and rejoice in thee, we will remember thy love more than wine." So on the other hand, Christ speaks of the church's love as far better to him than wine, Cant. 4:10. "How fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse! how much better is thy love than wine!"

Christ and his church rejoice in communion with each other, as in being united in their happiness, and having fellowship and a joint participation in each other's good: as the bridegroom and bride rejoice together at the wedding-feast, and as thenceforward they are joint partakers of each other's comforts and joys: <sup>1</sup> Revelation 3:20. "If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him and sup with him, and he with me." The church has fellowship with Christ in his own happiness, and his divine entertainment's, his joy is fulfilled in her, <sup>1</sup> John 15:11. and 17:13. She sees light in his light, and she is made to drink at the river of his own pleasures, <sup>1</sup> Psalm 36:8, 9. And Christ brings her to eat and drink at his own table, to take her fill of his own entertainment's; Cant. 5:1. "Eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved." And he, on the other

hand, has fellowship with her; he feasts with her; her joys are his; and he rejoices in that entertainment that she provides for him. So Christ is said to feed among the lilies, Cant. 2:16. and chapter 7:13. she speaks of all manner of pleasant fruits, new and old, which she had laid up, and says to him, chapter 4:16. "Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits;" and he makes answer in the next verse, "I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse; I have gathered my myrrh with my spice, I have eaten my honey-comb with my honey, I have drunk my wine with my milk."

And lastly, Christ and his church, as the bridegroom and bride, rejoice in conversing with each other. The words of Christ by which he converses with his church, are most sweet to her; and therefore she says of him, Cant. 5:16. "His mouth is most sweet." And on the other hand, he says of her, chapter 2:14. "Let me hear thy voice: for sweet is thy voice." And chapter 4:11. "Thy lips, O my spouse, drop as the honey-comb: honey and milk are under thy tongue."

Christ rejoices over his saints as the bridegroom over the bride at all times: but there are some seasons wherein he doth so more especially. Such a season is the time of the soul's conversion; when the good shepherd finds his lost sheep, then he brings it home rejoicing, and calls together his friends and neighbours, saying, Rejoice with me. The day of a sinner's conversion is the day of Christ's espousals; and so is eminently the day of his rejoicing; Sol. Song 3:11. "Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold king Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart." And it is oftentimes remarkably the day of the saints' rejoicing in Christ for then God turns again the captivity of his elect people, and, as it were, fills their mouth with laughter, and their tongue with singing, as in Psalm 126 at the beginning. We read of the jailer, that when he was converted,

"he rejoiced, believing in God, with all his house," (~~415~~ Acts 16:34.)

There are other seasons of special communion of the saints with Christ, wherein Christ doth in a special manner rejoice over his saints, and as their bridegroom brings them into his chambers that they also may be glad and rejoice in him, Cant. 1:4.

But this mutual rejoicing of Christ and his saints will be in its perfection, at the time of the saints glorification with Christ in heaven, for that is the proper time of the saints entering in with the bridegroom into the marriage, ~~4250~~ Matthew 25:10. The saints' conversion is rather like the betrothing of the intended bride to the bridegroom before they come together; but at the time of the saints' glorification that shall be fulfilled in ~~4941~~ Psalm 14:15.

“With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought;  
they shall enter into the king's palace.”

That is the time when those whom Christ loved, and for whom he gave himself — that he might sanctify and cleanse them, as with the washing of water by the word — shall be presented to him in glory, not having spot or wrinkle, or any thing. Then the church shall be brought to the full enjoyment of her bridegroom, having all tears wiped away from her eyes, and there shall be no more distance or absence. She shall then be brought to the entertainment's of an eternal wedding-feast, and to dwell for ever with her bridegroom yea, to dwell eternally in his embraces. Then Christ will give her his loves; and she shall drink her fill, yea, she shall swim in the ocean of his love.

And as these are various seasons wherein Christ and particular saints do more especially rejoice in each other so there are also certain seasons wherein Christ doth more especially rejoice over his church collectively taken. Such a season is a time of remarkable outpouring of the Spirit of God: it is a time of the espousals of many souls to Christ; and so of the joy of espousals. It is a time wherein Christ is wont more especially to visit his saints with his loving-kindness, and to bring them near to himself, and especially to refresh their hearts with divine communications: on which account, it becomes a time of great joy to the church of Christ. So when the Spirit of God was so wonderfully poured out on the city of Samaria, with the preaching of Philip, we read that “there was great joy in that city,” ~~4188~~ Acts 8:8. And the time of that wonderful effusion of the Spirit at Jerusalem, begun at the feast of Pentecost, was a time of holy feasting and rejoicing, and a kind of a wedding-day to the church of Christ; wherein

“they continuing daily, with one accord, in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness, and singleness of heart,” (~~406~~ Acts 2:46.)

But more especially is the time of that great outpouring of the Spirit of God in the latter days, so open foretold in the Scriptures, represented as the marriage of the Lamb, and the rejoicing of Christ and his church in each other, as the bridegroom and the bride. This is the time prophesied of in our text and context; and foretold in ~~259~~ Isaiah 65:19. “I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people; and the voice of weeping shall no more be heard in her, nor the voice of crying.” This is the time spoken of ~~600~~ Revelation 19:6, 7, 8, 9. where the apostle John tells us, he “heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.” And adds, “To her was granted, that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage-supper of the Lamb.”

But above all, the time of Christ’s last coming, is that of the consummation of the church’s marriage with the Lamb, and of the complete and most perfect Joy of the wedding. In that resurrection-morning, when the Sun of righteousness shall appear in our heavens, shining in all his brightness and glory, he will come forth as a bridegroom; he shall come in the glory of his Father, with all his holy angels. And at that glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ, shall the whole elect church, complete as to every individual member, and each member with the whole man, both body and soul, and both in perfect glory, ascend up to meet the Lord in the air, to be thenceforth for ever with the Lord. That will be indeed a joyful meeting of this glorious bridegroom and bride. Then the bridegroom will appear in all his glory without any veil; and then the saints shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father, and at the right hand of their Redeemer, and then the church will appear as the bride, the Lamb’s wife It is the state of the church after the resurrection, that is spoken of ~~600~~ Revelation 21:2. “And I John saw the holy city, never Jerusalem, coming down from God out of

heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.” And verse 9. “Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb’s wife.” Then will come the time, when Christ will sweetly invite his spouse to enter in with him into the palace of his glory, which he had been preparing for her from the foundation of the world, and shall, as it were, take her by the hand, and lead her in with him: and this glorious bridegroom and bride shall, with all their shining ornaments ascend up together into the heaven of heavens, the whole multitude of glorious angels waiting upon them: and this son and daughter of God shall, in their united glory and joy, present themselves together before the Father; when Christ shall say, “Here am I, and the children which thou hast given me.” And they both shall in that relation and union, together receive the Father’s blessing; and shall thenceforward rejoice together, in consummate, uninterrupted, immutable, and everlasting glory, in the love and embraces of each other, and joint enjoyment of the love of the Father.

**2.** That to re-mentioned union of faithful ministers with the people of Christ, is in order to this blessedness.

**1.** It is only with reference to Christ, as the true bridegroom of his church, that there is any union between a faithful minister and a Christian people, that is like that of a bridegroom and bride.

As I observed before, a faithful minister espouses a christian people, not in his own name, but as Christ’s ambassador: he espouses them, that therein they may be espoused to Christ. He loves her with a tender conjugal affection, as she is the spouse of Christ, and as he, as the minister of Christ, has his heart under the influence of the Spirit of Christ; as Abraham’s faithful servant, that was sent to fetch a wife for his master’s son, was captivated with Rebekah’s beauty and virtue; but not with reference to an union with himself, but with his master Isaac. It was for his sake he loved her, and it was for him that he desired her. He set his heart upon her, that she might be Isaac’s wife; and it was for this that he greatly rejoiced over her, for this he wooed her, and for this he obtained her, and she was for a season, in a sense, united to him but it was as a fellow-traveller, that by him she might be brought to Isaac in the land of Canaan. For this he adorned her with ornaments of gold; it was to prepare her for Isaac’s embraces. All that tender care which a faithful minister takes of his

people as a kind of spiritual husband — to provide for them, to lead, and feed, and comfort them — is not as to his own bride, but his master's.

And on the other hand, the people receive him, unite themselves to him in covenant, honour him, subject themselves to him, and obey him, only for Christ's sake, and as one that represents him, and acts in his name towards them. All this love, and honour, and submission, is ultimately referred to Christ. Thus the apostle says,

“Ye received me as an angel, or messenger of God,  
even as Christ Jesus.” (Galatians 4:14.)

And the children that are brought forth in consequence of the union of the pastor and people, are not properly the minister's children, but the children of Christ; they are not born of man, but of God.

**2.** The things that appertain to that fore-mentioned union of a faithful minister and Christian people, are the principal appointed means of bringing the church to that blessedness that has been spoken of. Abraham's servant, and the part he acted as Isaac's agent towards Rebekah, were the principal means of his being brought to enjoy the benefits of her conjugal relation to Isaac. Ministers are sent to woo the souls of men for Christ, 1 Corinthians 5:20. “We are then ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.” We read in Matthew 22 of a certain king, that made a marriage for his son, and sent forth his servants to invite and bring in the guests: these servants are ministers. The labours of faithful ministers are the principal means God is wont to make use of for the conversion of the children of the church, and so of their espousals unto Christ. I have espoused you to one husband, says the apostle, 2 Corinthians 11:2. The preaching of the gospel by faithful ministers, is the principal means that God uses for exhibiting Christ, his love and benefits to his elect people, and the chief means of their being sanctified, and so fitted to enjoy their spiritual bridegroom. Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it, as by the washing of water by the word, (*i.e.* by the preaching of the gospel,) and so might present it to him self, a glorious church. The labours of faithful ministers are ordinarily the principal teaching of the joy of the saints in Christ Jesus, in their fellowship with their spiritual bridegroom in this world; 2

Corinthians 1:24. "We are helpers of your joy." They are God's instruments for bringing up the church, as it were, from her childhood, till she is fit for her marriage with the Lord of glory, as Mordecai brought up Hadassah, or Esther, whereby she was fitted to be queen in Ahasuerus's court. God purifies the church under their hand, as Esther (to fit her for her marriage with the king) was committed to the custody of Hegai the keeper of the women, to be purified six months with oil of myrrh and six months with sweet odours. They are made the instruments of clothing the church in he; wedding-garments, that fine linen, clean and white, and adorning her for her husband, as Abraham's servant adorned Rebekah with golden ear-rings and bracelets. Faithful ministers are made the instruments of leading the people of God in the way to heaven, conducting them to the glorious presence of the bridegroom, to the consummate joys of her marriage with the Lamb, as Abraham's servant conducted Itebekah from Padan-aram to Canaan, and presented her to Isaac, and delivered her into his embraces. For it is the office of misters, not only to espouse the church to her husband but to present her a chaste virgin to Christ.

I would now conclude this discourse with some exhortations, agreeable to what has been said. And,

**1.** The exhortation may be to all that are called to the work of the gospel-ministry. — Let us who are honoured by the glorious bridegroom of the church, to be employed as his ministers, to so high a purpose, as has been represented, he engaged and induced by what has been observed, to faithfulness in our great work; that we may be and act towards Christ's people that are committed to our care, as those that are united to them in holy espousals, for Christ's sake, and in order to their being brought to the unspeakable blessedness of that more glorious union with the Lamb of God, in which he shall rejoice over them, as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride. Let us see to it that our hearts are united to them, as a young man to a virgin that he marries, in the most ardent and tender affection; and that our regard to them be pure and uncorrupt that it may be a regard to them, and not to what they have or any worldly advantages we hope to gain of them. And let us behave ourselves as those that are devoted to their good, being willing to spend and be spent for them joyfully undertaking and enduring the labour and self-denial that is requisite in order to a thorough fulfilling the ministry that we have received. Let us continually

and earnestly endeavour to promote the prosperity and salvation of the souls committed to our care, looking on their calamities and their prosperity as our own, feeling their spiritual wounds and griefs, and refreshed with their consolations, and spending our whole lives in diligent care and endeavour to provide for, nourish, and instruct our people, as the intended spouse of Christ, yet in her minority, that we may form her mind and behaviour, and bring her up for him, and that we may cleanse her, as with the washing of water by the word, and purify her as with sweet odours, and clothed in such raiment as may become Christ's bride. Let us aim that when the appointed wedding-day comes, we may have done our work as Christ's messengers, and may then be ready to present Christ's spouse to him, a chaste virgin, properly educated and formed, and suitably adorned for her mandate with the Lamb that he may then present her to himself, a glorious church not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, and may receive her into his eternal embraces, in perfect purity, beauty, and glory.

Here I would mention three or four things tending to excite us, to this fidelity.

**1.** We ought to consider how much Christ has done to obtain that joy, wherein he rejoices over his church, as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride. The creation of the world seems to have been especially for this end, that the eternal Son of God might obtain a spouse towards whom he might fully exercise the infinite benevolence of his nature and to whom he might, as it were, open and pour forth all that immense fountain of condescension, love, and grace that was in his heart, and that in this way God might be glorified. Doubtless the work of creation is subordinate to the work of redemption: the creation of the new heavens and new earth, is represented as so much more excellent than the old, that, in comparison, it is not worthy mentioned, or come into mind.

Christ has done greater things than to create the world, in order to obtain his bride and the joy of his espousals with her: for he became man for this end; which was a greater thing than his creating the world. For the Creator to make the creature was a great thing; but for him to become a creature was a greater thing. And he did a much greater thing still to obtain this joy; in that for this he laid down his life, and suffered even the death of the

cross: for this he poured out his soul unto death; and he that is the Lord of the universe, God over all, blessed for evermore, offered up himself a sacrifice, in both body and soul, in the flames of divine wrath. Christ obtains his elect spouse by conquest: for she was a captive in the hands of dreadful enemies; and her Redeemer came into the world to conquer these enemies, and rescue her out of their hands, that she might be his bride. And he came and encountered these enemies in the greatest battle that ever was beheld by men or angels: he fought with principalities and powers; he fought alone with the powers of darkness, and all the armies of hell; yea, he conflicted with the infinitely more dreadful wrath of God, and overcame in this great battle; and thus he obtained his spouse. Let us consider at how great a price Christ purchased this spouse: he did not redeem her with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with his own precious blood yea, he gave himself for her. When he offered up himself to God in those extreme labours and sufferings, this was the joy that was set before him, that made him cheerfully to endure the cross, and despise the pain and shame in comparison of this joy; even that rejoicing over his church, as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride that the Father had promised him, and that he expected when he should present her to himself in perfect beauty and blessedness.

The prospect of this was what supported him in the midst of the dismal prospect of his sufferings, at which his soul was troubled, <sup>48227</sup>John 12:27. “Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say! Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour.” These words show the conflict and distress of Christ’s holy soul in the view of his approaching sufferings. But in the midst of his trouble, he was refreshed with the joyful prospect of the success of those sufferings, in bringing home his elect church to himself, signified by a voice from heaven, and promised by the Father: on which he says in the language of triumph, verse 31, 32. “Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me.”

And ministers of the gospel are appointed to be the instruments of bringing this to pass, the instruments of bringing home his elect spouse to him, and her becoming his bride, and the instruments of her sanctifying and cleansing by the word, that she might be meet to be presented to him on the future glorious wedding-day flow great a motive then is here to induce

us who are called to be these instruments, to be faithful in our work, and most willingly labour and suffer, that Christ may see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied I Shall Christ do such great things, and go through such great labours and sufferings to obtain this joy, and then honour us sinful worms, so as to employ us as his ministers and instruments to bring this joy to pass; and shall we be loth to labour, and backward to deny ourselves for this end?

**2.** Let us consider how much the manner in which Christ employs us in this great business has to engage us to a faithful performance of it. We are sent forth as his servants; but it is as highly dignified servants, as stewards of his household, au Abraham's servant; and as his ambassadors, to stand in his stead, and in his name, and represent his person in so great an affair as that of his espousals with the eternally beloved of his soul. Christ employs us not as mere servants but as friends of the bridegroom; agreeable to the style in which John the Baptist speaks of himself, <sup><RB></sup>John 3:29.; in which he probably alludes to an ancient custom among the Jews at their nuptial solemnities, at which one of the guests that was most honoured and next in dignity to the bridegroom, was styled the friend of the bridegroom.

There is not an angel in heaven, of how high an order soever, but what looks on himself honoured by the Son of God and Lord of glory in being employed by him as his minister in the high affair of his espousals with his blessed bride. But such honour has Christ put upon us, that his spouse should in some sort be ours, that we should marry, as a young man marries a virgin, the same mystical person that he himself will rejoice over as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride; that we should be his ministers to treat and transact for him with his dear spouse, that he might obtain this joy: and, in our treaty with her, to be married to her in his name, and sustain an image of his own endearing relation to her; and that she should receive us, in some sort, as himself, and her heart be united to us in esteem, honour, and affection, as those that represent him and that Christ's and the church's children should be ours, and that the fruit of the travail of Christ's soul should be also the fruit of the travail of our souls, as the apostle speaks of himself as travailling in birth with his hearers,


<sup><RB></sup>Galatians 4:19. The reason why Christ puts such honour on faithful ministers, even above the angels themselves, is because they are of his


beloved church, they are select members of kits dear spouse, and Christ esteems nothing too much, no honour too great, for her. Therefore Jesus heist, the King of angels and men, does as it were cause it to be proclaimed concerning faithful ministers, as Ahasuerus did concerning him that brought up Esther, his beloved queen; “Thus shall it be done to the man that the king delights to honour.”

And seeing Christ hath so honoured us, that our relation to his people resembles his, surely our affection to them should imitate his, in seeking their salvation, spiritual peace, and happiness. Our tender care, labours, self-denial, and readiness to suffer for their happiness, should imitate what hath appeared in him, who hath purchased them with his own blood.

**3.** Let it be considered, that if we faithfully acquit ourselves in our office, in the manner that hath been represented, we shall surely hereafter be partakers of the joy, when the bridegroom, and bride shall rejoice in each other in perfect and eternal glory.

God once gave forth a particular command, with special solemnity, that it should be written for the notice of all professing Christians through all ages, that they are happy of the Lamb;

“And he saith unto me, Ante, blessed are they which are called unto the marriage-supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.” (  Revelation 19:9.)

But if we are faithful in our work, we shall surely be the subjects of that blessedness; we shall be partakers of the joy of the bridegroom and bride, not merely as friends and neighbours that are invited to be occasional guests, but as members of the one and the other. We shall be partakers with the church, the blessed bride, in her joy in the bridegroom, not only as friends and ministers to the church, but as members of principal dignity; as the eye, the ear, the hand, are principal members of the body. Faithful ministers in the church will hereafter be a part of the church that shall receive distinguished glory at the resurrection of the just, which, above all other times, may be looked on as the church’s wedding-day;  Daniel 12:2, 3. “Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars

for ever and ever.” They are elders who are represented as that part of the church triumphant that sit next to the throne of God, <sup><100></sup>Revelation 4:4. “And round about the throne were four-and-twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four-and-twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.”

And we shall also be partakers of the joy of the bridegroom in his rejoicing over his bride. We, as the special friends of the bridegroom, shall stand by, and hear him express his joy on that day, and rejoice greatly because of the bridegroom’s voice; as John the Baptist said of himself,

“He that hath the bride, is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom’s voice.” (John 52:29)

Christ, in reward for our faithful service, in winning and espousing his bride to him, and bringing her up from her minority, and adorning her for him, will then call us to partake with him in the joy of his marriage. And she that will then be his joy, shall also be our crown of rejoicing; <sup><100></sup>1 Thessalonians 2:19. “What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?” What a joyful meeting had Christ and his disciples together, when the disciples returned to their Master, after the faithful and successful performance of their appointed service, when Christ sent them forth to preach the gospel; <sup><100></sup>Luke 10:17. “And the seventy returned with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name.” Here we see how they rejoice: the next words show how Christ also rejoiced on that occasion: “And he said unto them I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.” And in the next verse but two, we are told, that “in that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.” So if we faithfully acquit ourselves, we shall another day return to him with joy; and we shall rejoice with him and he with us. — Then will be the day when Christ, who hath sown in tears and in blood, and we who have reaped the fruits of his labours and sufferings, shall rejoice together, agreeable to <sup><100></sup>John 4:35-37. And that will be a happy meeting indeed, when Christ and his lovely and blessed bride, and faithful ministers who have been the instruments of wooing and winning her heart

to him, and adorning her for him and presenting her to him, shall all rejoice together.

**4.** Further to stir us up to faithfulness in the great business that is appointed us, in order to the mutual joy of this bridegroom and bride, let us consider what reason we have to hope that the time is approaching when this joy shall be to a glorious degree fulfilled on earth, far beyond whatever yet has been, I mean the time of the church's latter day glory. This is what the words of our text have a more direct respect to; and this is what is prophesied of in ~~2ND~~ Hosea 2:19, 20. "And I will betroth thee unto me for ever, yea I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness, and thou shalt know the Lord." And this is what is especially intended by the marriage of the Lamb, in Revelation 19:

We are sure this day will come: and we have many reasons to think that it is approaching; from the fulfillment of almost every thing that the prophecies speak of as preceding it, and their having been fulfilled now a long time; and from the general earnest expectations of the church of God, and the best of her ministers and members, and the late extraordinary things that have appeared in the church of God, and appertaining to the state of religion, and the present aspects of divine Providence, which the time will not allow me largely to insist upon.

As the happiness of that day will have a great resemblance of the glory and joy of the eternal wedding-day of the church after the resurrection of the just, so will the privileges of faithful ministers at that time much resemble those they shall enjoy with the bridegroom and bride, as to honour and happiness, in eternal glory. This is the time especially intended in the text, wherein it is said, "as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee." And it is after in the prophecies spoken of as a great part of the glory of that time, that then the church should be so well supplied with faithful ministers. So in the next verse to the text, "I have set watchmen on thy walls, O Jerusalem, that shall never hold their peace, day nor night." So, ~~2ND~~ Isaiah 30:20, 21. "Thy teachers shall not be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers: and thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand and when ye turn to the left."

~~2485~~ Jeremiah 3:15. "And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding." And chapter 23:4. "And I will set up shepherds over them, which shall feed them." And the great privilege and joy of faithful ministers at that day is foretold in Isa. lli. 8. "Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice, with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion."

And as that day must needs be approaching, and we ourselves have lately seen some things which we have reason to hope are forerunners of it; certainly it should strongly excite us to endeavour to be such pastors as God has promised to bless his church with at that time; that if any of us should live to see the dawning of that glorious day, we might share in the blessedness of it, and then be called, as the friends of the bridegroom, to the marriage supper of the Lamb, and partake of that joy in which heaven and earth, angels and saints, and Christ and his church, shall be united at that time.

But here I would apply the exhortation in a few words to that minister of Christ, who above all others is concerned in the solemnity of this day, who is now to be united to and set over this people as their pastor.

You have now heard, Reverend Sir, the great importance and high ends of the office of an evangelical pastor, and the glorious privileges of such as are faithful in this office, imperfectly represented. May God grant that your union with this people, this day, as their pastor, may be such, that God's people here may have the great promise God makes to his church in the text, now fulfilled unto them. May you now, as one of the precious sons of Zion, take this part of Christ's church by the hand, in the name of your great Master the glorious bridegroom, with a heart devoted unto him with true adoration and supreme affection, and for his sake knit to this people, in a spiritual and pure love, and as it were a conjugal tenderness; ardently desiring that great happiness for them, which you have now heard Christ has chosen his church unto, and has shed his blood to obtain for her; being yourself ready to spend and be spent for them; remembering the great errand on which Christ sends you to them, viz. to woo and win their hearts, and espouse their souls to him. and to bring up his elect spouse, and to fit and adorn her for his embraces; that you may in due time present

her a chaste virgin to him, for him to rejoice over, as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride. How honourable is this business that Christ employs you in! and how joyfully should you perform it! When Abraham's faithful servant was sent to take a wife for his master's son, how engaged was he in the business; and how joyful was he when he succeeded! With what joy did he bow his head and worship, and bless the Lord God of his master, for his mercy and his truth in making his way prosperous I And what a joyful meeting may we conclude he had with Isaac, when he met him in the field, by the well of Laharoi, and there Presented his beauteous Rebekah to him, and told him all things that he had done! But this was but a shadow of that joy that you shall have, if you imitate his fidelity, in the day when you shall meet your glorious Master, and present Christ's church in this place, as a chaste and beautiful virgin unto him.

We trust, dear Sir, that you will esteem it a most blessed employment, to spend your time and skill in adorning Christ's bride for her marriage with the Lamb, and that it is work which you will do with delight; and that you will take heed that the ornaments you put upon her are of the right sort, what shall be indeed beautiful and precious in the eyes of the bridegroom, that she may be an glorious within, and her clothing of wrought gold; that on the wedding-day she may stand on the king's right hand in gold of Ophir.

The joyful day is coming, when the spouse of Christ shall be led to the King in raiment of needle-work; and angels and faithful minister will be the servants that shall lead her in. And you, Sir, if you are faithful in the charge now to be committed to you, shall be Joined with glorious angels in that honourable and Joyful service; but with this difference, that you shall have the higher privilege. Angels and faithful ministers shall be together in bringing in Christ's bride into his palace, and presenting her to him. But faithful ministers shall have a much higher participation of the joy of that occasion. They shall have a greater and more immediate participation with the bride in her joy, for they shall not only be ministers to the church as the angels are, but parts of the church, principal members of the bride. And as such, at the same time that angels do the part of ministering spirits to the bride, when they conduct her to the bridegroom they shall also do the part of ministering spirits to faithful ministers. And they shall also

have a higher participation with the bridegroom than the angels, in his rejoicing at that time, for they shall be nearer to him than they. They are also his members, and are honoured as the principal instruments of espousing the saints to him, and fitting them for his enjoyment; and therefore they will be more the crown of rejoicing of faithful ministers, than of the angels of heaven.

So great, dear Sir, is the honour and joy that is set before you, to engage you to faithfulness in your pastoral care of this people; so glorious the prize that Christ has set up to engage you to run the race that is set before you.

I would now conclude with a few words to the people of this congregation, whose souls are now to be committed to the care of that minister of Christ, whom they have chosen as their pastor.

Let me take occasion, dear brethren, from what has been said, to exhort you — not forgetting the respect, honour, and reverence that will ever be due from you to your former pastor, to has served you so long in that work, but by reason of age and growing infirmities, and the prospect of his place being so happily supplied by a successor has seen meet to relinquish the burden of the pastoral charge over you — to perform the duties that belong to you, in your part of that relation and union now to be established between you and your elect pastor. Receive him as the messenger of the Lord of hosts, one that in his office represents the glorious bridegroom of the church; love and honour him, and willingly submit yourselves to him, as a virgin when married to a husband. Surely the feet of that messenger should be beautiful, that comes to you on such a blessed errand as that which you have heard, to espouse you to the eternal Son of God, and to fit you for and lead you to him as your bridegroom. Your chosen pastor comes to you on this errand, and he comes in the name of the bridegroom, so empowered by him, and representing him, that in receiving him, you will receive Christ and in rejecting him, you will reject Christ.

Be exhorted to treat your pastor as the beautiful and virtuous Rebekah treated Abraham's servant. She most charitably and hospitably entertained him, provided lodging and food for him and his company, and took care that he should be comfortably entertained and supplied in all respects,

while he continued in his embassy, and that was the note or mark of distinction which God himself gave him, by which he should know the true spouse of Isaac from others of the daughters of the city. Therefore in this respect approve yourselves as the true spouse of Christ, by giving kind entertainment to your minister that comes to espouse you to the antetype of Isaac. Provide for his outward subsistence and comfort, with the like cheerfulness that Rebekah did for Abraham's servant. You have an account of her alacrity and liberality in supplying him, in ~~Gen~~ Genesis 24:18, etc. Say, as her brother did, verse 31. "Come in, thou blessed of the Lord."

Thus you should entertain your pastor. But this is not that wherein your duty towards him chiefly lies: the main thing is to comply with him in his great errand, and to yield to the suit that he makes to you in the name of Christ, to be his bride. In this you should be like Rebekah: she was, from what she heard of Isaac, and God's covenant with him, and blessing upon him, from the mouth of Abraham's servant, willing for ever to forsake her own country, and her father's house, to go into a country she had never seen, to be Isaac's wife, whom also she never saw. After she had heard what the servant had to say, and her old friends had a mind she should put off the affair for the present — but it was insisted on that she should go immediately — and she was asked "whether she would go with this man," she said, "I will go:" and she left her kindred, and followed the man through all that long journey, till he had brought her unto Isaac, and they three had that joyful meeting in Canaan. If you will this day receive your pastor in that union that is now to be established between him and you, it will be a joyful day in this place, and the joy will be like the joy of espousals, as when a young man marries a virgin; and it will not only be a joyful day in East-Hampton, but it will doubtless be a joyful day in heaven, on your account. And your joy will be a faint resemblance, and a forerunner of that future joy, when Christ shall rejoice over you as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, in heavenly glory.

And if your pastor be faithful in his office, and you hearken and yield to him in that great errand on which Christ sends him to you, the time will come, wherein you and your pastor will be each other's crown of rejoicing, and wherein Christ and he and you shall all meet together at the glorious marriage of the Lamb, and shall rejoice in and over one another, with perfect, uninterrupted, never ending, and never fading joy.

## SERMON 3

### TRUE SAINTS, WHEN ABSENT FROM THE BODY, ARE PRESENT WITH THE LORD.

[Preached on the day of the funeral of the Revelation Mr. David Brainerd, Missionary to the Indians, from the Honourable Society in Scotland for the propagation of Christian Knowledge, and Pastor of a Church of Christian Indians in New-Jersey; who died at Northampton in New-England, October 9, 1747, in the 30th year of his age, and was interred on the 12th following.]

We are confident I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. (~~1~~<sup>2</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:8)

THE apostle in this place is giving a reason why he went on with so much boldness and immovable steadfastness, through such labours, sufferings, amid dangers of his life, in the service of his Lord; for which his enemies, the false teachers among the Corinthians, sometimes reproached him as being beside himself, and driven on by a kind of madness. — In the latter part of the preceding chapter, the apostle informs the Christian Corinthians, that the reason why he did thus, was, that he firmly believed the promises that Christ had made to his faithful servants of a glorious future eternal reward, and knew that these present afflictions there and but for a moment, in comparison of that far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. The same discourse is continued in this chapter wherein the apostle further insists on the reason he had given of his constancy in suffering, and exposing himself to death in the work of the ministry, even the more happy state he expected after death. And this is the subject of my text; wherein may be observed,

**1.** The great future privilege, which the apostle hoped for; that of being present with Christ. The words in the original properly signify dwelling with Christ. as in the same country or city, or making a home with Christ.

2. When the apostle looked for this privilege, viz. when he should be absent from the body. He signifies the same thing in his epistle to the Philippians, chapter 1:22, 23. "But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour. what I shall choose, I wot not. For I am in a strait between two; having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ."
3. The value the apostle set on this privilege. It was such, that for the sake of it, he chose to be absent from the body. He was willing rather, or (as the word properly signifies) it were more pleasing to him, to part with the present life, and all its enjoyments, for the sake of being possessed of this great benefit.
4. The present benefit which the apostle had, by his faith and hope of this future privilege, viz. that hence he received courage, assurance, and constancy of mind: agreeable to the proper import of the word that is rendered, "we are confident." The apostle is now giving a reason of that fortitude and immovable stability of mind with which he went through those extreme laborers, hardships, and dangers, which he mentions in this discourse; so that, in the midst of all he did not faint, was not discouraged, but had constant light, and inward support, strength, and comfort in the midst of all: agreeable to the 10th verse of the foregoing chapter, "For which cause, we faint not, but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day." And the same is expressed more particularly in the 8th, 9th, and 10th verses of that chapter, "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed, we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken, cast down, but not destroyed, always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh." And in the next chapter ver 4-10. "In all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings, by pureness by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, by honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things."

Among the many useful observations that might be raised from the text, I shall at this time only insist on that which lies most plainly before us in the words; viz — The souls of true saints, when they leave their bodies at death, go to be with Christ. — And they

Go to be with Christ, in the following respects:

**I.** They go to dwell in the same blessed abode with the glorified human nature of Christ.

The human nature of Christ is yet in being. He still continues, and will continue to ail eternity, to be both God and man. His whole human nature remains: not, only his human soul but also his human body. His dead body rose from the dead, and the same that was raised from the dead, is exalted and glorified at God's right hand; that which was dead is now alive, and lives for evermore.

And therefore there is a certain place, a particular part of the external creation, to which Christ is gone, and where he remains. And this place is that which we call the highest heaven, or the heaven of heavens; a place beyond all the visible heavens. <sup><400></sup>Ephesians 4:9,10. "Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first I into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended, is I the same also that ascended up far above all heavens." This is the same which the apostle calls the third heaven, <sup><4710></sup>2 Corinthians 12:2. reckoning the aerial heaven as the first, the starry heaven as the second, and the highest heaven as the third. This is the abode of the holy angels: they are called "the angels of heaven," <sup><4245></sup>Matthew 24:36. "The angels which are in heaven," <sup><4133></sup>Mark 13:32. "The angels of God in heaven," <sup><4230></sup>Matthew 22:30. and <sup><4125></sup>Mark 12:25. They are said "always to behold the face of the Father which is in heaven," <sup><4130></sup>Matthew 18:10. And they are else where often represented as before the throne of God, or surrounding his throne in heaven, and sent from thence, and descending from thence on messages to this world. And thither it is that the souls of departed saints are conducted when they die. They are not reserved in some abode distinct from the highest heaven; a place of rest, which they are kept in till the day of judgment such as some imagine, which they call the shades, of the happy; but they go directly to heaven itself. This is the saint's home, being their Father's house: they are pilgrims and strangers on the earth, and this is the other and better country

to which they are traveling <sup><3113></sup> Hebrews 11:13-16. This is the city they belong to, <sup><3104></sup> Philippians 3:20. "Our conversation (or, as the word properly signifies, citizenship) is in heaven." Therefore this undoubtedly is the place the apostle has respect to in my text, when he says, "We ate willing to forsake our former house, the body, and to dwell in the same house, city, or country, wherein Christ dwells;" which is the proper import of the original. What can this house, or city, or country be, but that house, which is elsewhere spoken of as their proper home, and their Father's house, and the city and country to which they property belong, and whither they are traveling all the while they continue in this world, and the house, city, and country where we know the human nature of Christ is? This is the saint's rest, here their hearts are while they live, and here their treasure is: "The inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, that is designed for them, is reserved in heaven;" <sup><3104></sup> 1 Peter 1:4. and therefore they never can have their proper and full rest till they come here. So that undoubtedly their souls, when absent from their bodies, (when the Scriptures represent them as in a state of perfect rest,) arrive hither. Those two saints, who left this world without dying, viz. Enoch and Elijah, went to heaven. Elijah was seen ascending up to heaven, as Christ was. And to the same resting place, there is all reason to think, those saints go, who leave this world by death. Moses, when he died in the top of the mount, ascended to the same glorious abode with Elias, who ascended without dying. They are companions in another world; as they appeared together at Christ's transfiguration. They were together at that time with Christ in the mount, when there was a specimen or sample of kits glorification in heaven. And doubtless they revere also together afterwards with him, when he was actually and fully glorified in heaven. And thither undoubtedly it was, that the soul of Stephen ascended, when he expired. The circumstances of his death demonstrate it, <sup><4075></sup> Acts 7:55 etc. "He being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man (*i.e.* Jesus in his human nature) standing on the right hand of God. Then they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, and cast him out of the city, and stoned him. — And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Before his death he had an extraordinary view of the glory that his Saviour

had received in heaven, not only for himself, but also for all his faithful followers; that he might be encouraged, by the hopes of this glory, cheerfully to lay down his life for his sake. Accordingly he dies in the hope of this, saying, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” By which doubtless he meant, “receive my spirit to be with thee, in that glory, wherein I have now seen thee, in heaven, at the right hand of God.” And thither it was that the soul of the penitent thief on the cross ascended. Christ said to him, “To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.” Paradise is the same with the third heaven; as appears by <sup><4711></sup>2 Corinthians 12:2, 3, 4. There what is called the third heaven in the second verse, is in the fourth verse called paradise. The departed souls of the apostles and prophets are in heaven as is manifest from <sup><6831></sup>Revelation 18:20. “Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets.” The church of God is distinguished in Scripture, from time to time, into these two parts; that part of it which is in heaven, and that which is in earth; <sup><4814></sup>Ephesians 3:14, 15. “Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named.” <sup><8111></sup>Colossians 1:20. “And having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things to himself, by him, I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven. Now what things in heaven are they for whom peace has been made by the blood of Christ’s cross, and who have by him been reconciled to God, but the saints in heaven? In like manner we read, <sup><4911></sup>Ephesians 1:10. of “God’s gathering together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him.” The spirits of just men made perfect are in the same city of the living God, and heavenly Jerusalem, with the innumerable company of angels, and Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, as is manifest by <sup><8122></sup>Hebrews 12:22-24. The church of God is often in Scripture called Jerusalem; and the apostle speaks of the Jerusalem which is above, or which is in heaven, as the mother of us all: but if no part of the church be in heaven, or none but Enoch and Elias, it is not likely that the church would be called the Jerusalem which is in heaven.

**II.** The souls of true saints, when they leave their bodies at death, go to be with Christ, to dwell in the immediate, full, and constant view of him.

When we are absent from our dear friends, they are out of sight; but when we are with them, we have the opportunity and satisfaction of seeing them. So while the saints are in the body, and are absent from the Lord, he

is in several respects out of sight, <sup><4008></sup>1 Peter 1:8. “Whom having not seen, ye love: in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing,” etc. They have indeed, in this world, a Spiritual sight of Christ, but they see through a glass darkly, and with great interruption: but in heaven, they see him face to face, <sup><4632></sup>1 Corinthians 13:12. “The pure in heart we blessed; for they shall see God,” <sup><4018></sup>Matthew 5:8. Their beatific vision of God is in Christ, who is that brightness or effulgence of God’s glory, by which his glory shines forth in heaven, to the view of saints and angels there, as well as here on earth. This is the Sun of righteousness, that is not only the light of this world, but is also the sun that enlightens the heavenly Jerusalem; by whose bright beams it is that the glory of God shines forth there, to the enlightening and making happy all the glorious inhabitants. “The Lamb is the light thereof; and so the glory of God cloth lighten it,” <sup><6123></sup>Revelation 21:23. None sees God the father immediately, who is the King eternal, immortal, invisible: Christ is the image of that invisible God, by which he is seen by all elect creatures. The only-begotten Son that is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him, and manifested him. None has ever immediately seen the Father but the Son; and none else sees the Father any other way, than by the Son’s revealing him. And in heaven, the spirits of just men made perfect behold history. They see the glory of his divine nature, consisting in all the glory of the Godhead, the beauty of all his perfections, his great majesty, almighty power, his infinite wisdom, holiness, and grace, and they see the beauty of his glorified human nature, and the glory which the Father hath given him, as God-man and Mediator. For this end, Christ desired that his saints might “be with him, that they might behold his glory,” <sup><6124></sup>John 17:24. And when the souls of the saints leave their bodies, to go to be with Christ, they behold the marvelous glory of that great work of redemption, and of the glorious way of salvation by him, which the angels desire to look into. They have a most clear view of the unfathomable depths of the manifold wisdom and knowledge of God; and the most bright displays of the infinite purity and holiness of God which appear in that way and work: and see in another manner than the saints do here, what is the breadth and length, and depth and height of the grace and love of Christ, appearing in his redemption. And as they see the unspeakable riches and glory of the attribute of God’s grace so they most clearly behold and understand Christ’s eternal and unmeasurable dying love to them in particular. And in short, they see every thing in Christ that

tends to kindle, enflame and gratify love, and every thing that tends to satisfy stem: and that in the most clear and glorious manner, without any darkness or delusion, without any impediment or interruption. Now the saints, while in the body, see something of Christ's glory and love, as, in the dawning of the morning, we see something of the reflected light of the sun mingled with darkness: but when separated from the body, they see their glorious and loving Redeemer, as we see the sun when risen, and showing his whole disk above the horizon, by his direct begins, in a clear hemisphere, and with perfect day.

**III.** The souls of true saints, when absent from the body, go to be with Jesus Christ, as they are brought into a most perfect conformity to, and union with him. Their spiritual conformity is begun while they are in the body. Here beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, they are changed into the same image; but when they come to see him as he is, in heaven, then they become like him in another manner. That perfect sight will abolish all remains of deformity, disagreement, and sinful unlikeness; as all darkness is abolished before the full blaze of the sun's; meridian light. As it is impossible that the least degree of obscurity should remain before such light so it is impossible the least degree of sin and spiritual deformity should remain with such a view of the spiritual beauty and glory of Christ, as the saints enjoy in beaver, when they see that Son of righteousness without a cloud. They themselves shall not only shine forth as the sun, but shall be as little suns, without a spot. I or then is come the time when Christ presents his saints to himself, in glorious beauty; "not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing;" and having holiness without a blemish.

Then the saints, union with Christ is perfected. This also is begun in this world. The relative union is both begun and perfected at once, when the sold first being quickened by him closes with Christ by faith. The real union, consisting in the vital union and that of hearts and affections, is begun in this world and perfected in the next. The union of the heart of a believer to Christ is begun when it is drawn to him by the first discovery of divine excellency, at conversion; and consequent on this drawing and closing of his heart faith Christ, is established a mutual vital union with Christ; whereby the believer becomes a living branch of the true vine, living by a communication of the sap and vital juice of the stock and root; and a member of Christ's mystical body, living by a communication of

spiritual and vital influences from the head, and by a kind of participation of Christ's own life. But while the saints are in the body, there is much remaining distance between Christ and them. There are remainders of alienation, and the vital union is very imperfect, and so consequently are the communications of spiritual life and vital influences. There is much between Christ and believers to keep them asunder, much indwelling sin, much temptation, a heavy-moulded frail body, and a world of carnal objects, to keep off the soul from Christ, and hinder a perfect coalescence. But when the soul leaves the body, all these clogs and hindrances shall be removed, every separating wall shall be broken down, and every impediment taken out of the way, and all distance shall cease; the heart shall be wholly and perfectly drawn, and most firmly and for ever attached and bound to him, by a perfect view of his glory. And the vital union shall then be brought to perfection; the soul shall live perfectly in and upon Christ being perfectly filled with his spirit and animated by his vital influences; living as it were only by Christ's life, without any remainder of spiritual death, or carnal life.

**IV.** Departed souls of saints are with Christ, as they enjoy a glorious and immediate intercourse and converse with him.

While we are present with our friends, we have opportunity for that free and immediate conversation with them, which we cannot have in absence from them. And therefore, by reason of the vastly more free, perfect, and immediate intercourse with Christ which the saints enjoy when absent from the body, they are fitly represented if present with him.

The most intimate intercourse becomes that relation which the saints stand in to Jesus Christ; and especially becomes that most perfect and glorious union they shall be brought into with him in heaven. They are not merely Christ's servants, but his friends, <sup><B15></sup> John 15:15. His brethren and companions; <sup><B21></sup> Psalm 122:8. yea, they are the spouse of Christ. They are espoused or betrothed to Christ while in the body; but when they go to heaven, they enter into the King's palace, their marriage with him is come, and the King brings them into his chambers indeed. They then go to dwell with Christ constantly, to enjoy the most perfect converse with him. Christ conversed in the most friendly manner with his disciples on earth he admitted one of them to lean on his bosom; but they are admitted much

more fully and freely to converse with him in heaven. Though Christ be there in a state of glorious exaltation reigning in the majesty and glory of the sovereign Lord and God of heaven and earth, angels and men; yet this will not hinder intimacy and Freedom of intercourse, but rather promote it. For he is thus exalted, not only for himself but for them; he is instated in this glory of head over all things for their sakes, that they might be exalted and glorified, and when they go to heaven where he is they are exalted and glorified with him, and shall not be kept at a more awful distance from Christ, but shall be admitted nearer, and to a greater intimacy. For they shall be unspeakably more fit for it, and Christ in more fit circumstances to bestow on them this blessedness. Their seeing the great glory of their friend and Redeemer, will not awe them to a distance, and make them afraid of a near approach; but on the contrary, will most powerfully draw them near, and encourage and engage them to holy freedom. For they will know that it is he that is their own Redeemer, and beloved friend and bridegroom, the very same that loved them with a dying love, and redeemed them to God by his blood, <sup><1427></sup>Matthew 14:27. “It is I; be not afraid.” <sup><1417></sup>Revelation 1:17,18. “Fear not — I am he that liveth, and was dead.” And the nature of this glory of Christ which they shall behold will be such as will draw and encourage them, for they will not only see infinite majesty and greatness, but infinite grace, condescension, mildness, gentleness, and sweetness, equal to his majesty. For he appears in heaven, not only as “the Lion of the tribe of Judah, but as the Lamb in the midst of the throne,” <sup><1415></sup>Revelation 5:5, 6. and he shall be their shepherd, to “feed them, and lead them to living fountains of water,” <sup><1417></sup>Revelation 7:17. so that the sight of Christ’s great kingly majesty will be no terror to them; but will only serve the more to heighten their pleasure and surprise. When Mary was about to embrace Christ, being full of joy at the sight of him again alive after his crucifixion, Christ forbids her to do it for the present; because he was not yet ascended. <sup><1416></sup>John 20:16, 17. “Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni, which is to say, Master. Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God.” As if he had said, “This is not the time and place for that freedom your love to me desires: that is appointed for heaven, after my ascension. I am going thither: and you, my true disciples shall, as my brethren and companions, soon be

with me in my glory. And then there shall be no restraint. That is the place appointed for the most perfect expressions of complacency and endearment, and full enjoyment of mutual love.” And accordingly the souls of departed saints with Christ in heaven, shall have Christ as it were unbosomed unto them, manifesting those infinite riches of love towards them, that have been there from eternity: and they shall be enabled to express their love to him, in an incomparably better manner than ever they could while in the body. Thus they shall eat and drink abundantly and swim in the ocean of love, and be eternally swallowed up on the infinitely bright, and infinitely mild and sweet, beams of divine love, eternally receiving that light, eternally full of it, and eternally compassed round with it, and everlastingly reflecting it back again to its fountain.

**V.** The souls of the saints, when they leave their bodies at death, go to be with Christ as they are received to a glorious fellowship with Christ in his blessedness.

As the wife is received to a joint possession of her husband’s estate, and as the wife of a prince partakes with him in his princely possessions and honours, so the church the spouse of Christ, when the marriage comes, and she is received to dwell with him in heaven, shall partake with him in his glory. When Christ rose from the dead, and took possession of eternal life, this was not as a private person, as the public head of all his redeemed people. He took possession of it for them, as well as for himself and they are “quickened together with him, and raised up together.” — And so when he ascended into heaven, and was exalted to great glory there, this also was as a public person: he took possession of heaven not only for himself but his people, as their forerunner and head, that they might ascend also, “and sit together in heavenly places with him,” **EPH** Ephesians 2:5, 6. “Christ writes upon them his new name,” **REV** Revelation 3:12. *i.e.* he makes them partakers of his own glory and exaltation in heaven. His new name is that new honour and glory that the Father invested him with, when he set him on his own right hand: as a prince, when he advances any one to new dignity in his kingdom gives him a new title. Christ and his saints shall be glorified together. **ROM** Romans 8:17.

The saints in heaven have communion, or a joint participation, with Christ in his glory and blessedness in heaven, in the following respects more especially.

**1.** They partake with him in the ineffable delights he has in heaven, in the enjoyment of his Father.

When Christ ascended into heaven, he was received to a glorious and peculiar joy and blessedness in the enjoyment of his Father, who in his passion hid his face from him; such an enjoyment as became the relation he stood in to the Father, and such as was a meet reward for the great and hard service he had performed on earth. Then “God showed him the path of life and brought him into his presence, where is fullness of joy, and to sit on his right hand, where there are pleasures for evermore,” as <sup><1961></sup>Psalm 16:11. “Then the Father made him most blessed for ever: he made him exceeding glad with his countenance,” as in <sup><1920></sup>Psalm 21:6. The saints, by virtue of their union with Christ, and being his members, do in some sort partake of his child-like relation to the Father; and so are heirs with him of his happiness in the enjoyment of his Father, as seems to be intimated by the apostle, in <sup><1800></sup>Galatians 4:4-5. The spouse of Christ, by virtue of her espousals to that only-begotten Son of God, is, as it were, a partaker of his filial relation to God, and becomes the king’s daughter, <sup><1940></sup>Psalm 14:13. and so partakes with her divine husband in his enjoyment of “his Father and her Father, his God and her God.” A promise of this seems to be implied in those words of Christ to Mary, <sup><1817></sup>John 20:17. Thus Christ’s faithful servants “enter into the joy of their Lord,” <sup><1857></sup>Matthew 25:21-23. and “Christ’s joy remains in them;” agreeable to those words of Christ, <sup><1851></sup>John 15:11 Christ from eternity is, as it were, in the bosom of the Father, as the object of his infinite complacence. In him is the Father’s eternal happiness. Before the world was, he was with the Father, in the enjoyment of his infinite love; and had infinite delight and blessedness in that enjoyment as he declares of himself in <sup><1880></sup>Proverbs 8:30 “when I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him.” And when Christ ascended to the Father after his passion, he went to him, to the enjoyment of the same glory and blessedness in the enjoyment of his love, agreeable to his prayer the evening before his crucifixion, <sup><1871></sup>John 17:1. “And now, O Father, glorify me with thine own self, with the glory I had with thee before the world

was.” And in the same prayer, he manifests it to be his will, that his true disciples should be with him in the enjoyment of that joy and glory, which he then asked for himself, verse 13. “That my joy might be fulfilled in themselves,” verse 22. “And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them.” This glory and joy of Christ, which the saints are to enjoy with him, is that which he has in the enjoyment of the Father’s infinite love to him; as appears by the last words of that prayer of our Lord verse 26. “That the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.” The love which the Father has to his Son is great indeed; the Deity does, as it were, wholly and entirely flow out in a stream of love to Christ, and the joy and pleasure of Christ is proportionably great. — This is the stream of Christ’s delight, the river of his infinite pleasure; which he will make his saints to drink of with him; agreeable to ~~1818~~ Psalm 36:8. 9. “They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house: thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures. For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light.” The saints shall have pleasure in partaking with Christ in his pleasure, and shall see light in his light. They shall partake with Christ of the same river of pleasure, shall drink of the same water of life, and of the same new wine in the Father’s kingdom; ~~1818~~ Matthew 26:29. That new wine is especially the Joy and happiness that Christ and his true disciples shall partake of together in glory, which is the purchase of Christ’s blood, or the reward of his obedience unto death. Christ, at his ascension into heaven, received everlasting pleasures at his Father’s right hand, and in the enjoyment of his love, as the reward of his own death, or obedience unto death. But the same righteousness is reckoned to both head and members; and both shall have fellowship in the same reward, each according to their distinct capacity.

That the saints in heaven have such a communion with Christ in his joy, and do so partake with him in his own enjoyment of the Father, greatly manifests the transcendent excellency of their happiness, and their being admitted to a vastly higher privilege in glory than the angels.

**2.** The saints in heaven are received to a fellowship or participation with Christ, in the glory of that dominion to which the Father hath exalted him. The saints, when they ascend to heaven, and are made to sit together with Christ in heavenly places, and are partakers of the glory of his exaltation,

are exalted to reign with him. They are through him made kings and priests, and reign with him, and in him, over the same kingdom. As the Father hath appointed unto him a kingdom, so he has appointed to them. The Father has appointed the Son to reign over his own kingdom, and the Son appoints his saints to reign in his. The Father has given to Christ to sit with him on his throne, and Christ gives to the saints to sit with him on his throne, agreeable to Christ's promise, <sup>(102)</sup> Revelation 3:21. Christ, as God's Son, is the heir of his kingdom, and the saints are joint-heirs with Christ; which implies, that they are heirs of the same inheritance, to possess the same kingdom, in and with him, according to their capacity. Christ in his kingdom reigns over heaven and earth, he is appointed the heir of all things; and so all things are the saints; "whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come," all are theirs; because they are Christ's, and united to him, <sup>(103)</sup> 1 Corinthians 3:21-23. The angels are given to Christ as a part of his dominion; they are all given to wait upon him as ministering spirits to him: so also they are all, even the highest and most dignified of them, "ministering spirits, to minister to them who are the heirs of salvations." They are Christ's angels, and they are also their angels. Such is the saints' union with Christ, and their interest in him, that what he possesses they possess, in a much more perfect and blessed manner than if all things were given to them separately, and by themselves, to be disposed of according to their discretion. They are now disposed of so as, in every respect, to be most for their blessedness, by an infinitely better discretion than their own, and in being disposed of by their head and husband, between whom and them there is the most perfect union of hearts, and the most perfect union of wills.

As the glorified spouse of this great King reigns with and in him, in his dominion over the universe, so more especially does she partake with him in the joy and glory of his reign in his kingdom of grace; which is more peculiarly the kingdom that he possesses as head of the church, and is that kingdom wherein she is more especially interested. It was especially to reign in this kingdom, that God the Father exalted him to his throne in heaven: he set his King on his holy hill of Zion, especially that he might reign over Zion, or over his church, in his kingdom of grace; and that he might be under the best advantages to carry on the designs of his love in

this lower world. And therefore undoubtedly the saints in heaven are partakers with Christ in the joy and glory of the advancement and prosperity of his kingdom of grace on earth, and success of his gospel here, which he looks on as the peculiar glory of his reign. The good shepherd rejoices when he finds but one sheep that was lost; and his friends and neighbours in heaven rejoice with him on that occasion. That part of the family that is in heaven are surely not unacquainted with the affairs of that part of the same family that is on earth. They who are with the King, and the royal family that dwell in his palace, are not kept in ignorance of the affairs of his kingdom. The saints in heaven are with the angels, the King's ministers, by which he manages the affairs of his kingdom, and who are continually ascending and descending from heaven to the earth, and one or other of them daily employed as ministering spirits to each individual member of the church below. To this we may add, the continual ascending of the souls of departed saints from all parts of the militant church. On these accounts the saints in heaven must needs be under a thousand times greater advantage than we here, for a full view of the state of the church on earth and a speedy, direct, and certain acquaintance with all its affairs in every part. And that which gives them much greater advantage for such an acquaintance than the things already mentioned, is their being constantly in the immediate presence of Christ, and in the enjoyment of the most perfect intercourse with him, who is the King who manages all these affairs, and has an absolutely perfect knowledge of them. Christ is the head of the whole glorified assembly; they are mystically his glorified body: and what the head sees, it sees for the information of the whole body, according to its capacity: and what the head enjoys, is for the joy of the whole body. The saints, in leaving this world; and ascending to heaven, do not go out of the sight of things appertaining to Christ's kingdom on earth; but, on the contrary, they go out of a state of obscurity, and ascend above the mists and clouds into the clearest light; to a pinnacle, in the very centre of light, where every thing appears in clear view. They have as much greater advantage to view the state of Christ's kingdom, and the works of the new creation here, than while they were in this world, as a man that ascends to the top of a high mountain has greater advantage to view the face of the earth than he had while he was in a deep valley, or thick forest below, surrounded on every side with those things that impeded and limited his prospect. Nor do they

view as indifferent or unconcerned spectators, any more than Christ himself is an unconcerned spectator. The happiness of the saints in heaven consists very much in beholding the glory of God appearing in the work of redemption for it is by this chiefly that God manifests his glory, the glory of his wisdom, holiness, grace, and other perfections, to both saints and angels; as is apparent by many scriptures. And therefore undoubtedly their happiness consists very much in beholding the progress of this work in its application and success, and the steps by which infinite power and wisdom brings it to its consummation. And the saints in heaven are under unspeakably greater advantage to take the pleasure of beholding the progress of this work on earth than we are; as they are under greater advantages to see and understand the marvelous steps which Divine wisdom takes in all that is done, and the glorious ends he obtains, the opposition Satan makes and how he is baffled and overthrown. They can better see the connexion of one event with another, and the beautiful order of all things that come to pass in the church in different ages that to us appear like confusion. Nor do they only view these things, and rejoice in them, as a glorious and beautiful sight, but as persons interested, as Christ is interested, as possessing these things in Christ, and reigning with him, in this kingdom. Christ's success in his work of redemption, in bringing home souls to himself, applying his saving benefits by his Spirit, and the advancement of the kingdom of grace in the world, is the reward especially promised to him by his Father in the covenant of redemption for the hard and difficult service he performed while in the form of a servant; as is manifest by <sup>2530</sup>Isaiah 13:10-12. But the saints shall be rewarded with him. They shall partake with him in the joy of this reward, for this obedience that is thus rewarded is reckoned to them as they are his members. This was especially thereof that was set before Christ, for the sake of which he endured the cross and despised the shame. And his joy is the joy of all heaven. They that are with him in heaven are under much the greatest advantages to partake with him in this joy; for they have perfect communion with him through whom, and in fellowship with whom, they enjoy and possess their whole inheritance, all their heavenly happiness, as much as the whole body has all its pleasure of music by the ear, and all the pleasure of its food by the mouth and stomach, and all the benefit and refreshment of the air by the lungs. The saints while on earth pray and labour for the same thing that Christ laboured for; viz. the advancement of

the kingdom of God among men, the prosperity of Zion, and the flourishing of religion in this world. And most of them have been made partakers with their Head in his sufferings, and “filled up (as the apostle expresses it) that which is behind of the sufferings of Christ.” And therefore they shall partake with him of the glory and joy of the end obtained; <sup><ANT></sup> Romans 7:17. “We are joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.” <sup><APP></sup> 2 Timothy 2:12. “If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him.” Christ, when his sufferings were past, and he left the earth and ascended into heaven, was so far from having done with his kingdom in this world, that it was as it were but then begun; and he ascended for that very end, that he might more fully possess and enjoy this kingdom, that he might reign in it, and be under the best advantages for it: in like manner, no more have the saints done with Christ’s kingdom on earth, when they ascend into heaven. “Christ came (*i.e.* ascended) with clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and was brought near before him, to the very end, that he might receive dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him,” <sup><TRG></sup> Daniel 8:13, 14. This shall be eminently fulfilled after the reign of Antichrist, which is especially the time of Christ’s kingdom. And the same is the time when “the kingdom, and dominion, and greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most high God,” as verse 27. It is because they shall reign in and with Christ, the Most High, as seems intimated in the words that follow, “whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.” This is true, not only of the saints on earth, but also the saints in heaven. Hence the saints in heaven, having respect to this time, sing, <sup><REV></sup> Revelation 5:10. “We shall reign on the earth.” And agreeable here to, it is afterwards represented, that when the fore-mentioned time comes, the souls of them who in former ages had suffered with Christ do reign with him, having as it were given to them new life and joy, in that spiritual blessed resurrection, which shall then be of the church of God on earth, and thus, <sup><MTS></sup> Matthew 5:5. “The meek (those that meekly and patiently suffer with Christ, and for his sake) shall inherit the earth:” they shall inherit it, and reign on earth with Christ. Christ is the heir of the world, and when the appointed time of his kingdom comes, his inheritance shall be given him, and then the meek, who

are joint-heirs shall inherit the earth. The place in the Old Testament whence the words are taken, leads to a true interpretation of them,

**“The meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.”** (<sup><3711></sup>Psalm 37:11.)

That there is reference in these latter words, “the abundance of peace,” to the peace and blessedness of the latter days, we may be satisfied by comparing these words with <sup><327></sup>Psalm 32:7. “In his days shall be abundance of peace, so long as the moon endureth,” and <sup><336></sup>Jeremiah 33:6. “I will reveal to them the abundance of peace and truth:” also <sup><24></sup>Isaiah 2:4. <sup><303></sup>Micah 4:3. <sup><316></sup>Isaiah 11:6-9. and many other parallel places. The saints in heaven will be as much with Christ in reigning over the nations, and in the glory of his dominion at that time, as they will be with him in the honour of judging the world at the last day. That promise of Christ to his disciples, <sup><1928></sup>Matthew 19:28, 29. seems to have a special respect to the former of these. In verse 28. Christ promises to the disciples, that hereafter, “when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory they shall sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” The saints in beaten reigning on earth in the glorious latter day, is described in language accommodated to this promise of Christ, <sup><204></sup>Revelation 20:4. “And I saw thrones, and they that sat upon them; and judgment was given them. — And they reigned with Christ.” And the promise <sup><1929></sup>Matthew 19:29. seems to have its fulfilment at the same time: “And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or fathers, or wife, or children, or lands for my name’s sake, shall receive an hundred-fold and shall inherit everlasting life;” *i.e.* in the time when the saints shall inherit the earth, and reign on earth, the earth, with all its blessings and good things, shall be given in great abundance to the church, to be possessed by the saints This shall they receive in this present world, and in the future everlasting life. The saints in heaven shall partake with Christ in the triumph and glory of those victories that he shall obtain in that future glorious time, over the kings and nations of the world, represented by his ruling them with a rod of iron, and dashing them in pieces as a potter’s vessel. To which doubtless there is a respect in <sup><2627></sup>Revelation 2:26, 27. “He that overcometh, and keepeth my words unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations; (and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers;) even as I received

of my Father.” And <sup>499</sup>Psalm 149:5, to the end; “Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds, (*i.e.* in their separate state after death;) compare <sup>270</sup>Isaiah 17:1, 2. “Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand; to execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people, to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron, to execute upon them the judgment written: this honour have all the saints.” Accordingly, when Christ appears riding forth to his victory over Antichrist, Revelation 19: the hosts of heaven appear going forth with him in robes of triumph, verse 4. And when Antichrist is destroyed, the inhabitants of heaven, and the holy apostles and prophets’ are called upon to rejoice, chapter 18:20. And the whole multitude of the inhabitants of heaven on that occasion, appear to exult, and praise God with exceeding joy. chapter 19:1-8. and chap 11:15. They are also represented as greatly rejoicing on occasion of the ruin of the heathen empire, in the days of Constantine; chapter 12:10. And it is observable, all along in the visions of that book, that the hosts of heaven appear as much concerned and interested in the events appertaining to the kingdom of Christ here below, as the saints on earth. The day of the commencement of the church’s latter-day glory is eminently “the day of Christ’s espousals, the day of the gladness of his heart when as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so he will rejoice over his church.” And then will nil heaven exceedingly rejoice with him. Thus <sup>697</sup>Revelation 19:7. “Let us be glad, and rejoice, and give glory to him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come.”

Thus Abraham enjoys these things, when they come to pass, which were of old promised to him, and which he saw before-hand and rejoiced in. ale will enjoy the fulfillment of the promise of all the families of the earth being blessed in his seed, when it shall be accomplished. And all the ancient patriarchs, who died in faith of promises of glorious things that should be accomplished in this world, “who had not received the promises, but saw them afar off and were persuaded of them, and embraced them,” actually enjoy them when fulfilled. David actually saw and enjoyed the fulfillment of that promise, in its due time, which was made to him many hundred years before, and was all his salvation and all his desire. Thus Daniel shall stand in his lot at the end of the days pointed out by his own prophecy. Thus the saints of old that died in with not

having received the promise, are made perfect, and have their faith crowned by the better things accomplished in these latter days of the gospel, <sup><813></sup>Hebrews 11:39, 40. which they see and enjoy.

**3.** The departed souls of saints have fellowship with Christ, in his blessed and eternal employment of glorifying the Father. The happiness of heaven consists not only in contemplation, and a mere passive enjoyment, but consists very much in action. And particularly in actively serving and glorifying God. This is expressly mentioned as a great part of the blessedness of the saints in their most perfect state

“And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him.”

(<sup><821></sup>Revelation 22:3.)

The angels are as a flame of fire in their ardour and activity in God's service. the four animals, Revelation 4 (which are generally supposed to signify the angels,) are represented as continually giving praise and glory to God, and are said not to rest day nor night, verse 8. The souls of departed saints are doubtless become as the angels of God in heaven in this respect. And Jesus Christ is the head of the whole glorious assembly, as in other things appertaining to their blessed state, so in this of their praising and glorifying the Father. When Christ, the night before he was crucified, prayed for his exaltation to glory, it was that he might glorify the Father; <sup><817></sup>John 17:1. “These words spake Jesus, and lift up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father the hour is come, glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee.” And this he doubtless does, now he is in heaven, not only in fulfilling the Father's will, in what he does as Head of the church and Ruler of the universe, but also in leading the heavenly assembly in their praises. When Christ instituted the Lord's supper, and eat and drank with his disciples at his table, (giving them therein a representation and pledge of their future feasting with him, and drinking new wine in his heavenly Father's kingdom,) he at that time led them in their praises to God. in a home they sang. And so doubtless he leads his glorified disciples in heaven. David was the sweet psalmist of Israel, and led the great congregation of God's people in their songs of praise. Herein as well as in innumerable other things, he was a type of Christ, who is often spoken of in Scripture by the name of David. And many of the psalms that David

penned, were songs of praise, that be, by the spirit of prophecy, uttered in the name of Christ, as head of the church, and leading the saints in their praises. Christ in heaven leads the glorious assembly in their praises to God, as Moses did the congregation of Israel at the Red sea: which is implied in its being said, that “they sing the song of Moses and the Lamb,” ~~Revelation~~ Revelation 15:2, 3. In ~~Revelation~~ Revelation 19:5. John tells us, that “he heard a voice come out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great.” Who can it be that utters this voice out of the throne, but the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne, calling on the glorious assembly of saints to praise his Father and their Father, his God and their God? And what the consequence of this voice is, we have an account in the next words: “And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.”

### APPLICATION.

The use that I would make of what has been said on this subject is of exhortation. Let us all be exhorted hence earnestly to seek after this great privilege, that when “we are absent from the body, we may be present with the Lord.” We cannot continue always in these earthly tabernacles, — they are very frail, will soon decay and fall and are continually liable to be overthrown by innumerable means. Our souls must soon leave them and go into the eternal world. — O, how infinitely great will the privilege and happiness of such be, who at that time shall go to be with Christ in his glory, in the manner that has been represented I The privilege of the twelve disciples was great in being so constantly with Christ as his family, in his state of humiliation. The privilege of those three disciples was great, who were with him in the mount of his transfiguration, where was exhibited to them some little semblance of his future glory in heaven, such as they might behold in the present frail, feeble, and sinful state. They were greatly entertained and delighted with what they saw; and were for making tabernacles to dwell there, and return no more down the mount. And great was the privilege of Moses when he was with Christ in mount Sinai, and besought him to show him his glory, and he saw his back parts as he passed by, and proclaimed his name. — But how infinitely greater

the privilege of being with Christ in heaven, where he sits on the right hand of God, as the King and God of angels, and of the whole universe, shining forth as the great light, the bright sun of that world of glory; there to dwell in the full, constant, and everlasting view of his beauty and brightness; there most freely and intimately to converse with him, and fully to enjoy his love, as his friends and spouse; there to have fellowship with him in the infinite pleasure and joy he has in the enjoyment of his Father! How transcendent the privilege there to sit with him on his throne, to reign with him in the possession of all things, and to partake with him in the joy and glory of his victory over his enemies, and the advancement of his kingdom in the world, and to join with him in joyful songs of praise to his Father and their Father, to his God and their God, for ever and ever! Is not such a privilege worth seeking after?

But here, as a special enforcement of this exhortation, I would improve that dispensation of God's holy providence, which is the sorrowful occasion of our coming together at this time, viz. the death of that eminent servant of Jesus Christ, in the work of the gospel-ministry, whose funeral is this day to be attended; together with what was observable in him, living and dying.

In this dispensation of providence, God puts us in mind of our mortality, and forewarns us that the time is approaching when we must be absent from the body, and "must all appear (as the apostle observes in the context) before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one of us may receive the things done in the body, according to what we have done, whether it be good or bad."

And in him, whose death we are now called to consider and improve, we have not only an instance of mortality but an instance of one that, being absent from the body, is present with the Lord; as we have all imaginable reason to conclude. And that, whether we consider the nature of the operations he was under, about the time whence he dates his conversion, or the nature and course of his inward exercises from that time fore arc, or his outward conversation and practice in life, or his frame and behaviour during the whole of that long season wherein he looked death in the face.

His convictions of sin, preceding his first consolations in Christ, (as appears by a written account he has left of his inward exercises and

experiences,) were exceeding deep and thorough. His trouble and exercise of mind, through a sense of guilt and misery, were very great and long-continued, but yet sound and solid; consisting in no unsteady: violent, unaccountable hurries and frights, and strange perturbations of mind; but arising from the most serious consideration, and proper illumination of the conscience to discern and consider the true state of things. And the light let in to his mind at conversion, and the influences and exercises that his mind was subject to at that time, appear very agreeable to reason and the gospel of Jesus Christ; the change very great and remarkable, without any appearance of strong impressions on the imagination, sudden flights and pangs of the affections, and vehement emotions in animal nature, but attended with proper intellectual views of the supreme glory of the Divine Being, consisting in the infinite dignity and beauty of the perfections of his nature, and of the transcendent excellency of the way of salvation by Christ. — This was about eight years ago, when he was twenty-one years of age.

Thus God sanctified. and made meet for his use, that vessel which he intended to make of eminent honour in his house, and which he had made of large capacity, having endowed him with very uncommon abilities and gifts of nature. He was a singular instance of a ready invention, natural eloquence, easy flowing expression, sprightly apprehension, quick discernment, and very strong memory and yet of a very penetrating genius, close and clear thought, and piercing judgment. He had an exact taste.

His understanding was quick, strong, and distinguishing.

His learning was very considerable, for which he had a great taste; and he applied himself to his studies in so close a manner when he was at college, that he much injured his health; and was obliged on that account for a while to leave his studies, and return home. He was esteemed one that excelled in reaming in that society.

He had an extraordinary knowledge of men, as well as things; had a great insight into human nature, and excelled most that ever I knew in a communicative faculty. He had a peculiar talent at accommodating himself to the capacities, tempers, and circumstances of those whom he would instruct or counsel.

He had extraordinary gifts for the pulpit. I never had an opportunity to hear him preach, but have often heard him pray; and I think his manner of addressing himself to God, and expressing himself before him, in that duty, almost inimitable; such (so far as I may judge) as I have very rarely known equaled. He expressed himself with that exact propriety and pertinency, in such significant, weighty, pungent expressions; with that decent appearance of sincerity, reverence and solemnity, and great distance from all affectation, as forgetting the presence of men, and as being in the immediate presence of a great and holy God, that I have scarcely ever known paralleled. And his manner of preaching, by what I have often heard of it from good judges, was no less excellent; being clear and instructive, natural, nervous, forcible, moving, and very searching and convincing. — He rejected with disgust an affected noisiness, and violent boisterousness in the pulpit; and yet much disrelished a flat, cold delivery, when the subject of discourse, and matter delivered, required affection and earnestness.

Not only had he excellent talents for the study and the pulpit, but also for conversation. He was of a sociable disposition: and was remarkably free, entertaining, and profitable in his ordinary discourse: and had much of a faculty of disputing, defending truth and confuting error.

As he excelled in his judgment and knowledge of things in general, so especially in divinity. He was truly, for one of his standing, an extraordinary divine. But above all in matters relating to experimental religion. In this, I know I have the concurring opinion of some who have had a name for persons of the best judgment. And according to what ability I have to judge of things of this nature, and according to my opportunities, which of late have been very great, I never knew his equal, of his age and standing, for clear, accurate notions of the nature and essence of true religion, and its distinctions from its various false appearances, which I suppose to be owing to these three things meeting together in him, the strength of his natural genius, and the great opportunities he had of observing others, in various parts, both white people and Indians; and his own great experience.

His experiences of the holy influences of God's Spirit were not only great at his first conversion, but they were so in a continued course) from that

time forward: as appears by a private journal which he kept of his daily inward exercises, from the time of his conversion, until he was disabled by the failing of his strength, a few days before his death. The change which he looked upon as his conversion was not merely a great change of the present views affections, and frame of his mind, but also the beginning of that work of God on his heart, which God carried on from that time to his dying day. He greatly abhorred the way of such as live on their first work, as though they had now got through their work, and who are thenceforward, by degrees, settled in a cold, lifeless, negligent, worldly frame; he had an ill opinion of such persons' religion. His experiences were very diverse from many things that have lately obtained the reputation, with multitudes, of the very height of Christian experience. About the time that the false religion, which arises chiefly from impressions on the imagination, began first to make a very great appearance in the land, he was for a little while deceived with it so as to think highly of it. And though he knew he never had such experiences as others told of, he thought it was because others' attainments were beyond his, and so coveted them, and sought after them, but could never obtain them. He told me, that he never had what is called an impulse, or a strong impression on his imagination, in things of religion, in his life. But owned, that during the short time that he thought well of these things, he was tinged with that spirit of false zeal that is wont to attend them. But said that then he was not in his element, but as a fish out of water. And when, after a little while, he came clearly to see the vanity and preciousness of such things, it cost him abundance of sorrow and distress of mind, and to my knowledge he afterwards freely and openly confessed the errors in conduct that he had run into, and laid himself low before them whom he had offended. And since his conviction of his error in those respects, he has ever had a peculiar abhorrence of that kind of bitter zeal, and those delusive experiences that have been the principal source of it. He detested enthusiasm in all its forms and operations; and abhorred whatever in opinion or experience seemed to verge towards antinomianism; as, the experiences of those whose first faith Consists in believing that Christ died for them in particular and their first love, in loving God. because they supposed they were the objects of his love, and their assurance of their good estate from some immediate testimony, or suggestion, either with or without texts of Scripture, that their sins are forgiven, that God loves

them, etc. and the joys of such as rejoiced more in their own supposed distinction from others, in honour, and privileges, and high experiences, than in God's excellency and Christ's beauty, and the spiritual pride of such laymen, that are for setting up themselves as public teachers, and cry down human learning, and a learned ministry. He greatly disliked a disposition in persons to much noise and show in religion, and affecting to be abundant in publishing and proclaiming their own experience; though he did not condemn, but approved of Christians speaking of their experiences, on some occasions, and to some persons. with modesty, discretion and reserve. He abominated the spirit and practice of this generality of the Separatists in this land. I heard him say, once and again, that he had been much with this kind of people, and was acquainted with many of them, in various parts; and that by this acquaintance, he knew that what was chiefly and most generally in repute amongst them, as the power of godliness, was entirely different thine from that vital piety recommended in the Scripture, and had nothing in it of that nature. He never was more full in condemning these things than in his last illness, and after he ceased to have any expectation of life: and particularly when he had the greatest and nearest views of approaching eternity; and several times, when he thought himself actually dying, and expected in a few minutes to be in the eternal world, as he himself told me. As his inward experiences appear to have been of the right kind, and were very remarkable as to their degree, So was his outward behaviour and practice agreeable. He in his whole course acted as one who had indeed sold all for Christ, and had entirely devoted himself to God, and made his glory his highest end, and was fully determined to spend his whole time and strength in his service. He was lively in religion, in the right way; lively, not only, nor chiefly, with his tongue, in professing and talking; but lively in the work and business of religion. He vial not one of those who are for contriving ways to shun the cross, and get to heaven with ease and sloth: but was such an instance of one living a life of labour and self-denial and spending his strength and substance in pursuing that great end, and the glory of his Redeemer, that perhaps is scarcely to be paralleled in this age in these parts of the world. Much of this may be perceived by any one that reads his printed Journal, but much more has been learned by long intimate acquaintance with him, and by looking into his Diary since his death, which he purposely concealed in what he published.

And as his desires and labours for the advancement of Christ's kingdom were great, so was his success. God was pleased to make him the instrument of bringing to pass the most remarkable things among the poor savages — in enlightening, awakening, reforming, and changing their disposition and manners, and wonderfully transforming them — that perhaps can be produced in these latter ages of the world. An account of this has been given the public in his Journals, drawn up by order of the Honourable Society in Scotland, that employed him, which I would recommend to the perusal of all such as take pleasure in the wonderful works of God's grace, and would read that which will peculiarly tend both to entertain and profit a Christian mind.

No less extraordinary than the things already mentioned of him in life, was his constant calmness, peace, assurance, and joy in God, during the long time he looked death in the face, without the least hope of recovery; continuing without interruption to the last, while his distemper very sensibly preyed upon his vitals, from day to day, and oft brought him to that state in which he looked upon himself, and was thought by others, to be dying. The thoughts of approaching death never seemed in the least to damp but rather to encourage him, and exhilarate his mind. And he nearer death approached, the more desirous he seemed to be of it. He said, not long before his death, that "the consideration of the day of death, and the day of judgment had a long time been peculiarly sweet to him." And at another time, that "he could not but think of the meetness there was in throwing such a rotten carcass as his into the grave: it seemed to him to be the right way of disposing of it." He often used the epithet glorious, when speaking of the day of his death, calling it that glorious day. On a Sabbath-day morning, September 27, feeling an unusual appetite to food, and looking on it as a sign of approaching death, he said, "he should look on it as a favour, if this might be his dying day, and that he longed for the time." He had before expressed himself desirous of seeing his brother again, whose return had been expected from the Jerseys; but then (speaking of him) he said, "I am willing to go, and never see him again: I care not what I part with, to be for ever with the Lord." Being asked, that morning, how he did? he answered, "I am almost in eternity: God knows, I long to be there. My work is done; I have done with all my friends: all the world is nothing to me." On the evening of the next day, when he thought himself

dying, and was apprehended to be so by others, and he could utter himself only by broken whispers, he often repeated the word Eternity; and said, "I shall soon be with the holy angels. — He will come; he will not tarry." He told me one night, as he went to bed, that "he expected to die that night." And added, "I am not at all afraid, I am willing to go this night, if it be the will of God. Death is what I long for." He sometimes expressed himself as "nothing to do but to die: and being willing to go that minute, if it was the will of God." He sometimes used that expression, "O why is his chariot so long in coming."

He seemed to have remarkable exercises of resignation to the will of God. He once told me, that "he had longed for the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit of God, and the glorious times of the church, and hoped they were coming; and should have been willing to have lived to promote religion at that time, if that had been the will of God. But (says he) I am willing it should be as it is: I would not have the choice to make myself for ten thousand worlds."

He several times spake of the different kinds of willingness to die: and spoke of it as an ignoble mean kind, to be willing, only to get rid of pain, or to go to heaven only to get honour and advancement there. His own longings for death seemed to be quite of a different kind, and for nobler ends. When he was first taken with something like a diarrhea, which is looked upon as one of the last and most fatal symptoms in a consumption, he said, "O now the glorious time is coming? I have longed to serve God perfectly; and God will gratify these desires." And at one time and another, in the latter part of his illness, he uttered these expressions. "My heaven is to please God and glorify him, and give all to him, and to be wholly devoted to his glory. — That is the heaven I long for, that is my religion; and that is my happiness; and always was, ever since I supposed I had any true religion: and all those that are of that religion, shall meet me in heaven. I do not go to heaven to be advanced, but to give honour to God. It is no matter where I shall be stationed in heaven, whether I have a high or low seat there, but to love, and please, and glorify God. If I had a thousand souls, if they were worth any thing, I would give them all to God: but I have nothing to give, when all is done. It is impossible for any rational creature to be happy without acting all for God. God himself could not make me happy arty other way. — I long to be in heaven,

praising and glorifying God with the holy angels all my desire is to glorify God. — My heart goes out to thee burying-place it seems to me a desirable place: But O to glorify God! That is it! That is above all! — It is a great comfort to me to think that I have done a little for God in the world: It is but a very small matter, yet I have done a little and I lament it, that I have not done more for him. — There is nothing in the world worth living for, but doing good, and finishing God's work, doing the work that Christ did. I see nothing else in the world that can yield any satisfaction, besides living to God, pleasing him, and doing his whole will. My greatest joy and comfort has been to do something for promoting the interest of religion, and the souls of particular persons."

After he came to be in so low a state, that he ceased to have the expectation of recovery, his mind was peculiarly carried forth with earnest concern for the prosperity of the church of God on earth, which seemed very manifestly to arise from a pure disinterested love to Christ, and desire of his glory. The prosperity of Zion, was a theme he dwelt much upon, and of which he spoke much; and more and more, the nearer death approached. He told me when near his end, that "he never, in all his life, had his mind so led forth in desires and earnest prayers for the flourishing of Christ's kingdom on earth, as since he was brought so exceeding low at Boston." He seemed much to wonder, that there appeared no more disposition in ministers and people, to pray for the flourishing of religion through the world. And particularly, he several times expressed his wonder, that there appeared no more forwardness to comply with the proposal lately made from Scotland, for united extraordinary prayer among God's people, for the coming of Christ's kingdom, and sent it as his dying advice to his own congregation, that they should practice agreeably to that proposals. A little before his death, he said to me, as I came into the room, "My thoughts have been employed on the old dear theme, the prosperity of God's church on earth. As I waked out of sleep (said he) I was led to cry for the pouring, out of God's Spirit, and the advancement of Christ's kingdom, which the dear Redeemer did and suffered so much for: it is that especially makes me long for it." — But a few days before his death, he desired us to sing a psalm concerning the prosperity of Zion; which he signified his mind was engaged in above all things; and at his desire we sang a part of the 102nd Psalm. And when we

had done, though he was then so low that he could scarcely speak, he so exerted himself, that he made a prayer, very audibly, wherein, besides praying for those present, and for his own congregation, he earnestly prayed for the reviving and flourishing of religion in the world. His own congregation especially lay much on his heart. He often spake of them and commonly when he did so, it was with extraordinary tenderness, so that his speech was interrupted and drowned with weeping.

Thus I have endeavoured to represent something of the character and behaviour of that excellent servant of Christ, whose funeral is now to be amended. Though I have done it very imperfectly, yet I have endeavoured to do it faithfully, and as in the presence and fear of God, without flattery; which surely is to be abhorred in ministers of the gospel, when speaking as messengers of the Lord of hosts. Such reason have we to be satisfied that the person spoken of, now he is absent from the body, is present with the Lord; and now wearing a crown of glory, of distinguished brightness.

And how much is there in the consideration of such an example, and so blessed an end, to excite us, who are yet alive, with the greatest diligence and earnestness, to improve the time of life, that we also may go to be with Christ, when we forsake the body! The time is coming, and will soon come, we know not how soon, when we must take leave of all things here below, to enter on a fixed unalterable state in the eternal world. O, how well is it worth the while to labour and suffer, and deny ourselves to lay up in store a good foundation of support and supply, against that time! How much is such a peace as we have heard of, worth at such a time! And how dismal would it be, to be in such circumstances, under the outward distresses of a consuming, dissolving frame, and looking death in the face from day to day, with hearts uncleansed, and sin unpardoned, under a dreadful load of guilt and divine wrath, having much sorrow and wrath in our sickness, and nothing to comfort and support our minds; nothing before us but a speedy appearance before the judgment-seat of an almighty, infinitely holy, and angry God, and an endless eternity in suffering his wrath without mercy! The person we have been speaking of, had a great sense of this. He said, not long before his death, "It is sweet to me to think of eternity: the endlessness of it makes it sweet. But, oh, what shall I say to the eternity of the wicked! I cannot mention it, nor think of it! — The thought is too dreadful!" At another time, speaking of a heart

devoted to God and his glory, he said, “O of what importance is it to have such a frame of mind such a heart as this, when we come to die! It is this now that gives the peace.”

How much is there, in particular, in the things that have been observed of this eminent minister of Christ, to excite us, who are called to the same great work of the gospel ministry, to earnest care and endeavours, that we may be in like manner faithful in our work, that we may be filled with the same spirit, animated with the like pure and fervent flame of love to God, and the like earnest concern to advance the kingdom and glory of our Lord and Master and the prosperity of Zion! How amiable did these principles render this servant of Christ in his life, and how blessed in his end! The time will soon come, when we also must leave our earthly tabernacles, and go to our Lord that sent us to labour in his harvest, to render an account of ourselves to him. O how does it concern us so to run as not uncertainly, so to fight, not as those that beat the air! And should not what we have heard excite us to depend on God for his help and assistance in our great work and to be much in seeking the influences of his Spirit, and success in our labours, by fasting and prayer, in which the person spoken of was abundant? This practice he earnestly recommended on his death-bed, from his own experience of its great benefits, to some candidates for the ministry that stood by his bedside. He was often speaking of the great need ministers have of much of the Spirit of Christ in their work, and how little good they are like to do without it; and how, “when ministers were under the special influences of the Spirit of God, it assisted them to come at the consciences of men, and (as he expressed it) as it were to handle them with hands: whereas, without the Spirit of God, said he, whatever reason and oratory we make use of, we do but make use of stumps, instead of hands.”

Oh that the things that were seen and heard in this extraordinary person his holiness, heavenliness, labour, and self-denial in life, his so remarkably devoting himself and his all, in heart and practice, to the glory of God, and the wonderful frame of mind manifested in so steadfast a manner, under the expectation of death, and the pains and agonies that brought it on, may excite in us all, both ministers and people, a due sense of the greatness of the work we have to do in the world, the excellency and amiableness of thorough religion in experience and practice, and the blessedness of the end

of such a life, and the infinite value of their eternal reward, when absent from the body and present with the Lord, and effectually stir us up to endeavours that in the way of such a holy life, we may at last come to so blessed an end. — Amen.

## SERMON 4

### GOD'S AWFUL JUDGMENT IN THE BREAKING AND WHITHERING OF THE STRONG RODS OF A COMMUNITY.

[Preached at Northampton on the Lord's day, June 26, 1748, on the death of the Honourable John Stoddard. Esq. Often a member of his Majesty's council, for many years chief justice of the court of Common Pleas for the county of Hampshire, judge of the probate of wills, and chief colonel of the regiment, etc. who died at Boston, June 19, 1748 in the 67th year of his age.]

Her strong rods were broken and withered. (<sup>2000</sup>Ezekiel 19:12)

In order to a right understanding and improvement of these words, these four things must be observed concerning them.

**1.** Who she is that is here represented as having had strong rods, viz. the Jewish community, who here, as often elsewhere, is called the people's mother. She is here compared to a vine planted in a very fruitful soil, verse 10. The Jewish church and state is often elsewhere compared to a vine; as <sup>1800</sup>Psalms 80:8, etc. <sup>2100</sup>Isaiah 5:2. <sup>2121</sup>Jeremiah 2:21. Ezekiel 15:and chapter 17:6.

**2.** What is meant by her strong rods, viz. her wise, able, and well qualified magistrates or rulers. That the rulers or magistrates are intended is manifest by verse 11. "And she had strong rods for the sceptres of them that bear rule." And by rods that were strong, must be meant such rulers as were well qualified for magistracy, such as had great abilities and other qualifications fitting them for the business of rule. They were wont to choose a rod or staff of the strongest and hardest sort of wood that could be found, for the grace or sceptre of a prince; such an one only being counted fit for that use; and this generally was overlaid with gold.

It is very remarkable that such a strong rod should grow out of a weak vine: but so it had been in Israel, through God's extraordinary blessing, in times past. Though the nation is spoken of here, and frequently elsewhere, as weak and helpless in itself, and entirely dependent as a vine, the weakest of all trees, that cannot support itself by its own strength, and never stands but as it leans on or hangs by something else that is stronger than itself; yet God had caused many of her sons to be strong rods fit for sceptres, he had raised up in Israel many able and excellent princes and magistrates, who had done worthily in their day.

**3.** It should be understood and observed what is meant by these strong rods being broken and withered, viz. these able and excellent rulers being removed by death: men's dying is often compared in Scripture to the withering of the growth of the earth.

**4.** It should be observed after what manner the breaking and withering of these strong rods is here spoken of, viz. as a great and awful calamity, that God had brought upon that people: it is spoken of as one of the chief effects of God's dreadful displeasure against them; "But she was plucked up in fury, she was cast down to the ground, and the east wind dried up her fruit: her strong rods were broken and withered, the fire hath consumed them." The great benefits she enjoyed while her strong rods remained are represented in the preceding verse, "And she had strong rods for the sceptres of them that bear rule, and her stature was exalted among the thick branches; and she appeared in her height with the multitude of her branches."

And the terrible calamities that attended the breaking and withering of her strong rods, are represented in the two verses next following the text; "And now she is planted in the wilderness, in a dry and thirsty ground. And fire is gone out of a rod of her branches, which hath devoured her fruit." And in the conclusion in the next words, is very emphatically declared the worthiness of such a dispensation to be greatly lamented; "So that she hath no strong rod to be a sceptre to rule: this is a lamentation, and shall be for lamentation. That which I therefore observe from the words of the text, to be the subject of discourse at this time, is this, viz. When God by death removes from a people those in place of public

authority and rule that have been as strong rods, it is an awful judgment of God on that people, and worthy of great lamentation.

In discoursing on this proposition, I would,

- 1.** Show what kind of rulers may fitly be called strong rods.
  - 2.** Show why the removal of such rulers from a people by death is to be looked upon as an awful judgment of God on that people, and is greatly to be lamented.
- I.** I would observe what qualifications of those who are in public authority and rule may properly give them the denomination of strong rods.
- 1.** One qualification of rulers whence they may properly be denominated strong rods, is great ability for the management of public affairs. This is the case, when they who stand in a place of public authority are men of great natural abilities, men of uncommon strength of reason and largeness of understanding; especially when they have a remarkable genius for government, a peculiar turn of mind fitting them to gain an extraordinary understanding in things of that nature. They have ability, in an especial manner, for insight into the masteries of government, and for discerning those things wherein the public welfare or calamity consists, and the proper means to avoid the one and promote the other; an extraordinary talent at distinguishing what is right and just, from that which is wrong and unequal, and to see through the false colours with which injustice is often disguised, and unravel the false and subtle arguments and cunning sophistry that is often made use of to defend iniquity. They have not only great natural abilities in these respects, but their abilities and talents have been improved by study, learning, observation and experience; and by these means they have obtained great actual knowledge. They have acquired, great skill in public affairs, and things requisite to be known in order to their wise, prudent, and effectual management; they have obtained a great understanding of men and things, a great knowledge of human nature, and of the way of accommodating themselves to it. so as most effectually to influence it to wise purposes. They have obtained a very extensive knowledge of men with whom they are concerned in the management affairs, either those who have a joint concern in government,

or those who are to be governed; and they have also obtained a very full and particular understanding of the state and circumstances of the country or temple of whom they have the care, and know well their laws and constitution, and what their circumstances require, and likewise have a great knowledge of the people of neighbouring nations, states, or provinces, with whom they have occasion to be concerned in the management of public affairs committed to them These things all contribute to render those who are in authority fit to be denominated “strong rods.”

**2.** When they have not only great understanding, but largeness of heart, and a greatness and nobleness of disposition, this is another qualification that belongs to the character of a “stronger rod.”

Those that are by Divine Providence set in a place of public authority and rule, are called “gods, and sons of the Most High,” ~~Psalm~~ Psalm 82:6. And therefore it is peculiarly unbecoming them to be of a mean spirit, a disposition that will admit of their doing those things that are sordid and vile; as then they are persons of a narrow, private spirit, that may be found in little tricks and intrigues to promote their private interest. Such will shamefully defile their hands to gain a few pounds, are not ashamed to grind the faces of the poor, and screw their neighbours; and will take advantage of their authority or commission to line their own pockets with what is fraudulently taken or withheld from others. When a man in authority is of such a mean spirit, it weakens his authority, and makes him justly contemptible in the eyes of men and is utterly inconsistent with his being a strong rod.

But on the contrary, it greatly establishes his authority, and causes others to stand in awe of him, when they see him to be a man of greatness of mind, one that abhors those things that are mean and sordid, and not capable of a compliance with them: one that is of a public spirit and not of a private narrow disposition, a man of honour and not of mean artifice and clandestine management, for filthy lucre, one that abhors trifling and impertinence, or to waste away his time, that should be spent in the service of God, his king, and his country, in vain amusements and diversions, and in the pursuit of the gratification’s of sensual appetites. God charges the rulers in Israel, that pretended to be their great and mighty

men, with being mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink. There does not seem to be any reference to their being men of strong heads, and able to bear a great deal of strong drink, as some have supposed: there is a severe sarcasm in the words, for the prophet is speaking of the great men, princes, and judges in Israel, (as appears by the verse next following,) which should be mighty men, strong rods, men of eminent qualifications, excelling in nobleness of spirit, of glorious strength and fortitude of mind, but instead of that, they were mighty or eminent for nothing but gluttony and drunkenness.

**3.** When those that are in authority are endowed with much of a spirit of government, this is another thing that entitles them to the denomination of “strong rods.” They not only are men of great understanding and wisdom in affairs that appertain to government, but have also a peculiar talent at using their knowledge, and exerting themselves in this great and important business, according to their great understanding in it. They are men of eminent fortitude, and are not afraid of the faces of men, are not afraid to do the part that properly belongs to them as rulers, though they meet with great opposition, and the spirits of men are greatly irritated by it. They have a spirit of resolution and activity, so as to keep the wheels of government in proper motion, and to cause judgment and justice to run down as a mighty stream, they have not only a great knowledge of government, and the things that belong to it in theory, but it is, as it were, natural to them to apply the various powers and faculties with which God has endowed them, and the knowledge they have obtained by study and observation, to that business, so as to perform it most advantageously and effectually.

**4.** Stability and firmness of integrity, fidelity, and piety, in the exercise of authority, is another thing that greatly contributes to, and is very essential in, the character of a “strong rod.”

He is not only a man of strong reason and great discerning to know what is just, but is a man of strict integrity and righteousness, firm and immovable in the execution of justice and judgment. He is not only a man of great ability to bear down vice and immorality, but has a disposition agreeable to such ability, is one that has a strong aversion to wickedness, and is disposed to use the power God has put into his hands to suppress it; and

is one that not only opposes vice by his authority, but by his example. He is one of inflexible fidelity, who will be faithful to God whose minister he is, to his people for good, and who is immovable in his regard to his supreme authority, his commands and his glory, and will be faithful to his king and country. He will not be induced by the many temptations that attend the business of men in public authority basely to betray his trust; will not consent to do what he thinks not to be for the public good, for his own gain or advancement, or any private interest. He is well principled, and firm in acting agreeably to his principles, and will not be prevailed with to do otherwise through fear or favour, to follow a multitude, or to maintain his interest in any on whom he depends for the honour or profit of his place, whether it be prince or people; and is also one of that strength of mind, whereby he rules his own spirit. These things very eminently contribute to a rulers title to the denomination of a “strong rod.”

**5.** And lastly, It also contributes to that strength of a man in authority by which he may be denominated a “strong rod,” when he is in such circumstances as give him advantage for the exercise of his strength for the public good; as his being a person of honourable descent, of a distinguished education, a man of estate, one advanced in years, one that has long been in authority, so that it is become as it were natural for the people to pay him deference, to reverence him, to be influenced and governed by him, and to submit to his authority; and add to this, his being extensively known, and much honoured and regarded abroad; his being one of a good presence, majesty of countenance, decency of behavior, becoming one in authority; of forcible speech, etc. These things add to his strength, and increase his ability and advantage to serve his generation in the place of a ruler and therefore serve to render him one that is the more fitly and eminently called a “strong rod.” — I now proceed,

**II.** To show that when such strong rods are broken and withered by death, it is an awful judgment of God on the people who are deprived of them, and worthy of great lamentation. — And that on two accounts.

**1.** By reason of the many positive benefits and blessings to a people that such rulers are the instruments of.

Almost all the prosperity of a public society and civil community does, under God, depend on their rulers. They are like the main springs or

wheels in a machine, that keep every part in its due motion, and are in the body politic, as the vitals in the body natural, and as the pillars and foundation in a building. Civil rulers are called “the foundations of the earth.” Psalm 82 and 11:3. The prosperity of a people depends more on their rulers than is commonly imagined. As they have the public society under their care and powers so they have advantage to promote the public interest every way, and if they are such rulers as have been described, they are some of the greatest blessings to the public. Their influence has a tendency to promote wealth, and cause temporal possessions and blessings to abound, and to promote virtue amongst them, and so to unite them one to another in peace and mutual benevolence, and make them happy in society, each one the instrument of his neighbours’ quietness, comfort, and prosperity, and by these means to advance their reputation and honour in the world, and which is much more, to promote their spiritual and eternal happiness. Therefore, the wise man says,

“Blessed art thou, O land, when thy king is the son of nobles.”  
 (<sup>1017</sup>Ecclesiastes 10:17.)

We have a remarkable instance and evidence of the happy and great influence of such a strong rod as has been described, to promote the universal prosperity of a people, in the history of the reign of Solomon, though many of the people were uneasy under his government, and thought him too rigorous in his administrations: see <sup>1124</sup>1 Kings 12:4. “Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig-tree from Dan even to Beersheba, all the days of Solomon.” <sup>1125</sup>1 Kings 4:25. “And be made silver to be among them as stones for abundance.” Chapter 10:27. “And Judah and Israel there many, eating and drinking and making merry.” The queen of Sheba admired, and was greatly affected with, the happiness of the people, under the government of such a strong rod, I Kings 10:8, 9:2 “Happy are thy men, (says she,) happy are these thy servants which is continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom. Blessed be the Lord thy God which delighted in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel; because the Lord loved Israel for ever, therefore made he thee king, to do judgment and justice.”

The flourishing state of the kingdom of Judah, while they had strong rods for the sceptres of them that the rule is taken notice of in our context; “her

stature was exalted among the thick branches, and she appealed in her height with the multitude of her branches.”

Such rulers are eminently the ministers of God to his people for good: they are great gifts of the Most High to be people, blessed tokens of his favour, and vehicles of his goodness to them; amid therein are images of his own Son, the grand medium of all God's goodness to fallen mankind; and therefore, all of them are called, sons of the Most High. All civil rulers, if they are as they ought to be, such strong rods as have been described, will be like the Son of the Most High, vehicles of good to mankind, and like him, will be as the light of the morning when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds, as the tender grass springing out of the earth, by clear shining after rain. And therefore, when a people are bereaved of them, they sustain an unspeakable loss, and are the subjects of a judgment of God that is greatly to be lamented.

**2.** On account of the great calamities such rulers are a defense from. Innumerable are the grievous and fatal calamities which public societies are exposed to in this evil world, from which they can have no defense without order and authority. If a people are without government they are like a city broken down and without walls, encompassed on every side by enemies, and become unavoidably subject to all manner of confusion and misery.

Government is necessary to deferred communities from miseries from within themselves, from the prevalence of internal discord, mutual injustice, and violence, the members of the society continually making a prey one of another, without any defense from each other. Rulers are the heads of union in public societies, that hold the parts together, without which nothing else is to be expected than that the members of the society will be continually divided against themselves, every one acting the part of an enemy to his neighbour, every one's hand against every man, and every man's hand against him, going on in remediless and endless broils and jarring, until the society he utterly dissolved and broken in pieces, and life itself, in the neighbourhood of our fellow-creatures, becomes miserable and intolerable.

We may see the need of government in societies by what is visible in families, those lesser societies, of which all public societies are constituted.

How miserable would these little societies be, if all were left to themselves, without any authority or superiority in one above another, or any head of union and influence among them! We may be convinced by what we see of the lamentable consequences of the want of a proper exercise of authority and maintenance of government in families, which yet are not absolutely without all authority. No less need is there of government in public societies, but much more, as they are larger. A very few may possibly, without any government, act by concert, so as to concur in what shall be for the welfare of the whole; but this is not to be expected among a multitude, constituted of many thousands, of a great variety of tempers and different interests.

As government is absolutely necessary, so there is a necessity of strong rods in order to it the business being such as requires persons so qualified, no other being sufficient for, or well capable of, the government of public societies: and therefore, those public societies are miserable that have not such strong rods for sceptres to rule,

“Woe to thee, O land, when thy king is a child.”  
(~~2006~~ Ecclesiastes 10:16.)

As government, and strong rods for the exercise of it, are necessary to preserve public societies from dreadful and fatal calamities arising from among themselves; so no less requisite are they to defend the community from foreign enemies. As they are like the pillars of a building, so they are also like the walls and bulwarks of a city: they are under God the main strength of a people in the time of war, and the chief instruments of their preservation, safety, and rest. This is signified in a very lively manner in the words that are used by the Jewish community in her lamentations, to express the expectations she had from her princes,

“The breath of our nostrils, the anointed of the Lord, was taken in their pits, of whom we said, Under his shadow we shall live among the heathen.” (~~2001~~ Lamentations 4:20.)

In this respect also such strong rods are sons of the Most High, and images or resemblance’s of the Son of God, viz. as they are their saviours from their enemies, as the judges that God raised up of old in Israel are called, Nehemiah 9:27. “Therefore thou deliverest them into the hand of

their enemies, who vexed them: and in the time of their trouble when they cried unto thee, thou heardest them from heaven; and according to thy manifold mercies, thou gavest them saviours, who saved them out of the hand of their enemies.”

Thus both the prosperity and safety of a people under God, depends on such rulers as are strong rods. While they enjoy such blessings, they are wont to be like a vine planted in a fruitful soil, with her stature exalted among the thick branches, appearing in her height with the multitude of her branches; but when they have no strong rod to be a sceptre to rule, they are like a vine planted in a wilderness that is exposed to be plucked up, and cast down to the ground, to have her fruit dried up with the east wind, and to have fire coming out of her own branches to devour her fruit.

On these accounts, when a people's strong rods are broken and withered, it is an awful judgment of God on that people, and worthy of great lamentation: as when king Josiah (who was doubtless one of the strong rods referred to in the text) was dead, the people made great lamentation for him, <sup>481B</sup>2 Chronicles 35:24, 25. “And they brought him to Jerusalem, and he died, and was buried in one of the sepulchres of his fathers: and all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah. And Jeremiah lamented for Josiah: and all the singing-men and the singing-women spake of Josiah in their lamentations to this day, and made them an ordinance in Israel: and, behold, they are written in the lamentations.”

### APPLICATION.

I come now to apply these things to our own case, under the late awful frown of Divine Providence upon us, in removing by death that honourable person in public rule and authority, an inhabitant of this town, and belonging to this congregation and church, who died at Boston the last Lord's day.

He was eminently a strong rod in the fore-mentioned respects as to his natural abilities, strength of reason greatness and clearness of discerning, and depth of penetration, he was one of the first rank. It may be doubted whether he has left his superior in these respects in these parts of the world. He was a man of a truly great genius, and his genius was peculiarly fitted for the understanding and managing of public affairs.

And as his natural capacity was great, so was the knowledge that he had acquired, his understanding being greatly improved by close application of mind to those things he was called to be concerned in, and by a very exact observation of them, and long experience in them. He had indeed a great insight into the nature of public societies, the mysteries of government, and the affairs of peace and war. He had a discernment that very few have of those things wherein the public weal consists, and whet those things are that expose public societies; and of the proper means to avoid the latter, and promote the former. He was quick in his discerning, in that in most cases, especially such as belonged to his proper business, he at first sight would see further than most men when they had done their best, but yet he had a wonderful faculty of improving his own thoughts by meditation, and carrying his views a greater and greater length by long and close application of mind. He had an extraordinary ability to distinguish right and wrong, in the midst of intricacies; and circumstances that tended to perplex and darken the case. He was able to weigh things as it were in a balance, and to distinguish those things that were solid and weighty from those that had only a fair show without substance; which he evidently discovered in his accurate, clear, and plain way of stating and committing causes to a jury, from the bench, as by others hath been observed. He wonderfully distinguished truth from falsehood, and the most laboured cases seemed always to be clear in his mind, his ideas being properly ranged, and he had a talent of communicating them to every one's understanding, beyond almost any one; and if any were misguided, it was not because truth and falsehood, right and wrong, were not well distinguished.

He was probably one of the ablest politicians that ever New England bred. He had a very uncommon insight into human nature, and a marvelous ability to penetrate into the particular tempers and dispositions of such as he had to deal with, and to discern the fittest way of treating them, so as most effectually to influence them to any good and wise purpose.

And never perhaps was there a person that had a more extensive and thorough knowledge of the state of this land, and its public affairs, and of persons that were jointly concerned with him in them. He knew this people, and their circumstances, and what their circumstances required. He discerned the diseases of this body, and what were the proper remedies, as

an able and masterly physician. He had a great acquaintance with the neighbouring colonies, and also the nations on this continent, with whom we are concerned in our public affairs. He had a far greater knowledge than any other person in the land, of the several nations of Indians in these northern parts of America, their tempers, manners, and the proper way of treating them, and was more extensively known by them than any other person in the country. And no other person in authority in this province had such an acquaintance with the people and country of Canada, the land of our enemies, as he had.

He was exceeding far from a disposition and forwardness to intermeddle with other people's business, but as to what belonged to his proper business, in the offices he sustained, and the important affairs of which he had the care, he had a great understanding of what belonged to them. I have often been surprised at the length of his reach, and what I have seen of his ability to foresee and determine the consequences of things, even at a great distance, and quite beyond the sight of other men. He was not wavering and unsteady in his opinion. His manner was never to pass a judgment rashly, but was wont first thoroughly to deliberate and weigh an affair, and in this, notwithstanding his great abilities, he was glad to improve by the help of conversation and discourse with others (and often spake of the great advantage he found by it,) but when on mature consideration, he had settled his judgment he was not easily fumed from it by false colours, and plausible pretenses and appearances.

And besides his knowledge of things belonging to his particular caring as a ruler, he had also a great decree of understanding in things belonging to his general calling as a Christian. He was no inconsiderable divine. He was a wise casuist, as I know by the great help I have found from time to time by his judgment and advice in eases of conscience, wherein I have consulted him. And indeed I scarce knew the divine that I ever found more able to help and enlighten the mind in such eases than he. And he had no small degree of knowledge in things pertaining to experimental religion; but was wont to discourse on such subjects, not only with accurate doctrinal distinctions, but as one intimately and feelingly acquainted with these things.

He was not only great in speculative knowledge, but his knowledge was practical; such as tended to a wise conduct in the affairs, business, and duties of life; so as properly to have the denomination of wisdom, and so as properly and eminently to invest him with the character of a wise man. And he was not only eminently wise and prudent in his own conduct, but was one of the ablest and wisest counselors of others in any difficult affair.

The greatness and honourableness of his disposition was answerable to the largeness of his understanding. He was naturally of a great mind, in this respect he was truly the son of nobles. He greatly abhorred things which were mean and sordid, and seemed to be incapable of a compliance with them. How far was he from trifling and impertinence in his conversation! How far from a busy meddling disposition! How far from any sly and clandestine management to fill his pockets with what was fraudulently withheld, or violently squeezed, from the labourer, soldier, or inferior officer! How far from taking advantage from his commission or authority, or any superior power he had in his hands, or the ignorance, dependence, or necessities of others, to add to his own gains with what properly belonged to them, and with what they might lustily expect as a proper reward for any of their services! How far was he from secretly taking bribes offered to induce him to favour any man in his cause, or by his power or interest to promote his being advanced to any place of public trust, honour, or profit! How greatly did he abhor lying and prevarication! And how immovably steadfast was he to exact truth! His hatred of those things that were mean and sordid was so apparent and well known, that it was evident that men dreaded to appear in any thing of that nature in his presence.

He was a man of a remarkably public spirit, a true lover of his country, and who greatly abhorred sacrificing the public welfare to private interest. — He was very eminently endowed with a spirit of government. The God of nature seemed to have formed him for government, as though he had been made on purpose, and cast into a mould, by which he should be every way fitted for the business of a man in public authority. Such a behaviour and conduct was natural to him, as tended to maintain his authority, and possess others with awe and reverence and to enforce and render effectual what he said and did in the exercise of his authority. He

did not bear the sword in vain: he was truly a terror to evil-doers. What I saw in him often put me in mind of that saying of the wise man,

“The king that sitteth in the throne of judgment scattereth away all  
evil with his eyes.” (~~2008~~ Proverbs 20:8.)

He was one that was not afraid of the faces of men, and every one knew that it was in vain to attempt to deter him from doing what, on mature consideration, he had determined he ought to do. — Every thing in him was great and becoming a man in his public station. Perhaps never was there a man that appeared in New England to whom the denomination of a great man did more properly belong.

But though he was one that was great among men, exalted above others in abilities and greatness of mind, and in the place of rule, and feared not the faces of men, yet he feared God. He was strictly conscientious in his conduct, both in public and private. I never knew the man that seemed more steadfastly and immovably to act by principle, and according to rules and maxims, established and settled in his mind by the dictates of his judgment and conscience. He was a man of strict justice and fidelity. Faithfulness was eminently his character. Some of his greatest opponents that have been of the contrary party to him in public affairs, yet have openly acknowledged this of him, that he was a faithful man. He was remarkably faithful in his public trusts. He would not basely betray his trust, from fear or devour. It was in vain to expect it, however men might oppose him or neglect him, and how great soever they were: nor would he neglect the public interest committed to him, for the sake of his own ease, but diligently and laboriously watched and laboured for it night and day. And he was faithful in private affairs as well as public. He was a most faithful friend; faithful to any one that in any case asked his counsel: and his fidelity might be depended upon in whatever affair he undertook for any of his neighbours.

He was a noted instance of the virtue of temperance, unalterable in it, in all places, in all companies, and in the midst of all temptations. Though he was a man of a great spirit, yet he had a remarkable government of his spirit, and excelled in the government of his tongue. In the midst of all provocation's from multitudes he had to deal with, and the great multiplicity of perplexing affairs in which he was concerned, and all the

opposition and reproaches of which he was at any time the subject, yet what was there that ever proceeded out of his mouth that his enemies could lay hold of? No profane language, no vain, rash, unseemly, and unchristian speeches. If at any time he expressed himself with great warmth and vigour it seemed to be from principle and determination of judgment, rather than from passion. When he expressed himself strongly, and with vehemence, those that were acquainted with him, and well observed him from time to time, might evidently see it was done in consequence of thought and judgment, weighing the circumstances and consequences of things.

The calmness and steadiness of his behaviour in private, particularly in his family, appeared remarkable and exemplary to those who had most opportunity to observe. He was thoroughly established in those religious principles and doctrines of the first fathers of New England, usually called the doctrines of grace, and had a great detestation of the opposite errors of the present fashionable divinity, as very contrary to the word of God, and the experience of every true Christian. And as he was a friend to truth, so he was a friend to vital piety and the power of godliness, and ever countenanced and favoured it on all occasions.

He abhorred profaneness, and was a person of a serious and decent spirit, and ever treated sacred things with reverence. He was exemplary for his decent attendance on the public worship of God. Who ever saw him irreverently and indecently lolling, and laying down his head to sleep, or gazing about the meeting-house in time of divine service? And as he was able (as was before observed) to discourse very understandingly of experimental religion, so to some persons with whom he was very intimate, he gave intimations sufficiently plain, while conversing of these things, that they were matters of his own experience. And some serious persons in civil authority, who have ordinarily differed from him in matters of government, yet on some occasional close conversation with him on things of religion, have manifested a high opinion of him as to real experimental piety.

As he was known to be a serious person, and an enemy to a profane or vain conversation, so he was feared on that account by great and small. When he was in the room, only his presence was sufficient to maintain

decency; though many were there accounted great men, who otherwise were disposed to take a much greater freedom in their talk and behaviour, than they dared to do in his presence. He was not unmindful of death, nor insensible of his own frailty, nor did death come unexpected to him. For some years past, he has spoken much to some persons of dying, and going into the eternal world, signifying that he did not expect to continue long here.

Added to all these things, to render him eminently a strong rod, he was attended with many circumstances which tended to give him advantage for the exerting of his strength for the public good. He was honourably descended, was a man of considerable substance, had been long in authority, was extensively known and honoured abroad, was high in the esteem of the many tribes of Indians in the neighbourhood of the British colonies, and so had great influence upon them above any other man in New England. God had endowed him with a comely presence, and majesty of countenance, becoming the great qualities of his mind, and the place in which God had set him.

In the exercise of these qualities and endowments, under these advantages, he has been as it were a father to this part of the land, on whom the whole county had, under God, its dependence in all its public affairs, and especially since the beginning of the present war. How much the weight of all the warlike concerns of the country (which above any part of the land lies exposed to the enemy) has lain on his shoulders, and how he has been the spring of all motion, and the doer of every thing that has been done, and how wisely and faithfully he has conducted these affairs, I need not inform this congregation. You well know that he took care of the county as a father of a family of children, not neglecting men's lives, and making light of their blood but with great diligence vigilance and prudence, applying himself continually to the proper means of our safety and welfare. And especially has this his native town, where he has dwelt from his infancy, reaped the benefit of his happy influence. His wisdom has been, under God, very much our guide and his authority our support and strength, and he has been a great honour to Northampton, and ornament to our church. He continued in full capacity of usefulness while he lived; he was indeed considerably advanced in years, but his powers of mind were not sensibly

abated, and his strength of body was not so impaired, but that he was able to go long journeys, in extreme heat and cold, and in a short time.

But now this “strong rod is broken and withered,” and surely the judgment of God therein is very awful, and the dispensation that which may well be for a lamentation. Probably we shall be more sensible of the worth and importance of such a strong rod by the want of it. The awful voice of God in this providence is worthy to be amended to by this whole province, and especially by the people of this county, but in a more peculiar manner by us of this town. We have now this testimony of the divine displeasure, added to all the other dark clouds God has lately brought over us, and his awful frowns upon us. It is a dispensation, on many accounts, greatly calling for our humiliation and fear before God, an awful manifestation of his supreme, universal, and absolute dominion calling us to adore the divine sovereignty, and tremble at the presence of this great God. And it is a lively instance of human frailty and mortality. We see how that none are out of the reach of death, that no greatness, no authority, no wisdom and sagacity, no honourableness of person or station, no degree of valuableness and importance, exempts from the stroke of death. This is therefore a loud and solemn warning to all sorts to prepare for their departure hence.

And the memory of this person who is now gone, who was made so great a blessing while he lived, should engage us to show respect and kindness to his family. This we should do both out of respect to him and to his father, your former eminent pastor, who in his day was in a remarkable manner a father to this part of the land in spirituals, and especially to this town, as this his son has been in temporals. — God greatly resented it, when the children of Israel did not show kindness to the house of Jerubbaal that had been made an instrument of so much good to them,

“Neither showed they kindness to the house of Jerubbaal,  
according to all the good which he had showed unto Israel.”

(~~DOES~~ Judges 8:35.)

# SERMON 5

## TRUE GRACE DISTINGUISHED FROM THE EXPERIENCE OF DEVILS.

[Preached before the Synod of New York, convened at Newark, in New Jersey, on September 28, N. S. 1752.]

Thou believest that there is one God, thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. (~~sup~~James 2:19)

OBSERVE in these words, —

1. Something that some depended on, as an evidence of their good estate and acceptance, as the objects of God's favour, viz. a speculative faith, or belief of the doctrines of religion. The great doctrine of the existence of one only God is particularly mentioned probable, because this was a doctrine wherein especially, there was a visible and noted distinction between professing Christians and the heathens, amongst whom the Christians in those days were dispersed. And therefore, this was what many trusted in, as what recommended them to, or at least was an evidence of their interest in, the great spiritual and eternal privileges, in which real Christians were distinguished from the rest of the world.
2. How much is allowed concerning this faith, viz. That it is a good attainment, "Thou doest well." It was good, as it was necessary. This doctrine was one of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, and, in some respects, above all others fundamental. It was necessary to be believed, in order to salvation. To be without the belief of this doctrine especially in those that had such advantage to know as they had to whom the apostle wrote would be a great sin, and what would vastly aggravate their damnation. This belief was also good, as it had a good tendency in many respects.
3. What implicitly denied concerning it, viz. That it is any evidence of a person's being in a state of salvation. The whole context shows this to be

the design of the apostle in the words. And it is particularly manifest by the conclusion of the verse, which is

**4.** The thing observable in the words, viz. The argument by which the apostle proves, that this is no sign of a state of grace, viz. that it is found in the devils. They believe that there is one God, and that he is a holy, sin-hating God, and that he is a God of truth, and will fulfil his threatenings, by which he has denounced future judgments, and a areas increase of misery on them; and that he is an almighty God, and able to execute his threatened vengeance upon them.

Therefore, the doctrine I infer from the words to make the subject of my present discourse, is this. viz. Nothing in the mind of man, that is of the same nature with what the devils experience, or are the subjects of, is any sure sign of saving grace.

If there be any thing that the devils have, or find in themselves, which is an evidence of the saving grace of the Spirit of God, then the apostle's argument is not good which is plainly this. "That which is in the devils, or which they do, is no certain evidence of grace. But the devils believe that there is one God. Therefore, thy believing that there is one God, is no sure evidence that thou art gracious." So that the whole foundation of the apostle's argument lies in that proposition: "That which is in the devils, is no certain sign of grace." — Nevertheless, I shall mention two or three further reasons, or arguments of the truth of this doctrine.

**I.** The devil once was holy; but when he fell, he lost all his holiness, and became perfectly wicked. He is the greatest sinner, and in some sense the father of all sin. <sup><RB4></sup> John 8:44. "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do: he was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there was no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it." <sup><RB8></sup> 1 John 3:8. "He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning." He is often spoken of, by way of eminence, as "the wicked one." So, <sup><LB9></sup> Matthew 13:19. "Then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart." Verse 38. "The tares are the children of the wicked one." <sup><DP3></sup> 1 John 2:13. "I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one." Chapter 3:12. "Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one." Chapter 5:18. "Whosoever is born of

God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.” So the devils are called evil spirits, unclean spirits, powers of darkness, rulers of the darkness of this world, and wickedness itself: ~~and~~ Ephesians 6:12. “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers against the rulers of the darkness of this World, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”

Therefore, surely, those things which the minds of devils are the subjects of, can have nothing of the nature of true holiness in them. The knowledge and understanding which they have of the things of God and religion, cannot be of the nature of divine and holy light, nor any knowledge that is merely of the same kind. No impressions made on their hearts, can be of a spiritual nature. That kind of sense which they have of divine things, however great, cannot be a holy sense. Such affections as move their hearts, however powerful, cannot be holy affections. If there be no holiness in them as they are in the devil, there can be no holiness in them as they are in man, unless something be added to them beyond what is in the devil. And if any thing be added to them, then they are not the same things, but are something beyond what devils are the subjects of; which is contrary to the supposition: for the proposition which I am upon is, that those things which are of the same nature, and nothing beyond what devils are the subjects of, cannot be holy experiences. It is not the subject that makes the affection, or experience, or quality holy, but it is the quality that makes the subject holy.

And if those qualities and experiences which the devils are the subjects of, have nothing of the nature of holiness in them, then they can be no certain signs, that persons which have them are holy or gracious. There is no certain sign of true grace, but those things which are spiritual and gracious. It is God’s image that is his seal and mark, the stamp by which those that are his are known. But that which has nothing of the nature of holiness, has nothing of this image. That which is a sure sign of grace, must either be something which has the nature and essence of grace, or flows from, or some way belongs to, its essence: for that which distinguishes things one from another is the essence, or something appertaining to their essence. And therefore, that which is sometimes found wholly without the essence of holiness or grace, can be no essential, sure, or distinguishing mark of grace.

**II.** The devils are not only absolutely without all true holiness, but they are not so much as the subjects of any common grace.

If any should imagine, that some things may be signs of grace which are not grace itself, or which have nothing of the nature and essence of grace and holiness in them; yet, certainly they will allow, that the qualifications which are sure evidences of grace, must be things that are near akin to grace, or having some remarkable affinity with it. But the devils are not only wholly destitute of any true holiness, but they are at the greatest distance from it, and have nothing in them in any wise akin to it.

There are many in this world who are wholly destitute of saving grace, who yet have common grace. They have no true holiness, but nevertheless have something of that which is called moral virtue, and are the subjects of some degree of the common influences of the Spirit of God. It is so with those in general that live under the light of the gospel, and are not given up to judicial blindness and hardness. Yea, those that are thus given up, yet have some degree of restraining grace while they live in this world, without which the earth could not bear them, and I they would in no measure be tolerable members of human society. But when any are damned, or cast into hell, as the devils are, God wholly withdraws his restraining grace, and all merciful influences of his Spirit whatsoever. They have neither saving grace nor common grace, neither the Grace of the Spirit, nor any of the common gifts of the Spirit, neither true holiness, nor moral virtue of any kind. Hence arises the vast increase of the exercise of wickedness in the hearts of men when they are damned. And herein is the chief difference between the damned in hell, and unregenerate and graceless men in this world. Not that wicked men in this world have any more holiness or true virtue than the damned, or have wicked men, when they leave this world, any principles of wickedness infused into them: but when men are cast into hell, God perfectly takes away his Spirit from them, as to all its merciful common influences, and withdraws from them all restraints of his Spirit and good providence.

**III.** It is unreasonable to suppose, that a person's being in any respect as the devil is, should be a certain sign that he is very unlike and opposite to him, and here after shall not have his part with him. True saints are extremely unlike and contrary to the devil, both relatively and really. They

are so relatively. The devil is the grand rebel; the chief enemy of God and Christ; the object of God's greatest wrath, a condemned malefactor, utterly rejected and cast off by him; for ever shut out of his presence, the prisoner of his justice, an everlasting inhabitant of the infernal world. The saints, on the contrary, are the citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem, members of the family of the glorious King of heaven, the children of God, the brethren and spouse of his dear Son; heirs of God, joint-heirs with Christ; kings and priests unto God. And they are extremely different really. The devil on account of his hateful nature, and those accursed dispositions which reign in him, is called Satan, the adversary, Abaddon and Apollyon, the great destroyer, the wolf, the roaring lion, the great dragon, the old serpent. The saints are represented as God's holy ones, his anointed ones, the excellent of the earth, the meek of the earth lambs and doves, Christ's little children, having the image of God, pure in heart, God's jewels, lilies in Christ's garden, plants of Paradise, stars of heaven; temples of the living God. The saints, so far as they are saints, are as diverse from the devil, as heaven is from hell, and much more contrary than light is to darkness: and the eternal state that they are appointed to, is answerably diverse and contrary.

Now, it is not reasonable to suppose, that being in any respect as Satan is, or being the subject of any of the same properties, qualifications, affections, or actions, that are in him, is any certain evidence that persons are thus exceeding different from him, and in circumstances so diverse, and appointed to an eternal state so extremely contrary in all respects. Wicked men are in Scripture called the children of the devil. Now is it reasonable to suppose that men's being in any respect as the devil is can be a certain sign, that they are not his children, but the children of the infinitely holy and blessed God? We are informed, that wicked men shall hereafter have their part with devils, shall be sentenced to the same everlasting fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels. Now, can a man's being like the devil in any respect be a sure token that he shall not have his part with him, but with glorious angels, and with Jesus Christ, dwelling with him where he is, that he may behold and partake of his glory?

The first use may lie in several inferences, for our instruction.

**I.** From what has been said, it may be inferred, by parity of reason, that nothing that damned men do, or ever will experience, can be any sure sign of grace.

Damned men are like the devils, are conformed to them in nature and state. They have nothing better in them than the devils, have no higher principles in their hearts; experience nothing, and do nothing, of a more excellent kind; as they are the children and servants of the devil and as such, shall dwell with him, and be partakers with him of the same misery. As Christ says, concerning the saints in their future state,

“That they shall be as the angels of God in heaven;”  
(<sup>4123</sup>Matthew 22:30.)

so it may be said concerning ungodly men in their future state, that they shall be as the fallen, wicked angels in hell.

Each of the aforementioned reasons, given to show the truth of the doctrine with respect to devils, holds good with respect to damned men. Damned men have no degree of holiness; and therefore those things which are nothing beyond what they have, cannot be holy experiences. Damned men are not only absolutely destitute of all true holiness, but they have not so much as any common grace. And lastly, it is unreasonable to suppose, that a person's being in any respect as the damned in hell are, should be a certain sign that they are very unlike and opposite to them, and hereafter shall not have their portion with them.

**II.** We may hence infer, that no degree of speculative knowledge of things of religion is any certain sign of saving grace. The devil, before his fall, was among those bright and glorious angels of heaven, which are represented as morning-stars, and flames of fire, that excel in strength and wisdom. And though he be now become sinful, yet his sin has not abolished the faculties of the angelic nature; as when man fell, he did not lose the faculties of the human nature. — Sin destroys spiritual principles, but not the natural faculties. It is true, sin, when in full dominion, prevents the exercise of the natural faculties in holy and spiritual understanding; and lays many impediments in the way of their proper exercise in other respects. It lays the natural faculty of reason under great disadvantages, by many and strong prejudices; and in fallen men the faculties of the soul are, doubtless,

greatly impeded in their exercise, through that great weakness and disorder of the corporeal organ to which it is strictly united, and which is the consequence of sin. — But there seems to be nothing in the nature of sin, or moral corruption, that has any tendency to destroy the natural capacity, or even to diminish it, properly speaking. If sin were of such a nature as necessarily to have that tendency and effect; then it might be expected, that wicked men, in a future state, where they are given up entirely to the unrestrained exercise of their corruptions and lusts, and sin is in all respects brought to its greatest perfection in them, would have the capacity of their souls greatly diminished. This we have no reason to suppose; but rather, on the contrary, that their capacities are greatly enlarged, and that their actual knowledge is vastly increased; and that even with respect to the Divine Being, and the things of religion, and the great concerns of the immortal souls of men, the eyes of wicked men are opened, when they go into another world.

The greatness of the abilities of devils may be argued, from the representation in <sup>ⓔᓔᓔ</sup>Ephesians 6:12. “We wrestle not against flesh and blood but against principalities, against powers,” etc. The same may also be argued from what the Scripture says of Satan’s subtlety. <sup>ⓔᓔᓔ</sup>Genesis 3:1. <sup>ⓔᓔᓔ</sup>2 Corinthians 11:3. <sup>ⓔᓔᓔ</sup>Acts 13:10. And as the devil has a faculty of understanding of large capacity, so he is capable of a great speculative knowledge of the things of God, and the invisible and eternal world, as well as other things; and must needs actually have a great understanding of these things; as these have always been chiefly in his view; and as his circumstances, from his first existence, have been such as have tended chiefly to engage him to attend to these things. Before his fall, he was one of those angels who continually beheld the face of the Father in heaven: and sin has no tendency to destroy the memory, and therefore has no tendency to blot out of it any speculative knowledge that was formerly.

As the devil’s subtlety shows his great capacity; so the way in which his subtlety is exercised and manifested — which is principally in his artful management with respect to things of religion, his exceeding subtle representations, insinuations, reasonings, and temptations, concerning these things — demonstrates his great actual understanding of them, as, in order to be a very artful disputant in any science, though it be only to confound and deceive such as are conversant in it, a person had need to

have a great and extensive acquaintance with the things which pertain to that science.

Thus the devil has undoubtedly a great degree of speculative knowledge in divinity; having been, as it were, educated in the best divinity school in the universe, viz. the heaven of heavens. He must needs have such an extensive and accurate knowledge concerning the nature and attributes of God, as we, worms of the dust, in our present state, are not capable of. And he must have a far more extensive knowledge of the works of God, as of the work of creation in particular, for he was a spectator of the creation of this visible world, he was one of those morning-stars (~~38:4~~ Job 38:4-7.) “who sang together, and of those sons of God, that shouted for joy, when God laid the foundations of the earth, and laid the measures thereof, and stretched the line upon it.” And so he must have a very great knowledge of God’s works of providence. He has been a spectator of the series of these works from the beginning; he has seen how God has governed the world in all ages; and he has seen the whole train of God’s wonderful successive dispensations of providence towards his church, from generation to generation. And he has not been an indifferent spectator; but the great opposition between God and him, in the whole course of those dispensations, has necessarily engaged his attention in the strictest observation of them. He must have a great degree of knowledge concerning Jesus Christ as the Saviour of men, and the nature and method of the work of redemption, and the wonderful wisdom of God in this contrivance. It is that work of God wherein, above all others, God has acted in opposition to him, and in which he has chiefly set himself in opposition to God. It is with relation to this affair, that the mighty warfare has been maintained, which has been carried on between Michael and his angels, and the devil and his angels, through all ages from the beginning of the world, and especially since Christ appeared. The devil has had enough to engage his attention to the steps of divine wisdom in this work: for it is to that wisdom he has opposed his subtlety; and he has seen and found, to his great disappointment and unspeakable torment, how divine wisdom, as exercised in that work, has baffled and confounded his devices. He has a great knowledge of the things of another world; for the things of that world are in his immediate view. He has a great knowledge of heaven; for he has been an inhabitant of that world of glory: and he has a great knowledge of

hell and the nature of its misery, for he is the first inhabitant of hell, and above all the other inhabitants has experience of its torments, and has felt them constantly, for more than fifty-seven hundred years. He must have a great knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, for it is evident he is not hindered from knowing what is written there, by the use he made of the words of Scripture in his temptation of our Saviour. And if he can know, he has much opportunity to know, and must needs have a disposition to know, with the greatest exactness: that he may, to greater effect, pervert and wrest the Scripture, and prevent such an effect of the word of God on the hearts of men, as shall tend to overthrow his kingdom. He must have a great knowledge of the nature of mankind their capacity their dispositions, and the corruptions of their hearts, for he has had long and great observation and experience. The heart of man is what he had chiefly to do with, in his subtle devices, mighty efforts, restless and indefatigable operations and exertions of himself, from the beginning of the world. And it is evident that he has a great speculative knowledge of the nature of experimental religion by his being able to imitate it so artfully, and in such a manner as to transform himself into an angel of light.

Therefore it is manifest, from my text and doctrine, that no degree of speculative knowledge of religion is any certain sign of true piety. Whatever clear notions a man may have of the attributes of God, the doctrine of the Trinity, the nature of the two covenants, the economy of the persons of the Trinity, and the part which each person has in the affair of man's redemption; if he can discourse never so excellently of the offices of Christ, and the way of salvation by him, and the admirable methods of divine wisdom, and the harmony of the various attributes of God in that way; if he can talk never so clearly and exactly of the method of the justification of a sinner, and of the nature of conversion, and the operations of the Spirit of God, in applying the redemption of Christ; giving good distinctions, happily solving difficulties, and answering objections, in a manner tending greatly to enlighten the ignorant, to the edification of the church of God, and the conviction of gainsayers, and the great increase of light in the world: if he has more knowledge of this sort than hundreds of true saints of an ordinary education, and most divines; yet all is no certain evidence of any degree of saving grace in the heart.

It is true, the Scripture open speaks of knowledge of divine things, as what is peculiar to true saints: as in <sup><B7B></sup>John 17:3. “This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.” <sup><B12></sup>Matthew 11:27. “No man knoweth the Son, but the Father: neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.” <sup><B9D></sup>Psalms 9:10. “They that know thy name will put their trust in thee.” <sup><B8B></sup>Philippians 3:8. “I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.” But then, we must understand it of a different kind of knowledge from that speculative understanding which the devil has to so great a degree. It will also be allowed, that the spiritual saving knowledge of God and divine things, greatly promotes speculative knowledge, as it engages the mind in its search into things of this kind, and much assists to a distinct understanding of them, so that, other things being equal, they who have spiritual knowledge, are much more likely than others to have a good doctrinal acquaintance with things of religion; but yet such acquaintance may be no distinguishing characteristic of true saints.

**III.** It may also be inferred from what has been observed, that for persons merely to yield speculative assent to the doctrines of religion as true, is no certain evidence of a state of grace. My text tells us, that the devils believe; and as they believe that there is one God, so they believe the truth of the doctrines of religion in general. The devil is orthodox in his faith; he believes the true scheme of doctrine, he is no Deist, Socinian, Arian Pelagian, or antinomian; the articles of his faith are all sound, and in them he is thoroughly established.

Therefore for a person to believe the doctrines of Christianity merely from the force of arguments, as discerned only by speculation, is no evidence of grace.

It is probably a very rare thing for unregenerate men to have a strong persuasion of the truth of the doctrines of religion, especially such of them as are very mysterious, and much above the comprehension of reason. Yet if he be very confident of the truth of Christianity and its doctrines, and is able to argue most strongly for the proof of them, in this he goes nothing beyond the devil; who doubtless has a great knowledge of the rational arguments by which the truth of the Christian religion and its several

principles are evinced. And therefore when the Scripture speaks of believing that Jesus is the Son of God, as a sure evidence of grace, as in ~~and~~ 1 John 5:1. and other places, it must be understood, not of a mere speculative assent, but of another kind and manner of believing, which is called the faith of God's elect, ~~and~~ Titus 1:1. There is a spiritual conviction of the truth which is a believing with the whole bears, peculiar to true saints; of which I shall speak more particularly.

**IV.** It may be inferred from the doctrine which has been insisted on, that it is no certain sign of persons being savingly converted that they have been subjects of very great distress and terrors of mind, through apprehensions of God's wrath, and fears of damnation.

That the devils the subjects of great terrors, through apprehensions of God's wrath, and fears of its future effects, is implied in my text, which speaks not only of their believing, but trembling. It must be no small degree of terror which should make those principalities and powers, those mighty, proud, and sturdy beings, to tremble.

There are many terrors that some persons who are concerned for their salvation, are the subjects of, which are not from any proper awakenings of conscience, or apprehensions of truth, but from melancholy or frightful impressions on their imagination, or some groundless apprehensions, and the delusions and false suggestions of Satan. But if they have had never so great and long continued terrors from real awakenings, and convictions of truth, and views of things as they are, this is no more than what is in the devils, and will be in all wicked men in another world. However stupid and senseless most ungodly men are now, all will be effectually awakened at last. There will be no such thing as slumbering in hell. There are many that cannot be awakened by the most solemn warnings and awful threatenings of the word of God most alarming discourses from the pulpit, and the most awakening and awful providence's — but all will be thoroughly awakened by the sound of the last trumpet, And the appearance of Christ to judgment. All sorts will then be filled with most amazing terrors, from apprehensions of truth, and seeing things as they are; when “the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, (such as were the most lofty and stout-hearted, most ready to treat the things of religion with contempt,) shall hide themselves

in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains: and say to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?" ~~6666~~ Revelation 6:16-17. Therefore if persons have been first awakened, and afterwards have had comfort and joy, it is no certain sign that their comforts are of the right hand, because they were preceded by very great terrors.

**V.** It may be further inferred from the doctrine, That no work of the law on men's hearts, in conviction of guilt, and just desert of punishment, is a sure argument that a person has been savingly converted.

Not onto are no awakenings and terrors any certain evidence of this, but no mere legal work whatsoever, though carried to the utmost extent. Nothing wherein there is no grace or spiritual light, but only the mere conviction of natural conscience, and those acts and operations of the mind which are the result of this — and so are, as it were, merely forced by the clear light of conscience, without the concurrence of the heart and inclination with that light — is any certain sign of the saving grace of God, or that a person was ever savingly converted.

The evidence of this, from my text and doctrine, is demonstrative; because the devils are the subjects of these things; and all wicked men that shall finally perish, will be the subjects of the same. Natural conscience is not extinguished in the damned in hell; but, on the contrary, remains there in its greatest strength, and is brought to its most perfect exercise, most fully to do its proper office as God's vicegerent in the soul to condemn those rebels against the King of heaven and earth and manifest God's just wrath and vengeance, and by that means to torment them, and be as a never-dying worm within them. Wretched men find means in this world to blind the eyes and stop the mouth of this vicegerent of a sin-revenging God; but they shall not be able to do it always. In another world, the eyes and mouth of conscience will be fully opened. God will hereafter make wicked men to see and know these things from which now they industriously hide their eyes,

“Let favour be showed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness: in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord. Lord, when thy hand is

liked up, they will not see: but they shall see, and be ashamed for their envy at the people, yea, the fire of thine enemies shall devour them.” (Isaiah 26:10, 11.)

We have this expression often annexed to God’s threatenings of wrath to his enemies; “And they shall know that I am the Lord:” this shall be accomplished by their woeful experience, and clear light in their consciences. whereby they shall be made to know, whether they will or not, how great and terrible, holy and righteous, a God Jehovah is, whose authority they have despised, and they shall know that he is righteous and holy in their destruction. This all the ungodly will be convinced of at the day of judgment, by the bringing to light of all their wickedness of heart and practice, and setting all their sins, with all their aggravations, in order, not only in the view of others, even of the whole world, but in the view of their own consciences. This is threatened,

“These things thou hast done, and I kept silence: thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself: but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes.” (Psalm 50:21.)

Compare this with the four first verses of the psalm — The design of the day of judgment is not to find out what is just, as it is with human judgments; but it is to manifest what is just; to make known God’s justice in the judgment which he will execute, to men’s own consciences, and to the world. And therefore that day is called “the day of wrath, find revelation of the righteous judgment of God,” (Romans 2:5. Now sinners often cavil against the justice of God’s dispensations, and particularly the punishment which he threatens for their sins; excusing themselves, and condemning him: but when God comes to manifest their wickedness in the light of that day, and to call them to an account, they will be speechless, (Matthew 22:11,12. “And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding-garment. And he saith unto him, friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding-garment? And he was speechless.” When the King of heaven and earth comes to judgment, their consciences will be so perfectly enlightened and convinced by the all-searching light they shall then stand in, that their mouths will be effectually stopped, as to all excuses for themselves, all pleading of their own righteousness to excuse or justify them, and all objections against the

justice of their Judge, that their conscience will condemn them only, and not God.

Therefore it follows from the doctrine, That it can be no certain sign of grace, that persons have had great convictions of sin. Suppose they have had their sins of life, with their aggravations, remarkably set before them, so as greatly to affect and terrify them; and withal, have had a great sight of the wickedness of their hearts, the greatness of the sin of unbelief, and of the unexcusableness and heinousness of their most secret spiritual iniquities. Perhaps they have been convinced of the utter insufficiency of their own righteousness, and they despair of being recommended to God by it; have been convinced that they are wholly without excuse before God, and deserve damnation, and that God would be just in executing the threatened punishment upon them, though it be so dreadful. All these things will be in the ungodly at the day of judgment, when they shall stand with devils, at the left hand, and shall be doomed as accursed to everlasting fire with them.

Indeed there will be no submission in them. Their conscience will be convinced that God is just in their condemnation, but yet their wills will not be bowed to God's justice. There will be no acquiescence of mind in that divine attribute; no yielding of the soul to God's sovereignty, but the highest degree of enmity and opposition. A true submission of the heart and will to the justice and sovereignty of God, is therefore allowed to be something peculiar to true converts, being something which the devils and damned souls are and ever will be far from; and to which a mere work of the law, and convictions of conscience, however great and clear, will never bring men.

When sinners are the subjects of great convictions of conscience, and a remarkable work of the law, it is only transacting the business of the day of judgment in the conscience before-hand.

God sits enthroned in the conscience, as at the last day he will sit enthroned in the clouds of heaven; the sinner is arraigned as it were at God's bar, and God appears in his awful greatness, as a just and holy, sin-hating and sin-revenging. God, as he will then. The sinner's iniquities are brought to light; his sins set in order before him; the hidden things of darkness and the counsels of the heart are made manifest as it will; be then.

Many witnesses do as it were rise up against the sinner under convictions of conscience, as they will against the wicked at the day of judgment, and the books are opened, particularly the book of God's strict and holy law is opened in the conscience, and its rules applied for the condemnation of the sinner, which is the book that will be opened at the day of judgment, as the grand rule to all such wicked men as have lived under it. And the sentence of the law is pronounced against the sinner, and the justice of the sentence made manifest, as it will be at the day of judgment. The conviction of a sinner at the day of judgment will be a work of the law, as well as the conviction of conscience in this world: and the work of the law (if the work be merely legal) is never carried further ill the consciences of sinners now than it will be at that day, when its work will be perfect in thoroughly stopping the sinner's mouth,

“Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.” (~~ROM~~ Romans 3:19.)

Every mouth shall be stopped by the law, either now or hereafter, and all the world shall become sensibly guilty before God, guilty of death, deserving of damnation. — And therefore, if sinners have been the subjects of a great work of the law, and have thus become guilty, and their mouths have been stopped, it is no certain sign that ever they have been converted.

Indeed the want of a thorough sense of guilt, and desert of punishment, and conviction of the justice of God in threatening damnation, is a sign that a person never was converted, and truly brought with the whole soul to embrace Christ as a Saviour from this punishment: for it is easily demonstrable, that there is no such thing as entirely and cordially accepting an offer of a Saviour from a punishment which we think we do not deserve. But having such a conviction is no certain sign that persons have true faith, or have ever truly received Christ as their Saviour. And if persons have great comfort, joy, and confidence suddenly let into their minds, after great convictions, it is no infallible evidence that their comforts are built on a good foundation.

It is manifest, therefore, that too much stress has been laid by many persons on a great work of the law preceding their comforts who seem not

only to have looked on such a work of the law as necessary to precede faith, but also to have esteemed it as the chief evidence of the truth and genuineness of succeeding faith and comforts. By this means it is to be feared very many have been deceived and established in a false hope. And what is to be seen in the event of things in multitudes of instances, confirms this. It may be safely allowed that it is not so usual for great convictions of conscience to prove abortive, and fail of a good issue, as for lesser connections, and that more generally when the Spirit of God proceeds so far with sinners, in the work of the law, as to give them a great sight of their hearts, and of the heinousness of their spiritual iniquities, and to convince them that they are without excuse — and that all their righteousness can do nothing to merit God's favour, but they are justly exposed to God's eternal vengeance with mercy — a work of saving conversion follows. But we can have no warrant to say it is universally so, or to lay it down as an infallible ride that when convictions of conscience have gone thus far saving faith and repentance will surely follow. If any should think they have ground for such a determination because they cannot conceive what end God should have in carrying a work of conviction to such a length, and so preparing the heart for faith and after all, never giving saving faith to the soul, I desire it may be considered where will be the end of our doubts and difficulties, if we think ourselves sufficient to determine so positively and particularity concerning God's ends and designs in what he does. It may be asked such an objector, what is God's and in giving a sinner any decree of the strivings of his Spirit, and conviction of conscience, when he afterwards suffers it to come to nothing?

If he may give some degree that may finally be in vain who shall set the bounds, and say holy, great the degree shall be? Who can, on sure grounds, determine, that when a sinner has so much of that conviction which the devils and damned in hell have, true faith and eternal salvation will be the certain consequence? This we may certainly determine, that, if the apostle's argument in the text be good, not any thing whatsoever that the devils have is certainly connected with such a consequence. Seeing sinners, while such, are capable of the most perfect convictions, and will have them at the day of judgment, and in hell, who shall say, that God never shall cause reprobates to anticipate the future judgment and damnation in that

respect? And if he does so, who shall say to him, What doest thou? or call him to account concerning his ends in so doing? Not but that many possible wise ends might be thought of, and mentioned, if it were needful, or I had now room for it. — The Spirit of God is often quenched by the exercise of the wickedness of men's hearts, after he has gone far in a work of conviction, so that their convictions never have a good issue. And who can say that sinners, by the exercise of their opposition and enmity against God, which is not at all mortified by the greatest legal convictions, neither in the damned in hell nor sinners on earth, may not provoke God to take his Spirit from them, even after he has proceeded the greatest length in a work of conviction? Who can say, that God never is provoked to destroy some, after he has brought them, as it were, through the wilderness, even to the edge of the land of rest? As he slew some of the Israelites, even in the plains of Moab.

And let it be considered, where is our warrant in Scripture, to make use of any legal convictions, or any method or order of successive events in a work of the law, and consequent comforts, as a sure sign of regeneration. The Scripture is abundant, in expressly mentioning evidences of grace, and of a state of favour with God, as characteristics of true saints. But where do we ever find such things as these amongst those evidences? Or where do we find any other signs insisted on, besides grace itself, its nature exercises, and fruits? These were the evidences that Job relied upon: these were the things that the psalmist every where insists upon as evidences of his sincerity and particularly in the 119th Psalm, from the beginning to the end: these were the signs that Hezekiah trusted to in his sickness.

These were the characteristics of those that are truly happy given by our Saviour in the beginning of his sermon on the mount. These are the things that Christ mentions, as the true evidences of being his real disciples in his last and dying discourse to his disciples, in else with, 15th, and 16th chapters of John, and in his intercessory prayer chapter 17: These are the things which the apostle Paul often speaks of as evidences of his sincerity, and sure title to a crown of glory. And these are the things he often mentions to others; in his epistles, as the proper evidences of real Christianity, a justified state, and a title to glory. He insists on the fruits of the Spirit; love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; as the proper evidences of being Christ's, and

living in the Spirit: <sup><REF></sup>Galatians 5:22-25. It is that charity, or divine love, which is pure, peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy, etc. that he insists on, as the most essential evidence of true godliness; without which, all other things are nothing. Such are the signs which the apostle James insists on, as the proper evidence of a truly wise and good man: <sup><REF></sup>James 3:1 7. “The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.” And such are the signs of true Christianity, which the apostle John insists on throughout his epistles. And we never have any where in the Bible, from the beginning to the end of it, any other signs of godliness given, than such as these. If persons have such things as these apparently in them, it ought to be determined that they are truly converted, without its being first known what method the Spirit of God look to introduce these things into the and, which oftentimes is altogether untraceable. All the works of God are in some respects unsearchable but the Scripture often represents the works of the spirit of God as peculiarly so: <sup><REF></sup>Isaiah 40:13. “Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counselor, hath taught him?” <sup><REF></sup>Ecclesiastes 11:5. “As thou knowest not what the way of the Spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child: so thou knowest not the works of God, who maketh all.” <sup><REF></sup>John 3:8 “The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.”

**VI.** It follows from my text and doctrine, That it is no certain sign of grace, that persons have earnest desires and longings after salvation.

The devils, doubtless, long for deliverance from the misery they suffer, and from that greater misery which they expect. If they tremble through fear of it, they must, necessarily, earnestly desire to be delivered from it. Wicked men are, in Scripture, represented as longing for the privileges of the righteous, when the door is shut, and they are shut out from among them: they come to the door, and cry, Lord, Lord, open to us. Therefore we are not to look on all desires that are very earnest and vehement, as certain evidences of a pious heart. There are earnest desires of a religious nature, which the saints have, that are the proper breathings of a new nature, and distinguishing qualities of true saints: but there are also longings, which unregenerate men may have, which are often mistaken for

marks of godliness. They think they hunger and thirst after righteousness, and have earnest desires after God and Christ, and long for heaven, when, indeed, all is to be resolved into self-love; and so is a longing which arises from no higher principles than the earnest desires of devils.


**VII.** It may be inferred from what has been observed that persons who have no grace may have a great apprehension of an external glory in things heavenly and divine, and of whatsoever is external pertaining to religion.

If persons have impressed strongly on their minds ideas obtained by the external senses, whether by the ear as any kind of sound, pleasant music, or words spoken of excellent signification, words of Scripture, suitable to their case, or adapted to the subject of their meditations: or ideas obtained by the eye, as of a visible beauty and glory a shining light, golden streets, gates of precious stone, a most magnificent throne surrounded by angels and saints in shining ranks: or any thing external belonging to Jesus Christ either in his humbled state, as hanging on the cross, with ill's crown of thorns, his wounds open, and blood trickling down; or in his glorified state, with awful majesty, or ravishing beauty and sweetness in his countenance his face shining above the brightness of the sun, and the like: these things are no certain signs of grace. Multitudes that are now in hell, will have ideas of the external glory that pertains to things heavenly, far beyond whatever any have in this world. They will see all that external glory and beauty, in which Christ will appear at the day of judgment, when the sun shall be turned into darkness before him, which, doubtless, will be ten thousand times greater than ever was impressed on the imagination of either saints or sinners in this present state, or ever was conceived by any mortal man.

**VIII.** It may be inferred from the doctrine, That persons who have no grace may have a very great and affecting sense of many divine things on their hearts. The devil has not only great speculative knowledge, but he has a sense of many divine things, which deeply affects him, and is most strongly impressed on his heart. As

**1.** The devils and damned souls have a great sense of the vast importance of the things of another world. They are in the invisible world, and they see and know how great the things of that world are: their experience teaches them in the most affecting manner. They have a great sense of the

worth of salvation, and the worth of immortal souls, and the vast importance of those things that concern were eternal welfare. The parable in the latter end of the 16th chapter of Luke teaches this, in representing the rich men in hell as entreating that Lazarus might be sent to his five brothers, to testify unto them, lest they should come to that place of torment. They who endure the torments of hell have doubtless a most lively and affecting sense of the vastness of an endless eternity, and of the comparative momentariness of this life, and the vanity of the concerns and enjoyments of time. — They are convinced effectually that all the things of this world, even those that appear greatest and most important to the inhabitants of the earth, are despicable trifles, in comparison of the things of the eternal world. They have a great sense of the preciousness of time, and of the means of grace, and the inestimable value of the privileges which they enjoy which live under the gospel. They are fully sensible of the folly of those that go on in sin; neglect their opportunities; make light of the counsels and warnings of God; and bitterly lament their exceeding folly in their own sins, by which have brought on themselves so great and remediless misery. When sinners, by woeful experience, know the dreadful issue of their evil way, they will mourn at the last, saying how have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof, and have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me!

 Proverbs 4:11, 12, 13.

Therefore, however true godliness is attended with a great sense of the importance of divine things — and it is rare that men who have no grace maintain such a sense in any steady and persevering manner — yet it is manifest those things are no certain evidences of grace. Unregenerate men may have a sense of the importance of eternity, and the vanity of times the worth of immortal souls the preciousness of time and the means of grace and the folly of the way of allowed sin. They may have such a sense of those things, as may deeply affect them, and cause them to mourn for their own sins, and be much concerted for others, though it be true, they have not these things in the same manner, and in all respects from the same principles and views, as godly men have them.


**2.** Devils and damned men have a strong and most affecting sense of the awful greatness and majesty of God. This is greatly made manifest in the execution of divine vengeance on his enemies.

“What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction?” (~~412~~ Romans 9:22.)

The devils tremble before this great and terrible God, and under a strong sense of his awful majesty. It is greatly manifested to them and damned souls now, but shall be manifested in a further degree, in that day when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, to take vengeance upon them, and when they shall earnestly desire to fly, and be hid from the face of him that sits on the throne, (which shall be, “because of the glory of his majesty,” ~~219~~ Isaiah 2:10.) and when they shall be punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power. When Christ comes at the last day, in the glory of his Father, every eye shall see him in that glory, (in this respect, that they shall see his terrible majesty,) and they also that pierced him, ~~600~~ Revelation 1:7. Both those devils, and wicked men, which tormented and insulted him when he appeared in meanness and ignominy, shall then see him in the glory of his Father.

It is evident, therefore, that a sense of God’s terrible majesty is no certain evidence of saving grace: for we see that wicked men and devils are capable of it; yea, many wicked men in this world have actually had it. This is a manifestation which God made of himself in the sight of that wicked congregation at mount Sinai, which they saw, and with which they were deeply affected, so that all the people in the camp trembled.

**3.** Devils and damned men have some kind of conviction and sense of all attributes of God, both natural and moral, that is strong, and very affecting. The devils know God’s almighty power: they saw a great manifestation of it, when they saw God lay the foundation of the earth, etc. and were much affected with it. They have seen innumerable other great demonstrations of his power, as in the universal deluge, the destruction of Sodom, the wonders in Egypt, at the Red sea, and in the wilderness; causing the sun to stand still in Joshua’s time, and many others. — And they had a very affecting manifestation of God’s mighty power on themselves, in casting all their hosts down from heaven into hell and have continual affecting experience of it, in God’s reserving them in strong chains of darkness, and in the strong pains they feel. They will

hereafter have far more affecting experience of it, when they shall be punished from the glory of God's power, with that mighty destruction in expectation of which they now tremble. So the devils have a great knowledge of the wisdom of God: they have had unspeakably more opportunity and occasion to observe it in the work of creation, and also in the works of providence, than any mortal man has ever had, and have been themselves the subjects of innumerable affecting manifestations of it, in God's disappointing and confounding them in their most subtle devices, in so wonderful and amazing a manner. So they see and find the infinite purity and holiness of the divine nature, in the most affecting manner, as this appears in his infinite hatred of sin, in what they feel of the dreadful effects of that hatred. They know already by what they suffer, and will know hereafter to a greater degree, and far more affecting manner, that such is the opposition of God's nature to sin, that it is like a consuming fire, which burns with infinite vehemence against it. They also will see the holiness of God, as exercised in his love to righteousness and holiness, in the glory of Christ and his church, which also will be very affecting to devils and wicked men. And the exact justice of God will be manifested to them in the clearest and strongest, most convincing and most affecting, light, at the day of judgment, when they will also see great and affecting demonstrations of the riches of his grace, in the marvellous fruits of his love to the vessels of mercy, when they shall see them at the right hand of Christ, shining as the sun in the kingdom of their Father and shall hear the blessed sentence pronounced upon them; and will be deeply affected with it, as seems naturally implied in  Luke 13:28 29. The devils know Gods truth, and therefore they believe his threatenings, and tremble in expectation of their accomplishment. And wicked men that now doubt his truth, and dare not trust his word, will hereafter, in the most convincing, affecting manner, find his word to be true in all that he has threatened, and will see that he is faithful to his promises in the rewards of his saints. Devils and damned men know that God is eternal and unchangeable, and therefore they despair of there ever being an end to their misery. Therefore it is manifest, that merely persons having an affecting sense of some, or even of all God's attributes, is no certain sign that they have the true grace of God in their hearts.

**Object.** Here possibly some may object against the force of the foregoing reasoning, That ungodly men in this world are in exceeding different circumstances from those in which the devils are, and from those which wicked men will be in at the day of judgment. Those things which are visible and present to these, are now future and invisible to the other and wicked men in this world are in the body, that clogs and hinders the soul, and are encompassed with objects that blind and stupid them. Therefore it does not follow, that because the wicked in another world have a great apprehension and lively sense of such things without grace, ungodly men in their present state may have the same.

**Ans.** To this I answer: It is not supposed that ever men in this life have all those things which have been mentioned to the same degree that the devils and damned have them. — None supposes that ever any in this life have terrors of conscience to an equal degree with them. It is not to be supposed that any mortal man, whether godly or ungodly, has an equal degree of speculative knowledge with the devil. And, as was just now observed, the wicked at the day of judgment, will have a vastly greater idea of the external glory of Christ than ever any have in the present state. So, doubtless, they will have a far greater sense of God's awful greatness and terrible majesty, than any could subsist under in this frail state. So we may well conclude, that the devils and wicked men in hell have a greater and more affecting sense of the vastness of eternity, and (in some respects) a greater sense of the importance of the things of another world, than any here have, and they have also longings after salvation to a higher degree than any wicked men in this world.

But yet it is evident that men in this world may have things of the same kind with devils and damned men; the same sort of light in the understanding; the same views and affections, the same sense of things, the same kind of impressions on the mind and on the heart. The objection is against the conclusiveness of that reasoning which is the apostle's more properly than mine. The apostle judged it a conclusive argument against such as thought their believing there was one God an evidence of their being gracious, that the devils believed the same. So the argument is exactly the same against such as think they have grace, because they believe God is a holy God, or because they have a sense of the awful majesty of God. — The same may be observed of other things that have been mentioned.

My text has reference, not only to the act of the understandings of devils in believing. But to that affection of their hearts which accompanies the views they have; as trembling is an effect of the affection of the heart. Which shows, that if men have both the same views of understanding, and also the same affections of heart, that the devils have, it is no sign of grace.

And as to the particular degree to which these things may be carried in men in this world without grace, it appears not safe to make use of it as an infallible rule to determine men's state. I know not where we have any rule to go by, to fix the precise degree in which God by his providence, or his common influences on the mind, will excite in wicked men in this world, the same views and affections which the wicked have in another world which, it is manifest, the former are capable of as well as the latter, having the same faculties and principles of soul; and which views and affections, it is evident, they often are actually the subjects of in some degree, some in a greater and some in a less degree. The infallible evidences of grace which are laid down in Scripture are of another kind: they are all of a holy and spiritual nature; and therefore things of that kind which a heart that is wholly carnal and corrupt cannot receive or experience, ~~4124~~ 1 Corinthians 2:14. I might also here add, that observation and experience, in very many instances, seem to confirm what Scripture and reason teaches in these things.


The second use may be of self-examination.

Let the things which have been observed put all on examining themselves, and inquiring, whether they have any better evidences of saving grace, than such as have been mentioned.

We see how the infallible Spirit of God, in the text, plainly represents the things of which the devils are the subjects, as no sure sign of grace. And we have now, in some instances, observed how far the devils and damned men go, and will go, in their experience, their knowledge of divine things, their belief of truth, their awakenings and terrors of conscience, their conviction of guilt, and of the justice of God in their eternal dreadful damnation, their longings after salvation, their sight of the external glory of Christ and heavenly things, their sense of the vast importance of the things of religion, and another world; their sense of the awful greatness and terrible majesty of God, yea, of all God's attributes. These things may

well put us on serious self-examination, whether we have any thing to evidence our good estate, beyond what the devils have. Christ said to his disciples, "Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven:" so the Spirit of Christ, in his apostle James does in effect say, in my text, Except what you experience in your souls go beyond the experiences of devils, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of God. Here, it may be, some will be ready to say, I have something besides all these things; what the devils have not, even love and joy.

I answer, You may have something besides the experiences of devils, and yet nothing beyond them. Though the experience be different, yet it may not be owing, to any different principle, but only the different circumstances under which these principles are exercised. The principles from whence the fore-mentioned things in devils and damned men arise, are these two, natural understanding and self-love. It is from these principles of natural understanding and self-love, as exercised about their own dispositions and actions, and God as their judge, that they have natural conscience, and have such convictions of conscience as have been spoken of. It is from these principles that they have such a sense of the importance of the things of religion, and the eternal world, and such longings after salvation. It is from the joint exercise of these two principles that they are so sensible of the awful majesty of God, and of all the attributes of the divine nature, greatly affected with them. And it is from these principles, joined with external sense, the wicked, at the day of Judgment, will have so great an apprehension of, and will be so greatly affected by, the external glory of Christ and his saints. And that you have a kind of love, or gratitude and joy, which devils and damned men have not, may possibly not arise from any other principles in your heart different from these two, but only from these principles as exercised in different circumstances. As for instance, your being a subject of the restraining grace of God, and under circumstances of hope. The natural understanding and self-love of devils possibly might affect them in the same manner if they were in the same circumstances. If your love to God has its first source from nothing else than a supposed immediate divine witness, or any other supposed evidence, that Christ died for you in particular, and that God loves you, it springs from no higher principles

than self-love, which is a principle that reigns in the hearts of devils. Self-love is sufficient, without grace, to cause men to love those that love them, or that they imagine love them, and make much of them;  Luke 6:32. “For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? For sinners also love those that love them.” And would not the hearts of devils be filled with great joy, if they, by any means, should take up a confident persuasion that God had pardoned them, and was become their friend, and that they should be delivered from that wrath of which they now are in trembling expectation. If the devils go so far as you have heard, even in their circumstances, being totally cast off, and given up to unrestrained wickedness, being without hope, knowing that God is and ever will be their enemy, they suffering his wrath without mercy: how far may we reasonably suppose they might go, in imitation of grace and pious experience, if they had the same degree of knowledge, as clear views, and as strong conviction, under circumstances of hope, and offers of mercy; and being the subjects of common grace, restraining their corruptions, and assisting and exciting the natural principles of reason, conscience, etc.! Such thirsts, or any thing like them, in the heart of a sinner in this world; at the same time that he, from some strong impression on his imagination, has suddenly, after great terrors, imbibed a confidence, that now this great God is his Friend and Father, has released him from all the misery he feared, and has promised him eternal happiness: I say, such things would, doubtless, vastly heighten his ecstasy of joy, and raise the exercise of natural gratitude, (that principle from whence sinners love those that love them,) and would occasion a great imitation of many graces in strong exercises. Is it any wonder then that multitudes under such a sort of affection are deceived? Especially when they have devils to help forward the delusion, whose great subtlety has chiefly been exercised in deceiving, mankind through all past generations.

**INQ.** Here possibly some may be ready to inquire, If there be so many things which men may experience from no higher principles than are ill the minds and hearts of devils, what are those exercises and affections that are of a higher nature, which I must find in my heart, and which I may justly look upon as sure signs of the saving grace of God’s Spirit?

**Ans.** I answer, Those exercises and affections which are good evidences of place, differ from all that the devils have, and all that can arise from such

principles as are in their hearts, in two things, viz. their foundation and their tendency.

**1.** They differ in their foundation, or in that belonging to them which is the foundation of all the rest that pertains to them, viz. An apprehension or sense of the supreme holy beauty and comeliness of divine things, as they are in themselves, or in their own nature.

Of this the devils and damned in hell are, and for ever will be, entirely destitute. This the devils once had, while they stood in their integrity but they wholly lost it when they fell. And this is the only thing that can be mentioned pertaining, to the devil's apprehension and sense of the Divine Being, that he did lose. Nothing else belonging to the knowledge of God, can be devised, of which he is destitute. It has been observed, that there is no one attribute of the divine nature, but what he knows, with a strong and very affecting conviction. This I think is evident and undeniable. But to the supreme beauty of the divine nature he is altogether blind. He sees no more of it, than a man born perfectly blind does of colours. The great sight he has of the attributes of God gives him an idea and strong sense of his awful majesty, but no idea of his beauty and comeliness. Though he has seen so much of God's wonderful works of power, wisdom, holiness, justice, and truth, and his wonderful works of grace to mankind, for so many thousand years, and has had occasion to observe them with the strongest attention, yet all serves not to give him the least sense of his divine beauty. And though the devils should continue to exercise their mighty powers of mind with the strongest intention; and should take things in all possible views, in every order and arrangement, yet they never will see this. So little akin is the knowledge they have to this, that the great degrees of that knowledge, bring them no nearer to it. Yet the more knowledge they have of God of that kind, the more do they hate God. That wherein the beauty of the divine nature does most essentially consist, viz. his holiness, or moral excellency, appears in their eyes furthest from beauty. It is oft that very account chiefly that he appears hateful to them. The more holiness they see in him, the more hateful he appears: the greater their sight is of his holiness, the higher is their hatred of him raised. And because of their hatred of his holiness, they hate him the more, the more they see of his other attributes. They would hate a holy Being, whatever his other attributes were, but they hate such a holy

Being the worse, for his being infinitely wise, and infinitely powerful, etc. more than they would do, if they saw in him less power and less wisdom.

The wicked, at the day of judgment, will see every thing else in Christ, but his beauty and amiableness. There is no one quality or property of his person, that can be thought of, but what will be set before them in the strongest light at that day, but only such as consist in this. They will see him coming, in the clouds of heaven, “in power, and great glory, in the glory of his Father.” They will have that view of his external glory, which is vastly beyond what we can imagine; and they will have the stongest and most convincing demonstrations of all his attributes and perfections. They will have a sense of his great majesty, that will be, as it were, infinitely affecting to them. They shall be made to know effectually, “that he is the Lord.” They shall see what he is, and what he does, his nature and storks shall appear in the strongest view. but his infinite beauty and amiableness, which is all in all, and without which every other property is nothing, and worse than nothing, they will not see. Therefore in a sight or sense of this fundamentally consists the difference between the saving grace of God’s Spirit, and the experiences of devils and damned could. This is the foundation of every thing else that is distinguishing in true Christian experience. This is the foundation of the faith of God’s elect. This gives the mind a saving, belief of the truth of divine things. It is a view of the excellency of the gospel, or sense of the divine beauty and amiableness of the scheme of doctrine there exhibited, that savingly convinces the mind that it is indeed divine or of God. This account of the matter is plainly implied; ~~4COR~~ 2 Corinthians 4:3, 4. “But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine into them.” And, verse 6. “For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” It is very important that a saving belief of the gospel, is here spoken of by the apostle as arising from a view of the divine glory or beauty of the things it exhibits. It is by this view that the soul of a true convert is enabled savingly to see the sufficiency of Christ for his salvation. He that has his eyes opened to behold the divine superlative beauty and loveliness of Jesus Christ, is convinced of his sufficiency to

stand as a Mediator between him, a guilty hell-deserving wretch, and an infinitely holy God, in an exceeding different manner than ever he can be convinced by the arguments of authors or preachers, however excellent. When he once comes to see Christ's divine loveliness, he wonders no more that he is thought worthy by God the Father to be accepted for the vilest sinner. Now it is not difficult for him to conceive how the blood of Christ should be esteemed by God so precious as to be worthy to be accepted as a compensation for the greatest sins. The soul now properly sees the preciousness of Christ, and so does properly see and understand the very ground and reason of his acceptableness to God, and the value God sets on his blood, obedience, and intercession. This satisfies the poor guilty soul, and gives it rest, when the finest and most elaborate discourses about the sufficiency of Christ, and suitableness of the way of salvation, would not do it. When a man comes to see the proper foundation of faith and affiance with his own eyes, then he believes savingly.

“He that seeth the Son, and believeth on him, hath everlasting life,”  
✠John 6:40.

When Christ thus manifests God's name to men, then they believe that all things whatsoever God has given to Christ are of him, and believes that Christ was sent of God:” ✠John 17:6, 7, 8. And “they that thus know Christ's name will trust in him;” ✠Psalm 9:10. In order to true faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God is revealed in men, ✠Galatians 1:15. 16. And it is this sight of the divine beauty of Christ that bows the wills, and draws the hearts of men. A sight of the greatness of God in his attributes, may overwhelm men and be more than they can endure; but the enmity and opposition of the heart may remain in its full strength and the will remain inflexible. Whereas one glimpse of the moral and spiritual glory of God, and the supreme amiableness of Jesus Christ shining into the heart, overcomes and abolishes this opposition, and inclines the soul to Christ, as it were, by an omnipotent power. So that now, not only the understanding, but the will and the whole soul, receives and embraces the Saviour. This is most certainly the discovery, which is the first internal foundation of a saving faith in Christ in the soul of the true convert, and not any immediate outward or inward witness, that Christ loves him, or that he died for him in particular, and is his Saviour, so begetting confidence and joy, and a seeming love to Christ, because he loves him. By

such faith and conversion, (demonstrably vain and counterfeit,) multitudes have been deluded. The sight of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ, works true supreme love to God. This is a sight of the proper foundation of supreme love to God, viz. the supreme loveliness of his nature; and a love to him on this ground is truly above any thing that can come from a mere principle of self-love, which is in the hearts of devils as well as men. And this begets true spiritual and holy joy in the soul, which is indeed joy in God, and glorying in him, and not rejoicing in ourselves.

This sight of the beauty of divine things will excite true desires and longings of soul after those things: not like the longings of devils, but natural free desires; the desires of appetite, the thirstings of a new nature, as a new-born babe desires the mother's breast; and as a hungry man longs for some pleasant food he thinks of, or as the thirsty hart pants after the cool and clear stream.

This sense of divine beauty is the first thing in the actual change made in the soul in true conversion, and is the foundation of every thing else belonging to that change as is evident by those words of the apostle, <sup>2</sup> ~~2~~ Corinthians 3:18 "But we all with open face, beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

2: Truly gracious affections and exercises of mind differ from such as are counterfeit, which arise from no higher principles than are in the hearts of devils, in their tendency; and that in these two respects.

(1.) They are of a tendency and influence very contrary to that which was especially the devil's sin, even pride. That pride was in a peculiar manner the devil's sin, is manifest from <sup>1</sup> ~~1~~ Timothy 3:6. "Not a novice, lest, being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil." False and delusive experiences evermore tend to this, though oftentimes under the disguise of great and extraordinary humility. Spiritual pride is the prevailing temper and general character of hypocrites, deluded with false discoveries and affections. — They are in general of a disposition directly contrary to those two things belonging to the Christian temper, directed to by the apostle, the one in <sup>16</sup> ~~16~~ Romans 12:16. "Be not wise in your own conceit, "and the other in <sup>3</sup> ~~3~~ Philipians 2:3. "Let each esteem others better than themselves."

False experience is conceited of itself, and affected with itself. Thus he that has false humility is much affected to think how he is abased before God. He that has false love is affected, when he thinks of the greatness of his love. The very food and nourishment of false experience is to view itself, and take much notice of itself; and its very breath and life is to be some way showing itself. — Whereas truly gracious views and affections are of a quite contrary tendency. They nourish no self-conceit; no exalting notion of the man's own righteousness, experience, or privileges; no high conceit of his humiliations. They incline to no ostentation, nor self-exaltation, under any disguise whatsoever. But that sense of the supreme, holy beauty and glory of God and Christ, which is the foundation of them, mollifies pride, and truly humbles the soul. It not only cuts off some of the outermost branches, but it strikes at the very root of pride it alters the very nature and disposition of the heart. The light of God's beauty, and that alone, truly shows the soul its own deformity, and effectually inclines it to exalt God and abase itself.


**(2.)** These gracious exercises and affections differ from the other in their tendency to destroy Satan's interest, and that in two respects:

First, in the person himself. They cause the soul to hate every evil and false way, and to produce universal holiness of heart and life, disposing him to make the service of God, the promotion of his glory and the good of mankind, the very business of his life: whereas those false discoveries and affections have not this effect. There may indeed be great zeal, and a great deal of what is called religion: but it is not a truly Christian zeal: it is not being zealous of good works. Their religion is not the service of God; it is not seeking and serving God: but indeed seeking and serving themselves. — Though there may be a change of life, it is not a change from every wicked way to a uniform Christian life and practice, hut only fuming the stream of corruption from one channel to another. Thus the apostle James distinguishes, in our context, a true faith from the faith of devils, <sup><5109></sup>James 2:19, 20. "Thou believest that there is one God. The devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?" And thus the apostle John distinguishes true communion with God; <sup><5106></sup>1 John 1:6, 7. "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness; we lie, and do not the truth; but if we walk in the light,

as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin.” By this he distinguishes true spiritual knowledge, chapter 2:3, 4. “Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.” And hereby the same apostle distinguishes true love, chapter 3:18, 19. “Let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed (in work, as the word signifies) and in truth. And hereby wee know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.”

**2.** Truly gracious experiences have a tendency to destroy Satan’s interest in the world.

When false religion, consisting in the counterfeits of the operations of the Spirit of God, and in high pretences and great appearances of inward experimental religion, prevails among a people — though for the present it may surprise many, and may be the occasion of alarming and awakening some sinners — tends greatly to wound and weaken the cause of vital religion, and to strengthen the interest of Satan, desperately to harden the hearts of sinners, exceedingly to fill the world with prejudice against the power of godliness, to promote infidelity and licentious principles and practices, to build up and make strong the devil’s kingdom in the world, more than open vice and profaneness, or professed atheism, or public persecution, and perhaps more than any thing else whatsoever.

But it is not with true religion in its genuine beauty. — That, if it prevails in great power, will doubtless excite the rage of the devil, and many other enemies of religion. However, it gives great advantage to its friends, and exceedingly strengthens their cause, and tends to convince or confound enemies. True religion is a divine light in the souls of the saints, and as it shines out in the conversation before men, it tends to induce others to glorify God. There is nothing like it (as to means) to awaken the consciences of men, to convince infidels, and to stop the mouths of gainsayers. — Though men naturally hate the power of godliness, yet when they see the fruits of it, there is a witness in their consciences in its favour. “He that serveth Christ in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, is acceptable to God, and approved of men,”  Romans 14:17,18. The prevailing of true religion ever tends to its honour in the

world, though it commonly is the occasion of great persecution. It is a sure thing, the more it appears and is exemplified in the view of the world, the more will its honour, and the honour of its author, be advanced.


“Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God.” (Philippians 1:11.)

The third use may be of exhortation, to seek those distinguishing qualifications and affections of soul which neither the devil, nor any unholy being, has or can have.

How excellent is that inward virtue and religion which consists in those! Herein consists the most excellent experiences of saints and angels in heaven. Herein consists the best experience of the man Christ Jesus, whether in his humbled or glorified state. Herein consists the image of God. — Yea, this is spoken of in Scripture as a communication of something of God’s own beauty and excellency. A participation of the divine nature, 2 Peter 1:4. A partaking of his holiness, Hebrews 12:10. A partaking of Christ’s fulness, John 1:16. Hereby the saints are filled with all the fulness of God, Ephesians 3:18, 19. Hereby they have fellowship with both the Father and the Son, 1 John 1:3. that is, they communicate with them in their happiness. Yea, by means of this divine virtue, there is a mutual indwelling of God and the saints,

“God is love; and he that dwelleth in love,  
dwelleth in God, and God in him.” (1 John 4:16.)

This qualification must render the person that has it excellent and happy indeed, and doubtless is the highest dignity and blessedness of any creature. This is the peculiar gift of God, which he bestows only on his special favourites. As to silver, gold, and diamonds, earthly crowns and kingdoms, he often throws them out to those whom he esteems as dogs and swine; but this is the peculiar blessing of his dear children. This is what flesh and blood cannot impart. God alone can bestow it. This was the special benefit which Christ died to procure for his elect, the most excellent token of his everlasting love; the chief fruit of his great labours, and the most precious purchase of his blood. By this, above all other things, do men glorify God. By this, above all other things, do the saints shine as lights in the world, and are blessings to mankind. And this, above

all things, tends to their own comfort, from hence arises that “peace which passeth all understanding,” and that “joy which is unspeakable and full of glory.” And this is that which will most certainly issue in the eternal salvation of those who have it. It is impossible that the soul possessing it should sink and perish. It is an immortal seed; it is eternal life begun; and therefore they that have it can never die. It is the dawning of the light of glory. It is the day-star risen in the heart, that is a sure forerunner of that sun’s rising which will bring on an everlasting day. This is that water which Christ gives which is in him that drinks it “a well of water springing up into everlasting life;”  John 4:14. It is something from heaven, of a heavenly nature, and tends to heaven. And those that have it, however they may now wander in a wilderness, or be tossed to and fro on a tempestuous ocean, shall certainly arrive in heaven at last where this heavenly spark shall be increased and perfected, and the souls of the saints all be transformed into a bright and pure flame, and they shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Amen.

# FIFTEEN SERMONS

## ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS.

### PREFACE.

THE following Sermons were not transcribed with any view to a publication in this country. In the year 1773, I was desired by a gentleman in Scotland to transcribe a number of the author's sermons on some of the most plain, practical, and experimental subjects, that they might be printed there. The reader will hence see, that it was not the design to pick out the most curious and elaborate discourses, but those of a different stamp. Among the very numerous discourses on practical and experimental subjects out of which I was to choose, it was no easy task to determine which to publish and which to omit. And different persons would no doubt in this case judge differently. Many sermons equally worthy of the light as these, were omitted, and perhaps some that were more worthy: yet it is hoped that the public will judge these not unworthy of their acceptance and attention.

The reader cannot be insensible of the disadvantages attending all posthumous works, especially sermons, which are generally prepared only for the next sabbath, and for a particular congregation, and often in great haste, and amidst many avocations. Yet if in these sermons be shall find the most important truths exhibited, and pressed home on the conscience with that pungency which tends to awaken, convince, humble, and edify; if he shall find that serious strain of piety which, in spite of himself, forces upon him a serious frame of mind; if in the perusal he cannot but be ashamed and alarmed at himself, and in some measure feel the reality and weight of eternal things; if at least he, like Agrippa, shall be almost persuaded to be a Christian, — I presume he will not grudge the time requisite to peruse what is now offered him. These, if I mistake not are the great ends to be aimed at in all sermons, whether preached or printed, and are ends which can never be accomplished by those modern fashionable discourses which are delivered under the name of sermons, bat really are

mere harangues on such moral subjects as have been much better handled by Cicero, Seneca, or the Spectator, and contain very little more of the gospel than is to be found in the heathen philosophers. That the important ends now mentioned may be indeed accomplished by this publication to every reader is the sincere desire of the public's humble servant,

*JONATHAN EDWARDS.*

New-Haven, Dec. 21, 1779.

N. B. The reader will observe some sermons not dated. Those I suppose were written before the year 1733, when the author was thirty years of age; as in that year he began to date his sermons, and all written after that appear to be dated.

# SERMON 1

## THE MANNER IN WHICH THE SALVATION OF THE SOUL IS TO BE SOUGHT.

Thus did Noah, according to all that God commanded him, so did he. (~~0062~~Genesis 6:22)

CONCERNING these words, I would observe three things;

- 1.** What it was that God commanded Noah, to which these words refer. It was the building of an ark according to the particular direction of God, against the time when the flood of waters should come, and the laying up of food for himself, his family, and the other animals, which were to be preserved in the ark. We have the particular commands which God gave him respecting this affair, from the 14th verse, “Make thee an ark of gopher wood,” etc.
- 2.** We may observe the special design of the work which God had enjoined upon Noah: it was to save himself and his family, when the rest of the world should be drowned. See verse 17,18.
- 3.** We may observe Noah’s obedience. He obeyed God: “Thus did Noah. And his obedience was thorough and universal: According to all that God commanded him, so did he. He not only began, but he went through his work, which God had commanded him to undertake for his salvation from the flood. To this obedience the apostle refers in ~~8007~~Hebrews 11:7.

“By faith Noah being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house.”

DOCTRINE. — We should be willing to engage in and go through great undertakings, in order to our own salvation.

The building of the ark, which was enjoined upon Noah, that he and his family might be saved, was a great undertaking: the ark was a building of vast size; the length of it being three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty

cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits. A cubit, till of late, was by learned men reckoned to be equal to a foot and a half of our measure. But lately some learned men of our nation, have traveled into Egypt, and other ancient countries, and have measured some ancient buildings there, which are of several thousand years standing, and of which ancient histories give us the dimensions in cubits particularly the pyramids of Egypt, which are standing' entire at this day. By measuring these, and by comparing the measure in feet with the ancient accounts of their measure in cubits, a cubit is found to be almost two and twenty inches. Therefore learned men more lately reckon a cubit much larger than they did formerly. So that the ark reckoned so much larger every way will appear to be almost of double the bulk which was formerly ascribed to it. According to this computation of the cubit, it was more than five hundred and fifty feet long, about ninety feet broad, and about fifty feet in height.

To build such a structure, with all those apartments and divisions in it which were necessary, and in such a manner as to be fit to float upon the water for so long a time, was then a great undertaking. It took Noah, with all the workmen he employed, a hundred and twenty years, or thereabouts, to build it. For so long it was, that the Spirit of God strove, and the long-suffering God waited on the old world; as you may see in Genesis vi: 3. "My Spirit shall not always strive with man, yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years." All this while the ark was a preparing, as appears by ~~(100)~~ 1 Peter 3:20. "When once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing." It was a long time that Noah constantly employed himself in this business. Men would esteem that undertaking very great, which should keep them constantly employed even for one half of that time. — Noah must have had a great and constant care upon his mind for these one hundred and twenty years, in superintending this work and in seeing that all was done exactly according to the directions which God had given him.

Not only was Noah himself continually employed, but it required a great number of workmen to be constantly employed, during all that time, in procuring, and collecting, and fitting the materials, and in putting them together in due form. How great a thing was it for Noah to undertake such a work! For beside the continual care and labour it was a work of vast expense. It is not probable that any of that wicked generation would put

to a finger to help forward such a work, which doubtless they believed was merely the fruit of Noah's folly, without full wages. Noah must needs have been very rich, to be able to bear the expense of such a work, and to pay so many work-men for so long a time. it would have been a very great expense for a prince, and doubtless Noah was very rich, as Abraham and Job were afterwards. But it is probable that Noah spent all his worldly substance in this work, thus manifesting his faith in the word of God, by selling all he had as believing there would surely come a flood which would destroy all, so that if he should keep what he had, it would be of no service to him. Herein he has set us an example, showing us how we ought to sell all for our salvation.

Noah's undertaking was of great difficulty, as it exposed him to the continual-reproaches of all his neighbors for that whole one hundred and twenty years. None of them believed what he told them of a flood which was about to drown the world For a man to undertake such a vast piece of work, under a notion that it should be the means of saving him when the world should be destroyed, it made him the continual laughing-stock of the world. When he was about to hire workmen, doubtless all laughed at him and we may suppose, that though the workmen consented to work for wages yet they laughed at the folly of him who employed them. When the ark was begun, we may suppose that every one that passed by and saw such a huge hulk stand there, laughed at it, calling it Noah's folly.

In these days, men are with difficulty brought to do or submit to that which makes them the objects of the reproach of all their neighbours. Indeed, if while some reproach them, others stand by them and honour them, this will support thing. But it is very difficult for a man to go on in a way wherein he makes himself the laughing-stock of the whole world, and wherein he can find none who do not despise him. Where is the man that can stand the shock of such a trial for twenty years?

But in such an undertaking as this, Noah, at the divine direction, engaged and went through it, that himself and his family might be saved from the common destruction which was shortly about to come on the world. He began, and also made an end: "According to all that God commanded him, so did he." Length of time did not weary him: he did not grow weary of his vast expense. He stood the shock of the derision of all his neighbours and

of all the world, year after year: he did not grow weary of being their laughingstock, so as to give over his enterprise, but persevered in it till the ark was finished. After this, he was at the trouble and charge of procuring stores for the maintenance of his family, and of all the various kinds of creatures, for so long a time. Such an undertaking he engaged in and went through in order to a temporal salvation. How great an undertaking then should men be willing to engage in and go through in order to their external salvation! A salvation from an eternal deluge; from being overwhelmed with the billows of God's wrath, of which Noah's flood was but a shadow.

I shall particularly handle this doctrine under the three following propositions.

**I.** There is a work or business which must be undertaken and accomplished by men, if they would be saved.

**II.** This business is object undertaking.

**III.** Men should be willing to enter upon and go through this undertaking, though it be great, seeing it is for their own salvation.

**1. PROP.** There is a work or business which men must enter upon and accomplish, in order to their salvation. — Men have no reason to expect to be saved in idleness, or to go to heaven in a way of doing nothing. No in order to it, there is a great walk, which must be not only begun but finished. — I shall speak upon this proposition, it; answer to two inquiries.

**INQ.** 1. What is this work or business which must be undertaken and accomplished in order to the salvation of men.

**ANS.** It is the work of seeking salvation in a way of constant observance of all the duty to which God directs us in his word. If we would be saved, we must seek salvation. For although men do not obtain heaven of themselves, yet they do not go thither accidentally, or without any intention or endeavours of their owns God, in his word hath directed men to seek their salvation as they would hope to obtain it. There is a race that is set before them, which they must run, and in that race come off victors, in order to their winning the prize.

The Scriptures have told us what particular duties must be performed by us in order to our salvation. It is not sufficient that men seek their salvation only in the observance of some of those duties; but they must be observed universally. The work we have to do is not an obedience only to some, but to all the commands of God, a compliance with every institution of worship a diligent use of all the appointed means of grace, a going of all duty towards God and towards man. — It is not sufficient that men have some respect to all the commands of God, and that they may be said to seek their salvation in some sort of observance of all the commands; but they must be devoted to it. They must not make this a business, by the bye, or a thing in which they are negligent and careless, or which they do with a slack hand, but it must be their great business, being attended to as their great concern. They must not only seek, but strive, they must do what their hand findeth to do with their might, as men thoroughly engaged in their minds, and influenced and set forward by great desire and strong resolution. They must act as those that see so much of the importance of religion above all other things, that every thing else must be as an occasional affair, and nothing must stand in competition with its duties. This must be the one thing they do <sup><1083></sup>Philippians 3:13. “This one thing I do.” — It must be the business to which they make all other affairs give place, and to which they are ready to make other things a sacrifice. They must be ready to part with pleasures and honour, estate and life, and to sell all, that they may successfully accomplish this business.

It is required of every man, that he not only do something in tints business, but that he should devote himself to it; which implies that he should give up himself to it, all his affairs, and all his temporal enjoyments. This is the import of taking up the cross, of taking Christ’s yoke upon us, and of denying ourselves to follow Christ. The rich young man, who came kneeling to Christ to know what he should do to be saved, (<sup><1107></sup>Mark 10:17.) in some sense sought salvation, but did not obtain it. In some sense he kept all the commands from his youth up; but was not cordially denoted to this business. — He had not made a sacrifice to it of all his enjoyments, as appeared when Christ came to try him; he would not part with his estate for him.

It is not only necessary that men should seem to be very much engaged, and appear as if they were devoted to their duty for a little while; but

there must be a constant devotedness, in a persevering way, as Noah was to the business of the building the ark, going on with that great difficult, and expensive affair, till it was finished and till the flood came. — Men must not only be diligent in the use of the means of grace, and be anxiously engaged to escape eternal-ruin, till they obtain hope and comfort but afterwards they must persevere in the duties of religion, till the flood come, the flood of death. — Not only must the faculties strength, and possessions of men be devoted to this work, but also their time and their lives: they must give up their whole lives to it, even to the very day when God causes the storms and floods to come. This is the work or business which men have to do in order to their salvation.

**INQ.** 2. Why is it needful that men should undertake to go through such a work in order to their salvation?

**ANS.** 1. Not to merit salvation, or to recommend them to the saving mercy of God. Men are not saved on the account of any work of theirs, and yet they are not saved without works. If we merely consider what it is for which, or on the account of which, men are saved, no work at all in men is necessary to their salvation. In this respect they are saved wholly without any work of theirs,

“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.” (✠ Titus 3:5)

We must indeed be saved on the account of Corks: but not our own. It is on account of the worlds which Christ hath done for us. Works are the fixed price of eternal life; it s fixed by an eternal, unalterable rule of righteousness. But since the fall there is no hope of our doing these works, without salvation offered freely without money and without price. — But,

**2.** Though it be not needful that we do any thing to merit salvation, which Christ hath fully merited for all who believe in him; yet God, for wise and holy ends, hath appointed, that we should come to final salvation in no other way, but that of good works done by us.

God did not save Noah on account of the labour and expense he was at in building the ark. Noah’s salvation from the flood was an instance of the free and distinguishing mercy of God. Nor did God stand in need of

Noah's care, or cost, or labour, to build an ark. The same power which created the world, and which brought the flood of waters upon the earth, could have made the ark in an instant, without any care or cost to Noah, or any of the labour of those many workmen who were employed for so long a time. Yet God was pleased to appoint, that Noah should be saved in this way. — So God hath appointed that man should not be saved without his undertaking and doing this work of which I have been speaking, anti therefore we are commanded

“to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling,”  
(~~and~~ Philippians 2:12.)

There are many wise ends to be answered by the establishment of such a work as prerequisite to salvation. The glory of God requires it. For although God stand in no need of any thing that men do to recommend them to his saving mercy, yet it would reflect much on the glory of God's wisdom and holiness) to bestow salvation on men in such a way as tends to encourage them in sloth and wickedness; or in any other way than that which tends to promote diligence and holiness. Man was made capable of action, with many powers of both body and mind fitting hint for it. He was made for lousiness and not idleness; and the main business for which he was made, was that of religion. Therefore it becomes the wisdom of God to bestow salvation and happiness on man, in such a way as tends most to promote his end in this respect, and to stir him up to a diligent use of his faculties and talents.

It becomes the wisdom of God so to order it, that things of great value and importance should not be obtained without great labour and diligence. Much human learning and great moral accomplishments are not to be obtained without care and labour. It is wisely so ordered in order to maintain in man a due sense of the value of those things which are excellent. If great things severe in common easily obtained, it would have a tendency to cause men to slight and undervalue them. Men commonly despise those things which are cheap, and which are obtained without difficulty.

Although the work of obedience performed by men, be not necessary in order to merit salvation; yet it is necessary in order to their being prepared for it. Men cannot be prepared for salvation without seeking, it in such a

way as hath been described. This is necessary in order that they have a proper sense of their own necessities and unworthiness; and in order that they be prepared and disposed to prize salvation when bestowed, and be properly thankful to God for it. The requisition of so great a work in order to our salvation is no way inconsistent with the freedom of the offer of salvation, as after all, it is both offered and bestowed without any respect to our work, as the price or meritorious cause of our salvation, as I have already explained. Besides, salvation bestowed in this way is better for us, more for our advantage and happiness, both in this and the future world, than if it were given without this requisition.

**II.** Prop. This work or business, which must be done in order to the salvation of men, is a threat undertaking. It often appears so to men upon whom it is urged. Utterly to break off from all their sins, and to give up themselves for ever to the business of religion, without making a reserve of any one lust, submitting to and complying with every command of God, in all cases, and persevering therein, appears to many so great a thing, that they are in vain urged to undertake It. In so doing it seems to them, that they should give up themselves to a perpetual bondage. The greater part of men therefore choose to put it off, and keep it at as great a distance as they can. They cannot bear to think of entering immediately on such a hard service, and rather than do it they will run the risk of eternal damnation, by putting it off to an uncertain reverend opportunity.

Although the business of religion is far from really being as it appears to such men, for the devil will be sure, if he can, to represent it in false colors to sinners, and make it appear as black and terrible as he can; yet it is indeed a great business, a great undertaking, and it is fit that all who are urged to it, should count the cost beforehand and be sensible of the difficulty attending it. For though, the devil discourages men from this undertaking, by representing it to be more difficult than it really is yet with others he takes a contrary course, and flatters them it is a very easy thing, a trivial business, which may be done at any time when they please, and so beholds them to defer it from that consideration. But let none conceive any other notion of that business of religion, which is absolutely necessary to their salvation, than that it is a great undertaking. It is so on the following accounts.

**1.** It is a business of great labour and care. There are many commands to be obeyed, many duties to be done duties to God, duties to our neighbor, and duties to ourselves. — There is much opposition in the way of these duties from without. There is a subtle and powerful adversary laying all manner of blocks in the way. There are innumerable temptations of Satan to be resisted and repelled. There is great opposition from the world, innumerable snares laid on every side, many rocks and mountains to be passed over many streams to be passed through, and many batteries and enticements from a vain world to be resisted. There is a great opposition from within, a dull and sluggish heart which is exceedingly averse from that activity in religion; which is necessary a carnal heart, which is averse from religion and spiritual exercises, and continually drawing the contrary way and a proud and a deceitful heart, in which corruption; will be exerting itself in all manner of ways. So that nothing can be done to any effect without a most strict and careful watch, great labour and strife.

**2.** It is a constant business. — In that business which requires great labour, men love now and then to have a space of relaxation, that they may rest from their extraordinary labour. But this is a business which must be followed every day. <sup><1102></sup> Luke 9:23. “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow me.” — We must never give ourselves any relaxation from this business, it must be continually prosecuted day after day. If sometimes we make a great stir and bustle concerning religion, but then lay all aside to take our ease, and do so from time to time, it will be of no good effect; we had even as good do nothing at all. The business of religion so followed is never like to come to any good issue, nor is the work ever like to be accomplished to any good purpose.

**3.** It is a great undertaking, as it is an undertaking of great expense. — We must therein sell all: we must follow this business at the expense of all our unlawful pleasures and delights, at the expense of our carnal ease, often at the expense of our substance, of our credit among men, the good will of our neighbours, at the expense of all our earthly friends, and even at the expense of life itself. Herein it is like Noah’s undertaking to build the ark, which, as hath been shown, was a costly undertaking: it was expensive to his reputation among men, exposing him to be the continual laughing-stock

of all his neighbours and of the whole world: and it was expensive to his estate, and probably cost him all that he had.

**4.** Sometimes the fear, trouble and exercise of mind which are undergone respecting this business, and the salvation of the soul, are greet and long continued, before any comfort is obtained. Sometimes persons in this situation labour long in the dark, and sometimes, as it were, in the very fire, they having great distress of conscience, great fears, and many perplexing temptations, before they obtain light and comfort to make their care and labour more easy to them. They sometimes earnestly, and for a long time, seek comfort, but find it not, because they seek it not in a right manner, nor in the right objects. God therefore hides his face. They cry but God doth not answer their prayers. They strive, but all seems in vain. They seem to themselves not at all to get forward, or nearer to a deliverance from sin; but to go backward, rather than forward. They see no glimmerings of light: things rather appear darker and darker. Insomuch that they are often ready to be discouraged, and to sink under the weight of their present distress, and under the prospect of future misery. In this situation, and under these views, some are almost driven to despair.

Many, after they have obtained some saving comfort, are again involved in darkness and trouble. It is with them as it was with the Christian Hebrews, <sup>and</sup> Hebrews 10:32. "After ye were illuminated ye endured a great fight of afflictions." Some through a melancholy habit and distemper of body, together with Satan's temptations, spend a great part of their lives in distress and darkness, even after they have had some saving comfort.

**5.** It is a business which, by reason of the many difficulties, snares, and dangers that attend it, requires much instruction, consideration, and counsel. There is no business wherein men stand in need of counsel more than in this. It is a difficult undertaking, a hard matter to proceed aright in it. There are ten thousand wrong ways, which men may take there are many labyrinths wherein many poor souls are entangled and never find the way out; there are many rocks on which thousands of souls have suffered for want of having steered aright.

Men of themselves know not how to proceed in this business, any more than the children of Israel in the wilderness knew where to go without the guidance of the pillar of cloud and fire. There is great need that they search

the Scriptures, and give diligent heed to the instructions and directions contained in them, as to a light shining in a dark place; and that they ask counsel of those skilled in these matters. And there is no lousiness in which men have so much need of seeking to God by prayer, for his counsel, and that he would lead them in the right way, and show them the strait gate. “For strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it;” yea there are none that find it without direction from heaven.

The building of the ark was a work of great difficulty on this account, that Noah’s wisdom was not sufficient to direct him how to make such a building as should be a sufficient security against such a flood, and which should be convenient dwelling-place for himself, his family and all the various kinds of beasts, and birds, and creeping things. Nor could he ever have known how to construct this building, had not God directed him.

**6.** This business never ends till life ends. They that undertake this laborious, careful, expensive self-denying business, must not expect to rest from their labours, till death shall have put an end to them. The long continuance of the work which Noah undertook was what especially made it a great undertaking. This also was what made the travel of the children of Israel through the wilderness appear so great to them, that it was continued for so long a time. Their spirits failed, they were discouraged, and had not a heart to go through with so great an undertaking.

But such is his business that it runs parallel with life, whether it be longer or shorter. Although we should live to a great age, our race and warfare will not be finished till death shall come. We must not expect that an end will be put to our labour, and care, and strife by any hope of a good estate which we may obtain. Past attainments and past success will not excuse us from what remains for the future, nor will they make future constant labour and care not necessary to our salvation.

**III.** Men should be willing to engage in and go through this business, however great and difficult it may seem to them, seeing it is for their own salvation. — Because

**1.** A deluge of wrath will surely come. The inhabitants of the old world would not believe that there would come such a flood of waters upon the

earth, as that of which Noah told them, though he told them often, neither would they take any care to avoid the destruction. Yet such a deluge did come, nothing of all those things of which Noah had forewarned them, failed.

So there will surely come a more dreadful deluge of divine wrath on this wicked world. We are open forewarned of it in the Scriptures, and the world, as then, doth not believe any such thing. Yet the threatening will as certainly be accomplished, as the threatening denounced against the old world. A day of wrath is coming it will come at its appointed season, it will not tarry, it shall not be delayed one moment beyond its appointed time.

**2.** All such as do not seasonably undertake and go through the great work mentioned will surely be swallowed up in this deluge. When the floods of wrath shall come, they will universally overwhelm the wicked world: all such as shall not have taken care to prepare an ark, will surely be swallowed up in it: they will find no other way of escape. In vain shall salvation be expected from the hills and from the multitude of mountains, for the flood shall be above the tops of all the mountains. Or if they shall hide themselves in the caves and dens of the mountains, there the waters of the flood will find them out, and there shall they miserably perish.

As those of the old world who were not in the ark perished, (<sup>(0012)</sup>Genesis 7:21-23.) so all who shall not have secured to themselves a place in the spiritual ark of the gospel, shall perish much more miserably than the old world. — Doubtless the inhabitants of the old world had many contrivances to save themselves. Some, we may suppose, ascend to the tops of their houses, being driven out of one story to another, till at last they perished. Others climbed to the tops of high towers; who yet were washed thence by the boisterous waves of the rising flood. Some climbed to the tops of trees, others to the tops of mountains, and especially of the highest mountains. But all was in vain; the flood sooner or later swallowed them all up; only Noah and his family, who had taken care to prepare an ark, remained alive.

So it will doubtless be at the end of the world, when Christ shall come to judge the world in righteousness. Some, when they shall look up and see him coming in the clouds of heaven, shall hide themselves in closets, and

secret places in their houses. Others flying to the caves and dens of the earth, shall attempt to hide themselves there. Others shall call upon the rocks and mountains to fall on them, and cover them from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb. — So it will be after the sentence is pronounced, and wicked men see that terrible fire coming, which is to bum this world for ever, and which will be a deluge of fire, and will burn the earth even to the bottoms of the mountains, and to its very centre.

“For a fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn to the lowest hell, and shall consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains.” (~~1522~~ Deuteronomy 32:22.)

I say, when the wicked shall after the sentence, see this great fire beginning to kindle, and to take hold of this earth; there will be many contrivances devised by them to escape, some flying to caves and holes in the earth, some hiding themselves in one place, and some in another. But let them hide themselves where they will, or let them do what they will, it will be utterly in vain. Every cave shall burn as an oven, the rocks and mountains shall melt with fervent heat, and if they could creep down to the very centre of the earth, still the beat would follow them, and rage with as much vehemence there, as on the very surface.

So when wicked men, who neglect their great work in their lifetime, who are not willing to go through the difficulty and labour of this work, draw near to death, they sometimes do many things to escape death, and put forth many endeavours to lengthen out their lives at least a little longer. For this end they send for physicians, and perhaps many are consulted, and their prescriptions are punctually observed. They also use many endeavours to save their souls from hell. They cry to God they confess their past sins they promise future reformation, and, oh, what would they not give for some small addition to their lives, or some hope of future happiness. But all proves in vain: God hath numbered their days and finished them; and as they have sinned away the day of grace, they must even bear the consequence, and for ever lie down in sorrow.

**3.** The destruction, when it shall come, will be infinitely terrible. The destruction of the old world by the flood was terrible, but that eternal destruction which is coming on the wicked is infinitely more so. That

flood of waters was but an image of this awful Rood of divine vengeance When the waters poured down, more like spouts or cataracts, or the fall of a great river, than like rain; what an awful appearance was there of the wrath of God This however Is but an image of that terrible outpouring of the wrath of God which shall be for ever, yea for ever and ever, on wicked men. And when the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the waters burst forth out of the ground, as though they had issued out of the womb, (~~xxxv~~ Job 38:8.) this was an image of the mighty breakings forth of God's wrath, which shall be, when the flood gates of wrath shall be drawn up. How may we suppose that the wicked of the old world repented that they had not hearkened to the warnings which Noah had given them, when they saw these dreadful things, and saw that they must perish! How much more will you repent your refusing to hearken to the gracious warnings of the gospel, when you shall see the fire of God's wrath against you pouring down from heaven, and bursting on all sides out of the bowels of the earth!

**4.** Though the work which is necessary in order to man's salvation be a great work, yet it is not impossible. That was required of Noah, doubtless appeared a very great and difficult undertaking. Yet he undertook it with resolution, and he was carried through if we undertake this work with the same good will and resolution, we shall undoubtedly be successful. However difficult it be, yet multitudes have gone through it, and have obtained salvation by the means. It is not a work beyond the faculties of our nature, nor beyond the opportunities which God giveth us. If men will but take warning and hearken to counsel, if they will but be sincere and in good earnest, be seasonable in their work, take their opportunities, use their advantages, be steadfast and not wavering, they shall not fail.

### APPLICATION.

The use I would make of this doctrine, is to exhort all to undertake and go through this great work, which they have to do in order to their salvation, and this, let the work seem ever so great and difficult. If your nature be averse to it, and there seems to be very frightful things in the way, so that your heart is ready to fail at the prospect, yet seriously consider what has been said, and act a wise part. Seeing it is for yourselves, for your own salvation, seeing it is for so great a salvation, for your deliverance from eternal destruction; and seeing it is of such absolute necessity in order to

your salvation, that the deluge of divine wrath will come, and there will be no escaping it without preparing an ark, is it not best for you to undertake the work, engage in it with your might, and go through it, though this cannot be done without great labour, care, difficulty, and expense?

I would by no means flatter you concerning this work or go about to make you believe, that you shall find an easy light business of it: no, I would not have you expect any such thing. I would have you sit down and count the cost, and if you cannot find it in your hearts to engage in a great, hard, laborious, and expensive undertaking, and to persevere in it to the end of life, pretend not to be religious. Indulge yourselves in your ease follow your pleasures, eat, drink, and be merry even conclude to go to hell in that way, and never make any more pretenses of seeking your salvation. Here consider several things in particular.

**1.** How often you have been warned of the approaching flood of God's wrath. How frequently you have been told of hell, heard the threatening of the word of God set before you, and been warned to flee from the wrath to come. It is with you as it was with the inhabitants of the old world. Noah warned them abundantly of the approaching flood, and counseled them to take care for their safety. ~~1~~ 1 Peter 3:19, 20. — Noah warned them in words and he preached to them. He warned them also in his actions. His building the ark, which took him so long a time and in which he employed so many hands, was a standing warning to them. All the blows of the hammer and axe, during the progress of that building were so many calls and warnings to the old world, to take care for their preservation from the approaching destruction. Every knock of the workmen was a knock of Jesus Christ at the door of their hearts: but they would not hearken. All these warnings, though repeated every day and continued for so long a time, availed nothing.

Now, is it not much so with you, as it was with them? How often have you been warned I how have you heard the warning knocks of the gospel, sabbath after sabbath, for these many years! Yet how have some of you no more regarded them than the inhabitants of the old world regarded the noise of the workmen's tools in Noah's ark!

**OBJ.** But here possibly it may be objected by some, that though it be true they have often been told of hell, yet they never saw any thing of it, and

therefore they cannot realize it that there is any such place. They have often heard of hell, and are told that wicked men, when they die, go to a most dreadful place of torment; that hereafter there will be a day of Judgment, and that the world will be consumed by fire. But how do they know that it is really so? how do they know what becomes of those wicked men that die? None of them come back to tell them. They have nothing to depend on but the word which they hear. And how do they know that all is not a cunningly-devised fable?

**ANS.** sinners of the old world had the very same objection against what Noah told them of a flood about to drown the world. Yet the bare word of God proved to be sufficient evidence that such a thing was coming. What was the reason that none of the many millions then upon earth believed what Noah said, but this, that it was a strange thing, that no such thing had ever before been known? And what a strange story must that of Noah have appeared to them, wherein he told them of a deluge of waters above the tops of the mountains! Therefore it is said, <sup>3107</sup>Hebrews 11:7. that “Noah was warned of food of things not seen as yet.” It is probable, none could conceive how it could be that the whole world should be drowned in a flood of waters; and all were ready to ask, where there was water enough for it; and by what means it should be brought upon the earth, Noah did not tell them how it should be brought to pass, he only told them that God had said that it should be: and that proved to be enough. The event showed their folly in not depending on the mere word of God, who was able, who knew how to bring it to pass, and who could not lie.

In like manner the word of God will prove true, in threatening a flood of eternal wrath to overwhelm all the wicked. You will believe it when the event shall prove it, when it shall be too late to profit by the belief. The word of God will never fail, nothing is so sure as that: heaven and earth shall pass away, but the word of God shall not pass away. It is firmer than mountains of brass. At the end, the vision will speak and not lie. The decree shall bring forth, and all wicked men shall know that God is the Lord, that he is a God of truth, and that they are fools who will not depend on his word. The wicked of the old world counted Noah a fool for depending so much on the word of God, as to put himself to all the fatigue and expense of building the ark; but the event showed that they themselves were the fools, and that he was wise.

2. Consider that the Spirit of God will not always strive with you; nor will his long-suffering always wait upon you. So God said concerning the inhabitants of the old world,

“My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is  
flesh, yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.”  
(~~Gen~~ Genesis 6:3.)

All this while God was striving with them. It was a day of grace with them and God’s long-suffering all this while waited upon them (~~1~~ 1 Peter 3:20.) “Which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing.” All this while they had an opportunity to escape, if they would but hearken and believe God.

Even after the ark was finished, which seems to have been but little before the flood came, still there was an opportunity; the door of the ark stood open for some time. There was some time during which Noah was employed in laying up stores in the ark. Even then it was not too late; the door of the ark yet stood open. — About a week before the flood came, Noah was commanded to begin to gather in the beasts and birds. During this last week still the door of the ark stood open. But on the very day that the flood began to come, while the rain was yet withheld, Noah and his wife, his three sons, and their wives, went into the ark, and we are told, Genesis 7:16. That “God shut him in.” Then the day of God’s patience was past; the door of the ark was shut; God himself, who shuts and no man opens, shut the door. Then all hope of their escaping the flood was past, it was too late to repent that they had not hearkened to Noah’s warnings, and had not entered into the ark while the door stood open.

After Noah and his family had entered into the ark, and God had shut them in, after the windows of heaven were opened, and they saw how the waters were poured down out of heaven, we may suppose that many of those who were near came running to the door of the ark, knocking, and crying most piteously for entrance. But it was too late; God himself had shut the door, and Noah had no license, and probably no power, to open it. We may suppose, they stood knocking and calling, Open to us, open to us; O let us in; we beg that we may be let in. And probably some of them pleaded old acquaintance with Noah that they had always been his

neighbours, and had even helped him to build the ark. But all was in vain. There they stood till the waters of the flood came, and without mercy swept them away from the door of the ark.

So it will be with you, if you continue to refuse to hearken to the warnings which are given you. Now God is striving with you; now he is warning you of the approaching flood, and calling upon you sabbath after sabbath. Now the door of the ark stands open. But God's Spirit will not always strive with you; his long-suffering will not always shalt upon you. There is an appointed day of God's patience, which is as certainly limited as it was to the old world. God hath set your bounds, which you cannot pass. Though now warnings are continued in plenty, set there will be last knocks and last calls, the last that ever you shall hear. When the appointed time shall be elapsed, God will shut the door, and you shall never see it open again; for God shutteth, and no man openeth. — If you improve not your opportunity before that time, you will cry in vain, "Lord, Lord, open to us." (<sup>4151</sup>Matthew 25:11. and <sup>4152</sup>Luke 13:25, etc.) While you shall stand at the door with your piteous cries, the hood of God's wrath will come upon you, overwhelm you, and you shall not escape. The tempest shall carry you away without mercy, and you shall be for ever swallowed up and lost.

**3.** Consider how mighty the billows of divine wrath will be when they shall come. The waters of Noah's flood were very great. The deluge was vast; it was very deep, the billows reached fifteen cubits above the highest mountains; and it was an ocean which had no shore; signifying the greatness of that wrath which is coming on wicked men in another world, which will be like a mighty flood of waters overwhelming them, and rising vastly high over their heads, with billows reaching to the very heavens. Those billows will be higher and heavier than mountains on their poor souls. The wrath of God will be an ocean without shores, as Noah's flood was: it will be misery that will have no end.

The misery of the damned in hell can be better represented by nothing, than by a deluge of misery, a mighty deluge of wrath, which will be ten thousand times worse than a deluge of waters, for it will be a deluge of liquid fire, as in the Scriptures it is called a lake of fire and brimstone. — At the end of the world all the wicked shall be swallowed up in a vast

deluge of fire, which shall be as great and as mighty as Noah's deluge of water. (See <sup><GRS></sup>2 Peter 3:5, 6, 7.) After that the wicked will have mighty billows of fire and brimstone eternally rolling over their poor souls, and their miserable tormented bodies. Those billows may be called vast liquid mountains of fire and brimstone. And when one billow shall have gone over their heads, another shall follow, without intermission, giving them no rest day nor night to all eternity.

**4.** This flood of wrath will probably come upon suddenly, when you shall think little of it, and it shall seem far from you. So the flood came upon the old world, see <sup><GRS></sup>Matthew 24:36, etc. — Probably many of them were surprised in the night by the waters bursting suddenly in at their doors, or under the foundations of their houses, coming in upon them in their beds. For when the fountains of the great deep were broken up, the waters, as observed before, burst forth in mighty torrents. To such a sudden surprise of the wicked of the old world in the night, probably that alludes in <sup><GRS></sup>Job 27:20.

*“Terrors take hold on him as waters;  
a tempest stealeth him away in the night.”*

So destruction is wont to come on wicked men, who hear many warnings of approaching destruction, and yet will not be influenced by them. For “he that is often reprov'd, and hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy,” (<sup><GRS></sup>Proverbs 29:1.) And “when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape,” <sup><GRS></sup>1 Thessalonians 5:3.

**5.** If you will not hearken to the many warnings which are given you of approaching destruction, you will be guilty of more than brutish madness. “The ox knoweth his owner, nod the ass his master's crib.” They know upon whom they are dependent, and whom they must obey, and act accordingly. But you, so long as you neglect your own salvation, act as if you knew not God, your Creator and Proprietor, nor your dependence upon him. — The very beasts, when they see signs of an approaching storm, will betake themselves to their dens for shelter. Yet you, when abundantly warned of the approaching storm of divine vengeance, will not fly to the hiding-place from the stolen, and the expert from the tempest.

The sparrow, the swallow, and other birds, when they are forewarned of approaching winter, will betake themselves to a safer climate. Yet you who have been often forewarned of the piercing blasts of divine wrath, will not, in order to escape them, enter into the New Jerusalem, of most mild and salubrious air, though the gate stands wide open to receive you. The very ants will be diligent in summer to lay up for winter: yet you will do nothing to lay up in store a good foundation against the time to come. Balaam's ass would not run upon a drawn sword, though his master, for the sake of gain, would expose himself to the sword of God's wrath; and so God made the dumb ass, both in words and actions, to rebuke the madness of the prophet, ~~1~~ 1 Peter 2:16. In like manner, you, although you have been often warned that the sword of God's wrath is drawn against you and will certainly be thrust through you, if you proceed in your precept course, still proceed, regardless of the consequence.

So God made the very beasts and birds of the old world to rebuke the madness of the men of that day: for they, even all sorts of them, fled to the ark, while the door was yet open: which the men of that day refused to do; God hereby thus signifying, that their folly was greater than that of the very brute creatures. — Such folly and madness are you guilty of, who refuse to hearken to the warnings that are given you of the approaching flood of the wrath of God.

You have been once more warned to-day, while the door of the ark yet stands open. You have, as it were, once again heard the knocks of the hammer and axe in the building of the ark, to put you in mind that a flood is approaching. Take heed therefore that you do not still stop your ears, treat these warnings with a regardless heart and still neglect the great work which you have to do, lest the flood of wrath suddenly come upon you, sweep you away, and there be no remedy.

## SERMON 2

### THE UNREASONABLENESS OF INDETERMINATION IN RELIGION

And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long, halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word.  
(~~1~~<sup>1182</sup> 1 Kings 18:21)

It is the manner of God, before he bestows any signal mercy on the people, first to prepare them for it; and before he removes any awful judgments which he hath brought upon them for their sins, first to cause them to forsake those sins which procured those judgments. We have an instance of this in the context. — It was a time of sore famine in Israel. There had been neither rain nor dew for the space of three years and six months. This famine was brought upon the land for their idolatry. But God was now about to remove this judgment; and therefore, to prepare them for it, sends Elijah to convince them of the folly of idolatry, and to bring them to repentance for it. — In order to this, Elijah, by the command of the Lord, goes and shows himself to Ahab, and directs him to send and gather all Israel to him at mount Carmel, and all the prophets of Baal, four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the groves that ate at Jezebel's table, four hundred, that they might determine the matter and bring the controversy to an issue, whether Jehovah or Baal were God. To this end, Elijah proposes, that each should take a bullock, that he should take one, and the prophets of Baal another, that each should cut his bullock to pieces, lay it on the wood, and put no fire under; and that the God who should answer by fire should be concluded to be God.

The text contains an account of what Elijah said to all the people at their first meeting, and of their silence: “And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God follow him; but if Baal, then follow him.” To which the people, it seems, made no reply. In these words, we may observe

**1.** How Elijah expostulates with the people about their halting so long between two opinions; in which expostulation may be observed,

**(1.)** What the two opinions were, between which they halted, viz. whether the Lord were God, or whether Baal were God. The case in Israel seems to have been this: there were some who were altogether for Baal, and wholly rejected the true God, of which number, to be sure, were Jezebel and the prophets of Baal. And there were some among them who were altogether for the God of Israel, and wholly rejected Baal; as God told Elijah, that

“he had yet left in Israel seven thousand that had not bowed the knee to, Baal, and whose mouths had not kissed him,”

(~~1198~~ 1 Kings 19:18.)

But the rest of the people halted between two opinions. They saw that some were for one, and some for the other and they did not know which to choose, and, as is commonly the case when difference of opinion prevails, there were many who had no religion at all, they were not settled in any thing; the different opinions prevalent in Israel distracted and confounded them. Many who professed to believe in the true God, were yet very cold and indifferent, and many were wavering and unsettled. They saw that the king and queen were for Baal; and Baal’s party was the prevailing party, but their forefathers had been for the Lord, and they knew not which were right. Thus they halted between two opinions.

**(2.)** In this expostulation is implied the unreasonableness of their thus halting between two opinions. “How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him.” Which implies that they ought to determine one way or the other.

**2.** We may observe their silence on this occasion: “And the people answered him not a word,” as being convicted in their own consciences of the unreasonableness of their being for so long a time wavering and unresolved; they had nothing to reply in excuse for themselves.

DOCTRINE. Unresolved in religion is very unreasonable.

**I.** Prop. Many persons remain exceedingly undetermined with respect to religion. They are very much undetermined in themselves whether to embrace religion or to reject it. Many who are baptized, and make a profession of religion, and seem to be Christians, are yet in their own minds halting between two opinions: they never yet came fully to a conclusion whether to be Christians or not. They are taught the Christian religion in their childhood, and have the Bible, the word preached, and the means of grace, all their days; yet continue, and grow up and many grow old, in an unresolvcdness whether to embrace Christianity or not; and many continue unresolved as long as they live.

**1.** There are some persons who have never come to a settled determination in their own minds, whether or no there be any truth in religion. They hear of the things of religion from their childhood all their days; but never come to a conclusion in their own minds whether they be real or fabulous. Particularly, some have never come to any determination in their own minds, whether there be any such thing as conversion. They hear much talk about it and know that many pretend to be the subjects of it; but they are never resolved whether all be not merely designed hypocrisy and imposture.

Some never come to any determination whether the Scriptures be the word of God, or whether they be the invention of men, and whether the story concerning Jesus Christ be any thing but a fable. They fear it is true, but sometimes very much doubt of it. Sometimes when they hear arguments for it, they assent that it is true; but upon every little objection or temptation arising, they call it in question; and are always wavering and never settled about it.

So it seems to have been with many of the Jews in Christ's time; they were always at a loss what to make of him, whether he were indeed the Christ, or whether he were him, or one of the old prophets, or a mere impostor. <sup>GENE</sup>John 10:24, 25. "Then came the Jews round about him and said unto him, how long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ tell us plainly. Jesus answered them I told you, and ye believed not." Some have never so much as come to a resolution in their own minds, whether there be a God or not. They know not that there is, and oftentimes very much doubt of it.

**2.** There are some who never have come to any determination in their own minds whether to embrace religion in the practice of it. Religion consists not merely, or chiefly, in theory or speculation, but in practice. It is a practical thing, the end of it is to guide and influence us in our practice: and considered in this view, there are multitudes who never have come to a conclusion whether to embrace religion or not. It is probably pretty general for men to design to be religious some time or other before they die; for none intend to go to hell. But they still keep it at a distance; they put it off from time to time, and never come to any conclusion which determines them in their present practice. And some never so much as fix upon any time. They design to be religious some time before they die, but they know not when.

There are many who have always continued unresolved about the necessity of striving and being earnestly engaged for salvation. They flatter themselves that they may obtain salvation, though they be not so earnestly engaged, though they mind the world and their worldly affairs more than their salvation. They are often told how necessary it is that they make haste and not delay, that they do whatever their hand findeth to do with their might, that a dull, slack way of seeking salvation is never likely to be effectual. But of these things they are never thoroughly convinced. Some seem to resolve to be in earnest, and seem to set out with some engagedness of mind, but soon fail, because they have never been fully convinced of its necessity.

Many have never come to a determination what to choose for their portion. There are but two things which God offers to mankind for their portion: one is this world with the pleasures and profits of sin, together with eternal misery ensuing, the other is heaven and eternal glory, with a life of self-denial and respect to all the commands of God. Many, as long as they live, come to no settled determination which of these to choose. They must have one or the other, they cannot have both; but they always remain in suspense, and never make their choice.

They would fain have heaven and this world too; they would have salvation and the pleasures and profits of sin too. But considering heaven and the world, as God offers them, they will have neither. God offers heaven only with the self-denial and difficulty which are in the way to it;

and they are not willing to have heaven on these conditions. God offers the world and the pleasures of sin to men not alone, hut with eternal misery in connexion with them; and so neither are they willing to have the world. They would fain divide heaven from the holiness and self-denial which are the way to it, and from the holiness which reigns in it, and then they would be glad to have heaven. They would fain divide sin from hell, and then they would fully determine for ever to cleave to sin. But God will not make such a division for them. They must have one or the other of these for their portion, as God offers; and therefore they never make any choice at all. — Indeed they do practically and in effect choose sin and hell. But they do not come to any resolution in their own minds which they will have for their portion, whether heaven and holiness, or the world and hell: they are always wavering and halting between two opinions. Sometimes they seem to determine for the one, and sometimes for the other. When they meet with no difficulty or temptation, and can, as they say, do their duty without hurting themselves or much crossing their carnal inclinations, they seem to choose heaven and holiness. At other times, wherein they meet with difficulty in the way of duty, and great temptations of worldly profits or pleasures ate laid before them, then they choose the world, and let heaven and holiness alone. — There are among us vast multitudes before whom these two things have been set hundreds of times, who have never to this day come to a determination which to have.

So they have never yet determined which shall be their master, whether God or mammon. There are but few who have undertaken the service of God, and are come to a resolution and preparedness of mind to serve God and follow Christ at all times, and to whatever difficulties it may expose them. Yet, at the same time, neither are they determined that they will continue to serve Satan they are afraid to draw up such a conclusion. — This many spend their lives without making their choice, though they do in the mean time practically choose the service of Satan. These are the persons of whom the apostle James speaks in chapter 1:8.

“The double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.”

**II.** To continue thus undetermined and unresolved in the things of religion, is very unreasonable, and that upon the following accounts.

**1.** In the things of religion we are to the highest decree interested. The truth or falsehood of the doctrines of religion concern us to the highest degree possible. It is no matter of indifference to us whether there be a God or not or whether the Scriptures be the word of God; or whether Christ be the Son of God; or whether there be any Such thing as conversion. It makes an infinite difference to us whether these things be so or not. Therefore we are under the greatest obligation in point of interest to resolve in our minds whether they be true or false. They who are undetermined whether there be any truth in religion, and are contented to be so, not inquiring, nor thoroughly using the means to be determined, act very unreasonably. They remain in doubt whether there be any such thing as heaven or hell; are quiet and easy to continue ignorant in this matter; are not engaged in their minds to come to a determination; do not search and inquire what arguments there are to prove any such things, nor diligently weigh and consider the force of them, but busy their minds about other things of infinitely less importance, and act as if they thought it did not much concern them whether there be a future and eternal state.

If they think that there is not, yet it is a matter of so great importance, that no wise man should rest until he had satisfied himself, because if there be such a future state as the Scriptures assert, then we must have our part in it, either in a state of eternal rewards, or in a state of eternal punishment. — So it is no matter of indifference to to us what we have for our portion, whether this world with hell, or a life of holiness and self-denial with heaven. These opposite portions relate, not merely to a few days in this world, but to eternity. It is infinite madness therefore not to come to a determination.

So it is no matter of indifference what master we serve, whether God or mammon; or what interest we will pursue, whether our temporal or eternal interest; or which we prefer, the commands of God, or our pleasures, our ease, and convenience. We ought therefore to come to some determination which we will choose.

**2.** God hath made Us reasonable creatures, and capable of rationally determining for ourselves. Doubtless God hath made man capable of discovering the truth in matter. Of religion, of coming to a good determination in the questions whether the Scriptures be the word of God

whether there be a future state, and the like. The resolution of these questions, which it so much concerns us to determine, is not above our capacities. God hath not set these things beyond the extent of our faculties.

God hath made us capable of making a wise choice for ourselves, as to the life we shall choose to lead. He hath given man so much understanding, as to make him capable of determining which is best, to lead a life of self-denial, and enjoy eternal happiness, or to take our swing in sinful enjoyments, and burn in hell for ever. The question is of no difficult determination. — It is so far from being a matter too hard for our reason, that the reason of a child is sufficient to determine this matter. Therefore men in remaining undetermined in these matters, do not act as reasonable creatures, but make themselves like

“the horse and the mule, which have no understanding,”  
(~~Psalm~~ Psalm 32:9.)

**3.** God puts into our hands a happy opportunity to determine for ourselves. What better opportunity can a man desire to consult his own interest, than to have liberty to choose his own portion? God setteth life and death before us.

“I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing, therefore choose life that thou and thy seed after thee may live.”  
(~~Deuteronomy~~ Deuteronomy 30:19.)

See also ~~Ezekiel~~ Ezekiel 18:31, 32. and chapter 33:11. What better opportunity can we desire for securing to ourselves the greatest good, than to have eternal life and unchangeable happiness set before us, and offered to our choice? Therefore those who neglect coming to a resolution, act unreasonably, because they stand so much in their own light, and neglect so glorious an opportunity.

**4.** The things among which we are to make our choice are but few in number; there are but two portions set before us, one of which must be our portion; either life or death, either blessing or cursing; either a life of universal and persevering obedience, with eternal glory, or a worldly, carnal, wicked life, with eternal misery. If there were many terms in the

offer made us, many things of nearly an equal value, one of which we must choose, to remain long in suspense and undetermined would be more excusable; there would be more reason for long deliberation before we should fix. But these are only two terms there are but two states in another world, in one or the other of which we must be fixed to all eternity.

And there are but two states in this world, a state of sin, and a state of holiness; a natural state, and a converted state. There is but one way in which we can come to life, which renders the determination of reason much the easier. There are but two masters, to one of which we must be reputed the servants, Baal and Jehovah, God and Mammon: there are but two competitors for the possession of us, Christ and the devil. — There are but two paths, in one of which you are to travel, either in the straight and narrow way which leadeth unto life, or the broad way which leadeth unto destruction.

This shows the unreasonableness of those who live under light, and have the offers of the gospel made to them, and yet remain from year to year unfixed and undetermined, halting between two opinions.

**5.** God hath given us all needed helps to determine us. We have all needful helps to determine our understandings, as to the truth of the things of religion, as whether there be a God, whether the Scriptures be the word of God, whether them be a future state, etc. We are not left in the dark as to these things, as the poor heathens are, who are under great disadvantages to come to the knowledge of the truth, though they be not under an impossibility, for

“they may haply feel after God and find him,” (~~Acts~~ Acts 17:27.)

But we have a clear sunshine to guide us, we have a particular description of those things which are set before us for truth, and have great opportunity to examine them. The Scripture lies open before us, and all the doctrines of the gospel are particularly set forth, with the reasons on which their evidence is founded. We may search and try their force and sufficiency, as we please.

We have great helps to a wise and rational determination in our choice; to determine whether it be best for us to choose a life of sin or a life of

holiness, the service of God or the service of Baal. We have very plainly set before us the advantages of both sides; the loss and gain are particularly stated. Christ hath dealt by us faithfully, and hath told us what we shall get and what we shall lose by being his followers. He hath also told us what we shall get and what we shall lose by a life of sin. He hath not dealt by us deceitfully. He hath not pretended greater advantages in godliness than there really are, nor greater disadvantages or dangers in sin.

“In my Father’s house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you.” (☞<sup>6412</sup> John 14:2.)

He hath told us plainly that we must take up the cross daily and follow him; that we must hate father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, and our own life also, in order to become his disciples; and that we must cut off our right hands, and pluck out our right eyes, in order to enter into heaven. Thus we have a fair opportunity to count the costs on both sides and are directed so to do, ☞<sup>6413</sup> Luke 14:28. — How unreasonable therefore is it for men who have all these helps and advantages, to remain in suspense, and to come to no conclusion whether they will be Christians or heathens whether they will be for God or the devil; though they have lived under the preaching of the word and offers of the gospel for many years.

**6.** We have no reason to expect to be under better advantages to determine hereafter than we are now. We never shall have a clearer revelation of gospel truth; never shall have the advantages and disadvantages of both sides more plainly set before us, than they are already in the word of God: nor are we ever like to be under better advantages to know what will be best for us, and most for our interest. Those therefore who delay, gain nothing by their delays, but give Satan more opportunity to darken their minds, to deceive them, and lead them astray in their choice. Therefore their delay of coming to a resolution is unreasonable.

**7.** If they come not to a determination in this life, God will determine for them, and will appoint them their portion with the wicked. If sinners, by refusing to choose either life or death, either heaven or hell, could thereby avoid both, or if in this case the matter would remain undetermined, till they should determine it: the folly and unreasonableness of delaying a

determination would not be so great. But that is not the case; if they go on halting between two opinions, God will determine for them, and that quickly; he will determine where their portion shall be, viz. among the disbelievers, in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone for ever. God will not wait upon them always, to see what they will choose: but he will put an issue to the matter by his unalterable sentence. — Therefore it becomes all, if they are afraid to have their lot assigned them in hell, to come soon to a determination.

**8.** Delay in this case is unreasonable, because those who delay know not how soon the opportunity of choosing for themselves will be past. This opportunity will last no longer than life; when once life is past, they will no more have the offer made them; the sentence will be past; the matter will be closed.

Those who delay their choice in this world will be glad to choose afterwards; then they will not be at a loss which to choose; they will be able easily to determine. The judgments of sinners, after this life, are soon resolved, whether there be any truth in religion or not; they can soon determine which is most eligible; a life of obedience and self-denial, with heaven for a reward, or a life of irreligion and sin, with hell for a punishment. They no longer halt between two opinions, but it is too late, their opportunity is past. They would give all the world for another opportunity to choose, they would then soon come to a determination. But it will not be granted them.

### APPLICATION.

**1.** Let this put every one upon examining himself whether or no he have ever yet come to a full determination in the affair of religion.

First, Inquire whether you have yet come to a full determination with respect to the truth of the things of religion.

Have you ever been fully convinced? Is it a question which has been answered and determined with you, whether there be a future state; or does it yet remain a question with you unresolved? Are you not yet to seek whether there be any future state, and whether or no the story about

Jesus Christ be any more than a fable? Here I desire you to note two things.

**1.** If the main reason why you assent to the truth of religion be, that others believe so, and you have been so instructed from your childhood; you are of those with whom the truth of religion yet remains undetermined. Tradition and education will never fix and settle the mind in a satisfactory and effectual belief of the truth. Though men, taking religion upon trust, may seem to give a full assent to the truth of religion, and not to call it in question; yet such a faith will not stand a shock; a temptation easily overthrows it. The reason of man in time of trial will not rest on so poor an evidence.

There are multitudes who seem to grant the truth of religion, with whom the main foundation of their faith is the tradition of their fathers, or the profession of their neighbours, and it is to be feared, it is so with many who courts themselves good Christians. But as to all such persons as never have seen any other evidence to satisfy them, either of the truth or falsehood of religion, they only halt between two opinions. — The same may be said of ‘those who are unstable in their disposition with regard to Christ or the things which he taught.

**2** If you are fully come to a determination concerning the things of religion, that they are true, they will be of weight with you above all things in the world. If you be really convinced that these things are no fable, but reality, it is impossible but that you must be influenced by them above all things in the world; for these things are so great, and so infinitely exceed all temporal things, that it cannot be otherwise. He that really is convinced that these is a heaven and hell, and an eternal judgment; that the soul as soon as parted from the body, appears before the judgment-seat of God, and that the happiness and misery of a future state is as great as the Scripture represents it; or that God is as holy, just, and jealous, as he hath declared concerning himself in his word, I say, he that is really convinced, and hath settled it with himself, that these things are certainly true, will be influenced by them above all things in the world. He will be more concerned by far how he shall escape eternal damnation, and have the favour of God and eternal life, than how he shall get the world, gratify the flesh, please his neighbours, get honour, or obtain any temporal advantage

whatsoever. His main inquiry will not be, what shall I eat, and what shall I drink, etc. but he will seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

Examine yourselves therefore by this: Are not your hearts chiefly set upon the world and the things of it? Is it not more your concern, care, and endearment to further your outward interest, than to secure an interest in heaven? And is not this the very reason that you have never seen the reality of eternal things?

Secondly, Inquire whether you have ever yet come to a determination about religion with respect to the practice of it; whether you have chosen heaven with the way to it viz. the way of obedience and self-denial, before this world and the ways of sin, whether you have determined upon it as most eligible, to devote yourselves to the service of God. — Here I shall mention three or four things which are signs that men halt between two opinions in this matter.

**1.** To put off duty till hereafter. When persons love to keep their duty at a distance, engage not in it for the present, but think of engaging when they shall be under better conveniences for it; — when they are very good intenders concerning what they will do tomorrow, but very poor performers to-day; when they say, as Felix, “Go thy way for this time, when I have a convenient season I will call for thee;” — it is a sign that they halt between two opinions, and have never as yet come to a full determination with respect to the practice of religion. Those that have once fully determined that religion is necessary and eligible, will not desire to put it off; but will make it their present and immediate business.

**2.** It is a sign of the same thing when persons are strict and conscientious in some things, but not universal in their obedience, do some duties, but live in the omission of others, avoid some sins, but allow themselves in others are conscientious with respect to the duties of worship public and private, but not in their behaviour to their neighbours; are not just in their dealings, nor conscientious in paying their debts; nor do to others as they would that they should do to them; but have crooked perverse ways in their dealings among mankind.

The same may be said when they are just in their dealings and trade with men, but are not conscientious in other things; indulge sensual appetites,

drink to excess, or allow themselves in wanton practices: or are honest and temperate, but licentious in using their tongues, backbiting and reproaching their fellow-men, ~~2~~ Timothy 3:6, 7.

**3.** It is a sign that you halt between two opinions, if you sometimes are wont to be considerably engaged in religion, but at other times neglect it; sometimes forming a resolution to be in good earnest, then dropping it again; sometimes seeming to be really engaged in seeking salvation, and very earnest in religious duties, at other times wholly taken up about the things of the world, while religion is neglected, and religious duties are omitted. These things show that you are yet unsettled, have never yet come to a full determination concerning religion, but are halting between two opinions, and therefore are thus unstable in all your ways, and proceed thus by fits and starts in religion, ~~3~~ James 1:6, 7, 8. “But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering: for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.” If your determination were fixed in religion, you would be more steady in your practice.

**4.** It is a sign that you are halting between two opinions, if it be your manner to balk your duty whenever any notable difficulty comes in the way, considerably cross to your interest or very inconsistent with your ease or convenience, or your temporal honour. Whatever zeal you may seem to have, whatever concern about the things of religion and however strict you be in ordinary, you have never, if this be your manner, come to a full determination, have never fully made choice of religion and the benefits of it for your only portion, and at best have got no further than king Agrippa, who was almost persuaded to be a Christian ~~4~~ Acts 26:28. You are in the state of the stony-ground hearers, you have no root in yourselves, and like a tree without root, are easily blown down by every wind.

**II.** I shall conclude with an earnest exhortation to all, no longer to halt between two opinions, but immediately to come to a determination whether to be Christians or not. Let me insist upon it, that you now make a choice whether you will have heaven with a life of universal and persevering obedience, for your portion, or hell, with a life spent in the

pursuit of this world. — Consider those things which have been said, showing the unreasonableness of continuing in such irresolution about an affair of infinite importance to you, and as to which you have so short an opportunity to make your choice. — Consider two things in addition to what hath been already said.

**1.** Those who live under the gospel, and thus continue undetermined about religion, are more abominable to God than the heathen. He hates those persons who continue from year to year, under the calls, and warnings, and instructions, and entreaties of God's word, who yet can be brought to nothing, who will come to no determination at all, will neither be Christians nor heathens. These are they who are spoken of in

~~MRB~~ Revelation 3:15,16. "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth." — And ~~MRB~~ Ezekiel 20:39. "As for you, O house of Israel, thus saith the Lord God, Go ye, serve ye every one his idols, and hereafter also, if ye will not hearken unto me: but pollute ye my holy name no more with your gifts, and with your idols." — These are (~~MRB~~ 2 Timothy 3:7.) "ever learning," and never coming to the knowledge of the truth."

**2.** If you still refuse to come to a determination whether to be Christians or not, how just will it be, if God shall give you no further opportunity! If you refuse to make any choice at all — after all that hath been done to bring you to it, in setting life and death so often before you, in calling and warning you, how just will it be, if God shall wait no longer upon you; but shall, by his unalterable sentence, determine the case himself, and fix your state with the unbelievers, and teach you the truth and eligibility of religion, by sad and fatal experience, when it will be too late for you to choose your portion.

## SERMON 3

### UNBELIEVERS CONTEMN THE GLORY AND EXCELLENCY OF CHRIST.

This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders.

(~~4011~~ Acts 4:11.)

IN the foregoing chapters we have an account of the outpouring of the Holy Ghost on the apostles, and of its extraordinary effects in their speaking boldly in the name of Jesus, and speaking many strange languages, and so being made the instruments of the sudden conversion of vast multitudes. And in the chapter immediately preceding, there is an account how Peter and John miraculously healed a man who had been a cripple from his birth; which, together with the word which they spake to the people that flocked together on the occasion, was the means of a new accession to the church: so that the number of them that heard the word and believed, as we are told in the fourth verse of this chapter, was about five thousand.

This sudden and extraordinary progress of the gospel greatly alarmed the priests and scribes, and other chief men among the Jews; so that they laid hands on Peter and John, and put them in hold, and the next day brought them forth to appear before them, and called them to an account for what they had done. They asked them particularly by what power, or by what name, they had wrought the miracle on the impotent man. Upon which Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost makes answer, “Ye rulers of the people, and elders of? Israel, — Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought by you builders, which is become the head of the corner.” The apostle quotes to them as now fulfilled, the 118th Psalm, verse 22. “The stone which the builders refused is become the head-stone of the corner.” This text, in that psalm, the apostle applies by telling them,

- 1.** That This is the stone, *i.e.* this person of whom he had spoken in the foregoing verse, viz. Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom they had crucified, and whom God had raised from the dead.
- 2.** That they were the builders spoken of. They before whom the apostle then was, and to whom he was speaking, were rulers, and elders, and scribes of the people, the high priest and other priests. They, as they were set to be rulers and teachers among God's people, by their office were called to be builders of the church of God.
- 3.** That they set this stone at nought. They had so done by refusing to accept of him. Christ came to his own, and his own received him not: and not only so, but they had openly manifested the greatest contempt of him. They had mocked him, scourged and spit upon him, and in derision crowned him with a crown of thorns, and arrayed him in a mock robe, and then had put him to a most ignominious death.
- 4.** That notwithstanding this, he was become the head of the corner. In spite of all that they could do, he had obtained the chief place in the building. God had made him the main foundation of it, by raising him from the dead, and so putting great honour upon him; by pouring out his Spirit, and enduing his disciples with extraordinary gifts; by suddenly converting so many thousands to be the followers of Christ. — They put him to death, that he might have no followers, concluding that that would utterly put an end to his interest in Judea. But they were greatly disappointed: for the gospel had incomparably greater success after Christ's death than before. God had accomplished that very thing which they endeavoured to prevent by Christ's crucifixion, viz. Christ's being believed in and submitted to, as the great prophet of God, and prince of his people.

### DOCTRINE.

Unbelievers set at nought the glory and excellency in Christ.

- 1.** They set at nought the excellency of his person. — Christ is a great and glorious person, a person of infinite worthiness, on which account he is infinitely esteemed and loved of the Father, and is continually adored by the angels. But unbelievers have no esteem at all for him on that account. They have no value for him on account of his being the Son of God. He is

not set the higher in their esteem on the account of his standing in so near and honourable a relation to God the Father. He is not valued at all the more for his being a divine person. By his having the divine nature, he is infinitely exalted above all created beings. But he is not at all exalted by it in their esteem. They set nothing by his infinite majesty: his glorious brightness and greatness excite not any true respect or reverence in them.

Christ is the holy One of God: he is so holy that the heavens are not pure in his sight. He is possessed of all that holiness which is the infinite beauty and loveliness of the divine nature. But an unbeliever sets nothing by the holiness of Christ. — Christ is the wisdom of God and the power of God, ~~and~~ 1 Corinthians 1:24. But an unbeliever sets nothing by his power and wisdom. The Lord Jesus Christ is full of grace and mercy: the mercy and love of God appear no where else so brightly and gloriously as they do in the face of Jesus Christ. — But an unbeliever sets no value at all upon the infinite grace of Christ.

Neither do unbelievers set any thing by those excellent virtues which appeared in Christ's human nature when he was upon earth. He was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners, he was meek and lowly of heart; he was patient under afflictions and injuries, when he was reviled, he reviled not again. But unbelievers set nothing by these things in Jesus Christ. — They very often hear how excellent and glorious a person Christ is: they are told of his holiness, and grace, and condescension, and meekness, and have the excellencies of Christ plainly set forth to them, yet they set all at nought.

**2.** They set at nought his excellency in his work and office. They are told how glorious and complete a mediator he is, how sufficient to answer all our necessities, and to save sinners to the uttermost, but they make light of it all, yea, they make nothing of it. They hear of the wonderful wisdom of God in contriving such a way of salvation by Christ, they have the manifold wisdom of God set forth to them, but they make no account of the excellency of this way of salvation.

The unbeliever hears what a wonderful thing it was, that he who was in the form of God, and esteemed it no robbery to be equal with God, should take upon him the human nature, and come and live in this world in a mean and low condition; but he makes nothing of this. He hears much of the

dying love of Christ to sinners, how wonderful it was that so glorious a person, who is infinitely above the angels, should so set his love on such worms of the dust, as to come and be made a curse for them, and die a cruel and ignominious death in their stead; but he sets nothing by all this. This dying love of Christ is of no account with him, those great things that Christ hath done and suffered are with him light matters.

Unbelievers not only set little by the glory and excellency of Christ, but they set nothing by these things. Notwithstanding all the shows and presences which many natural men make of respect to Christ, by speaking honourably of him in their prayers, and in their common conversation, and by coming to sacraments, and attending other ordinances of Christ, yet indeed they do not set so much by all the glory and excellency of Christ — either of his person, or of his work as a Saviour — as they do by the smallest earthly enjoyment.

I proceed now to mention some evidences of the truth of this doctrine.

**1.** They never give Christ any honour on account of his glory and excellency. They may, and often do, pay Christ an external and seeming respect, but they do not honour him in their hearts. They have no exalting thoughts of Christ, no inward respect or reverence towards him. All their outward worship is only feigned; none of it arises from any real honour or respect in their hearts towards Christ. It is either only for fashion's sake, and in compliance with custom, or else it is forced, and what they are driven to by fear, as we read,

“Through the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies submit themselves unto thee.” (~~tem~~ Psalm 66:3.)

In the original it is, shall thine enemies lie unto thee, *i.e.* yield a feigned obedience. Through the greatness of Christ's power, and for fear of his wrath, his enemies who have no respect or honour for him in their hearts, will lie to him, and make a show of respect when they have none.

An nonbeliever is not sensible that Christ is worthy of any glory, and therefore does not at all seek the glory of Christ in any thing that he does; he does nothing in religion out of respect to Christ's glory, but wholly for other ends; which shows that he sees not Christ to be worthy of any glory. — Christ is set last and lowest in the heart of an unbeliever. — He

has high thoughts of other things: he has high thoughts of created objects and earthly enjoyments, but mean and low thoughts of Christ.

The unbeliever shows the mean and contemptible thought, that he has of Christ, in refusing to accept of him, and in shutting the door of his heart against him. Christ stands at the door and knocks, and sometimes stands many years knocking at the door of his heart, but he refuses to open to him. — Now it certainly shows that men have a very mean thought of a person, when they shut him out of their doors. Unbelievers show the mean and dishonourable thoughts they have of Christ, in that they dare not trust him. They believe not what he says to be true they will not trust the word of Christ, so far as the word of one of their honest neighbours, or of a servant whom they have found to be faithful. It also appears that they have no real honour for Christ in their hearts, in that they refuse to obey his commands. They do nothing from a spirit of obedience to him: and that external obedience which they render, is but a forced, feigned obedience, and not from any respect to Christ's authority or worthiness to be obeyed.

**2.** They have no love to him on account of his glory and excellency. If they saw any excellency in Christ, they would have some measure of love to him. But the truth is, they see no form or comeliness in Christ, and hence they have no love at all to him. An unbeliever never exercises one act of true love to Christ. All that he is told of his divine perfections, of his holiness, his meekness, and grace, has no influence at all to draw forth any love. The display of these things doth no more draw forth love out of the heart of an unbeliever, it draws forth love from the stones and rocks.

A natural man hath no love of benevolence towards Christ.

Notwithstanding all that is declared to him of the excellency of Christ, he has no good-will towards him. He rejoices not in his glory and happiness; he would not care what became of Christ, if he could but escape hell. If Christ should be dethroned, or should cease to be, he has not so much good-will to Christ, as would make him concerned about it. And if the kingdom and interest of Christ in the world should go to ruin, it would be nowise grievous to the unbeliever, provided his own interest could be secure.

So also an unbeliever has no love of complacency in Jesus Christ for his excellency. He takes no delight in the consideration of that excellency of Christ of which he is told. — He is told that it is exceedingly beautiful and glorious, but the thoughts of the glory of Christ are nowise entertaining to him: he has no delight in the thoughts of it, or in any contemplations upon it. He takes delight in thinking of earthly objects; but when he comes to turn his mind upon Jesus Christ, if ever he so does, this is to him a dry and barren subject: he finds nothing there to feed and delight his soul, no beauty or loveliness to please or gratify him.

**3.** Unbelievers have no desires after the enjoyment of Christ. If they did set any thing by the excellency of Christ, they would have some desires after him on account of that excellency; especially when he is offered to them and is from time to time set forth as the proper object of their choice and desires. That which men prize, they are wont to desire, especially if it be represented to them as attainable and as fit and suitable for them. But unbelievers only desire to be delivered from hell, but not to enjoy Christ.

They cannot conceive what happiness there can be in beholding Christ and being with him, in seeing his holiness, and contemplating his wonderful grace and divine glory. They have no relish for any such thing, nor appetite after it.

**4.** They show that they set at nought the glory and excellency of Christ, in that they seek not a conformity to that glory and excellency. A natural man may seek to be holy, but it is not for holiness' sake, it is only that he may escape wrath. He has no desires after holiness, nor is it indeed holiness that he seeks, because he is all the while an enemy to holiness. A natural man has no desires to have his soul conformed to the glorious beauty and excellency of Christ, nor to have his image upon him.

If he prized or delighted in the excellencies of Christ, he would necessarily desire to be like him so far as he could. — This we see in ourselves and in all men: when we see any qualifications in others that are pleasing to us, it is natural for us to endeavour to imitate, and to be conformed to those persons. Hence men are apt to learn of those for whom they have a great esteem: they naturally fall into an imitation of their ways and manner of behaviour. But natural men feel within themselves no disposition or inclination to learn of Christ, or to imitate him. Their tempers and

dispositions remain quite contrary to Christ's, neither do they grow at all better or more conformed to him, but rather worse. <sup><HBB></sup>2 Timothy 3:13. "Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse."

### APPLICATION.

**I.** This doctrine may teach us the heinousness of the sin of unbelief; as this sin sets all the glory and excellency of Christ at nought. It often appears strange to natural men, that unbelief should be spoken of as such a heinous and crying sin. They cannot see such evil in it. There are other sins which often trouble their consciences, when this troubles them not at all, though it be that which brings far greater guilt upon them, then those sins about which they are more troubled.

What has been said may show why unbelief is spoken of as a heinous sin, <sup><HBB></sup>John 3:18. and chapter 16:9. and <sup><GLB></sup>1 John 5:10. For thereby all the glory of Christ is set at nought, though it be so great, though it be infinite, though it be the glory of the Godhead itself, and though it has been so gloriously manifested in what Christ has done and suffered. Natural men in their unbelief cast contempt on all this glory, and tread it under foot, as being nothing worth. Their unbelief treats the excellency of Christ as being of less value than the meanest earthly enjoyments.

**II.** This doctrine may convict natural men in four particulars.


**1.** Hereby you may be convinced of the greatness of your quilt. Consider how great and excellent that Person is, whom you thus set at nought. Contempt of any person is heinous in proportion to the worthiness and dignity of the person contemned. Though we are but worms of the dust, and very vile, sinful creatures, yet we take it grievously when we are despised. Consider how you yourselves are ready to resent it, when any of your neighbours seem to slight you, and set light by what you say and do, and to make no account of it, but to treat you as if you were good for nothing, or not worth minding. Do you take this well of your neighbours and equals, when you observe any thing of this nature? Are you not ready to look upon it with resentment, to think very ill of it, and to judge that you have great cause to be offended?

But if it be such a crime to despise you and set you at nought, what is it to set at nought the eternal infinitely glorious Son of God, in comparison with whom you and all nations are nothing, and less than nothing, and vanity? You dislike it much to be condemned by your equals, but you would take it yet more grievously to be despised by your inferiors, by those whom, on every account, you must excel. — What a crime is it then for a vile, sinful worm, to set at nought him who is the brightness of the glory of the King of kings!

It would be a crime inexpressibly heinous, to set little by the glory and excellency of such a person; but it is more so, to set nothing at all by it, as you do. You have no value at all for it, as has been shown. And this is the more aggravated, as Christ is a person whom you so much need, and as he came into the world out of infinite grace to sinners, to lay down his life to deliver them from hell, and purchase for them eternal glory. How much has Christ done and suffered, that you might have opportunity to be saved! Yet you set nothing by the blood of Christ even that blood that was shed for such poor sinners as you are, and that is offered to you for your salvation. But you trample under foot the blood of the Son of God. If Christ had come into the world only to teach us, it would have been a heinous thing to trample under foot his word and instructions. But when he came to die for us, how much more heinous is it to trample under foot his blood!

Men take it hardly to have any of their qualifications or actions despised, which they esteem commendable. But especially do they highly resent it when others slight their kindness. And above all when they put themselves out of their way, and have denied themselves, and suffered considerably to do others a kindness then to have their kindness despised and set at nought, is what men would above all things resent. How heinous then is it, and how exceedingly provoking to God must it be, thus to set at nought so great kindness and love of Christ, when from love to sinners he suffered so much!

Consider how highly the angels, who are so much above you, do set by the glory and excellency of Christ. They admire and adore the glory of Christ, and cease not day nor night to praise the same in the most exalted strains

 Revelation 5:11, 12. “And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels

round about the throne, and the beasts, and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.” The saints admire the excellency of Christ, and the glorious angels admire it, and every creature in heaven and earth, but only you unbelieving children of men.

Consider not only how much the angels set by the glory of Christ, but how much God himself sets by it for he is the darling of heaven, he was eternally God’s delight, and because of his glory God hath thought him worthy to be appointed the heir of all things, and hath seen fit to ordain that all men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father. — Is he thus worthy of the infinite esteem and love of God himself? and is he worthy of no esteem from you?

**2.** Hereby you may be convinced of your danger. You must needs think that such guilt will bring great wrath. Dreadful destruction is denounced in Scripture against those that despise only the disciples of Christ, <0800 Matthew 18:6. What destruction then Consider that you not only have no value for all the glory and excellency of Christ, but you are enemies to him on that very account. The very ground of that enmity and opposition which there is will come on them that despise all the glorious excellency of Christ himself? between your hearts and Jesus Christ, is the glorious perfections and excellencies that there are in Jesus Christ. By being such a holy and excellent Saviour, he is contrary to your lusts and corruptions. If there were a Saviour offered to you that was agreeable to your corrupt nature, such a Saviour you would accept. But Christ being a Saviour of such purity, holiness, and divine perfection, this is the cause why you have no inclination to him, but are offended in him.

Instead of being a precious stone in your eyes, he is a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence to you. That he is a Saviour who hath manifested such divine perfections in what he hath done and suffered, is one principal reason why you set nothing by him. Consider how provoking this must needs be to God the Father, who has given his only-begotten Son for your salvation; and what wrath it merits from the Son whom you thus treat. And consider how you will hereafter bear this wrath.

Consider that however Christ be set at nought by you, he shall be the head of the corner. Though you set him low, yet he shall be exalted even with respect to you. It is but a vain thing for you to make light of Christ and treat him with contempt. How much soever you condemn him, you cannot break his bands asunder, nor cast his cords from you. You will still be in his hands. While you despise Christ, God will despise you, and the Lord will have you in derision. God will set his King on his holy hill of Zion in spite of all his enemies, <sup><H110></sup>Psalm 2:1-6. Though you say, We will not have this man to reign over us, yet Christ will rule over you <sup><H110></sup>Psalm 110:2. “Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.” If you will not submit to the sceptre of his grace, you shall be subject to the rod of his wrath, and he will rule you with a rod of iron; <sup><H110></sup>Psalm 2:9-12.

**3.** You may hence be led to see how worthless many of those things in yourselves are, that you have been ready to make much of. Particularly, if you set nothing by all the glory of Christ, what are those desires that you have after Christ good for? and that willingness that you think you find to come to Christ? Sinners are often wont to excuse themselves in their unbelief, because they see not but that they are willing to come to Christ, and would gladly come to him if they could. And they make much of such desires, as though God were unjust to punish them for not coming to Christ, when they would gladly come if they could. But this doctrine shows that your willingness and desires to come to Christ are not worthy to be mentioned as any excuse; for they are not from any respect to Christ, but are merely forced; you at the same time set nothing by all his excellency and glory.

So you may hence learn the worthlessness of all your pains and endeavors after Christ. When sinners have taken a great deal of pains to get an interest in Christ they are wont to make a righteousness of it, little considering that at the very time they are taking so much pains, they set nothing at all by Christ for any glory or excellency there is in him; but set him wholly at nought, and seek him out of respect to their own interest.

**4.** Hence learn how justly God might for ever refuse to give you an interest in Christ. For why should God give you any part or interest in him whom you set at nought, all whose glory and excellency you value not in the least, but rather trample it under your feet.

Why should God give you any interest in him whom you so despise? seeing you despise him, how justly might you be obliged to go without any interest in him! How justly might you be refused any part in that precious stone, whose preciousness you esteem no more than that of the stones of the street! Is God obliged to cast each a pearl before swine who will trample it under their feet? Is God obliged to make you possessors of his infinitely glorious and dear Son, when at the same time you count him not worth the having, for the sake of any worth or excellency that there is in him; but merely because you cannot I escape hell without him?

# SERMON 4

*[Dated, May, 1735.]*

## THE FOLLY OF LOOKING BACK IN FLEEING OUT OF SODOM.

Remember Lot's wife. (~~CHRIST~~ Luke 17:32)

CHRIST here foretells his coming in his kingdom, in answer to the question which the Pharisees asked him, viz. When the kingdom of God should come. And in what he says of his coming, he evidently has respect to two things; his coming at the destruction of Jerusalem, and his coming at the end of the world. He compares his coming at those times to the coming of God in two remarkable judgments that were past; first, to that in the time of the flood; "and as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man." Next, he compares it to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah; "likewise also, as it was in the days of Lot, even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed."

Then he immediately proceeds to direct his people how they should behave themselves at the appearance of the signal of that day's approach, referring especially to the destruction of Jerusalem. "In that day, he which shall be upon the house-top, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back." In which words Christ shows that they should make the utmost haste to flee and get out of the city to the mountains, as he commands, ~~CHRIST~~ Matthew 24:15, etc. — "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet stand in the holy place, then let them which be in Judea flee to the mountains; let him which is in the house-top not come down to take any thing out of the house, neither let him which is in the field turn back to take his clothes."

Jerusalem was like Sodom, in that it was devoted to destruction, by special divine wrath; and indeed to a more terrible destruction than that of Sodom. Therefore the like direction is given concerning fleeing out of it

with the utmost haste, without looking behind, as the angel gave to Lot, when he bid him flee out of Sodom,

“Escape for thy life, look not behind thee neither stay thou in all the plain.” (<sup>GEN</sup>Genesis 19:17.)

And in the text Christ enforces his counsel by the instance of Lot’s wife. He bids them remember her, and take warning by her, who looked back as she was fleeing out of Sodom, and became a pillar of salt.

If it be inquired why Christ gave this direction to his people to flee out of Jerusalem, in such exceeding haste, at the first notice of the signal of her approaching destruction; I answer, it seems to be, because fleeing out of Jerusalem was a type of fleeing out of a state of sin. Escaping out of that unbelieving city typified an escape out of a state of unbelief. Therefore they were directed to flee without staying to take any thing out of their houses, to signify with what haste and concern we should flee out of a natural condition, that no respect to any worldly enjoyment should prevent us one moment, and that we should flee to Jesus Christ, the refuge of souls, our strong rock, and the mount of our defence, so as, in fleeing to him, to leave and forsake heartily all earthly things.

This seems to be the chief reason also why Lot was directed to make such haste, and not to look behind; because his fleeing out of Sodom was designed on purpose to be a type of our fleeing from that state of sin and misery in which we naturally are.

### DOCTRINE.

We ought not to look back when we are fleeing out of Sodom. The following reasons may be sufficient to support, this doctrine:

**1.** That Sodom is a city full of filthiness and abominations. It is full of those impurities that ought to be had in the utmost abhorrence and detestation by all. The inhabitants of it are a polluted company, they are all under the power and dominion of hateful lusts. All their faculties and affections are polluted with those vile dispositions that are unworthy of the human nature, that greatly debase it, that are exceedingly hateful to God, and that dreadfully incense his anger. Every kind of spiritual

abomination abounds in it. There is nothing so hateful and abominable but that there it is to be found, and there it abounds.

Sodom is a city full of devils and all unclean spirits: there they have their rendezvous, and there they have their dominion. There they sport, and wallow in filthiness, as it is said of mystical Babylon, <sup><68D></sup>Revelation 18:2. Babylon is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and the cage of every unclean and hateful bird. — Who would be of such a society? who would not flee from such a city with the utmost haste, and never look back upon it, and never have the least inclination of returning?

Some in Sodom may seem to carry a fair face, and make a fair outward show; but if we could look into their hearts, they are every one altogether filthy and abominable. We ought to flee from such a city, with the utmost abhorrence of the place and society, with no desires to dwell longer there, and never to discover the least inclination to return to it: but should be desirous to get to the greatest possible distance from it, that we might in no wise be partakers in her abominations.

**2.** We ought not to look back when fleeing out of Sodom, because Sodom is a city appointed to destruction. The cry of the city hath reached up to heaven. The earth cannot bear such a burden as her inhabitants are, she will therefore disburden herself of them, and spew them out. God will not suffer such a city to stand; he will consume it. God is holy, and his nature is infinitely opposite to all such uncleanness; he will therefore be a consuming fire to it. The holiness of God will not suffer it to stand and the majesty and justice of God require that the inhabitants of that city who thus offend and provoke him be destroyed. And God will surely destroy them, it is the immutable and irreversible decree of God. — He hath said it, and he will do it. The decree is gone forth, and so sure as there is a God, and he is almighty, and able to fulfill his decrees and threatenings, so surely will he destroy Sodom. <sup><01D></sup>Genesis 19:12, 13. “Whatsoever thou hast in this city, bring them out of this place; for we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the Lord, and the Lord hath sent us to destroy it.” And in verse 14. “Up, get ye out of this place, for the Lord will destroy this city.”

This city is an accursed city; it is destined to ruin. — Therefore, as we would not be partakers of her curse, and would not be destroyed, we should flee out of it, and not look behind us,

“Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.” (Revelation 18:4.)

**3.** We ought not to look back when fleeing out of Sodom, because the destruction to which it is appointed is exceedingly dreadful: it is appointed to utter destruction, to be wholly and entirely consumed. It is appointed to suffer the wrath of the great God, which is to be poured down from God upon it, like a dreadful storm of fire and brimstone. This city is to be filled full of the wrath of God. Every one that remains in it shall have the fire of God’s wrath come down on his head and into his soul: he shall be full of fire and full of the wrath of the Almighty. He shall be encompassed with fire without and full of fire within: his head, his heart, his bowels, and all his limbs shall be full of fire, and not a drop of water to cool him.

Nor shall he have any place to flee to for relief. Go where he will, there is the fire of God’s wrath: his destruction and torment will be inevitable. — He shall be destroyed without any pity. He shall cry aloud, but there shall be none to help, there shall be none to regard his lamentations, or to afford relief. The decree is gone forth, and the days come when Sodom shall burn as an oven, and all the inhabitants thereof shall be as stubble. As it was in the literal Sodom, the whole city was full of fire: in their houses there was no safety, for they were all on fire; and if they fled out into the streets, they also were full of fire. Fire continually came down out of heaven every where. — That was a dismal time. What a cry was there then in that city, in every part of it! But there was none to help, they had no where to go, where they could hide their heads from fire: they had none to pity or relieve them. If they fled to their friends, they could not help there.

Now, with what haste should we flee from a city appointed to such a destruction! and how should we flee without looking behind us! how should it be our whole intent, to get at the greatest distance from a city in such circumstances! how far should we be from thinking at all of returning to a city which has such wrath hanging over it!

**4.** The destruction to which Sodom is appointed is an universal destruction. None that stay in it shall escape: none will have the good fortune to be in any by-corner, where the fire will not search them out. All sorts, old and young, great and small, shall be destroyed. There shall be no exception of any age, or any sex, or any condition but all shall perish together. <sup><112></sup>Genesis 19:24, 25. “Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven, and he overthrew those cities and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground.” We therefore must not delay or look behind us, for there is no place of safety in Sodom, nor in all the plain on which Sodom is built. The mountain of safety is before us, and not behind us.

**5.** The destruction to which Sodom is appointed is an everlasting destruction. This is said of the literal Sodom that it suffered the vengeance of eternal fire, Jude 7. “Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them, in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.” The destruction that Sodom and Gomorrah suffered was an eternal destruction: those cities were destroyed, and have never been built since, and are not capable of being rebuilt: for the land on which they stood at the time of their destruction sunk and has been ever since covered with the lake of Sodom; or the Dead sea, or as it is called in Scripture the Salt sea. This seems to have been thus ordered on purpose to be a type of the eternal destruction of ungodly men. So that fire by which they were destroyed is called eternal fire, because it was so typically, it was a type of the eternal destruction of ungodly men, which may be in part what is intended, when it is said in that text in Jude that they were set forth for an example, or for a type or representation of the eternal fire in which all the ungodly are to be consumed.

Sodom has in all ages since been covered with a lake which was first brought on it by fire and brimstone, to be a type of the lake of fire and brimstone in which ungodly men shall have their part for ever and ever, as we read <sup><115></sup>Revelation 20:15. and elsewhere. — We ought not therefore to took back when fleeing out of Sodom, seeing that the destruction to which it is appointed is an eternal destruction, for this renders the destruction infinitely dreadful.

**6.** Sodom is a city appointed to swift and sudden destruction. The destruction is not only certain and inevitable, and infinitely dreadful, but it will come speedily. “ Their judgment lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not;” <sup><1112></sup>2 Peter 2:3. And so <sup><1122></sup>Deuteronomy 32:35. “The day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste.” — The storm of wrath, the black clouds of divine vengeance, even now every moment hang over them, just ready to break forth and come down in a dreadful manner upon them. God hath already whet his sword and bent his bow and made ready his arrow on the string, <sup><1117></sup>Psalms 7:12. Therefore we should make haste and not look behind us. For if we linger and stop to look back, and flee not for our lives, there is great danger that we shall be involved in the common ruin.

The destruction of Sodom is not only swift, but will come suddenly and unexpectedly. — It seems to have been a fair morning in Sodom before it was destroyed. <sup><1112></sup>Genesis 19:23. It seems that there were no clouds to be seen, no appearance of any storm at all, much less of a storm of fire and brimstone. The inhabitants of Sodom expected no such thing, even when Lot told his sons-in-law of it, they would not believe it; <sup><1114></sup>Genesis 19:14. — They were making merry, their hearts were at ease, they thought nothing of such a calamity at hand. But it came at once, as travail upon a woman with child, and there was no escaping; as ver 28, 29. “They did eat, they drank; they bought, they sold; they planted, they builded: but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all.”

So it is with wicked men; <sup><1119></sup>Psalms 73:19. “How are they brought into desolation in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors.” — If therefore we linger and look back, we may be suddenly overtaken and seized with destruction.

**7.** There is nothing in Sodom that is worth looking back upon. All the enjoyments of Sodom will soon perish in the common destruction, all will be burnt up. And surely it is not worth the while to look back on things that are perishing and consuming in the flames, as it is with all the enjoyments of sin, they are all appointed to the fire. Therefore it is foolish for any who are fleeing out of Sodom to hanker any more after them; for when they are burnt up, what good can they do? And is it worth the while

for us to return back for the sake of a moment's enjoyment of them, before they are burnt, and so expose ourselves to be burnt up with them?

Lot's wife looked back, because she remembered the pleasant things that she left in Sodom. She hankered after them; she could not but look back with a wishful eye upon the city, where she had lived in such ease and pleasure. Sodom was a place of great outward plenty; they ate the fat, and drank the sweet. The soil about Sodom was exceedingly fruitful; it is said to be as the garden of God, <sup><1131></sup>Genesis 13:10. And fulness of bread was one of the sins of the place, <sup><3360></sup>Ezekiel 16:49.

Here Lot and his wife lived plentifully, and it was a place where the inhabitants wallowed in carnal pleasures and delights. But however much it abounded in these things, what were they worth now, when the city was burning? Lot's wife was very foolish in lingering in her escape, for the sake of things which were all on fire. — So the enjoyments, the profits, and pleasures of sin, have the wrath and curse of God on them; brimstone is scattered on them; hell-fire is ready to kindle on them. It is not therefore worth while for any person to look back after such things.

**8.** We are warned by messengers sent to us from God to make haste in our flight from Sodom, and not to look behind us. God sends to us his ministers, the angels of the churches, on this grand errand, as he sent the angels to warn Lot and his wife to flee for their lives, <sup><115></sup>Genesis 19:15, 16. — If we delay or look back, now that we have had such fair warning, we shall be exceedingly inexcusable and monstrously foolish.

### APPLICATION.

The use that I would make of this doctrine, is to warn those who are in a natural condition to flee out of it, and by no means to look back. While you are out of Christ, you are in Sodom. The whole history to the destruction of Sodom, with all its circumstances, seems to be inserted in the Scriptures for our warning, and is set forth for an example, as the apostle Jude says. It in a lively manner typifies the ease of natural men, the destruction of those that continue in a natural state, and the manner of their escape who flee to Christ. The psalmist, when speaking of the appointed punishment of ungodly men, seems evidently to refer to the destruction of Sodom,

“Upon the wicked God shall rain snares, fire, and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup.”

(~~Psalm~~ Psalm 11:6.)

Consider therefore, you that are seeking an interest in Christ, you are to flee out of Sodom. Sodom is the place of your nativity, and the place where you have spent your lives. You are citizens of that city which is full of filthiness and abomination before God, that polluted and accursed city. You belong to that impure society. You not only live among them, but you are of them, you have committed those abominations, and have so provoked God as you have heard. It is you that I have all this while been speaking of under this doctrine you are the inhabitants of Sodom. Perhaps you may look on your circumstances as not very dreadful; but you dwell in Sodom. — Though you may be reformed, and appear with a clean outside, and a smooth face to the world; yet as long as you are in a natural condition, you are impure inhabitants of Sodom.

The world of mankind is divided into two companies, or, as I may say, into two cities: there is the city of Zion, the church of God, the holy and beloved city, and there is Sodom, that polluted and accursed city, which is appointed to destruction. You belong to the latter of these. How much soever you may look upon yourselves as better than some others, you are of the same city, the same company with fornicators, and drunkards, and adulterers, and common swearers, and highwaymen, and pirates, and Sodomites. How much soever you may think yourselves distinguished, as long as you are out of Christ you belong to the very same society, you are of the company, you join with them, and are no better than they, any otherwise than as you have greater restraints. You are considered in the sight of God as fit to be ranked with them. You and they are altogether the objects of loathing and abhorrence, and have the wrath of God abiding on you; you will go with them and be destroyed with them, if you do not escape from your present state. Yea, you are of the same society and the same company with the devils, for Sodom is not only the city of wicked men, but it is the hold of every foul spirit.

You belong to that city which is appointed to an awful inevitable, universal, swift, and sudden destruction; a city that hath a storm of fire and wrath hanging over it. Many of you are convinced of the awful state

you are in while in Sodom, and are making some attempts to escape from the wrath which hangs over it. Let such be warned by what has been said, to escape for their lives, and not to look back. Look not back, unless you choose to have a share in the burning tempest that is coming down on that city. — Look not back in remembrance of the enjoyments which you have had in Sodom, as hankering after the pleasant things which you have had there, after the ease, the security, and the pleasure which you have there enjoyed.

Remember Lot's wife, for she looked back, as being doth utterly and for ever to leave the ease, the pleasure and plenty which she enjoyed in Sodom, and as having a mind to return to them again: remember what became of her. — Remember the children of Israel in the wilderness, who were desirous of going back again into Egypt.

“We remember the flesh which we did eat in Egypt freely, the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks and onions, and the garlick.” (~~CHURCH~~ Numbers 11:5.)

Remember what was the issue. You must be willing for ever to leave all the ease, and pleasure, and profit of sin, to forsake all for salvation, as Lot forsook all, and left all he had, to escape out of Sodom.

# SERMON 5

## THE FOLLY OF LOOKING BACK IN FLEEING OUT OF SODOM

Remember Lot's wife. (~~Q173~~ Luke 17:32)

THE doctrine from these words was, That we ought not to look back when we are fleeing out of Sodom — Having confirmed this doctrine by several reasons, we came to the application of it in a use of warning to sinners in a natural state, and especially to those who are awakened and convinced of the awful state in which they are, and are desirous of escaping the wrath which is to come. And further to enforce this warning, let me entreat all you who are in this state, to consider the several things which I shall now mention:

**1.** The destruction of which you are in danger is infinitely more dreadful than that destruction of the literal Sodom from which Lot fled. The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah in a storm of fire and brimstone, was but a shadow of the destruction of ungodly men in hell, and is no more to it than a shadow or a picture is to a reality, or than painted fire is to real fire. The misery of hell is set forth by various shadows and images in Scripture, as blackness of darkness, a never-dying worm, a furnace of fire, a lake of fire and brimstone, the torments of the valley of the son of Hinnom, a storm of fire and brimstone.

The reason why so many similitudes are used, is because none of them are sufficient. Any one does but partly and very imperfectly represent the truth, and therefore God makes use of many.

You have therefore much more need to make haste in your escape, and not to look behind you, than Lot and his wife had when they fled out of Sodom; for you are every day and every moment in danger of a thousand times more dreadful storm coming on your heads, than that which came on Sodom, when the Lord rained brimstone and fire from the Lord out of

heaven upon them; so that it will be vastly more sottish in you to look back than it was in Lot's wife.

**2.** The destruction of which you are in danger is not only greater than the temporal destruction of Sodom, but greater than the eternal destruction of the inhabitants of Sodom. For however well you may think you have behaved yourselves, you who have continued impenitent under the glorious gospel, have sinned more, and provoked God far more and have greater quilt upon you, than the inhabitants of Sodom; although you may seem to yourselves, and perhaps to others, to be very harmless creatures.

“Verily I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city.”

(~~405~~ Matthew 10:15.)

**3.** Multitudes, while they have been looking back, have been suddenly overtaken and seized by the storm of wrath. The wrath of God hath not delayed, while they have delayed, it has not waited at all for them to turn about and flee, but has presently seized them, and they have been past hope. When Lot's wife looked back, she was immediately destroyed, God had exercised patience towards her before. When she lingered at the setting out, the angels pressed her, and her husband and children, to make haste. Not only so, but when they yet delayed, they brought her forth, and set her without the city, the Lord being merciful to her. But now when, notwithstanding this mercy, and the warnings which had been in like manner been merciful to you. You in time past have been lingering; you have been warned by the angel of your danger, and pressed to make haste and flee; yet you have delayed. And now at length God hath as it were laid hold on you, by the convictions of his Spirit, to draw you out of Sodom; and therefore remember Lot's wife. If now, after all, you should look back, when God hath been so merciful to you, you will have reason to fear, that God will suddenly destroy you. Multitudes, given her, she looked back, God exercised no more patience towards her, but proceeded immediately to put her to death.

Now God has when they have been looking back, and putting off to another time, have never had another opportunity; they have been suddenly destroyed, and that without remedy.

**4.** If you look back, and live long after it, there will be great danger that you will never get any further. The only way to seek salvation is to press forward with all your might, and still to look and press forward, never to stand still or slacken your pace. Then Lot's wife stopped in her flight and stood still in order that she might look, her punishment was, that there she was to stand for ever; she never got any further; she never got beyond that place: but there she stood as a pillar of salt, a durable pillar and monument of wrath, for her folly and wickedness.

So it was very often with backsliders, though they may live a considerable time after. When they look back, after they have been taking pains for their salvation, they lose all, they put themselves under vast disadvantages by quenching the Spirit of God, and losing their convictions, they dreadfully harden their own hearts, and stupify their souls. They make way for discouragements, dreadfully strengthen and establish the interest of sin in their hearts, many ways give Satan great advantages to ruin them, and provoke God oftentimes utterly to leave them to hardness of heart. When they come to look back, their souls presently become dead and hard like the body of Lot's wife. And though they live long after, they never get any further it is worse for them than if they were immediately damned. When persons in fleeing out of Sodom look back, their last case is far worse than the first; ~~408~~ Matthew 12:43, 44, 45. And experience confirms that none ordinarily are so hard to be brought to repentance as backsliders.

**5.** It may well stir you up to flee for your lives, and not to look behind you, when you consider how many have lately fled to the mountain, while you yet remain in Sodom. To what multitudes hath God given the wisdom to flee to Christ, the mountain of safety! They have fled to the little city Zoar, which God will spare and never destroy. How many have you seen of all sorts resorting out of Sodom thither, as believing the word of God by the angels, that God would surely destroy that place. They are in a safe condition; they are got out of the reach of the storm; the fire and brimstone can do them no harm there.

But you yet remain in that cursed city among them accursed company. You are yet in Sodom, which God is about so terribly to destroy, where you are in danger every minute of having snares, fire, and brimstone, come down on your head. — Though so many have obtained, yet you have not

obtained deliverance. Good has come, but you have seen none of it. Others are happy, but no man knows what will become of you: you have no part nor lot in that glorious salvation of souls, which has lately been among us. — The consideration of this should stir you up effectually to escape, and in your escape to press forward — still to press forward — and to resolve to press forward for ever, let what will be in the way, to hearken to no temptation, and never to look back, or in any wise slacken or abate your endeavours as long as you live, but if possible to increase in them more and more.

**6.** Backsliding after such a time as this, will have a vastly greater tendency to seal a man's damnation than at another time. The greater means men have, the louder calls and the greater advantages they are under, the more dangerous is backsliding, the more it has a tendency to enhance guilt, to provoke God, and to harden the heart.

We, in this land of light, have long enjoyed greater advantages than most of the world. But the advantages which persons are under now for their salvation, are perhaps tenfold what they have been at such times as we have ordinarily lived in; and backsliding will be proportionably the greater sin, and the more dangerous to the soul. You have seen God's glory and his wonders amongst us, in a most marvellous manner. — If therefore you look back after this, there will be great danger that God will swear in his wrath, that you shall never enter into his rest; as God swore concerning them that were for going back into Egypt, after they had seen the wonders which God wrought for Israel. <sup><0412></sup>Numbers 14:22, 23. "Because all those men that have seen my glory and my miracles that I did in Egypt, and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice, surely they shall not see the land which I swore unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it." — Else wonders that we have seen among us of late, have been of a more glorious nature than those that the children of Israel saw in Egypt and in the wilderness.

**7.** We know not but that great part of the wicked world are, at this day, in Sodom's circumstances, when Lot fled out of it; having some outward, temporal destruction hanging over it. It looks as if some great thing were coming; the state of things in the world seems to be ripe for some great

revolution. The world has got to such a terrible degree of wickedness, that it is probable the cry of it has reached up to heaven; and it is hardly probable that God will suffer things to go on, as they now do, much longer. It is likely that God will ere long appear in awful majesty to vindicate his own cause; and then none will be safe that are out of Christ. Now therefore every one should flee for his life, and escape to the mountain, lest be consumed. We cannot certainly tell what God is about to do, but this we may know, that those who are out of Christ are in a most unsafe state.

**8.** To enforce this warning against looking back, let me beseech you to consider the exceeding proneness to it there is in the heart. The heart of man is n backsliding heart. There is in the heart a great love and hankering desire after the ease, pleasure, and enjoyments of Sodom, as there was in Lot's wife, by which persons are continually liable to temptations to look back. The heart is so much towards Sodom, that it is a difficult thing to keep the eye from turning that way, and the feet from tending thither. When men under convictions are put upon fleeing, it is a mere force, it is because God lays hold on their hands, as he did on Lot's and his wife's, and drags them so far. But the tendency of the heart is to go back to Sodom.

Persons are very prone to backsliding also through discouragement. The heart is unsteady, soon tired, and apt to listen to discouraging temptations. A little difficulty and delay soon overcome its feeble resolutions. And discouragement tends to backslide: it weakens persons' hands, lies as a dead weight on their hearts, and makes them drag heavily; and if it continue long, it very often issues in security and senselessness. Convictions are often shaken off that way: they begin first to go off with discouragement.


Backsliding is a disease that is exceeding secret in its way of working. It is a flattering distemper; it works like a consumption, wherein persons often flatter themselves that they are not worse, but something better, and in a hopeful way to recover, till a few days before they die. So backsliding commonly comes on gradually, and steals on men insensibly and they still flatter themselves that they are not backslidden. — They plead that they are seeking yet, and they hope they have not lost their convictions. And

by the time they find it out, and cannot pretend so any longer, they are commonly so far gone, that they care not much if they have lost their convictions. And when it is come to that, it is commonly a gone case as to those convictions. Thus they blind themselves, and keep themselves insensible of their own disease, and so are not terrified with it, nor awakened to use means for relief, till it is past cure.

Thus it is that backsliding commonly comes upon persons that have for some time been under any considerable convictions, and afterwards lose them. Let the consideration of this your danger excite you to the greatest care and diligence to keep your hearts, and to watchfulness and constant prayer against backsliding. And let it put you upon endeavours to strengthen your resolutions of guarding against every thing that tends to the contrary, that you may indeed hold out to the end, for then shall you know, if you follow on to know the Lord.

## SERMON 6

### THE WARNINGS OF SCRIPTURE ARE IN THE BEST MANNER ADAPTED TO THE AWAKENING AND CONVERSION OF SINNERS

And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets,  
neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.  
( Luke 16:31)

WE here have an account how the rich man in hell — after he had in vain begged of Abraham to send Lazarus to his relief — prays that Lazarus may be sent to his brethren to warn them, that they might take care for their salvation, and escape that place of torment. By the way, it may be proper to remark, that we cannot from this conclude, that the damned will have any workings of natural affection to their near relations in this world, or any concern for their salvation. The design of Christ was only parabolically to represent what different thoughts worldly and wicked men will have of things, when in hell, from what they have while upon earth. The rich man, when he was upon earth, only minded his honour, ease, and pleasure and did not think it worth while to take care of his soul, and to be at much pains to escape hell. But now he is of another mind, and is sensible that if his five brethren, who live in the same careless neglect of their souls as he did, knew what hell is, they would take more care.

But this seems to be put into the parable chiefly to introduce what follows, the reply which Abraham made to him, They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them. As much as to say, They have already abundant warning and instruction, which God himself hath provided for them, let them make use of that.

The rich man replies, Nay, Father Abraham, but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. Then come in the words of the text, And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead. By Moses and the

prophets is meant the whole Old Testament, which was the whole canon of Scripture which they had in those times. The hearing of them implies, attending to what they say, believing them, and obeying them — they would not be persuaded — that is, they would not be persuaded to take thorough care of their souls, to forsake their sins and turn to God, so as to avoid this place of torments — though one rose from the dead, though one should go from the invisible world, either from heaven, where they see the torments of the damned, or from hell, where they feel them.

### DOCTRINE.

The warnings of God's word are more fitted to obtain the ends of awakening sinners, and bringing them to repentance, than the rising of one from the dead to warn them.

In this passage, Moses and the prophets seem not only to be equalized to the warnings of one from the invisible world, but to be preferred before them. They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them: they have already those means which God in his infinite wisdom hath seen to be fittest for them, and more suitable to their nature and circumstances, than the rising of one from the dead. — But whether there can be any more than an equality necessarily inferred or not; yet if only the warnings of the Old Testament have an equal tendency to bring men to repentance, as the rising of one from the dead; then surely these, together with the much clearer revelation under the gospel dispensation by Christ and his apostles — wherein we are abundantly more plainly told of another world, and wherein life and immortality are brought to light — must have a much greater tendency and fitness to obtain these ends.

Sinners are apt to find fault with the means of grace which they enjoy and to say with themselves, If I had ever seen hell, or had ever heard the cries of the damned, or had ever seen a person who had felt hell-torments, or had seen them at a distance, that would awaken me; then I would forsake all my sins, and would do whatever I could to escape hell. But now I am only told of hell in the Bible and by ministers, and there never was any in this world that saw or felt it: so that I am ready to think it is mere delusion and fancy. How do I know that there is any hell? How do I know but that when I die there will be an end of me?

But it is the indisposition of sinners to this great work, to which they are directed, which makes them find fault with their means and advantages. The slothful and negligent, who hate to bestir themselves, are they who object. “The way of the slothful is as a hedge of thorns “ — Sinners know not what they would have. They are fixedly averse to breaking off their sins by righteousness; and to make the matter the more excusable, they object against the sufficiency of their means, and so they will not believe, except they see hell, or see some person who has seen it.

But God, who knows our nature and circumstances, knows what is most adapted to them. He who made the faculties of our souls, knows what will have the greatest tendency to move them, and to work upon them. He who is striving with us, to bring us to repentance and salvation, uses the fittest and best means. In contriving and appointing the means of our salvation, he chooses better for us than we should for ourselves.

Suppose a person should rise from the dead to warn sinners, either from heaven, where they see the misery of the damned, or from hell, where they feel it; and should tell how dismal those torments are. having seen or felt them; and suppose he should confirm what he said, by declaring that he had seen the smoke of their torments, the raging of the flames, the dreadful crew of devils and damned souls together, and had heard their dismal cries and shrieks; or suppose he should say that he had felt them, and should express by words and actions the doleful state of the damned and the extremity of their torments this would probably greatly fright and terrify many sinners who were not terrified by reading the Bible, nor by hearing preaching about hell-torments. But it would be very much because of the unusualness and strangeness of the thing. Men are apt to be much affected with strange things, and to be much affrighted by spectres in the dark, because they are unusual. But if they were as common as preaching is, they would lose their effect.

It might be that on such an unusual occasion, as the rising of one from the dead, for a while men would reform their lives, and possibly some might be so affected as never to forget it. But we are to consider which would have the greatest tendency to awaken us, if both were alike new and unusual, to be warned of the misery of hell by the great God himself, declaring as it were from heaven how dreadful hell is, and abundantly

warning us about it; or to be warned only by a man coming from the invisible world, who had either seen or felt these miseries. It is in this view that we shall consider the matter; and we shall show what advantages the former mode of warning has above the latter: or how the warnings of God's word have a greater tendency to awaken sinners and bring them to repentance, than the rising of one from the dead to warn them.

**1.** God, in many respects, knows better what belongs to the punishment of sinners than departed souls. Departed souls doubtless know what hell-torments are, much better than any on earth. The souls of the wicked feel them and the souls of the saints see them afar off. God glorifies his justice in the punishment of ungodly men, in the view of the saints and angels, and thereby makes them the more admire the riches of his goodness in choosing them to life. As the rich man saw Lazarus in heaven afar off so Lazarus saw the rich man in hell; he saw hell-torments; and therefore the rich man desires he may be sent to warn his brethren. — And if one should rise from the dead to warn wicked men, if it would at all awaken them, it would be because he knew what hell-torments were by his own knowledge, and could describe them to others, as having seen and felt them.

But surely the all-seeing God knows as well as any of the dead, what the present sufferings of the damned are. He is every where present with his all-seeing eye. He is in heaven and in hell, and in and through every part of the creation. He is where every devil is, and where every damned soul is, he is present by his knowledge and his essence. He not only knows as well as those in heaven who see at a distance; but he knows as perfectly as those who feel the misery. He seeth into the innermost recesses of the hearts of those miserable spirits. He seeth all the sorrow and anguish that are there; for he upholds them in being. They and all the powers of their spirits, whereby they are capable of either happiness or misery, are in his hands.

Besides, it is his wrath they endure; he measures out to them their several portions of punishment; he makes his wrath enter into them; he is a consuming fire to them; his anger is that fire, in which they are tormented. He therefore is doubtless able to give us as clear and distinct, and as true,

an account of hell, as the damned themselves, if they should rise from the dead. He needs not any to inform him.

He knows far better what the eternity of those torments is than any of them. He can better tell us how awful a thing eternity is. He knows better what the future judgment of sinners will be, when the Lord Jesus shall come in flaming fire to take vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel. He knows far better than they how much the torment of the wicked will then be increased.


**2.** We have the truth upon surer grounds from God's testimony, than we could have it from the testimony of one rising; from the dead. Suppose one should rise from the dead, and tell us of the dreadfulness of hell-torments how precarious a foundation would that be to build upon in a matter of such importance, unless we considered it as confirmed by divine testimony. We should be uncertain whether there were not some delusion in the case. We know that it is impossible for God to be; and we may know that the matter is just as he declares it to us. But if one should come from the dead, we could not be so sure that we were no way imposed upon. We could not be so sure that he who testified was not himself subject to some delusion. We could not be sure that the matter was not strained too high, and represented greater than it really is.


One coming from the dead could not, merely by force of his own testimony, make us sure that we should come to that place of torments if we did not repent and reform. And if there should come more witnesses than one from the dead, if there should be ever so many, yet there is no authority equal to that of God, there is no testimony of spirits from the invisible world which would be so indisputable and unquestionable as the divine testimony. How could we know, unless by some divine revelation, that they who should come from the dead had not come to deceive us? How could we know how wicked, or how good they were, and upon what views they acted?

Whereas we have the greatest ground to be assured that the First Being, and the Fountain of all being and perfection, is nothing but light and truth itself, and therefore that it is impossible he should deceive or be deceived.

**3.** The warnings of God's word have greatly the advantage, by reason of the greatness and majesty of him who speaks. The speeches and declarations of those who are great, excellent, and honourable, have a greater tendency to move the affections, than the declarations of others who are less excellent. Things spoken by a king affect more than the same things spoken by a mean man.

But God is infinitely greater than kings, he is universal King of heaven and earth, the absolute Sovereign of all things. Now, what can have a greater tendency to strike the mind and move the heart, than to be warned by this great and glorious Being? Shall we be unmoved when he speaks who made heaven and earth by the word of his power? If his immediate speeches, declarations, and warnings, will not influence us, what will?

“Hear, O heavens, and give ear,  
O earth, for the Lord hath spoken.” (  Isaiah 1:2)

That is to the present purpose which we have in  Matthew 21:37. “But last of all he sent his son saying, They will reverence my son.” He sent his servants before, but they did not regard them. He therefore sent his son, who was a much greater and more honourable messengers and said, Surely they will regard him.

What if God should send messengers from the dead to warn us, even many in succession, and men should reject them; we should justly argue, that it would have a much greater tendency to make men regard and obey the counsel, if he would send his Son, or come himself: But God hath sent his Son, and therein he hath come himself. He came down from heaven, and took upon him our nature, and dwelt among use teaching and warning us concerning hell and damnation.

In the Bible, we not only have those warnings which were given by inspiration of the prophets, but we have God's own words, which he spoke as it were by his own mouth. In the Old Testament is his voice out of the midst of the fire and the darkness, from mount Sinai; and in the New Testament, we have God speaking to us, as dwelling among us. He came down from heaven, and instructed us in a familiar manner for a long while; and we have his instructions recorded in our Bibles. — How which has the greatest tendency to influence men, to have one of the departed spirits

sent back into its body to warn them, or to have God himself assume a body and warn them?

**4.** It more evidently shows the importance of the affair that God should immediately concern himself in it, that; the coming of one from the dead would do. Those things about which kings most immediately concern themselves are commonly matters of the greatest importance, while they leave less concerns to be managed by their officers. And surely that must be a matter of very great moment, in which God shows himself so much concerned as he does in our salvation. God, in all ages of the world hath showed himself very much concerned in this matter.

How abundantly hath he warned us in his holy word! How earnest hath he shown himself in it! how many arguments and expostulations hath he used, that we might avoid the way to hell! — This evidently argues, that what we are warned about is a matter of the utmost concern, and proves it much more than if we were only warned by one risen from the dead.

**5.** God warning us of our danger of damnation hath a greater tendency to have influence upon us, because he is our Judge. Damnation is a punishment to which he condemns and which he inflicts. What he warns us of is his own wrath and vengeance. In his word we have his threatenings against sin denounced by himself. He tells us, that if we go on in sin, he will destroy us, and cast us out of his sight, and pour out his wrath upon us, and hold us eternally under misery. He tells us so himself; and this hath a much greater tendency to influence us, than to be told so by another, who is not to be our judge who hath not in his hands the power of making us miserable. — When a king immediately threatens his own displeasure, it has a greater tendency to terrify men, than when another man threatens it, or warns them of the danger.

**6.** God is infinitely wise, and knows better how to speak to us so as to persuade us, than one risen from the dead. He perfectly knows our nature and state, and knows how to adapt his instructions and warnings to our frame and circumstances in the world; and without doubt that method which God has chosen, is agreeable to his infinite wisdom, and most adapted to our nature.

If one should come from hell to warn sinners, it may be he would tell them of hell in such a manner as would have more of a tendency to drive men into despair, and set them a blaspheming as they do in hell, than to excite them to strive for salvation, and diligently to use the needs which God hath appointed. But God knoweth what revelation of hell we can bear, and what hath the most tendency to do us good in this our infirm, dark, and sinful state. — The declarations of one come from hell might more tend to drive us from God than to bring us near to him. It is best for us to be warned and instructed by God, who knows best how to do it.

These are some of the reasons why the warnings of God's word have more of a tendency to bring us to repentance, than the warning of one risen from the dead.

### APPLICATION.

**1.** It is a natural inference from this doctrine, that if these means which God hath appointed do not answer to lead men to repentance and reformation, no others would. — Although this be not an absolutely necessary consequence from the words of the doctrine; yet it seems to be Christ's aim to teach us, that if God's means will not answer, none will. Our own means, those which we can devise, however they may seem more likely at a distance to be effectual, if brought to the trial will not prove to be better. The rich man thought that if his brethren were warned by one rising from the dead, they would surely repent. But Abraham tells him, he is mistaken.

If one rising from the dead would not answer the purpose, we may rationally conclude that no other kind of means, different from those appointed by God, would. For what can we think of, which seems to have more tendency to awaken men, and lead to repentance, than one coming from the dead to them, except those means which we enjoy. — Indeed men can think of many means, which they may imagine, if they enjoyed them, would make them believe and repent: but they deceive themselves.

It may be they think, if they could see some prophet and see him work miracles, that this would awaken them. But how was it then when there were prophets? There has rarely been a more degenerate time than that of Elijah and Elisha, who wrought so many miracles. The people did not

regard their prophecies nor their miracles but walked in their own ways, and served their own gods so that Elijah thought there was none left of the true worshippers of God. And how did they treat the prophet Jeremiah, solemnly warning them from God of their approaching destruction? And how often do the prophets complain that all their prophecies and warnings were neglected and despised!

Would it be sufficient if you could hear God speak from heaven? How was it in Moses's time, when they heard God speak out of the midst of the fire, and heard the voice of words exceeding loud and full of majesty, so that they exceedingly trembled; when they saw mount Sinai all covered with smoke, and shaking exceedingly? How did they behave themselves? Did they all turn from their sins, and after that walk in the ways of God? It is true, they were very much affected at first, while it was a new and strange thing to them but how hard-hearted and rebellious were they soon after! They did not scruple to rebel against this same great and glorious God. Yea, they made a golden calf while Moses was in the mount conversing with God, just after they had seen those dreadful appearances of divine majesty.

Thus they rebelled against the Lord, although they had seen so many miracles and wonders in Egypt at the Red sea, and in the wilderness, although they continually saw the pillar of cloud and of fire going before them, were continually fed in a miraculous manner with manna, and in the same miraculous manner made to drink water out of the rock.

Men are apt to think, that if they had lived in Christ's time, and had seen and heard him, and had seen his miracles, that they would have effectually convinced and turned them from sin. But how was it in fact? How few were these brought to repentance by all his discourses and miracles! How hard-hearted were they! Some were very much affected for a little while; but how few constant steady followers had he! He was, notwithstanding his miracles, rejected, despised, and even murdered by the people among whom he dwelt. And they were men of the same natures as sinners in these days.

The Scripture is full of instances, sufficient to convince us, that if the word of God will not awaken and convert sinners, nothing will. — And we see enough in these days to convince us of it. Men sometimes meet with

those things by which we should not imagine, if we did not see it, and were not used to it, but that they would be thoroughly awakened and reformed. — They sometimes hear the warnings of dying men expecting to go to hell. One would think this would be enough to awaken them, and it may be they are affected with it for the present: but it only touches them; it vanishes away, and is gone like a puff of wind.

Sometimes sinners themselves are laid upon beds of sickness, and their lives hang in doubt before them. They are brought to the sides of the grave, and to the very mouth of hell, and their hearts are full of terror and amazement. Yet if they recover, they soon forget it, and return to the ways of folly and wickedness. — Sometimes this is repeated; they are taken sick again, are again in extreme peril of death, their hearts are full of amazement, and they make many promises and vows; yet being recovered, they again soon forget all, and return to sin and folly. Such things are enough to convince us, that if the word of God be not sufficient to convince men, and make them break off their sin, no external means would be sufficient.

Perhaps some may yet be ready to think, that if sinners should see hell, and here the cries of the damned, that would be effectual, though nothing else would. But if we duly consider the matter, we shall see reason to think, that it would not have so great a tendency to turn men from sin, as the word of God. Such a thing would doubtless be effectual to terrify and affright men, and probably to death. Such a mean is not at all suitable to our nature and state in the world. If it should not fright men to death, it would not have so great a tendency to make them diligently use means for their salvation as the warnings of Scripture. It would probably drive them to despair; or so take away their spirits that they would have no heart to seek God. Instead of driving them to God, it would probably make them hate him the more. It would make them more like devils; and set them a blaspheming as the damned do. For while the hearts of men are filled with natural darkness, they cannot see the glory of the divine justice appearing in such extreme torments.

Therefore the means which God hath instituted for us, are doubtless the best, and most conducive to lead men to repentance and salvation. They are doubtless far better than any other which we can devise.

**2.** Hence we learn the dreadful hardness of men's hearts, since the word of God hath no more influence upon them and they are no more moved and wrought upon by those means which infinite wisdom hath provided. The warnings of the word of God are, as you have heard, better and more powerful means than if one should rise from the dead to warn us, and tell us our danger, and the dreadfulfulness of the wrath of God. You have also heard, that if these means will not answer the end of awakening and leading sinners to repentance, no other will, neither the working of miracles, nor the hearing of God speak with an audible voice from heaven: nor any thing else. — Yet how few are there who are effectually wrought upon by the word of God! They are very thinly sown, there is but here and there one. When we read how the children of Israel conducted themselves in the wilderness, how often they murmured and offended; we are ready to wonder at the hardness of their hearts. And when we read the history of Christ, and how the Jews hated and rejected him notwithstanding his many miracles; we are ready to wonder how they could be so hard-hearted. But we have as much reason to wonder at ourselves, for we have naturally the same sort of hearts that they had; and sinners in these days manifest a hardness of heart as much to be wondered at, in that they are not influenced by the word of God; for they who will not hear Moses and the prophets, Jesus Christ and his apostles, neither would be persuaded, if one should rise from the dead, or if an angel should come from heaven.

The best means of awakening and conversion are plentifully enjoyed by us, much more plentifully in several respects, than they were by those who had only Moses and the prophets. In the first place, we have divine truth more fully revealed in the Bible than they had then. Light now shines abundantly clear. Gospel-truth is revealed, not in types and shadows, but plainly. Heaven and hell are much more clearly and expressly made known. We are told, that the glory of that revelation was no glory in comparison with the revelation of the gospel.

Again, we have a greater plenty of Bibles than they had under the dispensation of Moses and the prophets. Then there was no such thing as printing, and Bibles were scarce things. They seldom had any Bibles any where else but in their synagogues. But how we have them in our houses we can look into them when we please. Besides, Christ hath appointed the gospel-ministry, by which we have the word of God explained and

enforced every week. Yet how little influence hath the word of God to bring men to repentance!

Let this strike conviction into those who never yet have found any such effect by the word of God. Though you are convinced of nothing else, yet you have abundant reason to be convinced that your hearts are as hard as a stone, and that you are exceedingly stupid and sottish.

**3.** Hence we may learn how justly and fairly God deals with us. He gives us the best means of awakening and reclaiming us from our sins; better than if he had sent one from the dead to warn us. He gives us those means which are most suited to our nature and circumstances. He gives sinners abundant warning before he punishes them. What could he have done more than he hath done? We can devise or imagine no sort of warning which would have been better than what God hath given us. How justly therefore are ungodly men punished! how inexcusable will they be!

**4.** Let all make use of the means which God hath instituted. They are the best and only means by which we may expect to obtain salvation. We shall be most inexcusable therefore if we neglect them. Let us attend to the word of God, read and hear it carefully, consider it thoroughly and daily walk by it. Let us be diligent in this work The word of God is a great price put into our hands to get wisdom and eternal salvation, let us there fore improve it while we have it, as we know not how soon we may be deprived of it, lest Christ say to us as in ~~☞~~ Luke 19:42.

“If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! But now they are hid from thine eyes.”

# SERMON 7

[Dated, June, 1740.]

## HYPOCRITES DEFICIENT IN THE DUTY OF PRAYER

Will he always call upon God? (~~1870~~ Job 27:10)

CONCERNING these words, I would observe,

- 1.** Who it is that is here spoken of, viz. the hypocrite; as you may see, if you take the two preceding verses with the verse of the text. “For what is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul? Will God hear his cry when trouble cometh upon him? Will he delight himself in the Almighty? Will he always call upon God?” Job’s three friends, in their speeches to him, insisted much upon it, that he was a hypocrite But Job, in this chapter, asserts his sincerity and integrity, and shows how different his own behavior had been from that of hypocrites. Particularly he declares his steadfast and immovable resolution at persevering and holding out in the ways of religion and righteousness to the end; as you may see in the six first verses. In the text, he shows how contrary to this stedfastness and perseverance the character of the hypocrite is, who is not wont thus to hold out in relation.
- 2.** We may observe what duty of religion it is, with respect to which the hypocrite is deciphered in the text, and that is the duty of prayer or calling upon God.
- 3.** Here is something supposed of the hypocrite relating to this duty, viz. That he may continue in it for a while; he may call upon God for a season.
- 4.** Something asserted, viz. That it is not the manner of hypocrites to continue always in this duty. Will he always call upon God? It is in the form of an interrogation but the words have the force of a strong assertion, that however the hypocrite may call upon God for a season, yet he will not always continue in it.

## DOCTRINE.

However hypocrites may continue for a season in the duty of prayer, yet it is their manner, after a while, in a great measure to leave off.

In speaking upon this doctrine, I shall show,

**I.** How hypocrites often continue for a season to call upon God.

**II.** How it is their manner, after a while in a great measure to leave off the practice of this duty.

**III.** Give some reasons why this is the manner of hypocrites.

**I.** I would show how hypocrites often continue for a season in the duty of prayer.

**1.** They do so for a while after they have received common illuminations and affections. While they are under awakenings, they may through fear of hell call upon God, and attend very constantly upon the duty of secret prayer. And after they have had some melting affections, having; their hearts much moved with the goodness of God, or with some affecting encouragements, and false joy and comfort; while these impressions last they continue to call upon God in the duty of secret prayer.

**2.** After they have obtained a hope, and have made profession of their good estate, they often continue for a while in the duty of secret prayer. For a while they are affected with their hope: they think that God hath delivered them out of a natural condition, and given them an interest in Christ, thus introducing them into a slate of safety from that eternal misery which they lately feared. With this supposed kindness of God to them, they are much affected, and often find in themselves for a while a kind of love to God, excited by his supposed love to them. Now while this affection towards God continues, the duties of religion seem pleasant to them, it is even with some delight that they approach to God in their closets; and for the present it may be, they think of no other than continuing to call upon God as long as they live.

Yea, they may continue in the duty of secret prayer for a while after the liveliness of their affections is past, through the influence of their former intentions. They intended to continue seeking God always, and now

suddenly to leave off would be too shocking to their own minds. And the force of their own preconceived notions, viz. That godly persons continue in religion, may have some effect. Therefore, though they have no love to the duty of prayer, and begin to grow weary of it, yet as they love their own hope they are somewhat backward to take a course, which will prove it to be a false hope, and so deprive them of it.

If they should all at once bear the sign of a false hope, they would scare themselves. Their hope is dear to them, and it would fright them to see any plain evidence that it is not true. Hence, for a considerable time after the force of their illuminations and affections is over, and after they hate the duty of prayer — and would be glad to have done with it, if they could without showing themselves to be hypocrites they hold up a kind of attendance upon the duty of secret prayer. — This may keep up the outside of religion in them for a good while, and occasion it to be somewhat slowly that they are brought to neglect it. They must not leave off suddenly, because that would be too great a shock to their false peace. — But they must come gradually to it, as they find their consciences can bear it, and as they can find out devices and salvos to cover the matter, and make their so doing consistent, in their own opinion, with the truth of their hope. — But,

**II.** It is the manner of hypocrites, after a while, in a great measure to leave off the practice of this duty. We are often taught, that the seeming, goodness and piety of hypocrites is not of a lasting and persevering nature. It is so with respect to their practice of the duty of prayer in particular, and especially of secret prayer. They can omit this duty, and their omission of it not be taken notice of by others, who know what profession they have made. So that a regard to their own reputation doth not oblige them still to practice it. If others saw how they neglect it, it would exceedingly shock their charity towards them. But their neglect doth not fall under their observation at least not under the observation of many. Therefore they may omit this duty, and still have the credit of being converted persons.

Men of this character can come to a neglect of secret prayer by degrees without shocking their peace. For though indeed for a converted person to live in a great measure without secret prayer, is very wide of the notion

they once had of a true convert; yet they find means by degrees to alter their notions, and to bring their principles to suit with their inclinations; and at length they come to a notion, that a man may be a convert, and yet live very much in neglect of this duty. In time, they can bring all things to suit well together; as a hope of heaven, an indulgence of sloth, gratifying carnal appetites, and living in a great measure a prayerless life. They cannot indeed suddenly make these things agree; it must be a work of time; and length time will effect it. By degrees they find out ways to guard and defend their consciences against those powerful enemies; so that those enemies, and a quiet, secure conscience, can at length dwell together.

Whereas it is asserted in the doctrine, that it is the manner of hypocrites, after a while, in a great measure to leave off this duty, I would observe to you,

**1.** That it is not intended but that they may commonly continue to the end of life in an external attendance on prayer with others. They may commonly be present at public prayers in the congregation, and also at family prayer. This, in such places of light as this is, men commonly do before they are so much as awakened. Many vicious persons, who make no pretence to serious religion, commonly attend public prayers in the congregation, and also more private prayers in the families in which they live, unless it be when carnal designs interfere, or when their youthful pleasures and diversions, and their vain company, call them; and then they make no conscience of attending family prayer. Otherwise they may continue to attend upon prayer as long as they live, and yet may truly be said not to call upon God. For such prayer, in the manner of it, is not their own. They are present only for the sake of their credit, or in compliance with others. They may be present at these prayers, and yet have no proper prayer of their own. Many of those concerning whom it may be said, as in <sup>1830A</sup>Job 15:4. that they cast off fear and restrain prayer before God, are yet frequently present at family and public prayers.

**2.** But they in a great measure leave off the practice of secret prayer. They come to this pass by degrees. At first they begin to be careless about it, under some particular temptations. Because they have been out in young company, or have been taken up very much with worldly business, they omit it once: after that they more easily omit it again. Thus it presently

becomes a frequent thing with them to omit it; and after a while, it comes to that pass, that they seldom attend it. Perhaps they attend it on sabbath-days, and sometimes on other days. But they have ceased to make it a constant practice daily to retire to worship God alone, and to seek his face in secret places. They sometimes do a little to quiet conscience, and just to keep alive their old hope, because it would be shocking to them, even after all their subtle dealing with their consciences, to call themselves converts, and yet totally to live without prayer. Yet the practice of secret prayer they have in a great measure left off. — I come now,

### III. To the reasons why this is the manner of hypocrites.

1. Hypocrites never had the spirit of prayer. They may have been stirred up to the external performance of this duty, and that with a great deal of earnestness and affection, and yet always have been destitute of the true spirit of prayer. The spirit of prayer is a holy spirit, a gracious spirit. We read of the spirit of grace and supplication;

“I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of  
Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplications.”

(~~3820~~ Zechariah 12:10.)

Wherever there is a true spirit of supplication, there is the spirit of grace. The true spirit of prayer is no other than God’s own spirit dwelling in the hearts of the saints. And as this spirit comes from God, so doth it naturally tend to God in holy breathings and partings. It naturally leads to God to converse with him by prayer. Therefore the Spirit is said to make intercession for the saints with groanings which cannot be uttered,

~~888~~ Romans 8:26.

The Spirit of God makes intercession for them, as it is that Spirit which in some respect indites their prayers, and leads them to pour out their souls before God. Therefore the saints are said to worship God in the spirit; Phil iii 3. “We are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit;” and ~~8023~~ John 4:23. “The true worshippers worship the Father in spirit and in truth.” The truly godly have the spirit of adoption, the spirit of a child, to which it is natural to go to God and call upon him, crying to him as to a father.

But hypocrites have nothing of this spirit of adoption: they have not the spirit of children for this is a gracious and holy spirit, given only in a real work of regeneration. Therefore it is often mentioned as a part of the distinguishing characters the godly, that they call upon God. Psalm cxiv. 18, 19. "The Lord is nigh to them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth. He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him; he will also hear their cry, and will save them." ~~2023~~ Joel 2:32. "It shall come to pass, that who-soever calleth on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

It is natural to one who is truly born from above to pray to God, and to pour out his soul in holy supplications before his heavenly Father. This is as natural to the new nature and life at breathing is to the nature and life of the body. But hypocrites have not this new nature. Those illuminations and affections which they had, went away, and left no change of nature. Therefore prayer naturally dies away in them, having no foundation laid in the nature of the soul. It is maintained awhile only by a certain force put upon nature. But force is not constant; and as that declines, nature will take place again.

The spirit of a true convert is a spirit of true love to God, and that naturally inclines the soul to those duties wherein it is conversant with God, and makes it to delight in approaching him. But a hypocrite hath no such spirit. He is left under the reigning power of enmity against God, which naturally inclines him to shun his presence. The spirit of a true convert is a spirit of faith and reliance on the power, wisdom, and mercy of God, and such a spirit is naturally expressed in prayer. True prayer is nothing else but faith expressed. Hence we read of the prayer of faith; ~~2023~~ James 5:15. True christian prayer is the faith and reliance of the soul breathed forth in words. But a hypocrite is without the spirit of faith. He hath no true reliance or dependence on God, but is really self-dependent.

As to those common convictions and affections which the hypocrite had, and which made him keep up the duty of prayer for a while; they not reaching the bottom of the heart, nor being accompanied with any change of nature, a little thing extinguishes them. The cares of the world commonly choke and suffocate them, and open the pleasures and vanities of youth totally put an end to them and with them ends their constant practice of the duty of prayer.

**2.** When a hypocrite hath had his false conversion, his wants are in his sense of things already supplied, his desires are already answered, and so he finds no further business at the throne of grace. He never was sensible that he had any other needs, but a need of being safe from hell. And now that he is converted, as he thinks, that need is supplied. Why then should he still go on to resort to the throne of grace with earnest requests? He is out of danger all that he was afraid of is removed: he hath got enough to carry him to heaven, and what more should he desire? — While under awakenings, he had this to stir him up to go to God in prayer, that he was in continual fear of hell. This put him upon crying to God for mercy. But since in his own opinion he is converted, he hath no further business about which to go to God. And although he may keep up the duty of prayer in the outward form a little while, for fear of spoiling his hope, yet he will find it a dull business to continue it without necessity, and so by degrees he will let drop the practice. The work of the hypocrite is done when he is converted, and therefore he standeth in no further need of help.

But it is far otherwise with the true convert. His work is not done; but he finds still a great work to do, and great wants to be supplied. He sees himself still to be a poor, empty, helpless creature, and that he still stands in great and continual need of God's help. He is sensible that without God he can do nothing. A false conversion makes a man in his own eyes self-sufficient. He saith he is rich, and increased with goods, and hath need of nothing, and knoweth not that he is wretched and miserable, and poor and blind, and naked. But after a true conversion, the soul remains sensible of its own impotence and emptiness, as it is in itself, and its sense of it is rather increased than diminished. It is still sensible of its universal dependence on God for every thing. A true convert is sensible that his grace is very imperfect; and he is very far from having all that he desires. Instead of that, by conversion are begotten in him new desires which he never had before. He now finds in him holy appetites, a hungering and thirsting after righteousness, a longing after more acquaintance and communion with God. So that he hath business enough still at the throne of grace; yea, his business there, instead of being diminished, is rather increased.

**3.** The hope which the hypocrite hath of his good estate takes off the force that the command of God before had upon his conscience, so that now he

dares neglect so plain a duty. The command which requires the practice of the duty of prayer is exceeding plain: ~~1081~~ Matthew 26:41. “Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.” ~~1082~~ Ephesians 6:18 “Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit, and watching there unto with all perseverance, and supplication for all saints.” ~~1083~~ Matthew 6:6. “When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret.” As long as the hypocrite was in his own apprehension in continual danger of hell, he durst not disobey these commands. But since he is, as he thinks, safe from hell, he is grown bold, he dares to live in the neglect of the plainest command in the Bible.

**4.** It is the manner of hypocrites, after a while, to return to sinful practices, which will tend to keep them from praying. While they were under convictions, they reformed their lives, and walked very exactly. This reformation continues, after their supposed conversion, while they are much affected with hope and false comfort. But as these things die away, their old lusts revive, and by degrees they return like the dog to his vomit, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire. They return to their sensual, worldly, proud, and contentious practices, as before. And no wonder this makes them forsake their closets. Sinning and praying agree not well together. If a man be constant in the duty of secret prayer, it will tend to restrain him from wilful sinning. So, on the other hand if he allow himself in sinful practices, it will restrain him from praying. It will give quite another turn to his mind so that he will have no disposition to the practice of such a duty: it will be contrary to him. A man who knows that he lives in sin against God, will not be inclined to come daily into the presence of God; but will rather be inclined to fly from his presence, as Adam, when he had eaten of the forbidden fruit, ran away from God, and hid himself among the trees of the garden.

To keep up the duty of prayer after he hath given loose to his lusts, would tend very much to disquiet a man’s conscience. It would give advantage to his conscience to testify aloud against him. If he should come from his wickedness into the presence of God, immediately to speak to him, his conscience would, as it were, fly in his face. Therefore hypocrites, as they by degrees admit their wicked practices, exclude prayer.

- 5.** Hypocrites never counted the cost of perseverance in seeking God, and of following him to the end of life. To continue instant in prayer with all perseverance to the end of life, requires much care, watchfulness, and labour. For much opposition is made to it by the flesh, the world, and the devil and Christians meet with many temptations to forsake this practice. He that would persevere in this duty must be laborious in religion in general. But hypocrites never count the cost of such labour; *i.e.* they never were prepared in the disposition of their minds to give their lives to the service of God, and to the duties of religion. It is therefore no great wonder they are weary, and give up after they have continued for a while, as their affections are gone, and they find that prayer to them grows irksome and
- 6.** Hypocrites have no interest in those gracious promises which God hath made to his people, of those spiritual supplies which are needful in order to uphold them in the way of their duty to the end. God hath promised to true saints that they shall not forsake him;

“I will put my fear into their hearts,  
that they shall not depart from me.” (<sup>3930</sup>Jeremiah 32:40.)

He hath promised that he will keep them in the way of their duty; <sup>3931</sup>1 Thessalonians 5:23, 24. “And the God of peace sanctify you wholly. And I pray God your spirit, soul, and body, he preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.” — But hypocrites have no interest in these and such like promises; and therefore are liable to fall away. If God do not uphold men, there is no dependence on their steadfastness. If the Spirit of God depart from them, will soon become careless and profane, and there will be an end to their seeming devotion and piety.

The application may be in a use of exhortation, in two branches.

**I.** I would exhort those who have entertained a hope of their being true converts — and who since their supposed conversion have left off the duty of secret prayer, and ordinarily allow themselves in the omission of it — to throw away their hope. If you have left off calling upon God, it is time for you to leave off hoping and flattering yourselves with an imagination that you are the children of God. Probably it will be a very difficult thing for you to do this. It is hard for a man to let go a hope of

heaven, on which he hath once allowed himself to lay hold, and which he hath retained for a considerable time. True conversion is a rare thing; but that men should be brought off from a false hope of conversion — after they are once settled and established in it, and have continued in it for some time — is much more rare.

Those things in men which, if known, would be sufficient to convince others that they are hypocrites, will not convince themselves; and those things which would be sufficient to convince them concerning others, will not be sufficient to convince them concerning themselves. They can make larger allowances for themselves than they can for others. They can find out ways to solve objections against their own hope, when they can find none in the like case for their neighbour.

But if your case be such as is spoken of in the doctrine, it is surely time for you to seek a better hope, and another work of God's Spirit, than ever you have yet experienced; something more thorough and effectual. When you find by experience, that the seed which was sown in your hearts, though at first it sprang up and seemed flourishing, is withering away, as by the heat of the sun, or is choked, as with thorns; this shows in what sort of ground the seed was sown, that it is either stony or thorny ground; and that therefore it is necessary you should pass through another change, whereby your heart may become good ground, which shall bring forth fruit with patience.

Insist not on that as a reason why you should not throw away your hope, that you had the judgment of others, that the change of which you were the subject was right. It is a small matter to be judged of man's judgment, whether you be approved or condemned, and whether it be by minister or people, wise or unwise.

“It is a very small thing that I should be judged of you or  
of man's judgment.” (~~408~~ 1 Corinthians 4:3.)

If your goodness have proved to be as the morning cloud and early dew; if you be one of those who have forsaken God, and left off calling upon his name, you have the judgment and sentence of God in the Scriptures against you, which is a thousand times more than to have the judgment of all the wise and godly men and ministers in the world in your favour.

Others, from your account of things, may have been obliged to have charity for you, and to think that — provided you were not mistaken, and in your account did not misrepresent things, or express them by wrong terms — you were really converted. But what a miserable foundation is this, upon which to build a hope as to your eternal state!

Here I request your attention to a few things in particular, which I have to say to you concerning your hope.

**1.** Why will you retain that hope which by evident experience you find poisons you? Is it reasonable to think, that a holy hope, a hope that is from heaven, would have such an influence? No, surely, nothing of such a malignant influence comes from that world of purity and glory. No poison groweth in the paradise of God. The same hope which leads men to sin in this world, will lead to hell hereafter. Why therefore will you retain such a hope, of which your own experience shows you the ill tendency, in that it encourages you to lead a wicked life? For certainly that life is a wicked life wherein you live in the neglect of so well-known a duty, as that of secret prayer, and in the disobedience of so plain a command of God, as that by which the duty is enjoined. And is not a way of disobedience to God a way to hell?

If your own experience of the nature and tendency of your hope will not convince you of the falseness of it, what will? Are you resolved to retain your hope, let it prove ever so unsound and hurtful? Will you hold it fast till you go to hell with it? Many men cling to a false hope, and embrace it so closely, that they never let it go till the flames of hell cause their arms to unclench and let go their hold. — Consider how you will answer it at the day of judgment, when God shall call you to an account for your folly in resting in such a hope. Will it be a sufficient answer for you to say, that you had the charity of others, and that they thought your conversion was right?

Certainly it is foolish for men to imagine, that God had no more wisdom, or could contrive no other way of bestowing comfort and hope of eternal life, than one which should encourage men to forsake him.

# SERMON 8

## HYPOCRITES DEFICIENT IN THE DUTY OF PRAYER

Will he always call upon God? (<sup>3271</sup>Job 27:10.)

FROM these words, our doctrine was, That however hypocrites may continue for a season in the duty of prayer, yet it is their manner, after a while, in a great measure to leave it off. This was our subject in the preceding discourse, in which, after having shown — how hypocrites often continue for a season to call upon God — how it is their manner, after a while, in a great measure to leave it off — and having given the reasons why this is their manner, I came at length to make application, which I proposed to do in a use of exhortation, in two branches; and first to exhort those who entertain a hope of their good estate and yet live in the neglect of secret prayer, to reject their hope. One particular consideration I have already laid before men of this character, to the end just mentioned; and I now proceed to say to them,

**2.** How is your conduct consistent with loving God above all. If you have not a spirit to love God above your dearest earthly friends, and your most pleasant earthly enjoyments; the Scriptures are very plain and full in it, that you are not true Christians. But If you had indeed such a spirit, would you thus grow weary of the practice of drawing near to him, and become habitually so averse to it, as in a great measure to cast off so plain a duty, which is so much the life of a child of God? It is the nature of love to be averse to absence, and to love a near access to those whom we love. We love to be with them; we delight to come often to them, and to have much conversation with them. But when a person who hath heretofore been wont to converse freely with another, by degrees forsakes him, grows strange, and converses with him but little, and that although the other be importunate with him for the continuance of their former intimacy; this plainly shows the coldness of his heart towards him.

The neglect of the duty of prayer seems to be inconsistent with supreme love to God also upon another account, and that is, that it is against the will of God so plainly revealed. — True love to God seeks to please him in every thing, and universally to conform to his will.

**3.** Your thus restraining prayer before God is not only inconsistent with the love, but also with the fear, of God. It is an argument that you cast off fear, as is manifest by that text,

“Yea, thou castest off fear, and restrainest prayer before God.”

(<sup><BEB></sup> Job 15:4.)

While you thus live in the transgression of so plain a command of God, you evidently show that there is no fear of God before your eyes.

“The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, that there is no fear of God before his eyes.” (<sup><BEB></sup> Psalm 36:1.)

**4.** Consider how living in such a neglect is consistent with leading a holy life. We are abundantly instructed in Scripture, that true Christians do lead a holy life; that without holiness no man shall see the Lord, (<sup><BEB></sup> Hebrews 12:14. and that every one that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as Christ is pure, <sup><BEB></sup> 1 John 3:3. In <sup><BEB></sup> Proverbs 16:17. it is said, The highway of the upright is to depart from evil, *i.e.* the common beaten road in which all the godly travel. To the like purpose is <sup><BEB></sup> Isaiah 35:8. “A highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it but it shall be for those:” *i.e.* those redeemed persons spoken of in the foregoing verses. It is spoken of in <sup><BEB></sup> Romans 8:1. as the character of all believers, that they walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit.

But how is a life, in a great measure prayerless, consistent with a holy life? To lead a holy life is to lead a life devoted to God; a life of worshipping and serving God a life consecrated to the service of God. But how doth he lead such a life who doth not so much as maintain the duty of prayer? How can such a man be said to walk by the Spirit, and to be a servant of the most high God? A holy life is a life of faith. The life that true Christians live in the world, they live by the faith of the Son of God. But who can believe that the man lives by faith who lives without prayer, which is the natural expression of faith? Prayer is as natural an expression

of faith, as breathing is of life; and to say a man lives a life of faith, and yet lives a prayerless life, is every whit as inconsistent and incredible, as to say, that a man lives without breathing. A prayerless life is so far from being holy, that it is a profane life: he that lives so, lives like a heathen, who calleth not on God's name; he that lives a prayerless life, lives without God in the world.

**5.** If you live in the neglect of secret prayer, you show your good-will to neglect all the worship of God. He that prays only when he prays with others, would not pray at all, were it not that the eyes of others are upon him. He that will not pray where none but God seeth him manifestly doth not pray at all out of respect to God, or regard to his all-seeing eye, and therefore doth in effect cast off all prayer. And he that casts off prayer in effect casts off all the worship of God, of which prayer is the principal duty. Now, what a miserable saint is he who is no worshipper of God! He that casts off the worship of God, in effect casts off God himself: he refuses to own him, or to be conversant with him as his God. For the way in which men own God, and are conversant with him as their God, is by worshipping him.

**6.** How run you expect to dwell with God for ever, if you so neglect and forsake him here? This your practice shows, that you place not your happiness in God, in nearness to him, and communion with him. He who refuses to visit and converse with a friend, and who in a great measure forsakes him, when he is abundantly invited and importuned to come; plainly shows that he places not his happiness in the company and conversation of that friend. Now, if this be the case with you respecting God, then how can you expect to have it for your happiness to all eternity, to be with God, and to enjoy holy communion with him?

Let those persons who hope they are converted, and yet have in a great measure left off the duty of secret prayer, and whose manner it is ordinarily to neglect it, for their own sake seriously consider these things. for what will it profit them to please themselves with that, while they live, which wilt fail them at last, and leave them in fearful and amazing disappointment?

It is probable, that some of you who have entertained a good opinion of your state, and have looked upon yourselves as converts — but have of

late in a great measure left off the duty — will this evening attend secret prayer, and so may continue to do for a little while after your hearing this sermon, to the end that you may solve the objection which is made against the truth of your hope. But this will not hold. As it hath been in former instances of the like nature, so what you now hear will have such effect upon you but a little while. — When the business and cares of the world shall again begin to crowd a little upon you, or the next time you shall go out into young company, it is probable you will again neglect this duty. After the next frolic to which you go, it is highly probable you will neglect not only secret, but also family prayer. Or at least, after a while, you will come to the same pass as before, in casting off fear, and restraining prayer before God.

It is not very likely that you will ever be constant and persevering in this duty, until you shall have obtained a better principle in your heart. The streams which have no springs to feed them will dry up. The drought and heat consume the snow waters. Although they run plentifully in the spring, yet when the sun ascends higher with a burning heat, they are gone. The seed that is sown in stony places, though it seem to flourish at present, yet as the sun shall rise with a burning heat, will wither away. None will bring forth fruit with patience, but those whose hearts are become good ground.

Without any heavenly seed remaining in them, men may, whenever they fall in among the godly, continue all their lives to talk like saints. They may, for their credit sake, tell of what they have experienced but their deeds will not hold. — They may continue to tell of their inward experiences, and yet live in the neglect of secret prayer, and of other duties.

**II.** I would take occasion from this doctrine to exhort all to persevere in the duty of prayer. This exhortation is much insisted on in the word of God. It is insisted on in the Old Testament, <sup><3161></sup>1 Chronicles 16:11. “Seek the Lord and his strength, seek his face continually” <sup><3167></sup>Isaiah 62:7. “Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence;” i.e. be not silent as to the voice of prayer, as is manifest by the following words, “and give him no rest till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.” Israel of old is reproved for growing weary of the duty of prayer. <sup><3162></sup>Isaiah

43:22. “But thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob, thou hast been weary of me, O Israel.”

Perseverance in the duty of prayer is very much insisted on in the New Testament, as Luke 18: at the beginning, “A man ought always to pray and not to faint; “ *i.e.* not to be discoursed or weary of the duty; but should always continue in it. Again, <sup><213></sup>Luke 21:36. “Watch ye therefore, and pray always.” We have the example of Anna the prophetess set before us, <sup><103></sup>Luke 1:35, etc. who, though she had lived to be more than a hundred years old, yet was not weary of this duty. It is said, “the departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day.” Cornelius also is commended for his constancy in this duty. It is said, that he prayed to God always, <sup><402></sup>Acts 10:2. The apostle Paul in his epistles insists very much on constancy in this duty; <sup><512></sup>Romans 12:12.

“Continuing instant in prayer.” <sup><408></sup>Ephesians 6:18,19. “Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit and watching thereunto with all perseverance.” <sup><504></sup>Colossians 4:2. “Continue in prayer, and watch in the same.” <sup><517></sup>1 Thessalonians 5:17. “Pray without ceasing.” To the same effect the apostle Peter, <sup><607></sup>1 Peter 4:7. “Watch unto prayer.” — Thus abundantly the Scriptures insist upon it, that we should persevere in the duty of prayer, which shows that it is of very great importance that we should persevere. If the contrary be the manner of hypocrites, as hath been shown in the doctrine, then surely we ought to beware of this heaven.

But here let the following things be particularly considered as motives to perseverance in this duty.

**I.** That perseverance in the way of duty is necessary to salvation, and is abundantly declared to be so in the Holy Scriptures; as <sup><2615></sup>Isaiah 64:5. “Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, those that remember thee in thy ways: behold, thou art wroth, for we have sinned: in those is continuance, and we shall be saved.” <sup><508></sup>Hebrews 10:38, and 39. “Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul hath no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.” <sup><512></sup>Romans 11:22. “Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity, but towards thee goodness, if thou continue in his goodness, otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.” — So in many other places.

Many, when they think they are converted, seem to imagine that their work is done, and that there is nothing else needful in order to their going to heaven. Indeed perseverance in holiness of life is not necessary to salvation in the same way as the righteousness by which a right to salvation is obtained. Nor is actual perseverance necessary in order to our becoming interested in that righteousness by which we are justified. For as soon as ever a soul hath believed in Christ, or hath put forth one act of faith in him, it becomes interested in his righteousness, and in all the promises purchased by it.

But persevering in the way of duty is necessary to salvation, as a concomitant and evidence of a title to salvation. There is never a title to salvation without it, though it be not the righteousness by which a title to salvation is obtained. It is necessary to salvation, as it is the necessary consequence of true faith. It is an evidence which universally attends uprightness, and the defect of it is an infallible evidence of the want of uprightness. <sup><B30></sup>Psalm 125:4, 5. There such as are good and upright in heart, are distinguished from such as fall away or turn aside: “Do good, O Lord, to those that are good, and to them that are upright in their hearts. As for such as turn aside to their crooked ways, the Lord shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity. But peace shall be upon Israel. — It is mentioned as an evidence that the hearts of the children of Israel were not right with God, that they did not persevere in the ways of holiness. Psalm lxxviii. 8 “A generation that set not their hearts aright, and whose spirit was not stedfast with God.”

Christ gives this as a distinguishing character of those that are his disciples indeed, and of a true and saving faith, that it is accompanied with perseverance in obedience to Christ’s word.

“Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, if ye  
continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed.”  
(<sup><B31></sup>John 8:31.)

This is mentioned as a necessary evidence of an interest in Christ

“We are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our  
confidence stedfast to the end.” (<sup><B34></sup>Hebrews 3:14.)

Perseverance is not only a necessary concomitant and evidence of a title to salvation, but also a necessary prerequisite to the actual possession of eternal life. It is the only way to heaven the narrow way that leadeth to life. Hence Christ exhorts the church of Philadelphia to persevere in holiness from this consideration, that it was necessary in order to her obtaining the crown. <sup><661></sup>Revelation 3:11. “Hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take the crown.” It is necessary not only that persons should once have been walking in the way of duty, but that they should be found so doing when Christ cometh. <sup><662></sup>Luke 12:43. “Blessed is that servant whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing.” — Holding out to the end is often made the condition of actual salvation. <sup><663></sup>Matthew 10:22 “He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved;” and <sup><664></sup>Revelation 2:10. “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.”

**2.** In order to your own perseverance in the way of duty, your own care and watchfulness is necessary. For though it be promised that true saints shall persevere, yet that is no argument that their care and watchfulness is not necessary in order to it; because their care to keep the commands of God is the thing promised. If the saints should fail of care, watchfulness, and diligence to persevere in holiness, that failure of their care and diligence would itself be a failure of holiness. They who persevere not in watchfulness and diligence, persevere not in holiness of life, for holiness of life very much consists in watchfulness and diligence to keep the commands of God. It is one promise of the covenant of grace, that the saints shall keep God’s commandments. <sup><665></sup>Ezekiel 11:19, 20. — Yet that is no argument that they have no need to take care to keep these commandments, or to do their duty. So the promise of God, that the saints shall persevere in holiness is no argument that it is not necessary that they should take heed lest they fall away.

Therefore the Scriptures abundantly warn men to watch over themselves diligently, and to give earnest heed lest they fall away. <sup><666></sup>1 Corinthians 16:13. “Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.” <sup><667></sup>1 Corinthians 10:12. “Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.” <sup><668></sup>Hebrews 3:12 — 14. “Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; but exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers of Christ, if we

hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end.” <sup><BOOK></sup> Hebrews 4:1. “Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.” <sup><BOOK></sup> 2 Peter 3:17. “Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness.” 2 John 8. “Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.” — Thus you see how earnestly the Scriptures press on Christians exhortations to take diligent heed to themselves that they fall not away. “And certainly these cautions are not without reason.

The Scriptures particularly insist upon watchfulness in order to perseverance in the duty of prayer. Watch and pray, saith Christ, which implies, that we should watch unto prayer, as the apostle Peter says, <sup><BOOK></sup> 1 Peter 4:7. It implies, that we should watch against a neglect of prayer, as well as against other sins. The apostle, in places which have been already mentioned, directs us to pray with all prayer, watching thereunto with all perseverance, and to continue in prayer, and watch in the same. — Nor is it any wonder that the apostles so much insisted on watching in order to a continuance in prayer with all perseverance; for there are many temptations to neglect this duty; first to be inconstant in it, and from time to time to omit it; then in a great measure to neglect it. The devil watches by temptation to draw us away from God, and to hinder us from going to him in prayer. We are surrounded with one and another tempting object, business, and diversion: particularly we meet with many things which are great temptations to a neglect of this duty.

**3.** To move you to persevere in the duty of prayer, consider how much you always stand in need of the help of God. If persons who have formerly attended this duty, leave it off, the language of it is, that now they stand in no further need of God’s help, that they have no futher occasion to go to God with requests and supplications: when indeed it is in God we live, and move, and have our being. We cannot draw a breath without his help. You need his help every day for the supply of your outward wants; and especially you stand in continual need of him to help your souls. Without his protection they would immediately fall into the hands of the devil, who always stands as a roaring lion, ready, whenever he is permitted to fall upon the souls of used and devour them. — If God

should indeed preserve your lives, but should otherwise forsake and leave you to yourselves, you would be most miserable: your lives would be a curse to you.

Those that are converted, if God should forsake them, would soon fall away totally from a state of grace into a state far more miserable than ever they were in before their conversion. They have no strength of their own to resist those powerful enemies who surround them. Sin and Satan would immediately carry them away, as a mighty flood, if God should forsake them. — You stand in need of daily supplies from God. Without God you can receive no spiritual light nor comfort, can exercise no grace, can bring forth no fruit. Without God your souls will wither and pine away, and sink into a most wretched state. You continually need the instructions and directions of God. What can a little child do in a vast howling wilderness, without some one to guide it, and to lead it in the right way! Without God you will soon fall into snares, and pits, and many fatal calamities.

Seeing therefore you stand in such continual need of the help of God, how reasonable is it that you should continually seek it of him, and perseveringly acknowledge your dependence upon him, by resorting to him, to spread your needs before him, and to offer up your requests to him in prayer. — Let us consider how miserable we should be, if we should leave off prayer, and God at the same time should leave off to take care of us, or to afford us any more supplies of his grace. By our constancy in prayer, we cannot be profitable to God; and if we leave it off, God will sustain no damage: he doth not need our prayers, <sup>Job 35:6, 7.</sup> — But if God ceases to care for us and to help us, we immediately sink: we can do nothing: we can receive nothing without him.

**4.** Consider the areas benefit of a constant, diligent, and persevering attendance on this duty. It is one of the greatest and most excellent means of nourishing the new nature, and of causing the soul to flourish and prosper. It is an excellent mean of keeping up an acquaintance with, and of growing in the knowledge of, God. It is the way to a life of communion with God. It is an excellent mean of taking off the heart from the vanities of the world, and of causing the mind to be conversant in heaven. It is an excellent preservative from sin and the wiles of the devil, and a powerful antidote against the poison of the old serpent. It is a duty whereby

strength is derived from God against the lusts and corruptions of the heart, and the snares of the world.

It hath a great tendency to keep the soul in a wakeful frame, and to lead us to a strict walk with God, and to a life that shall be fruitful in such good works, as tend to adorn the doctrine of Christ, and to cause our light so to shine before others, that they seeing our good works shall glorify our Father who is in hearer. And if the duty be constantly and diligently attended, it will be a very pleasant duty. Slack and slothful attendance upon it, and unsteadiness in it, are the causes which make it so great a burden as it is to some persons. Their slothfulness in it hath naturally the effect to beget a dislike of the duty, and a great indisposition to it. But if it be constantly and diligently attended, it is one of the best means of leading not only a Christian and amiable, but also a pleasant life; a life of much sweet fellowship with Christ, and of the abundant enjoyment of the light of his countenance.

Besides, the great power which prayer, when duly attended, hath with God, is worthy of your notice. By it men become like Jacob, who as a prince had power with God, and prevailed, when he wrestled for the blessing. See the power of prayer represented in ~~Gen~~ James 5:16,-18. By these things you may be sensible how much you will lose, if you shall be negligent in this great duty of calling upon God; and how ill you will consult your own interest by such a neglect.

I conclude my discourse with two directions in order to constancy and perseverance in this duty.

**1.** Watch against the beginnings of a neglect of this duty. Persons who have for a time practiced, and afterwards neglect it, commonly leave it off by degrees. While their convictions and religious affections last, they are very constant in their closets, and no worldly business, or company, or diversion hinders them. But as their convictions and affections begin to die away, they begin to find excuses to neglect it sometimes? They are now so hurried; they have now such and such things to attend to; or there are now such inconveniences in the way, that they persuade themselves they may very excusably omit it for this time. Afterwards it pretty frequently so happens, that they have something to hinder, something which they call a just excuse. After a while, a less thing becomes a sufficient excuse than

was allowed to be such at first. Thus the person by degrees contracts more and more a habit of neglecting prayer, and becomes more and more indisposed to it. And even when he doth perform it? it is in such a poor dull, heartless, miserable manner, that he says to himself he might as well not do it at all? as do it thus. Thus he makes his own dulness and indisposition an excuse for wholly neglecting it, or at least for living in a great measure in its neglect. — After this manner do Satan and men's own corruptions inveigle them to their ruin.

Therefore beware of the first beginnings of a neglect: watch against temptations to it take heed how you begin to allow excuses. Be watchful to keep up the duty in the height of it; let it not so much as beam to sink. For when you give way, though it be but little, it is like giving way to an enemy in the field of battle: the first beginning of a retreat greatly encourages the enemy, and weakens the retreating soldiers.

**2.** Let me direct you to forsake all such practices as you find by experience do indispose you to the duty of secret prayer. Examine the things in which you have allowed yourselves? and inquire whether they have had this effect. You are able to look over your past behaviour, and may doubtless, on an impartial consideration, make a judgment of the practices and courses in which you have allowed yourselves.

Particularly let young people examine their manner of company keeping, and the round of diversions in which with their companions they have allowed themselves. I only desire that you would ask at the mouth of your own consciences what has been the effect of these things with respect to your attendance on the duty of secret prayer. Have you not found that such practices have tended to the neglect of this duty? Have you not found that after them you have been more indisposed to it, and less conscientious and careful to attend it? Yea, have they not, from time to time, actually been the means of your neglecting it?

If you cannot deny that this is really the case, then, if you seek the good of your souls, forsake these practices. Whatever you may plead for them, as that there is no harm in them, or that there is a time for all things, and the like; yet if you find this harm in the consequence, it is time for you to forsake them. And if you value heaven more than a little worldly


diversion, if you set a higher price on eternal glory, than on a dance or a song, you will forsake them.

If these things be lawful in themselves, yet if your experience show, that they are attended with such a consequence as I have now mentioned, that is enough. It is lawful in itself for you to enjoy your right hand and your right eye: but if by experience you find they cause you to offend, it is time for you to cut off the one, and pluck out the other, as you would rather go to heaven without them than go to hell with them, into that place of torment where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

## SERMON 9

*[Dated, April, 1741]*

### THE FUTURE PUNISHMENT OF THE WICKED UNAVOIDABLE AND INTOLERABLE

Can thine heart endure, or can thine hands be strong, in the day  
that I shall deal with thee? I the Lord have spoken it, and will do it.  
( Ezekiel 22:14.)

IN the former part of this chapter, we have a dreadful catalogue of the sins of Jerusalem; as you may see from the first to the thirteenth verse. In the thirteenth which is the verse preceding the text, God manifests his great displeasure and fearful wrath against them for their iniquities. “Behold, I have smitten mine hand at thy dishonest gain which thou hast made, and at thy blood which hath been in the midst of thee.” The expression of God’s smiting his hand, signifies the greatness of his anger, and his preparing himself, as it were, to execute wrath answerable to their heinous crimes. It is an allusion to what we sometimes see in men when they are surprised, by seeing or hearing of some horrid offense, or most intolerable injury, which very much stirs their spirits, and animates them with high resentment; on such an occasion they will rise up in wrath and smite their hands together as an expression of the heat of their indignation, and full resolution to be avenged on those who have committed the injury, as in chapter 21:17. “I will also smite mine hands together, and I will cause my fury to rest: I the Lord have said it.” Then, in the text, the punishment of that people is represented.

**1.** The nature of their punishment is more generally represented in that, God will undertake to deal with them. — The prophets could do nothing with them. God had sent them one after another; but those sinners were too strong for them, and beat one, and killed another. Therefore now God himself undertakes to deal with them.

**2.** Their punishment is more particularly represented in three things, viz. The intolerableness, the remedilessness, and the unavoidable-ness of it. — The intolerableness of it: can thine heart endure? — Its remedilessness, or the impossibility of their doing any thing for their own relief: can thine hands be strong? — Its unavoidable-ness: I the Lord have spoken it, and will do it.

### DOCTRINE.

Since God hath undertaken to deal with impenitent sinners, they shall neither shun the threatened misery, nor deliver themselves out of it, nor can they bear it.

In handling this doctrine I shall,

- 1.** Show what is implied in God's undertaking to deal with impenitent sinners.
- 2.** That therefore they cannot avoid punishment.
- 3.** That they cannot in any measure deliver themselves from it, or do any thing for their own relief under it.
- 4.** That they cannot bear it.
- 5.** I shall answer an inquiry; and then proceed to the use.

**I.** I shall show what is implied in God's undertaking to deal with impenitent sinners. Others are not able to deal with them. They baffle all the means used with them by those that are appointed to teach and to rule over, them. — They will not yield to parents, or to the counsels, warnings, or reproofs of ministers: they prove obstinate and stiff-hearted. Therefore God undertakes to deal with them. This implies the following things:

**1.** That God will reckon with them, and take of them satisfaction to his justice. In this world God puts forth his authority to command them, and to require their subjection to him. In his commands he is very positive, strictly requiring of them the performance of duties, and as positively forbidding things contrary to their duty. But they have no regard to these commands. God continues commanding, and they continue rebelling. They

make nothing of God's authority. — God threatens but they despise his threatenings. — They make nothing of dishonouring God; they care not how much their behaviour is to his dishonour. He offers them mercy, if they will repent and return; but they despise his mercy as well as his wrath. God calleth, but they refuse. Thus they are continually plunging themselves deeper and deeper in debt and at the same time imagine they shall escape the payment of the debt, and design entirely to rob God of his due.

But God hath undertaken to right himself. He will reckon with them; he hath undertaken to see that the debts due to him are paid. All their sins are written in his book; not one of them is forgotten, and every one must be paid. If God be wise enough, and strong enough he will have full satisfaction: he will exact the very uttermost farthing. He undertakes it as his part, as what belongs to him, to see himself righted, wherein he hath been wronged. <sup>(1528)</sup>Deuteronomy 32:35. "To me belongeth vengeance.

Ibid. 7:10. "He will not be slack to him that hateth him; he will repay him to his face.

**2.** He hath undertaken to vindicate the honour of his majesty. His majesty they despise. They hear that he is a great God; but they despise his greatness; they look upon him as worthy of contempt, and treat him accordingly. They hear of him by the name of a great King; but his authority they regard not, and sometimes trample upon it for years together.

But God hath not left the honour of his majesty wholly to their care. Though they now trample it in the dust yet that is no sum that it will finally be lost. If God had left it wholly to their hands, it would indeed be lost. But God doth not leave his honour and his glory with his enemies; it is too precious in his eyes to be so neglected. He hath reserved the care of it to himself: he will see to it that his own injured majesty is vindicated. If the honour of God, upon which sinners trample, finally lie in the dust, it will be because he is not strong enough to vindicate himself. He hath sworn, in

"As truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled  
with the glory of the Lord." (<sup>(1412)</sup>Numbers 14:21.)

Sinners despise his Son, and trample him under their feet; but he will see if he cannot make the glory of his Son appear, with respect to them; that all the earth may know how evil a thing it is to despise the Son of God. God intends that all men and angels, all heaven and all earth, shall see whether he be sufficient to magnify himself upon sinners who now despise him. He intends that the issue of thing; with respect to them shall be open, that all men may see it.

**3.** He hath undertaken to subdue impenitent sinners. — Their hearts while in this world are very unsubdued. They lift up their heads and conduct themselves very proudly and contemptuously, and often sin with a high hand. They set their mouths against the heavens, and their tongues walk through the earth. They practically say as Pharaoh did. “Who is the Lord? I know not the Lord, neither will I obey his voice.” ~~Job~~ Job 21:14. “They say to God, Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.”

Some, who cover their sin with their specious show who put on a face of religion, and a demure countenance? and behaviour, yet have this spirit secretly reigning in their breasts. Notwithstanding all their fair show, and good external carriage, they despise God in their hearts, and have the weapons of war about them, though they carry their swords under their skirts. They have most proud, stubborn, and rebellious hearts, which are ready to rise in opposition, to contend with him, and to find fault with his dispensations. Their hearts are full of pride, enmity, stubbornness, and blasphemy, which work in them many ways, while they sit under the preaching of the word, and while the Spirit of God is striving in them: and they always continue to oppose and resist God as long as they live in the world, they never lay down the weapons of their rebellion.

But God hath undertaken to deal with them and to subdue them; and those proud and stubborn hearts, which will not yield to the power of God's word, shall be broken by the power of his hand. If they will not be willing subjects to the golden sceptre, and will not yield to the attractives of his love, they shall be subject to the force of the iron rod, whether they will or not.

Them that proudly set up their own righteousness, and their own wills, God hath undertaken to bring down: and without doubt, it will be done.

He hath undertaken to make those who are now regardless, to regard him. They shall know that he is Jehovah. Now they will not own that he is the Lord; but they shall know it.

“Lord, when thine hand is lifted up, they will not see:  
but they shall see.” (<sup>2391</sup>Isaiah 26:11.)


Now wicked men not only hate God, but they slight him; they are not afraid of him. But he will subdue their contempt. When he shall come to take them in hand, they will hate him still; but they will not slight him; they will not make light of his power as they now do; they will see and feel too much of the infinity of his power to slight it. They are now wont to slight his wrath; but then they will slight it no more, they will find by sufficient experience that his wrath is not to be slighted: they will learn this to their cost, and they never will forget it.

**4.** God hath undertaken to rectify their judgments. Now they will not be convinced of those things which God tells them in his word. Ministers take much pains to convince them, but all is in vain. Therefore God will undertake to convince them, and he will do it effectually. — Now they will not be convinced of the truth of divine things. They have indeed convincing arguments set before them; they hear and see enough to convince them, yet so prone are they to unbelief and atheism, that divine things never seem to them to be real. But God will hereafter make them seem real.

Now they are always doubting of the truth of the Scriptures, questioning whether they be the word of God, and whether the threatenings of Scripture be true. But God hath undertaken to convince them that those threatenings are true, and he will make them to know that they are true, so that they will never doubt any more for ever. They will be convinced by dear experience. Now they are always questioning whether there be any such place as hell. They hear much about it, but it always seems to them like a dream. But God will make it seem otherwise than a dream. Now they are often told of the vanity of the world; but we may as well preach to the beasts, to persuade them of the vanity of earthly things. But God will undertake to convince them of this; he will hereafter give them a thorough conviction of it, so that they shall have a strong sense of the vanity of all these things.

Now ministers often tell sinners of the great importance of all interest in Christ, and that that is the one thing needful. They are also told the folly of delaying the care of their souls, and how much it concerns them to improve their opportunity. But the instructions of ministers do not convince them, therefore God will undertake to convince them.

Impenitent sinners, while in this world, hear how dreadful hell is. But they will not believe that it is so dreadful as ministers represent. They cannot think that they shall to all eternity suffer such exquisite and horrible torments. But they shall be taught and convinced to purpose, that the representations ministers give of those torments, agreeable to the word of God, are indeed as dreadful as they declare. Since God hath undertaken to deal with sinners, and to rectify their judgments in these matters, he will do it thoroughly, for his work is perfect, when he undertakes to do things he doth not do them by halves, therefore before he shall have done with sinners, he will convince them effectually, so that they shall never be in danger of relapsing into their former errors. He will convince them of their folly and stupidity in entertaining such notions as they now entertain.

Thus God hath undertaken to deal with obstinate unbelievers. They carry things on in great confusion, but we need not be dismayed at it: let us wait, and we shall see that God will rectify things. Sinners will not always continue to rebel and despise with impunity. The honour of God will in due time be vindicated, and they shall be subdued and convicted, and shall give an account. There is no sin, not so much as an idle word that they shall speak but they must give an account of it,  Matthew 12:36. And their sins must be fully balanced, and recompensed, and satisfaction obtained. Because judgment against their evil works is not speedily executed, their hearts are fully set in them to do evil. Yet God is a righteous judge; he will see that judgment is executed in due time. — I come now,

**II.** To show, that therefore impenitent sinners shall not avoid their due punishment. God hath undertaken to inflict it; he hath engaged to do it; he takes it as what properly belongs to him, and we may expect it of him. If he hath sworn by his life, that he will do it, and if he hath power sufficient, if he is the living God, doubtless we shall see it done. And that God hath declared that he will punish impenitent sinners is manifest from

many Scriptures, as <sup><1541></sup>Deuteronomy 32:41. “I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and will reward them that hate me.” <sup><1571></sup>Deuteronomy 7:10. “He will not be slack to him that hateth him: he will repay him to his face.” <sup><1541></sup>Exodus 34:7. “That will by no means clear the guilty.” <sup><3011></sup>Nahum 1:3. “The Lord is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked.”

God saith in the text, “I the Lord have spoken it, and will do it,” which leaves no room to doubt of the actual fulfilment of the threatening in its utmost extent. Some hate flattered themselves, that although God hath threatened very dreadful things to wicked men for their sins, yet in his heart he never intends to fulfil his threatenings, but only to terrify them, and make them afraid, while they live. But would the infinitely holy God, who is not a man that he should lie, and who speaketh no vain words utter himself in this manner: I the Lord have spoken it, and will do it; I have not only threatened, but I will also fulfil my threatenings; when at the same time these words did not agree with his heart, but he secretly knew that though he had spoken, yet he intended not to do it? Who is he that dares to entertain such horrid blasphemy in his heart?

No, let no impenitent sinner flatter himself so vainly and foolishly. If it were indeed only a man, a being of like impotency and mutability with themselves, who had undertaken to deal with them; they might perhaps with some reason flatter themselves, that they should find some means to avoid the threatened punishment. But since an omniscient, omnipotent, immutable God hath undertaken, vain are all such hopes.

There is no hope that possibly they may steal away to heaven, though they die unconverted. There is no hope that they can deceive God by any false show of repentance and faith, and so be taken to heaven through mistake: for the eyes of God are as a flame of fire, they perfectly see through every man, the inmost closet of the heart is all open to him.

There is no hope of escaping the threatened punishment by striking into nothing at death like brute creatures. Indeed, many wicked men upon their death-beds wish for this. If it were so, death would be nothing to them in comparison with what it now is. But all such wishes are vain.

There is no hope of their escaping without notice, when they leave the body. There is no hope that God, by reason of the multiplicity of affairs which he hath to mind, will happen to overlook them and not take notice of them when they come to die; that their souls will slip away privately, and hide themselves in some secret corner, and so escape divine vengeance.

There is no hope that they shall be missed in a crowd at the day of judgment, and that they can have opportunity to hide themselves in some cave or den of the mountains, or in any secret hole of the earth, and that while so doing they will not be minded, by reason of the many things which will be the objects of attention on that day. — Neither is there any hope that they will be able to crowd themselves in among the multitude of the saints at the right hand of the Judge, and so go to heaven undiscovered. Nor is there any hope that God will alter his mind, or that he will repent of what he hath said; for he is not the son of man that he should repent. Hath he said, and shall he not do it? Hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good! When did God ever undertake to do any thing and fail! — I come now,

**III.** To show, that as impenitent sinners cannot shun the threatened punishment; so neither can they do any thing to deliver themselves from it, or to relieve themselves under it. This is implied in those words of the text, Can thine hands be strong? It is with our hands that we make and accomplish things for ourselves. But the wicked in hell will have no strength of hand to accomplish any thing at all for themselves, or to bring to pass any deliverance, or any decree of relief.

**1.** They will not be able in that conflict to overcome their enemy, and so to deliver themselves. God, who will then undertake to deal with them, and will gird himself with might to execute wrath, will be their enemy, and will act the part of an enemy with a witness; and they will have no strength to oppose him. Those, who live negligent of their souls under the light of the gospel, act as if they supposed, that they should be able hereafter to make their part good with God.

“Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?”

( 1 Corinthians 10:22.)


But they will have no power, no might to resist that omnipotence, which will be engaged against them.

- 2.** They will have no strength in their hands to do any thing to appease God, or in the least to abate the fierceness of his wrath. They will not be able to offer any satisfaction: they will not be able to procure God's pity. Though they cry, God will not hear them. They will find no price to offer to God, in order to purchase favour, or to pay any part of their debt.
- 3.** They will not be able to find any to befriend them, and intercede with God for them. They had the offer of a mediator often made them in this world; but they will have no such offers in hell. None will befriend them in hell all there will be their enemies. They will have no friend in heaven: none of the saints or angels will befriend them: or if they should, it would be to no purpose. There will be no creature that will have any power to deliver them nor will any ever pity them.
- 4.** Nor will they ever be able to make their escape. They will find no means to break prison and flee. In hell they will be reserved in chains of darkness for ever and ever. Malefactors have often found means to escape the hand of civil justice. But none ever escaped out of the prison of hell, which is God's prison. It is a strong prison: it is beyond any finite power, or the united strength of all wicked men and devils, to unlock or break open the door of that prison. Christ hath the key of hell; "he shuts and no man opens."
- 5.** Nor will they ever be able to find any them to relieve them in hell. They will never find any resting place there, any secret corner, which will be cooler than the rest, where they may have a little respite, a small abatement of the extremity of their torment. They never will be able to find any cooling stream or fountain, in any part of that world of torment; no, nor so much as a drop of water to cool their tongues. They will find no company to give them any comfort, or to do them the least good. They will find no place, where they can remain, and rest, and take breath for one minute: for they will be tormented with fire and brimstone; and will have no rest day nor night for ever and ever.

Thus impenitent sinners will be able neither to shun the punishment threatened, nor to deliver themselves from it, nor to find any relief under it.

# SERMON 10

## THE FUTURE PUNISHMENT THE WICKED UNAVOIDABLE AND INTOLERABLE.

Can thine heart endure, or can thine hands be strong, it the days  
that I shall deal with thee? I the Lord have spoken it, and will do it.  
( Ezekiel 22:14.)

HAVING shown that impenitent sinners will hereafter be able, neither to avoid the punishment threatened, nor to deliver themselves from it, nor to find any relief under it I come now,

**IV.** To show, that neither will they be able to bear it. Neither will their hands be strong to deliver them from it nor will their hearts be able to endure it. It is common with men, when they meet with calamities in this world, in the first place to endeavour to shun them. But if they find that they cannot shun them, then after they are come, they endeavor to deliver themselves from them as soon as they can; or at least, to deliver themselves in some degree. But if they find that they can by no means deliver themselves, and see that they must bear them then they fortify their spirits, and take up a resolution, that they will support themselves under them as well as they can.

But it will be utterly in vain for impenitent sinners to think to do thus with respect to the torments of hell. They will not be able to endure them, or at all to support themselves under them the torment will be immensely beyond their strength. What will it signify for a worm, which is about to be pressed under the weight of some great rock, to be let fall with its whole weight upon it, to collect its strength, to set itself to bear up the weight of the rock, and to preserve itself from being crushed by it? — Much more vain will it be for a poor damned soul, to endeavour to support itself under the weight of the wrath of Almighty God. What is the strength of man, who is but a worm, to support himself against the power

of Jehovah, and against the fierceness of his wrath? What is man's strength, when set to bear up against the exertions of infinite power?

**“Whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.”**

**(~~414~~ Matthew 21:44.)**

When sinners hear of hell-torments, they sometimes think with themselves; Well, if it shall come to that, than I must go to hell, I will bear it as well as I can: as if by clothing themselves with resolution and firmness of mind they would be able to support themselves in some measure when, alas! they will have no resolution, no courage at all. However they shall have prepared themselves, and collected their strength, set as soon as they shall begin to feel that wrath, their hearts will melt and be as water. However they may seem to harden their hearts, in order to prepare themselves to bear, yet the first moment they feel it, their hearts will become like wax before the furnace. Their courage and resolution will be all gone in an instant; it will vanish away like a shadow, in the twinkling of an eye. The stoutest and most sturdy will have no more courage than the feeblest infant: let a man be an infant, or a giant, it will be all one. They will not be able to keep alive and courage, any strength, any comfort, any hope at all. — I come now, as was proposed,

**V.** To answer an inquiry which may naturally be raised concerning these things.

**INQ.** Some may be ready to say, If this be the case, if impenitent sinners can neither shun future punishment, nor deliver themselves from it, nor bear it; then what will become of them?

**ANS.** They will wholly sink down into eternal death. There will be that sinking of heart, of which we now cannot conceive. We see how it is with the body when in extreme pain. The nature of the body will support itself for a considerable time under very great pain, so as to keep from wholly sinking. There will be great struggles, lamentable groans and partings, and it may be convulsions. These are the strugglings of nature to support itself under the extremity of the pain. There is, as it were, a great lothness in nature to yield to it; it cannot bear wholly to sink.

But yet sometimes pain of body is so very exquisite, that the nature of the body cannot support itself under it; however though it may be to sink, yet it cannot bear the pain; there are a few struggles, and throes, and partings, and it may be a shriek or two, and then nature yields to the violence of the torments, sinks down, and the body dies. This is the death of the body. So it will be with the soul in hell; it will have no strength or power to deliver itself; and its torment and horror will be so great, so mighty, so vastly disproportioned to its strength, that having no strength in the least to support itself, although it be infinitely contrary to the nature and inclination of the soul utterly to sink; yet it will utterly and totally sink, without the least degree of remaining comfort, or strengths, or courage, or hope. And though it will never be annihilated, its being and perception will never be abolished; yet such will be the infinite depth of gloominess into which it will sink, that it will be in a state of death, eternal death.

The nature of man desires happiness, it is the nature of the soul to crave and thirst after well-being: and if it be under misery, it eagerly pants after relief, and the greater the misery is, the more eagerly doth it struggle for help. But if all relief be withholden, all strength overborne, all support utterly gone; then it sinks into the darkness of death.

We can conceive but little of the matter; but to help your conception, imagine yourself to be cast into a fiery oven, or a great furnace, where your pain would be as much greater than that occasioned by accidentally touching a coal of fire, as the heat is greater. Imagine also that your body were to lie there for a quarter of an hour, full of fire, and all the while full of quick sense; what horror would you feel at the entrance of such a furnace! and how long would that quarter of an hour seem to you! And after you had endured it for one minute, how overbearing would it be to you to think that you had it to endure the other fourteen!

But what would be the effect on your soul, if you knew you must lie there enduring that torment to the full for twenty-four hours! And how much greater would be the effect, if you knew you must endure it for a whole year and how vastly greater still, if you knew you must endure it for a thousand years! — O then, how would your hearts sink, if you knew; that you must bear it for ever and ever! that there would be no end! that after

millions of millions of ages, your torment would be no nearer to the end, and that you never, never should be delivered!

But your torment in hell will be immensely greater than this illustration represents. How then will the heart of a poor creature sink under it! How utterly inexpressible and inconceivable must the sinking of the soul be in such, a case!

This is the death threatened in the law. This is dying in the highest sense of the word. This is to die sensibly; to die and know it; to be sensible of the gloom of death. This is to be undone; this is worthy of the name of destruction. This sinking of the soul under an infinite weight, which it cannot bear, is the gloom of hell. We read in Scripture of the blackness of darkness; this is it, this is the very thing. — We read in Scripture of sinners being lost, and of their losing their souls: this is the thing intended; this is to lose the soul: they that are the subjects of this are utterly lost.

### APPLICATION.

This subject may be applied in a use of awakening to impenitent sinners. — What hath been said under this doctrine is for thee, O impenitent sinner, O poor wretch, who art in the same miserable state in which thou camest into the world, excepting that thou art loaded with vastly greater guilt by thine actual sins. These dreadful things which thou hast heard are for thee, who art yet unconverted, and still remainest an alien and stranger, without Christ and without God in the world. They are for thee who to this day remainest an enemy to God, and a child of the devil, even in this remarkable season, when others both here and elsewhere, far and near, are flocking to Christ; for thee who hearest the fame of these things, but knowest nothing of the power of godliness in thine own heart.

Whoever thou art, whether young or old, little or great if thou art in a Christless unconverted state, this is the wrath, this is the death to which thou art condemned. This is the wrath that abideth on thee, this is the hell over which thou hangest, and into which thou art ready to drop every day and every night.

If thou shalt remain blind, and hard, and dead in sin a little longer this destruction will come upon thee: God hath spoken, and he will do it. It is

in vain for thee to flatter thyself with hopes that thou shalt avoid it, or to say in thine heart, perhaps it will not be; perhaps things have been represented worse than they are. If thou wilt not be convinced by the word preached to thee by men in the name of God, God himself will undertake to convince thee. ~~244~~ Ezekiel 14:4, 7, 8.

Doth it seem to thee not real that thou shalt suffer such a dreadful destruction, because it seems to thee that thou dost not deserve it? and because thou dost not see any thing so horrid in thyself, as to answer such a dreadful punishment? — Why is it that thy wickedness doth not seem bad enough to deserve this punishment? The reason is, that thou lovest thy wickedness, thy wickedness seems good to thee; it appears lovely to thee; thou dost not see any such hatefulness in it as to answer such misery.

But know, thou stupid, blind, hardened wretch, that God doth not see, as thou seest with thy polluted eyes: thy sins in his sight are infinitely abominable. — Thou knowest that thou hast a thousand and a thousand times made light of the majesty of God. And why should not that majesty, which thou hast thus despised be manifested in the greatness of thy punishment? Thou hast often heard what a great and dreadful God Jehovah is: but thou hast made so light of it, that thou hast not been afraid of him, thou hast not been afraid to sin against him, nor to go on day after day, by thy sins, to provoke him to wrath, nor to cast his commands under foot, and trample on them. Now why may not God, in the greatness of thy destruction, justly vindicate and manifest the greatness of that majesty which thou hast despised?

Thou hast despised the mighty power of God, thou hast not been afraid of it. Now why is it not fit that God should show the greatness of his power in thy ruin. What king is there who will not show his authority in the punishment of those subjects that despise it? and who will not vindicate his royal majesty in executing vengeance on those that rise in rebellion? And art thou such a fool as to think that the great King of heaven and earth, before whom all other kings are so many grasshoppers, will not vindicate his kingly majesty on such contemptuous rebels as thou art? Thou art very much mistaken if thou thinkest so. If thou be regardless of

God's majesty, be it known to thee, God is not regardless of his own majesty; he taketh care of its honour, and he will vindicate it.

Think it not strange that God should deal so severely with thee, or that the wrath which thou shalt suffer should be so great. For as great as it is, it is no greater than that love of God which thou hast despised. The love of God and his grace, condescension, and pity to sinners in sending his Son into the world to die for them, is every whit as great and wonderful as this inexpressible wrath. This mercy hath been held forth to thee, and described in its wonderful greatness, hundreds of times, and as often hath it been offered to thee, but thou wouldst not accept Christ; thou wouldst not have this great love of God; thou despisedst God's dying love, thou trampledst the benefits of it under foot. Now why shouldst thou not have wrath as great as that love and mercy which thou despisest and rejectest? Doth it seem incredible to thee that God should so harden his heart against a poor sinner, as to destroy him, and to bear him down with infinite power and merciless wrath? and is this a greater thing than it is for thee to harden thy heart, as thou hast done, against infinite mercy, and against the dying love of God?

Doth it seem to thee incredible, that God should be so utterly regardless of the sinner's welfare, as to sink him into an infinite abyss of misery? Is this shocking to thee? And is it not at all shocking to thee, that thou shouldst be so utterly regardless as thou hast been of the honour and glory of the infinite God?

It arises from thy stupidity, and because thou hast a heart of stone, that thou art so senseless of thine own wickedness, as to think that thou hast not deserved such a punishment, and that it is to thee incredible that it will be inflicted upon thee. But if, when all is said and done, thou be not convinced, wait but a little while, and thou wilt be convinced: God will undertake to do the work which ministers cannot do. Though judgment against thine evil works be not yet executed, and God now let thee atone; yet he will soon come upon thee with his great power, and then thou shalt know what God is, and what thou art.

Flatter not thyself, that if these things shall prove true and the worst shall come thou wilt set thyself to bear it as well as thou canst. What will it signify, to set thyself to bear and to collect thy strength to support

thyself, when thou shalt fall into the hands of that omnipotent King Jehovah? He that made thee can make his sword approach unto thee. His sword is not the sword of man, nor is his wrath the wrath of man. If it were, possibly stoutness might be maintained under it. But it is the fierceness of the wrath of the great God, who is able to baffle and dissipate all thy strength in a moment. He can fill thy poor soul with an ocean of wrath, a deluge of fire and brimstone; or he can make it ten thousand times fuller of torment than ever an oven was full of fire, and at the same time, can fill it with despair of ever seeing any end to its torment, or any rest from its misery: and then where will be thy strength? what will become of thy courage? what will signify thine attempts to bear?

What art thou in the hands of the great God, who made heaven and earth by speaking a word? What art thou, when dealt with by that strength, which manages all this vast universe, holds the globe of the earth, directs all the motions of the heavenly bodies from age to age, and, when the fixed time shall come, will shake all to pieces? There are other wicked beings a thousand times stronger than thou: there are strong and proud spirits of a gigantic stoutness and hardiness. But how little are they in the hands of the great God! they are less than weak infants; they are nothing, and less than nothing, in the hands of an angry God, as will appear at the day of judgment. Their hearts will be broken, they will sink; they will have no strength nor courage left; they will be as weak as water their souls will sink down into an infinite gloom, an abyss of death and despair. Then what will become of thee, a poor worm, when thou shalt fall into the hands of that God when he shall come to show his wrath, and make his power known on thee?

If the strength of all the wicked men on earth, and of all the devils in hell, were united in one, and thou wert possessed of it all; and if the courage, greatness, and stoutness of all their hearts were united in thy single heart, thou wouldst be nothing in the hands of Jehovah. If it were all collected, and thou shouldst set thyself to bear as well as thou couldst, all would sink under his great wrath in an instant, and would be utterly abolished: thine hands would drop down at once, and thine heart would melt as wax. The great mountains, the firm rocks, cannot stand before the power of God. He can tear the earth in pieces in a moment; yea, he can shatter the

whole universe, and dash it to pieces at one blow. How then will thine hands be strong, or thine heart endure?

Thou canst not stand before a lion of the forest; an angry wild beast, if stirred up, will easily tear such an one as thou art in pieces. Yea, not only so, but thou art crushed before the moth. A little thing, a little worm or spider, or some such insect, is able to kill thee. What then canst thou do in the hands of God? It is vain to set the briers and thorns in battle-array against glowing flames the points of thorns, though sharp, do nothing to withstand the fire.

Some of you have seen buildings on fire; imagine therefore with yourselves, what a poor hand you would make at fighting with the flames, if you were in the midst of so great and fierce a fire. You have often seen a spider or some other noisome insect, when thrown into the midst of a fierce fire, and have observed how immediately it yields to the force of the flames. There is no long struggle no fighting against the fire, no strength exerted to oppose the heat, or to fly from it; but it immediately stretches forth itself and yields, and the fire takes possession of it and at once it becomes full of fire. Here is a little image of what you will be in hell, except you repent and fly to Christ. To encourage yourselves, that you will set yourselves to bear hell-torments as well as you can, is just as if a worm, that is about to be thrown into a glowing furnace, should swell and fortify itself, and prepare itself to fight the flames.

What can you do with lightnings? What doth it signify to fight with them? What an absurd figure would a poor weak man make, who in a thunder-storm should expect a flash of lightning on his head or his breast, and should go forth sword in hand to oppose it; when a flash would in an instant drink up all his spirits and his life, and melt his sword!

Consider these things, all you enemies of God, and rejecters of Christ, whether you be old men and women, Christless heads of families, or young people and wicked children. He assured, that if you do not hearken and repent, God intends to show his wrath, and make his power known upon you. He intends to magnify himself exceedingly in sinking you down in hell. He intends to show his great majesty at the Day of Judgment, before a vast assembly, in your misery; before a greater assembly many thousand-fold than ever yet appeared on earth; before a vast assembly of

saints, and a vast assembly of wicked men, a vast assembly of holy angels, and before all the crew of devils.

God will before all these get himself honour in your destruction; you shall be tormented in the presence at them all. Then all will see that God is a great God indeed; then all will see how dreadful a thing it is to sin against such a God, and to reject such a Saviour, such love and grace, as you have rejected and despised the great sight, and all the saints and angels will look upon you. and adore that majesty, that mighty power, and that holiness and justice of, God, which shall appear in your ineffable destruction and misery.

It is probable that some who hear me, are at this very moment unawakened, and are in a great degree careless; about their souls. I fear there are some among us who are most fearfully hardened their hearts are harder than the very rocks. It is easier to make impressions upon an adamant than upon their hearts. I suppose some of you have heard all that I have said with ease and quietness: it appears to you as great sounding words, but doth not reach your hearts. You have heard such things many times: you have been too much used to the roaring, of heaven's cannon, to be frightened at it. It will therefore probably be in vain for me to say any thing further to you; I will only put you in mind that ere long God will deal with you. I cannot deal with you, you despise what I say; I have no power to make you sensible of your danger and misery, and of the dreadfulfulness of the wrath of God. The attempts of men in this way have often proved vain.

However, God has undertaken to deal with such men as you are. It is his manner commonly first to let men try their utmost strength; particularly to let ministers try that thus he may show ministers their own weakness and impotency; and when they have done what they can, and all fails, then God takes the matter into his own hands. So it seems by your obstinacy as if God intended to undertake to deal with you. He will undertake to subdue you; he will see, if he cannot cure you of your senselessness and regardlessness of his threatenings. And you will be convinced; you will be subdued effectually your strength will be utterly broken, your courage and hope will sink. God will surely break those who will not bow.

Having girded himself with his power and wrath, he hath heretofore undertaken to deal with many hard, stubborn, senseless, obstinate hearts, and he never failed, he always did his work thoroughly.

It will not be long before you will be wonderfully be changed. You who now hear of hell and the wrath of the great God, and sit here so easy and quiet, and go away so careless; by and by will shake and tremble, and cry out, and shriek, and gnash your teeth, and will be thoroughly convinced of the vast weight and importance of these things which you now despise.

# SERMON 11

*[Dated, April, 1739.]*

## THE ETERNITY OF HELL TORMENTS

These shall go away into everlasting punishment.

(~~456~~ Matthew 25:46.)

In this chapter we have the most particular description of the day of Judgment, of any in the whole Bible. Christ here declares, that when he shall hereafter sit on the throne of his glory, the righteous and the wicked shalt be set before him, and separated one from the other, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats. Then we have an account how both will be judged according to their works; how the good works of the one and the evil works of the other will be rehearsed, and how the sentence shall be pronounced accordingly. We are told what the sentence will be on each, and then we have an account of the execution of the sentence on both. In the words of the text is the account of the execution of the sentence on the wicked or the ungodly: concerning which, it is to my purpose to observe two things.

- 1.** The duration of the punishment on which they are here said to enter: it is called everlasting punishment.
- 2.** The time of their entrance on this everlasting punishment; viz. after the day of judgment, when all these things that are of a temporary continuance shall have come to an end, and even those of them that are most lasting, — the frame of the world itself; the earth which is said to abide for ever; the ancient mountains and everlasting hills, the sun, moon, and stars. When the heavens shall have waxed old like a garment, and as a vesture shall be changed, then shall be the time when the wicked shall enter on their punishment.

Doctrine. — The misery of the wicked in hell will be absolutely eternal.

There are two opinions, which I mean to oppose in this doctrine. One is, that the eternal death with which wicked men are threatened in Scripture, signifies no more than eternal annihilation that God will punish their wickedness by eternally abolishing their being.

The other opinion, which I mean to oppose, is that though the punishment of the wicked shall consist in sensible misery, yet it shall not be absolutely eternal; but only of a very long continuance.

Therefore to establish the doctrine in opposition to these different opinions, I shall undertake to show,

**I.** That it is not contrary to the divine perfections to inflict on wicked men a punishment that is absolutely eternal.

**II.** That the eternal death which God threatens, is not annihilation, but an abiding sensible punishment or misery.

**III.** That this misery will not only continue for a very long time but will be absolutely without end.

**IV.** That various good ends will be obtained by the eternal punishment of the wicked.

**I.** I am to show that it is not contrary to the divine perfections to inflict on wicked men a punishment that is absolutely eternal.

This is the sum of the objections usually made against this doctrine, That it is inconsistent with the justice, and especially with the mercy, of God. And some say, If it be strictly just, yet how, can we suppose that a merciful God can bear eternally to torment his creatures.

**1.** I shall briefly show that it is not inconsistent with the justice of God to inflict an eternal punishment. To evince this, I shall use only one argument, viz. that sin is heinous enough to deserve such a punishment, and such a punishment is no more than proportionable to the evil or demerit of sin. If the evil of sin be infinite, as the punishment is, then it is manifest that the punishment is no more than proportionable to the sin punished, and is no more than sin deserves. And if the obligation to love, honour, and obey God be infinite, then sin which is the violation of this obligation, is a violation of infinite obligation, and so is an infinite evil.

Again, if God be infinitely worthy of love, honour, and obedience, then our obligation to love, and honour, and obey him is infinitely great. — So that God being infinitely glorious, or infinitely worthy of our love honour, and obedience, our obligation to love, honour and obey him, and so to avoid all sin, is infinitely great. Again, our obligation to love, honour, and obey God being infinitely great, sin is the violation of infinite obligation, and so is an infinite evil. Once more, sin being an infinite evil, deserves an infinite punishment, an infinite punishment is no more than it deserves therefore such punishment is just; which was the thing to be proved. There is no evading the force of this reasoning, but by denying that God, the sovereign of the universe, is infinitely glorious; which I presume none of my hearers will venture to do.

**2.** I am to show that it is not inconsistent with the mercy of God, to inflict an eternal punishment on wicked men. It is an unreasonable and unscriptural notion of the mercy of God, that he is merciful in such a sense that he cannot hear that penal justice should be executed. This is to conceive of the mercy of God as a passion to which his nature is so subject that God is liable to be moved, and affected, and overcome by seeing a creature in misery, so that he cannot bear to see justice executed: which is a most unworthy and absurd notion of the mercy of God, and would, if true, argue great weakness. — It would be a great defect, and not a perfection, in the sovereign and supreme Judge of the world, to be merciful in such a sense that he could not bear to have penal justice executed. It is a very unscriptural notion of the mercy of God. The Scriptures every where represent the mercy of God as free and sovereign, and not that the exercises of it are necessary, so that God cannot bear justice should take place. The Scriptures abundantly speak of it as the glory of the divine attribute of mercy that it is free and sovereign in its exercises; and not that God cannot but deliver sinners from misery. This is a mean and most unworthy idea of the divine mercy.

It is most absurd also, as it is contrary to plain fact. For if there be any meaning in the objection, this is supposed in it, that all misery of the creature, whether just or unjust, is in itself contrary to the nature of God. For if his mercy be of such a nature, that a very great degree of misery, though just, is contrary to his nature, then it is only to add to the mercy, and then a less degree of misery is contrary to his nature, again to add

further to it, and a still less degree of misery is contrary to his nature. And so the mercy of God being infinite, all misery must be contrary to his nature, which we see to be contrary to; fact: for we see that God in his providence, doth indeed inflict very great calamities on mankind even in this life.

However strong such kind of objections against the eternal misery of the wicked, may seem to the carnal senseless hearts of men, as though it were against God's justice and mercy; yet their seeming strength arises from a want of sense of the infinite evil, odiousness, and provocation there is in sin. Hence it seems to us not suitable that any poor creature should be the subject of such I misery, because we have no sense of any thing abominable and provoking in any creature answerable to it. If we had, then this infinite calamity would not seem unsuitable. I For one thing would but appear answerable and proportionable to another, and so the mind would rest in it as fit and suitable, and no more than what is proper to be ordered by the just, holy, and good Governor of the world.

That this is so, we may be convinced by this consideration, viz. that when we hear or read of some horrid instances of cruelty, it may be to some poor innocent child or some holy martyr — and their cruel persecutors, having no regard to their shrieks and cries, only sported themselves with their misery, and would not vouchsafe even to put an end to their lives — we have a sense of the evil of them, and they make a deep impression on our minds. Hence it seems just, every way fit and suitable, that God should inflict a very terrible punishment on persons who have perpetrated such wickedness. It seems no way disagreeable to any perfection of the Judge of the world; we can think of it without being at all shocked. The reason is, that we have a sense of the evil of their conduct, and a sense of the proportion there is between the evil or demerit and the punishment.

Just so, if we saw a proportion between the evil of sin and eternal punishment, if we saw something in wicked men that should appear as hateful to us, as eternal misery appears dreadful; something that should as much stir up indignation and detestation, as eternal misery does terror all objections against this doctrine would vanish at once. Though now it seem incredible, though when we hear of it and are so often told of it, we know not how to realize it; though when we hear of such a degree and duration

of torments as are held forth in this doctrine, and think what eternity is, it is ready to seem impossible, that such torments should be inflicted on poor feeble creatures by a Creator of infinite mercy, yet this arises principally from these two causes: (1.) It is contrary to the depraved inclinations of mankind that they hate to believe it, and cannot bear it should be true. (2:) They see not the suitableness of eternal punishment to the evil of sin; they see not that it is no more than proportionable to the demerit of sin.

Having thus shown that the eternal punishment of the wicked is not inconsistent with the divine perfections. I shall now proceed to show, that it is so far from being inconsistent with the divine perfections, that those perfections evidently require it; *i.e.* they require that sin should have so great a punishment, either in the person who has committed it, or in a surety; and therefore with respect to those who believe not in a surety, and have no interest in him, the divine perfections require that this punishment should be inflicted on them.

This appears, as it is not only not unsuitable that sin should be thus punished: but it is positively suitable decent, and proper. — If this be made to appear, that it is positively suitable that sin should be thus punished, then it will follow, that the perfections of God require it; for certainly the perfections of God require is proper to be done. The perfection and excellency of God require that to take place which is perfect, excellent, and proper in its own nature. But that sin should be punished eternally is such a thing; which appears by the following considerations.

**1.** It is suitable that God should infinitely hate sin, and be an infinite enemy to it. Sin, as I have before shown, is an infinite evil, and therefore is infinitely odious and detestable. It is proper that God should hate every evil, and hate it according to its odious and detestable nature. And sin being infinitely evil and odious, it is proper that God should hate it infinitely.

**2.** If infinite hatred of sin be suitable to the divine character, then the expressions of such hatred are also suitable to his character. Because that, which is suitable to be, is suitable to be expressed, that which is lovely in itself, is lovely when it appears. If it be suitable that God should be an

infinite enemy to sin, or that he should hate it infinitely, then it is suitable that he should act as such an enemy. If it be suitable that he should hate and have enmity against sin, then it is suitable for him to express that hatred and enmity in that to which hatred and enmity by its own nature tends. But certainly hatred in its own nature tends to opposition, and to set itself against that which is hated, and to procure it's evil and not it's good: and that in proportion to the hatred. Great hatred naturally tends to the great evil, and infinite hatred to the infinite evil, of its object.

Whence it follows, that if it be suitable that there should be infinite hatred of sin in God, as I have shown it is, it is suitable that he should execute an infinite punishment on it, and so the perfections of God require that he should punish sin with an infinite, or which is the same thing with an eternal, punishment.

Thus we see not only the great objection against this doctrine answered, but the truth of the doctrine established by reason. I now proceed further to establish it by considering the remaining particulars under the doctrine.

**II.** That eternal death or punishment which God threatens to the wicked, is not annihilation, but an abiding sensible punishment or misery. — The truth of this proposition will appear by the following particulars.

**1.** The Scripture every where represents the punishment of the wicked, as implying very extreme pains and sufferings; but a state of annihilation is no state of suffering at all. Persons annihilated have no sense or feeling of pain or pleasure, and much less do they feel that punishment which carries in it an extreme pain or suffering. They no more suffer to eternity than they did suffer from eternity.

**2.** It is agreeable both to Scripture and reason to suppose, that the wicked will be punished in such a manner that they shall be sensible of the punishment they are under, that they should be sensible that now God has executed and fulfilled what he threatened, what they disregarded, and would not believe. They should know themselves that justice takes place upon them; that God vindicates that majesty which they despised, that God is not so despicable a being as they thought him to be. They should be sensible for what they are punished, while they are under the threatened punishment. It is reasonable that they should be sensible of

their own guilt, and should remember their former opportunities and obligations, and should see their own folly and God's justice. — If the punishment threatened be eternal annihilation, they will never know that it is inflicted; they will never know that God is just in their punishment, or that they have their deserts. And how is this agreeable to the Scriptures, in which God threatens that he will repay the wicked to his face,

<sup><8770></sup>Deuteronomy 7:10. And to that in <sup><8219></sup>Job 21:19, 20. "God rewardeth him, and he shall know it, his eyes shall see his destruction, and he shall drink of the wrath of the Almighty." And to that in <sup><8720></sup>Ezekiel 22:21, 22. "Yea, I will gather you, and blow upon you in the fire of my wrath, and ye shall be melted in the midst thereof: As silver is melted in the midst to the furnace so shall ye be melted in the midst thereof, and ye shall know that I the Lord have poured out my fury upon you." — And how is it agreeable to that expression so often annexed to the threatenings of God's wrath against wicked men, 'And ye shall know that I am the Lord!'

**3.** The Scripture teaches that the wicked will suffer different degree of torment, according to the different aggravations of their sins.

"Whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shalt say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell-fire." (<sup><4182></sup>Matthew 5:22.)


Here Christ teaches us, that the torments of wicked men will be different in different persons, according to the different degrees of their guilt. — It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah, for Tyre and Sidon, than for the cities where most of Christ's mighty works were wrought. — Again, our Lord assures us, That he that knoweth his Lord's will, and prepareth not himself, nor doeth according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knoweth not, and committeth things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. These several passages of Scripture infallibly prove that there will be different degrees of punishment in hell, which is utterly inconsistent with the supposition, that the punishment consists in annihilation, in which there can be no degree.

**4.** The Scriptures are very express and abundant in this matter, That the eternal punishment of the wicked will consist in sensible misery and


torment, and not in annihilation. — What is said of Judas is worthy to be observed here,

“It had been good for that man if he had not been born,”



( Matthew 26:24.)



This seems plainly to teach us, that the punishment of the wicked is such that their existence, upon the whole, is worse than non-existence. But if their punishment consists merely in annihilation, this is not true. — The wicked, in their punishment, are said to weep, and wail, and gnash their teeth which implies not only real existence, but life, knowledge and activity, and that they are in a very sensible and exquisite manner affected with their punishment. —  Isaiah 33:14. Sinners in the state of their punishment are represented to dwell with everlasting burnings. But if they are only turned into nothing, where is the foundation for this representation? It is absurd to say that sinners will dwell with annihilation, for there is no dwelling in the case. It is also absurd to call annihilation a burning, which implies a state of existence, sensibility, and extreme pain; whereas in annihilation there is neither.

It is said, that they shall be cast into a lake of fire and brimstone. How can this expression with any propriety be understood to mean a state of annihilation? Yea, they are expressly said to have no rest day nor night, but to be tormented with fire and brimstone for ever and ever, Rev 20:10. But annihilation is a state of rest, a state in which not the least torment can possibly be suffered. The rich man in hell lifted up his eyes being in torment, and saw Abraham afar off and Lazarus in his bosom, and entered into a particular conversation with Abraham, all which proves that he was not annihilated.

The spirits of ungodly men before the resurrection are not in a state of annihilation, but in a state of misery, they are spirits in prison, as the apostle saith of them that were drowned in the flood,  1 Peter 3:19. — And this appears very plainly from the instance of the rich man before mentioned, if we consider him as representing the wicked in their separate state between death and the resurrection. But if the wicked even then, are in a state of torment much more will they be, when they shall come to suffer that which is the proper punishment of their sins.

Annihilation is not so great a calamity but that some men have undoubtedly chosen it, rather than a state of suffering even in this life. This was the case of Job, a good man. But if a good man in this world may suffer that which is worse than annihilation, doubtless the proper punishment of the wicked, in which God means to manifest his peculiar abhorrence of their wickedness, will be a calamity vastly greater still; and therefore cannot be annihilation. That must be a very mean and contemptible testimony of God's wrath towards those who have rebelled against his crown and dignity — broken his laws, and despised both his vengeance and his grace — which is not so great a calamity as some of his true children have suffered in life.

The eternal punishment of the wicked is said to be the second death, as  Revelation 20:14. and 21:8. It is doubtless called the second death in reference to the death of the body, and as the death of the body is ordinarily attended with great pain and distress, so the like, or something vastly greater, is implied in calling the eternal punishment of the wicked the second death, and there would be no propriety in calling it so, if it consisted merely in annihilation. And this second death wicked men will suffer; for it cannot be called the second death with respect to any other than men; it cannot be called so with respect to devils, as they die no temporal death, which is the first death. In  Revelation 2:11. it is said, "He that overcometh, shall not be hurt of the second death;" implying that all who do not overcome their lusts, but live in sin, shall suffer the second death.

Again, wicked men will suffer the same kind of death with the devils; as in verse 25 of the context, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Now the punishment of the devil is not annihilation, but torment: he therefore trembles for fear of it; not for fear of being annihilated, — he would be glad of that. What he is afraid of is torment, as appears by  Luke 8:28. Where he cries out, and beseeches Christ, that he would not torment him before the time. And it is said  Revelation 20:10. "The devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night, for ever and ever."

It is strange how men will go directly against so plain and full revelations of Scripture, as to suppose, notwithstanding all these things, that the eternal punishment threatened against the wicked signifies no more than annihilation.

**III.** As the future punishment of the wicked consists in sensible misery; so it shall not only continue for a very long time, but shall be absolutely without end.

Of those who have held that the torments of hell are not absolutely eternal, there have been two sorts. Some suppose, that in the threatenings of everlasting punishment the terms used do not necessarily import a proper eternity, but only a very long duration. Others suppose, that if they do import a proper eternity, yet we cannot necessarily conclude thence, that God will fulfill his threatenings. — Therefore I shall,

First, Show that the threatenings of eternal punishment do very plainly and fully import a proper, absolute eternity, and not merely a long duration. — This appears,

**1.** Because when the Scripture speaks of the wicked being sentenced to their punishment at the time when all temporal things are come to an end, it then speaks of it as everlasting, as in the text, and elsewhere. It is true, that the term forever is not always in Scripture used to signify eternity. Sometimes it means, as long as a man liveth. In this sense it is said, that the Hebrew servant, who chose to abide with his master, should have his ear bored, and should serve his master forever. Sometimes it means, during the continuance of the state and church of the Jews. In this sense, several laws, which were peculiar to that church, and were to continue in force no longer than that church should last, are called statutes forever. See <sup>2077</sup>Exodus 27:21. chapter 28:43, etc. Sometimes it means as long as the world stands. So in <sup>2100</sup>Ecclesiastes 1:4 “One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh; but the earth abideth for ever.”

And this last is the longest temporal duration that such a term is ever used to signify. For the duration of the world is the longest of things temporal, as its beginning was the earliest. Therefore when the Scripture speaks of things as being before the foundation of the world, it means that they existed before the beginning of time. So those things, which continue after

the end of the world, are eternal things. When heaven and earth are shaken and removed, those things that remain will be what cannot be shaken, but will remain for ever, <sup><812></sup>Hebrews 12:26, 27.

But the punishment of the wicked will not only remain after the end of the world, but is called everlasting, as in the text, “These shall go away into everlasting punishment.”

So in <sup><810></sup>2 Thessalonians 1:9, 10. “Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power: when he shall come to be glorified in his saints,” etc. — Now, what can be meant by a thing being everlasting, after all temporal things are come to an end, but that it is absolutely without end?

**2.** Such expressions are used to set forth the duration of the punishment of the wicked, as are never used in the scriptures of the New Testament to signify any thing but a proper eternity. It is said, not only that the punishment shall be forever, but forever and ever. <sup><644></sup>Revelation 14:11.

“The smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever.” —

<sup><610></sup>Revelation 20:10. “Shall be tormented day and night, for ever and ever.” — Doubtless the New Testament has some expression to signify a proper eternity, of which it has so often occasion to speak. But it has no higher expression than this: if this do not signify an absolute eternity, there is none that does.

**3.** The Scripture uses the same way of speaking to set forth the eternity of punishment and the eternity of happiness, yea, the eternity of God himself. <sup><154></sup>Matthew 25:46. “These shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.” The words everlasting and eternal, in the original, are the very same. <sup><625></sup>Revelation 22:5. “And they (the saints) shall reign for ever and ever.” And the Scripture has no higher expression to signify the eternity of God himself, than that of his being forever and ever; as <sup><640></sup>Revelation 4:9. “To him who sat on the throne, who liveth forever and ever,” and in the 10th verse, and in chapter 5:14. and chapter 10:6. and chapter 15:7.

Again, the Scripture expresses God’s eternity by this, that it shall be for ever, after the world is come to an end; Psalm cii. 26, 27. “They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment;

as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed. But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end.”

**4.** The Scripture says, that wicked men shall not be delivered, till they have paid the uttermost farthing of their debt; <sup>4094</sup>Matthew 5:26. The last mite; <sup>4095</sup>Luke 10:59. *i.e.* the utmost that is deserved and all mercy is excluded by this expression. But we have shown that they deserve an infinite, an endless punishment.

**5.** The Scripture says absolutely, that their punishment shall not have an end, <sup>4096</sup>Mark 9:44. “Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.” Now, it will not do to say, that the meaning is, Their worm shall live a great while, or that it shall be a great while before their fire is quenched. If ever the time comes that their worm shall die, if ever there shall be a quenching of the fire at all, then it is not true that their worm dieth not, and that the fire is not quenched. For if there be a dying of the worm, and a quenching of the fire, let it be at what time it will, nearer or further off, it is equally contrary to such a negation — it dieth not, it is not quenched.

Secondly, There are others who allow, that the expressions of the threatenings do denote a proper eternity, but then, they say, it doth not certainly follow, that the punishment will really be eternal: because God may threaten, and yet not fulfil his threatenings. Though they allow that the threatenings are positive and peremptory, without any reserve, yet they say, God is not obliged to fulfill absolute positive threatenings, as he is absolute promises. Because in promises a right is conveyed that the creature to whom the promises are made will claim but there is no danger of the creature’s claiming any right by a threatening. Therefore I am now to show, that what God has positively declared in this matter, does indeed make it certain, that it shall be as he has declared. To this end, I shall mention two things:

**1.** It is evidently contrary to the divine truth, positively to declare any thing to be real, whether past, present, or to come, which God at the same time knows is not so. Absolutely threatening that any thing shall be, is the same as absolutely declaring that it is to be. For any to suppose, that God absolutely declares that any thing will be, which he at the same time knows will not be, is blasphemy, if there be any such thing as blasphemy.

Indeed, it is very true, that there is no obligation on God, arising from the claim of the creature, as there is in promises. They seem to reckon the wrong way, who suppose the necessity of the execution of the threatening to arise from a proper obligation on God to the creature to execute consequent on his threatening. For indeed the certainty of the execution arises the other way, viz. on the obligation there was on the omniscient God, in threatening to conform his threatening to what he knew would be future in execution. Though, strictly speaking, God is not properly obliged to the creature to execute because he has threatened, yet he was obliged not absolutely to threaten, if at the same time he knew that he should not or would not fulfil: because this would not have been consistent with his truth. So that from the truth of God there is an inviolable connexion between positive threatenings and execution. They who suppose that God positively declared that he would do contrary to what he knew would come to pass, do therein suppose that he absolutely threatened contrary to what he knew to be truth. And how any one can speak contrary to what he knows to be truth, in declaring, promising, or threatening, or any other way, consistently with inviolable truth, is inconceivable.

Threatenings are significations of something, and if they are made consistently with truth, they are true significations, or significations of truth, that which shall be. If absolute threatenings are significations of any thing, they are significations of the futurity of the things threatened. But if the futurity of the things threatened be not true and real, then how can the threatening be a true signification? And if God, in them, speaks contrary to what he knows; and contrary to what he intends, how he can speak true is inconceivable.

Absolute threatenings are a kind of predictions, and though God is not properly obliged by any claim of ours to fulfil predictions, unless they are of the nature of promises, yet it certainly would be contrary to truth, to predict that such a thing would come to pass, which he knew at the same time would not come to pass. Threatenings are declarations of something future and they must be declarations of future truth, if they are true declarations. Its being future alters not the case any more than if it were present. It is equally contrary to truth, to declare contrary to what at the same time is known to be truth, whether it be of things past, present, or to come for all are alike to God.

Beside, we have often declarations in Scripture of the future eternal punishment of the wicked, in the proper form of predictions, and not in the form of threatenings. So in the text, “These shall go away into everlasting punishment.” So in those frequent assertions of eternal punishment in the Revelation, some of which I have already quoted. The Revelation is a prophecy, and is so called in the book itself, so are those declarations of eternal punishment. — The like declarations we have also in many other places of Scripture.

**2.** The doctrine of those who teach, that it is not certain that God will fulfil those absolute threatenings, is blasphemous another way; and that is, as God, according to their supposition, was obliged to make use of a fallacy to govern the world. They own, that it is needful that men should apprehend themselves, liable to an eternal punishment, that they might thereby be restrained from sin, and that God has threatened such a punishment, for the very end that they might believe themselves exposed to it. But what an unworthy opinion does this convey of God and his government, of his infinite majesty, and wisdom, and all-sufficiency! — Beside, they suppose, that though God has made use of such a fallacy, yet it is not such an one but that they have detected him in it. Though God intended men should believe it to be certain, that sinners are liable to an eternal punishment; set they suppose, that they have been so cunning as to find out that it is not certain: and so that God had not laid his design so deep, but that such cunning men as they can discern the cheat, and defeat the design: because they have found out, that there is no necessary connexion between the threatening of eternal punishment, and the execution of that threatening.

Considering these things, is it not greatly to be wondered at, that Archbishop Tillotson, who has made so great a figure among the new-fashioned divines, should advance such an opinion as this? Before I conclude this head, it may be proper for me to answer an objection or two, which may arise in the minds of some.

**1.** It may be here said, We have instances wherein God hath not fulfilled his threatenings; as his threatening to Adam, and in him to mankind, that they should surely die, if they should eat the forbidden fruit. I answer, it is not true that God did not fulfil that threatening: he fulfilled it and will

fulfill it in every jot and tittle. When God said, “Thou shalt surely die,” If we respect spiritual death, it was fulfilled in Adam’s person in the day that he ate. For immediately his image, his holy spirit, and original righteousness, which was the highest and best life of our first parents, were lost, and they were immediately in a doleful state of spiritual death.

If we respect temporal death, which was also fulfilled: he brought death upon himself and all his posterity, and he virtually suffered that death on that very day on which he ate. His body was brought into a corruptible, mortal, and dying condition, and so it continued till it was dissolved. If we look at all that death, which was comprehended in the threatening, it was, properly speaking, fulfilled in Christ. When God said to Adam, If thou eatest, thou shalt die, he spake not only to him, and of him personally, but the words respected mankind, Adam and his race, and doubtless were so understood by him. His offspring were to be looked upon as sinning in him, and so should die with him. The words do as justly allow of an imputation of death as of sin, they are as well consistent with dying in a surety as with sinning in one. Therefore, the threatening is fulfilled in the death of Christ, the surety.

**2.** Another objection may arise from God’s threatening to Nineveh. He threatened, that in forty days Nineveh should be destroyed, which yet he did not fulfil. — I answer, that threatening could justly be looked upon no otherwise than as conditional. It was of the nature of a warning, and not of an absolute denunciation. Why was Jonah sent to the Ninevites, but to give them warning, that they might have opportunity to repent, reform, and avert the approaching destruction? God had no other design or end in sending the prophet to them, but that they might be warned and tried by him, as God warned the Israelites, Judah and Jerusalem, before their destruction. Therefore the prophets, together with their prophecies of approaching destruction, joined earnest exhortations to repent and reform, that it might be averted.

No more could justly be understood to be certainly threatened, than that Nineveh should be destroyed in forty days, continuing as it was. For it was for their wickedness that that destruction was threatened, and so the Ninevites took it. Therefore, when the cause was removed, the effect ceased. It was contrary to God’s known manner, to threaten punishment

and destruction for sin in this world absolutely, so that it should come upon the persons threatened unavoidably, let them repent and reform and do what they would: <sup>2410</sup>Jeremiah 18:7, 8. “At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; if that nation against whom I have pronounced turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them.” So that all threatening of this nature had a condition implied in them, according to the known and declared manner of God’s dealing. And the Ninevites did not take it as an absolute sentence of denunciation: if they had, they would have despaired of any benefit by fasting and reformation.

But the threatenings of eternal wrath are positive and absolute. There is nothing in the word of God from which we can gather any condition. The only opportunity of escaping is in this world; this is the only state of trial, wherein we have any offers of mercy, or place for repentance.

**IV.** I shall mention several good and important ends, which will be obtained by the eternal punishment of the wicked.

**1.** Hereby God vindicates his injured majesty. Wherein sinners cast contempt upon it, and trample if in the dust, God vindicates and honours it, and makes it appear, as it is indeed, infinite, by showing that it is infinitely dreadful to condemn or offend it.

**2.** God glorifies his justice. — The glory of God is the greatest good, it is that which is the chief end of the creation, it is of greater importance than any thing else. But this is one way wherein God will glorify himself, as in the eternal destruction of ungodly men he will glorify his justice. Therein he will appear as a just governor of the world. The vindictive justice of God will appear strict, exact, awful, and terrible, and therefore glorious.

**3.** God hereby indirectly glorifies his grace on the vessels of mercy — The saints in heaven will behold the torments of the damned: “the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever.” <sup>2411</sup>Isaiah 66:24. “And they shall go forth and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched, and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.” And in <sup>2412</sup>Revelation 14:10. It is said, that they shall be tormented in the presence

of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb. So they will be tormented in the presence also of the glorified saints.

Hereby the saints will be made the more sensible how great their salvation is. When they shall see how great the misery is from which God hath saved them, and how great a difference he hath made between their state, and the state of others, who were by nature, and perhaps for a time by practice. No more sinful and ill deserving than any, it will give them a greater sense of the wonderfulness of God's grace to them. Every time they look upon the damned. it will excite in them a lively and admiring sense of the grace of God, in making them so to differ. This the apostle informs us is one end of the damnation of ungodly men; ~~ROM~~ Romans 9:22, 23. What if God willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory?" The view of the misery of the damned will double the ardour of the love and gratitude of the saints in heaven.

**4.** The sight of hell torments will exalt the happiness of the saints forever. It will not only make them more sensible of the greatness and freeness of the grace of God in their happiness, but it will really make their happiness the greater, as it will make them more sensible of their own happiness: it will give them a more lively relish of it; it will make them prize it more. When they see others, who were of the same nature, and born under the same circumstances, plunged in such misery, and they so distinguished, O it will make them sensible how happy they are. A sense of the opposite misery, in all cases, greatly increases the relish of any joy or pleasure.

The sight of the wonderful power, the great and dreadful majesty, and awful justice and holiness of God, manifested in the eternal punishment of ungodly men, will make them prize his favour and love vastly the more and they will be so much the more happy in the enjoyment of it.

### APPLICATION.

**I.** From what hath been said, we may learn the folly and madness of the greater part of mankind, in that for the sake of present momentary gratification, they run the venture of enduring all these eternal torments.

They prefer a small pleasure, or a little wealth, or a little earthly honour and greatness, which can last but for a moment, to an escape from this punishment. If it be true that the torments of hell are eternal, what will it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul, or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? What is there in this world, which is not a trifle, and lighter than vanity, in comparison with these eternal things?

How mad are men, who so often hear of these things and pretend to believe them; who can live but a little while, a few years; who do not even expect to live here longer than others of their species ordinarily do; and who yet are careless about what becomes of themselves in another world, where there is no change and no end!

How mad are they, when they hear that if they go on in sin, they shall be eternally miserable, that they are not moved by it, but hear it with as much carelessness and coldness as if they were no way concerned in the matter; when they know not but that it may be their case, that they may be suffering these torments before a week is at an end!

How can men be so careless of such a matter as their own eternal and desperate destruction and torment! What a strange stupor and senselessness possesses the hearts of men! How common a thing is it to see men, who are, told from sabbath to sabbath of eternal misery, and who are as mortal as other men, so careless about it, that they seem not to be at all restrained by it from whatever their souls lust after! It is not half so much their care to escape eternal misery, as it is to get money and land, and to be considerable in the world, and to gratify their senses. Their thoughts are much more exercised about these things, and much more of their care and concern is about them. Eternal misery, though they lie every day exposed to it, is a thing neglected, it is but now and then thought of, and then with a great deal of stupidity, and not with concern enough to stir them up to do any thing considerable in order to escape it. They are not sensible that it is worth their while to take any considerable pains in order to it. And if they do take pains for a little while, they soon leave off, and something else takes up their thoughts and concern.

Thus you see it among young and old. Multitudes of youth lead a careless life, taking little care about their salvation. So you may see it among

persons of middle age; and with many advanced in years, and when they certainly draw near to the grave. — Yet these same persons will seem to acknowledge, that the greater part of men go to hell and suffer eternal misery, and this through carelessness about it. However, they will do the same. How strange is it that men can enjoy themselves and be at rest, when they are thus hanging over eternal burnings; at the same time having no lease of their lives, and not knowing how soon the thread by which they hang will break, nor indeed do they pretend to know; and if it breaks, they are gone, they are lost for ever, and there is no remedy! Yet they trouble not themselves much about it; nor will they hearken to those who cry to them, and entreat them to take care for themselves, and labour to get out of that dangerous condition: they are not willing to take so much pains: they choose not to be diverted from amusing themselves with toys and vanities. Thus, well might the wise man say, <sup>2000</sup> Ecclesiastes 9:3. “The heart of the sons of men is full of evil. Madness is in their heart while they live; and after that they go to the dead.” — How much wiser are those few, who make it their main business to lay a foundation for eternity, to secure their salvation!

**2.** I shall improve this subject in a use of exhortation to sinners, to take care to escape these eternal torments. If they be eternal, one would think that would be enough to awaken your concern and excite your diligence. If the punishment be eternal, it is infinite, as we said before and therefore no other evil, no death, no temporary torment that ever you heard of, or that you can imagine, is any thing in comparison with it, but is as much less and less considerable, not only as a grain of sand is less than the whole universe, but as it is less than the boundless space which encompasses the universe. — Therefore here,

**(1.)** Be entreated to consider attentively how great and awful a thing eternity is. Although you cannot comprehend it the more by considering, yet you may be made more sensible that it is not a thing to be disregarded. — Do but consider what it is to suffer extreme torment for ever and ever; to suffer it day and night, from one year to another, from one age to another, and from one thousand ages to another, and so adding age to age, and thousands to thousands, in pain, in wailing and lamenting, groaning and shrieking, and gnashing your teeth, with your souls full of dreadful grief and amazement, with your

bodies and every member full of racking torture, without any possibility of getting ease, without any possibility of moving God to pity by your cries, without any possibility of hiding yourselves from him, without any possibility of diverting your thoughts from your pain; without any possibility of obtaining any manner of mitigation, or help, or change for the better.

**(2.)** Do but consider how dreadful despair will be in such torment. How dismal will it be, when you are under these racking torments, to know assuredly that you never, never shall be delivered from them, to have no hope: when you shall wish that you might be turned into nothing, but shall have no hope of it; when you shall wish that you might be turned into a toad or a serpent, but shall have no hope of it; when you would rejoice, if you might but have any relief, after you shall have endured these torments millions of ages, but shall have no hope of it. After you shall have worn out the age of the sun, moon, and stars, in your dolorous groans and lamentations, without rest day and night, or one minute's ease, yet you shall have no hope of ever being delivered: after you shall have worn a thousand more such ages, you shall have no hope, but shall know that you are not one whit nearer to the end of your torments, but that still there are the same groans, the same shrieks, the same doleful cries, incessantly to be made by you, and that the smoke of your torment shall still ascend up for ever and ever. Your souls, which shall have been agitated with the wrath of God all this while, will still exist to bear more wrath; your bodies, which shall have been burning all this while in these glowing flames, shall not have been consumed, but will remain to roast through eternity, which will not have been at all shortened by what shall have been past.

You may by considering make yourselves more sensible than you ordinarily are, but it is a little you can conceive of what it is to have no hope in such torments. How sinking would it be to you, to endure such pain as you have felt in this world, without any hopes, and to know that you never should be delivered from it, nor have one minute's rest! You can now scarcely conceive how doleful that would be. How much more to endure the vast weight of the wrath of God without hope! The more the damned in hell think of the eternity of their torments, the more amazing will it appear to them, and alas! They will not be able to keep it out of

their minds. Their tortures will not divert them from it, but will fix their attention to it. O how dreadful will eternity appear to them after they shall have been thinking on it for ages together, and shall have so long an experience of their torments! The damned in hell will have two infinities perpetually to amaze them, and swallow them up: one is an infinite God whose wrath they will bear, and in whom they will behold their perfect and irreconcilable enemy. The other is the infinite duration of their torment.

If it were possible for the damned in hell to have a comprehensive knowledge of eternity, their sorrow and grief would be infinite in degree. The comprehensive view of so much sorrow, which they must endure, would cause infinite grief for the present. Though they will not have a comprehensive knowledge of it, yet they will doubtless have a vastly more lively and strong apprehension of it than we can have in this world. Their torments will give them an impression of it. — A man in his present state, without any enlargement of his capacity, would have a vastly more lively impression of eternity than he has, if he were only under some pretty sharp pain in some member of his body, and were at the same time assured, that he must endure that pain for ever. His pain would give him a greater sense of eternity than other men have. How much more will those excruciating torments, which the damned will suffer, have this effect!

Besides, their capacity will probably be enlarged, their understandings will be quicker and stronger in a future state, and God can give them as great a sense and as strong an impression of eternity, as he pleases, to increase their grief and torment. — O be entreated, ye that are in a Christless state, and are going on in a way to hell, that are daily exposed to damnation, to consider these things. If you do not, it will surely be but a little while before you will experience them, and then you will know how dreadful it is to despair in hell; and it may be before this year, or this month, or this week, is at an end before another sabbath, or ever you shall have opportunity to hear another sermon.

**(3.)** That you may effectually escape these dreadful and eternal torments, be entreated to flee and embrace him who came into the world for the very end of saving sinners from these torments, who has paid the whole debt due to the divine law, and exhausted eternal in

temporal sufferings. What great encouragement is it to those of you who are sensible that you are exposed to eternal punishment that there is a Saviour provided, who is able and who freely offers to save you from that punishment, and that in a way which is perfectly consistent with the glory of God, yea, which is more to the glory of God than it would be if you should suffer the eternal punishment of hell. For if you should suffer that punishment you would never pay the whole of the debt. Those who are sent to hell never will have paid the whole of the debt, which they owe to God, nor indeed a part, which bears any proportion to the whole.

They never will have paid a part, which bears so great a proportion to the whole, as one might to ten thousand talents. Justice therefore never can be actually satisfied in your damnation; but it is actually satisfied in Christ. Therefore he is accepted of the Father, and therefore all who believe are accepted and justified in him. Therefore believe in him, come to him, and commit your soul to him to be saved by him. In him you shall be safe from the eternal torments of hell. Nor is that all: but through him you shall inherit inconceivable blessedness and glory, which will be of equal duration with the torments of hell. For, as at the last day the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment, so shall the righteous, or those who trust in Christ, go into life eternal.

# SERMON 12

*[Dated, August, 1750.]*

## THE PEACE WHICH CHRIST GIVES HIS TRUE FOLLOWERS.

Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you;  
not as the world giveth, give I unto you. (~~John~~ John 14:27)

THESE words are a part of a most affectionate and affecting discourse that Christ had with his disciples the same evening in which he was betrayed, knowing that he was to be crucified the next day. This discourse begins with the 31st verse of the 13th, and is continued to the end of the 16th chapter. Christ began his discourse after he partook of the passover with them, after he had instituted and administered the sacrament of the supper, and after Judas was gone out, and none were left but his true and faithful disciples, whom he now addresses as his dear children. This was the last discourse that Christ had with them before his death. As it was his parting discourse, and, as it were, his dying discourse, so it is on many accounts the most remarkable we have recorded in our Bibles.

It is evident this discourse made a deep impression on the minds of the disciples; and we may suppose that it did so, in a special manner, on the mind of love the beloved disciple, whose heart was especially full of love to him, and who had just then been leaning on his bosom. In this discourse Christ had told his dear disciples that he was going away, which filled them with sorrow and heaviness. The words of the text are given to comfort them, and to relieve their sorrow. He supports them with the promise of that peace which he would leave with them, and which they would have in him and with him, when he was gone.

This promise he delivers in three emphatical expressions which illustrate one another. "Peace I leave with you." As much as to say, though I am going away, yet I will not take all comfort away with me. While I have been with you, I have been your support and comfort, and you have had

peace in me in the midst of the losses you have sustained, and troubles you have met with from this evil generation. This peace I will not take from you, but leave it with you in a more full possession.

“My peace I give unto you.” Christ by calling it his peace signifies two things,

**1.** That it was his own that which he had to give. It was the peculiar benefit that he had to bestow on his children, now he was about to leave the world as to his human presence. Silver and gold he had none; for, while in his estate of humiliation, he was poor. The foxes had holes, and the birds of the air had nests; but the Son of man had not where to lay his head: ~~4188~~ Luke 9:58. He had no earthly estate to leave to his disciples who were as it were his family: but he had peace to give them.

**2.** It was his peace that he gave them; as it was the same kind of peace which he himself enjoyed. The same excellent and divine peace which he ever had in God, and which he was about to receive in his exalted state in a vastly greater perfection and fulness: for the happiness Christ gives to his people, is a participation of his own happiness: agreeable to chapter 15:11. “These things have I said unto you, that my joy might remain in you.” And in his prayer with his disciples at the conclusion of this discourse, chapter 17:13. “And now come I to thee, and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.” And verse 22. “And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them.”

Christ here alludes to men making their wills before death. When parents are about to leave their children by death, they are wont in their last will and testament to give them their estate, that estate which they themselves were wont to possess and enjoy. So it was with Christ when he was about to leave the world, with respect to the peace which he gave his disciples; only with this difference, that earthly parents, when they die, though they leave the same estate to their children which they themselves heretofore enjoyed; yet when the children come to the full possession of it, they enjoy it no more; the parents do not enjoy it with their children. The time of the full possession of parents and children is not together. Whereas with respect to Christ’s peace, he did not only possess it himself before his death, when he bequeathed It to his disciples; but also afterwards more fully: so that they were received to possess it with him.

The third and last expression is, “not as the world giveth, give I unto you.” Which is as much as to say, my gifts and legacies, now I am going to leave the world, are not like those which the rich and great men of the world are wont to leave to their heirs, when they die. They bequeath to their children their worldly possessions; and it may be, vast treasures of silver and gold, and sometimes an earthly kingdom. But the thing that I give you, is my peace, a vastly different thing from what they are wont to give, and which cannot be obtained by all that they can bestow, or their children inherit from them.

### DOCTRINE.

That peace which Christ, when he died, left as a legacy to all his true saints is very different from all those things which the men of this world bequeath to their children, when they die.

**I.** Christ at his death made over the blessings of the new covenant to believers, as it were in a will or testament.

**II.** A great blessing that Christ made over to believers in this his testament was his peace.

**III.** This legacy of Christ is exceedingly diverse from all that any of the men of this world ever leave to their children when they die.

**I.** Christ at his death made over the blessings of the new covenant to believers, as it were in a will or testament.

The new covenant is represented by the apostle as Christ’s last will and testament. <sup>ROM 8:17</sup> Hebrews 9:15, 16. “And for this cause he is the Mediator of the New Testament that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator.” What men convey by their will or testament, is their own estate. So Christ in the new covenant conveys to believers his own inheritance, so far as they are capable of possessing and enjoying it. They have that eternal life given to them in their measure, which Christ himself possesses. They live in him, and with him, and by a participation of his life. Because he lives they live

also. They inherit his kingdom: the same kingdom which the Father appointed unto him. Luke 25:29. “And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me.” They shall reign on his throne, ~~4023~~ Revelation 3:21. They have his glory given to them, John 17: And because all things are Christ’s, so in Christ all things are the saints,” ~~4021~~ 1 Corinthians 3:21, 22.

Men in their wills or testaments most commonly give their estates to their children: so believers are in Scripture represented as Christ’s children.

~~4023~~ Hebrews 2:13. “Behold, I, and the children which God hath given me.” Men most commonly make their wills a little before their death: so Christ did, in a very special and solemn manner, make over and confirm to his disciples the blessings of the new covenant on the evening before the day of his crucifixion, in that discourse of which my text is a part. The promises of the new covenant were never so particularly expressed, and so solemnly given forth by Christ in all the time that he was upon earth, as in this discourse. Christ promises them mansions in his Father’s house, chapter 16:1, 2, 3. Here he promises them whatever blessings they should need and ask in his name. Chapter 15:7. 14:23, 24. Here he more solemnly and fully than any where else, gives forth and confirms the promise of the Holy Spirit, which is the sum of the blessings of the covenant of grace. Chapter 14:18. 17:26. 15:25. 16:7. Here he promises them his own and his Father’s gracious presence and favour. Chapter 14:18. 19:20, 21. Here he promises them peace, as in the text. Here he promises them his joy. Chapter 15:11. Here he promises grace to bring forth holy fruits. Chapter 15:16. And victory over the world. Chapter 16:33. And indeed there seems to be no where else so full and complete an edition of the covenant of grace in the whole Bible as in this dying discourse of Christ with his eleven true disciples.

This covenant between Christ and his children is like a will or testament also in this respect, that it becomes effectual, and a way is made for putting it in execution, no other way than by his death; as the apostle observes it is with a will or testament among men.

“For a testament is of force after men are dead.”

(~~4027~~ Hebrews 9:17.)

For though the covenant of grace indeed was of force before the death of Christ, yet it was of force no otherwise than by his death, so that his death then did virtually intervene, being already undertaken and engaged. As a man's heirs come by the legacies bequeathed to them no otherwise than by the death of the testator, so men come by the spiritual and eternal inheritance no otherwise than by the death of Christ. If it had not been for the death of Christ they never could have obtained it.

**II.** A great blessing that Christ in his testament hath bequeathed to his true followers, is his peace. Here are two things that I would observe particularly, viz. That Christ hath bequeathed to believers true peace, and then, that the peace he has given them is his peace.

**1.** Our Lord Jesus Christ has bequeathed true peace and comfort to his followers. Christ is called the Prince of peace. <sup><299></sup>Isaiah 9:6. And when he was born into the world, the angels on that joyful and wonderful occasion sang, Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace: because of that peace which he should procure for and bestow on the children of men; peace with God, and peace one with another, and tranquillity and peace within themselves: which last is especially the benefit spoken of in the text. This Christ has procured for his followers, and laid a foundation for their enjoyment of it, in that he has procured for them the other two, viz. peace with God, and one with another. He has procured for them peace and reconciliation with God, and his favour and friendship; in that he satisfied for their sins, and laid a foundation for the perfect removal of the guilt of sin, and the forgiveness of all their trespasses, and wrought out for them a perfect and glorious righteousness, most acceptable to God, and sufficient to recommend them to God's full acceptance, to the adoption of children, and to the eternal fruits of his fatherly kindness.

By these means true saints are brought into a state of freedom from condemnation, and all the curses of the law of God. <sup><513></sup>Romans 8:34. "Who is he that condemneth?" And by these means they are safe from that dreadful and eternal misery to which naturally they are exposed, and are set on high out of the reach of all their enemies, so that the gates of hell and powers of darkness can never destroy them; nor can wicked men, though they may persecute, ever hurt them. <sup><513></sup>Romans 8:31. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" <sup><23></sup>Numbers 23:8. "How shall I curse whom

God hath not cursed?" Verse 23. "There is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel." By these means they are out of the reach of death, ~~and~~ John 6:4-9, 50, 51. "This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die." By these means death with respect to them has lost its sting, and is no more worthy of the name of death. ~~and~~ 1 Corinthians 15:55. "O death, where is thy sting?" By these means they have no need to be afraid of the day of judgment, when the heavens and earth shall be dissolved. ~~and~~ Psalm 46:1, 2. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed: and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea." Yea, a true saint has reason to be at rest in an assurance, that nothing can separate him from the love of God. ~~and~~ Romans 8:38, 39.

Thus he that is in Christ, is in a safe refuge from every thing that might disturb him; ~~and~~ Isaiah 32:2. "And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest: as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." And hence they that dwell in Christ have that promise fulfilled to them which we have in the 18th verse of the same chapter: "And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting-places."

And the true followers of Christ have not only ground of rest and peace of soul, by reason of their safety from evil, but on account of their sure title and certain enjoyment of all that good which they stand in need of, living dying, and through all eternity. They are on a sure foundation for happiness, are built on a rock that can never be moved, and have a fountain that is sufficient, and can never be exhausted. The covenant is ordered in all things and sure, and God has passed his word and oath, "That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us." The infinite Jehovah is become their God, who can do every thing for them. He is their portion who has an infinite fulness of good in himself: "He is their shield and exceeding great reward." As great a good is made over to them as they can desire or conceive of, and is made as sure as they can desire: therefore they have reason to put their hearts at rest, and be at peace in their minds.

Besides, he has bequeathed peace to the souls of his people, as he has procured for them and made over to them the spirit of grace and true holiness; which has a natural tendency to the peace and quietness of the soul.

It implies a discovery and relish of a suitable and sufficient good. It brings a person into a view of divine beauty, and to a relish of that good which is a man's proper happiness; and so it brings the soul to its true centre. The soul by his means is brought to rest, and ceases from restlessly inquiring, as others do, who will show us any good; and wandering to and fro, like lost sheep seeking rest, and finding none. The soul hath found him who is as the appletree among the trees of the wood, and sits down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit is sweet unto his taste. Cant. 2:2. And thus that saving of Christ is fulfilled, ~~and~~ John 4:14. "Whoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst." And besides, true grace naturally tends to peace and quietness, as it settles things in the soul in their due order, sets reason on the throne, and subjects the settees and affections to its government, which before were uppermost. Grace tends to tranquillity, as it mortifies tumultuous desires and passions, subdues the eager and insatiable appetites of the sensual nature and greediness after the vanities of the world. It mortifies such principles as hatred, variance, emulation, wrath, envyings, and the like, which are a continual source of inward uneasiness and perturbation; and supplies those sweet, calming, and quieting principles of humility, meekness, resignation, patience, gentleness, forgiveness, and sweet reliance on God. It also tends to peace, as it fixes the aim of the soul to a certain end; so that the soul is no longer distracted and drawn by opposite ends to be sought, and opposite portions to be obtained and many masters of contrary wills and commands to be served; but the heart is fixed in the choice of one certain, sufficient, and unfailing good: and the soul's aim at this and hope of it, is like an anchor that keeps it stedfast, that it should no more be driven to and fro by every wind.

**2.** This peace which Christ has left as a legacy to his true followers, is his peace. It is the peace which himself enjoys. This is what I take to be principally intended in the expression. It is the peace that he enjoyed while on earth, in his state of humiliation. Though he was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, and was every where hated and

persecuted by men and devils, and had no place of rest in this world, yet in God, his Father, he had peace. We read of his rejoicing in spirit, ☞ Luke 10:21

So Christ's true disciples, though in the world they have tribulation, yet in God have peace.

When Christ had finished his labours and sufferings, had risen from the dead, and ascended into heaven, he entered into his rest, a state of most blessed, perfect, and everlasting peace: delivered by his own sufferings from our imputed guilt, acquitted and justified of the Father on his resurrection. Having obtained a perfect victory over all his enemies, he was received of his Father into heaven, the rest which he had prepared for him, there to enjoy his heart's desire fully and perfectly to all eternity. And then were those words in the six first verses of the 21st Psalm which have respect to Christ, fulfilled. This peace and rest of the Messiah is exceeding glorious. ☞ Isaiah 11:10 "And his rest shall be glorious." This rest is what Christ has procured, not only for himself, but also his people by his death; and he has bequeathed it to them, that they may enjoy it with him, imperfectly in this, and perfectly and eternally in another, world.

That peace, which has been described, and which believers enjoy, is a participation of the peace which their glorious Lord and Master himself enjoys, by virtue of the same blood by which Christ himself has entered into rest. It is in a participation of this same justification; for believers are justified with Christ. As he was justified when he rose from the dead, and as he was made free from our guilt, which he had as our surety, so believers are justified in him and through him, as being accepted of God in the same righteousness. It is in the favour of the same God and heavenly Father that they enjoy peace. "I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God."

It is in a participation of the same Spirit, for believers have the Spirit of Christ. He had the Spirit given to him not by measure, and of his fulness do they all receive, and grace for grace. As the oil poured on the head of Aaron went down to the skirts of his garments, so the Spirit poured on Christ, the head, descends to all his members. It is as partaking of the same grace of the Spirit that believers enjoy this peace; ☞ John 1:16.

It is as being united to Christ, and living by a participation of his life, as a branch lives by the life of the vine. It is as part thing of the same love of God; <sup><B17></sup>John 17:26. “That the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them.” — It is as having a part with him in his victory over the same enemies: and also as having an interest in the same kind of eternal rest and peace. <sup><B18></sup>Ephesians 2:5, 6. “Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together, and hath made us sit together in heavenly places.”

**III.** This legacy of Christ to his true disciples is very different from all that the men of this world ever leave to their children when they die. The men of this world, many of them, when they come to die, have great estates to bequeath to their children, an abundance of the good things of this world, large tracts of ground, perhaps in a fruitful soil, covered with flocks and herds. They sometimes leave to their children stately mansions, and vast treasures of silver, gold, jewels, and precious things, fetched from both the Indies, and from every side of the globe. They leave them wherewith to live in much state and magnificence, and make a great show among men, to fare very sumptuously, and swim in worldly pleasures. Some have crowns, sceptres, and palaces, and great monarchies to leave to their heirs. But none of these things are to be compared to that blessed peace of Christ which he has bequeathed to his true followers. These things are such as God commonly in his providence gives his worst enemies, those whom he hates and despises most. But Christ’s peace is a precious benefit, which he reserves for his peculiar favourites. These worldly things, even the best of them, that the men and princes of the world leave for their children, are things which God in his providence throws out to those whom he looks on as dogs; but Christ’s peace is the bread of his children. All these earthly things are but empty shadows, which, however men set their hearts upon them, are not bread, and never can satisfy their souls; but this peace of Christ is a truly substantial satisfying food. <sup><B19></sup>Isaiah 55:2. None of those things, if men have them to the best advantage, and in ever so great abundance, can give true peace and rest to the soul, as is abundantly manifest not only in reason, but experience; it being found in all ages, that those who have the most of them, have commonly the least quietness of mind. It is true, there may be a kind of quietness, a false peace, in the enjoyment of worldly things; men

may bless their souls, and think themselves the only happy persons, and despise others: may say to their souls, as the rich man did,

“Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.” (~~12:19~~ Luke 12:19.)

But Christ’s peace, which he gives to his true disciples, differs from this peace that men may have in the enjoyments of the world, in the following respects:

**1.** Christ’s peace is a reasonable peace and rest of soul it is what has its foundation in light and knowledge, in the proper exercises of reason, and a right view of things; whereas the peace of the world is founded in blindness and delusion. The peace that the people of Christ have, arises from their having their eyes open, and seeing things as they are. The more they consider, and the more they know of the truth and reality of things — the more they know what is true concerning themselves, the state and condition they are in; the more they know of God, and what manner of being he is; the more certain they are of another world and future judgment, and of the truth of God’s threatenings and promises; the more their consciences are awakened and enlightened, and the brighter and the more searching the light — the more is their peace established. Whereas, on the contrary, the peace that the men of the world have in their worldly enjoyments can subsist no otherwise than by their being kept in ignorance. They must be blind folded and deceived, otherwise they can have no peace: do but let light in upon their consciences, so that they may look about them and see what they are, and what circumstances they are in, and it will at once destroy all their quietness and comfort. Their peace can live no where but in the dark. Light turns their ease into torment. The more they know what is true concerning God and concerning themselves, the more they are sensible of the truth concerning those enjoyments which they possess; and the more they are sensible what things now are, and what things are like to be hereafter, the more will their calm be turned into a storm. The worldly man’s peace cannot be maintained but by avoiding consideration and reflection. If he allows himself to think, and properly to exercise his reason, it destroys his quietness and comfort. If he would establish his carnal peace, it concerns him to put out the light of his mind, and turn back as fast as he can. The faculty of reasons if at liberty, proves

a mortal enemy to his peace. It concerns him, if he would keep alive his peace to stupify his mind and deceive himself, and to imagine things to be otherwise than they are. But with respect to the peace which Christ gives, reason is its great friend. The more this faculty is exercised, the more it is established. The more they consider and view things with truth and exactness, the firmer is their comfort and the higher their joy. How vast a difference then is there between the peace of a Christian and the worldling! How miserable are they who cannot enjoy peace any otherwise than by hiding their eyes from the light, and confining themselves to darkness. Their peace is stupidity, it is as the ease that a man has who has taken a dose of stupifying poison, the ease and pleasure that a drunkard may have in a house on fire over his head, or the joy of a distracted man in thinking that he is a king, though a miserable wretch confined in bedlam! Whereas the peace that Christ gives his true disciples is the light of life, something of the tranquillity of heaven, the peace of the celestial paradise that has the glory of God to lighten it.

**2.** Christ's peace is a virtuous and holy peace. The peace that the men of the world enjoy is vicious: it is vile depraves and debases the mind, and makes men brutish. But the peace that the saints enjoy in Christ' is not only their comfort, but it is a part of their beauty and dignity. The Christian tranquillity, rest, and joy of real saints, are not only unspeakable privileges, but they are virtues and graces of God's Spirit, wherein his image partly consists. This peace has its source in those principles which are in the highest degree virtuous and amiable, such as poverty of spirit, holy resignation, trust in God, divine love, meekness, and charity; the exercise of the blessed fruits of the Spirit, <sup><1007</sup>Galatians 5:22, 23.

**3.** This peace greatly differs from that which is enjoyed by the men of the world, with regard to its exquisite sweetness. It is a peace so much above all that natural men enjoy in worldly things, that it surpasses their understanding and conception. <sup><1007</sup>Philippians 4:7. It is exquisitely sweet and secure, because it has so firm a foundation, the everlasting rock that never can be moved, because perfectly agreeable to reason; because it rises from holy and divine principles, that, as they are the virtue, so are they the proper happiness of men; and because the greatness of the objective good that the saints enjoy, is no other than the infinite bounty and fulness of that God who is the fountain of all good. The fulness and perfection of

that provision that is made in Christ and the new covenant is a foundation laid for the saints' perfect peace; and this hereafter they shall actually enjoy. And though their peace is not now perfect, it is not owing to any defect in the provision made, but to their own imperfection, sin, and darkness. As yet, they partly cleave to the world, and seek peace from thence, and do not perfectly cleave to Christ. But the more they do so, and the more they see of the provision made, and accept of it, and cleave to that alone, the nearer are they brought to perfect tranquillity <sup><2375</sup>Isaiah 27:5.

**4.** The peace of the Christian infinitely differs from that of the worldling, in that it is unfailing and eternal. That peace which carnal men have in the things of the world, is, according to the foundation upon which it is built, of short continuance; like the comfort of a dream, 1 John 2: <sup><4131</sup>1 Corinthians 7:31. These things, the best and most durable of them, are like bubbles on the face of the water; they vanish in a moment. <sup><3010</sup>Hosea 10:7. — But the foundation of the Christian's peace is everlasting; it is what no time no change, can destroy. It will remain when the body dies: it will remain when the mountains depart and the hills shall be removed, and when the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll. The fountain of his comfort shall never be diminished, and the stream shall never be dried. His comfort and joy is a living spring in the soul, a well of water springing up to everlasting life.

### APPLICATION.

The use that I would make of this doctrine, is to improve it as an inducement unto all to forsake the world, no longer seeking peace and rest in its vanities, and to cleave to Christ and follow him. Happiness and rest are what all men pursue. But the things of the world, wherein most men seek it, can never afford it, they are labouring and spending themselves in vain. But Christ invites you to come to him, and offers you this peace, which he gives his true followers, and that so much excels all that the world can afford, <sup><3510</sup>Isaiah 55:2, 3.

You that have hitherto spent your time in the pursuit of satisfaction in the profit or glory of the world, or in the pleasures and vanities of youth, have this day an offer of that excellent and everlasting peace and blessedness, which Christ has purchased with the price of his own blood. As long as

you continue to reject those offers and invitations of Christ, and continue in a Christless condition, you never will enjoy any true peace or comfort; but will be like the prodigal, that in vain endeavoured to be satisfied with the husks that the swine did eat. The wrath of God will abide upon, and misery will attend you, wherever you go, which you never will be able to escape. Christ gives peace to the most sinful and miserable that come to him. He heals the broken in heart and bindeth up their wounds. But it is impossible that they should have peace, while they continue in their sins.

<sup>25719</sup> Isaiah 57:19, 20, 21. There is no peace between God and them, for, as they have the guilt of sin remaining in their souls, and are under its dominion so God's indignation continually burns against them, and therefore they travail in pain all their days. While you continue in such a state, you live in dreadful uncertainty what will become of you, and in continual danger. When you are in the enjoyment of things most pleasing to you where your heart is best suited, and most cheerful, yet you are in a state of condemnation. You hang over the infernal pit, with the sword of divine vengeance hanging over your head, having no security one moment from utter and remediless destruction. What reasonable peace can any one enjoy in such a state as this. What though you clothe him in gorgeous apparel, or set him on a throne, or at a prince's table, and feed him with the rarest dainties the earth affords? How miserable is the ease and cheerfulness that such have! what a poor kind of comfort and joy is it that such take in their wealth and pleasures for a moment, while they are the prisoners of divine justice, and wretched captives of the devil! They have none to befriend them, being without Christ, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers from the covenant of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world!

I invite you now to a better portion. There are better things provided for the sinful, miserable children of men. There is a surer comfort and more durable peace: comfort that you may enjoy in a state of safety, and on a sure foundation: a peace and rest that you may enjoy with reason, and with your eyes open. You may have all your sins forgiven, your greatest and most aggravated transgressions blotted out as a cloud, and buried as in the depths of the sea, that they may never be found more. And being not only forgiven, but accepted to favour, you become the objects of Gods complacency and delight being taken into God's family and made his

children, you may have good evidence that your names were written on the heart of Christ before the world was made, and that you have an interest in that covenant of grace that is well ordered in all things and sure; wherein is promised no less than life and immortality, an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, a crown of glory that fades not away. Being in such circumstances, nothing shall be able to prevent your being happy to all eternity; having for the foundation of your hope, that love of God which is from eternity to eternity, and his promise and oath, and his omnipotent power, things infinitely firmer than mountains of brass. The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, yea, the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, yet these things will never be abolished.

In such a state as this you will have a foundation of peace and rest through all changes, and in times of the greatest uproar and outward calamity be defended from all storms, and dwell above the floods; ~~PSALM~~ Psalm 32:6, 7. And you shall be at peace with every thing, and God will make all his creatures throughout all parts of his dominion, to befriend you; ~~JOB~~ Job 5:19-24. You need not be afraid of any thing that your enemies can do unto you, ~~PSALM~~ Psalm 3:5, 6. Those things that now are most terrible to you, viz. death, judgment, and eternity, will then be most comfortable, the most sweet and pleasant objects of your contemplation, at least there will be reason that they should be so.

Hearken therefore to the friendly counsel that is given you this day, turn your feet into the way of peace, forsake the foolish and live; forsake those things which are no other than the devil's baits and seek after this excellent peace and rest of Jesus Christ, that peace of God which passeth all understanding. Taste and see; never was any disappointed that made a trial. ~~PROVERBS~~ Proverbs 24:13, 14. You will not only find those spiritual comforts that Christ offers you to be of a surpassing sweetness for the present, but they will be to your soul as the dawning light that shines more and more to the perfect day; and the issue of all will be your arrival in heaven, that land of rest, those regions of everlasting joy, where your peace and happiness will be perfect, without the least mixture of trouble or affliction, and never be interrupted nor have an end.

# SERMON 13.

## THE PERPETUITY AND CHANGE OF THE SABBATH.

Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.

(~~1~~ 1 Corinthians 16:1, 2)

WE find in the New Testament often mentioned a certain collection, which was made by the Grecian churches for the brethren in Judea, who were reduced to pinching want by a dearth which then prevailed, and was the heavier upon them by reason of their circumstances, they having been from the beginning oppressed and persecuted by the unbelieving Jews. This collection or contribution is twice mentioned in the Acts, chapter 11:28-30. and 24:17. It is also noticed in several of the epistles; as ~~659~~ Romans 15:26. and ~~820~~ Galatians 2:10. But it is most largely insisted on in these two epistles to the Corinthians, in this first epistle chapter 16: and in the second epistle, chapter 8: and 9:— The apostle begins the directions, which in this place he delivers concerning this matter, with the words of the text; — wherein we may observe,

**1.** What is the thing to be done concerning which the apostle gives them direction, the exercise and manifestation of their charity towards their brethren, by communicating to them, for the supply of their wants; which was by Christ and his apostles often insisted on, as one main duty of the Christian religion, and is expressly declared to be so by the apostle James, chapter 1:27. “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit he fatherless and widows in their affliction.”

**2.** We may observe the time on winch the apostle directs that this should be done, viz. “on the first day of the week.” By the inspiration of the Holy Ghost he insist upon it, that it be done on such a particular day of

the week, as if no other day would do so well as that, or were so proper and fit a time for such a work. — Thus, although the inspired apostle was not for making that distinction of days in gospel times, which the Jews made, as appears by <sup><4010></sup>Galatians 4:10. “Ye observe days, and months,” etc. yet, here he gives the preference to one day of the week, before any other, for the performance of a certain great duty of Christianity.

**3.** It may be observed, that the apostle had given to other churches, that were concerned in the same duty, to do it on the first day of the week: “As I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye.” Whence we may learn, that it was nothing peculiar in the circumstances of the Christians at Corinth, which was the reason why the Holy Ghost insisted that they should perform this duty on this day of the week. The apostle had given the like orders to the churches of Galatia.

Now Galatia was far distant from Corinth, the sea parted them, and there were several other countries between them. Therefore it cannot be thought that the Holy Ghost directs them to this time upon any secular account, having respect to some particular circumstances of the people in that city, but upon a religious account. In giving the preference to this day for such work, before any other day, he has respect to something which reached all Christians throughout the wide world.

And by other passages of the New Testament, we learn that the case was the same as to other exercises of religion; and that the first day of the week was preferred before any other day, in churches immediately under the care of the apostles, for an attendance on the exercises of religion in general. <sup><4010></sup>Acts 20:7. “Upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them.” — It seems by these things to have been among the primitive Christians in the apostles’ days, with respect to the first day of the week, as it was among the Jews, with respect to the seventh.

We are taught by Christ, that the doing of alms and showing of mercy are proper works for the sabbath day. When the Pharisees found fault with Christ for suffering his disciples to pluck the ears of corn, and eat on the sabbath, Christ corrects them with that saying, “I will have mercy and not sacrifice;” <sup><4010></sup>Matthew 12:7. And Christ teaches that works of mercy are proper to be done on the sabbath, <sup><4015></sup>Luke 13:15 16. and 14:5. — These

works used to be done on sacred festivals and days of rejoicing, under the Old Testament, as in Nehemiah's and Esther's time:  ~~Nehemiah~~ Nehemiah 8:10. and Esth. 9:19, 22. — And Josephus and Philo, two very noted Jews, who wrote not long after Christ's time, give an account that it was the manner among the Jews on the sabbath, to make collections for sacred and pious uses.

## DOCTRINE.

It is the mind and will of God, that the first day of the week should be especially set apart among Christians, for religious exercises and duties.

That this is the doctrine which the Holy Ghost intended to teach us, by this and some other passages of the New Testament, I hope will appear plainly by the sequel. This is a doctrine that we have been generally brought up in by the instructions and examples of our ancestors; and it has been the general profession of the Christian world, that this day ought to be religiously observed and distinguished from other days of the week. However, some deny it. Some refuse to take notice of the day, as different from other days. Others own, that it is a laudable custom of the christian church, into which she fell by agreement, and by appointment of her ordinary rulers, to set apart this day for public worship. But they deny any other original to such an observation of the day, than prudential human appointment. — Other's religiously observe the Jewish sabbath, as of perpetual obligation, and that we want a foundation for determining that that is abrogated, and another day of the week is appointed in the room of the seventh.

All these classes of men say, that there is no clear revelation that it is the mind and will of God, that the first day of the week should be observed as a day to be set apart for religious exercises, in the room of the ancient sabbath; which there ought to be in order to the observation of it by the Christian church, as a divine institution. They say, that we ought not to go upon the tradition of past ages, or upon uncertain and far-fetched inferences from some passages of the history of the New Testament, or upon some obscure and uncertain hints in, the apostolic writings; but that we ought to expect a plain institution; which, they say, we may conclude God would have given us, if he had designed that the whole christian

church, in all ages, should observe another day of the week for a holy sabbath, than that which was appointed of old by plain and positive institution.

So far it is undoubtedly true, that if this be the mind and will of God, he hath not left the matter to human tradition, but hath so revealed his mind about it, in his word, that there is to be found good and substantial evidence that it is his mind; and doubtless, the revelation is plain enough for them that have ears to hear; that is, for them that will justly exercise their understandings about what God says to them. No Christian, therefore, should rest till he has satisfactorily discovered the mind of God in this matter. If the Christian sabbath be of divine restitution, it is doubtless of great importance to religion that it be well kept; and therefore, that every Christian be well acquainted with the institution.

If men take it only upon trust, and keep the first day of the week because their parents taught them so, or because they see others do it, they will never be likely to keep it so conscientiously and strictly, as if they had been convinced by seeing for themselves, that there are good grounds in the word of God for their practice. Unless they do see thus for themselves, whenever they are negligent in sanctifying the sabbath, or are guilty of profaning it, their consciences will not have that advantage to smite them for it, as otherwise they would. — And those who have a sincere desire to obey God in all things, will keep the sabbath more carefully and more cheerfully, if they have seen and; been convinced that therein they do what is according to the will and command of God, and what is acceptable to him; and will also have a great deal more comfort in the reflection upon their having carefully and painfully kept the sabbath. Therefore, I design now, by the help of God, to show, that it is sufficiently revealed in the Scriptures, to be the mind and will of God, that the first day of the week should be distinguished in the Christian church from other days of the week, as a sabbath, to be devoted to religious exercises.

In order to this, I shall here premise, that the mind and will of God, concerning any duty to be performed by us, may be sufficiently revealed in his word, without a particular precept in so many express terms, enjoining it. The human understanding is the ear to which the word of God

is spoken; and if it be so spoken, that that ear may plainly hear it, it is enough. God is sovereign as to the manner of speaking his mind, whether he will speak it in express terms, or whether he will speak it by saying several other things which imply it, and from which we may, by comparing them together, plainly perceive it. If the mind of God be but revealed, it there be but sufficient means for the communication of his mind to our minds, that is sufficient; whether we hear so many express words with our ears, or see them in writing with out eyes; or whether we see the thing that he would signify to us, by the eye of reason and understanding.

Who can positively say, that if it had been the mind of God, that we should keep the first day of the week, he would have commanded it in express terms, as he did the observation of the seventh day of old? Indeed, if God had so made our faculties, that we were not capable of receiving a revelation of his mind in any other way, then there would have been some reason to say so. But God hath given us such understandings, that we are capable of receiving a revelation, when made in another manner. And if God deals with us agreeably to our natures, and in a way suitable to our capacities, it is enough. If God discovers his mind in any way whatsoever, provided it be according to our faculties, we are obliged to obedience and God may expect our notice and observance of his revelation, in the same manner as if he had revealed it in express terms.

I shall speak upon this subject under these two general propositions.

**1.** It is sufficiently clear, that it is the mind of God, that one day of the week should be devoted to rest, and to religious exercises, throughout all ages and nations.

**2.** It is sufficiently clear, that under the gospel-dispensation, this day is the first day of the week.

**I. PROP.** It is sufficiently clear, that it is the mind of God, that one day of the week should be devoted to rest, and to religious exercises, throughout all ages and nations; and not only among the ancient Israelites, till Christ came, but even in these gospel times, and among all nations professing Christianity.

**1.** From the consideration of the nature and state of mankind in this world, it is most consonant to human reason, that certain fixed parts of time should be set apart to be spent by the church wholly in religious exercises and in the duties of divine worship. It is a duty incumbent on all mankind, in all ages alike, to worship and serve God. His service should be our great business. It becomes us to worship him with the greatest devotion and engagedness of mind; and therefore to put ourselves, at proper times, in such circumstances, as will most contribute to render our minds entirely devoted to this work, without being diverted or interrupted by other things.

The state of mankind in this world is such, that we are called to concern ourselves in secular business and affairs, which will necessarily, in a considerable degree, take up the thoughts and engage the attention of the mind. However some particular persons may be in circumstances more free and disengaged; yet the state of mankind is such, that the bulk of them, in all ages and nations, are called ordinarily to exercise their thought about secular affairs, and to follow worldly business which, in its own nature, is remote from the solemn duties of religion.

It is therefore most meet and suitable, that certain times should be set apart, upon which men should be required to throw by all other concerns, that their minds may be the more freely and entirely engaged in spiritual exercises, in the duties of religion, and in the immediate worship of God; and that their minds being disengaged from common concerns, their religion may not be mixed with them.

It is also suitable that these times should be fixed and settled, that the church may agree therein, and that they should be the same for all, that men may not interrupt one another; but may rather assist one another by mutual example: for example has a great influence in such cases. If there be a time set apart for public rejoicing, and there be a general manifestation of joy, the general example seems to inspire men with a spirit of Joy, one kindles another. So, if it be a time of mourning, and there be general appearances and manifestations of sorrow, it naturally affects the mind, it disposes it to depression, it casts a gloom upon it, and does as it were dull and deaden the spirits. — So, if a certain time be set apart as holy time, for

general devotion, and solemn religious exercises, a general example tends to render the spirit serious and solemn.

**2.** Without doubt, one proportion of time is better and fitter than another for this purpose. One proportion is more suitable to the state of mankind, an will have a greater tendency to answer the ends of such times, than another. The times may be too far asunder. I think human reason is sufficient to discover, that it would be too seldom for the purposes of such solemn times, that they should be but once a year. So, I conclude, nobody will deny, but that such times may be too near together to agree with the state and necessary affairs of mankind.

Therefore, there can be no difficulty in allowing, that some certain proportion of time, whether we can exactly discover it or not, is really fittest and best — considering the end for which such times are kept, and the condition, circumstances, and necessary affairs of men; and considering what the state of man is, taking one age and nation with another — more convenient and suitable than any other; which God may know and exactly determine, though we, by reason of the scantiness of our understandings, cannot.

As a certain frequency of the returns of these times may be more suitable than any other, so one length or continuance of the times themselves may be fitter than another, to answer the purposes of such times. If such times, when they come, were to last but an hour, it would not well answer the end; for then worldly things would crowd too nearly upon sacred exercises, and there would not be that opportunity to get the mind so thoroughly free and disengaged from other things, as there would be if the times were longer. Being so short, sacred and profane things would be as it were mixed together. Therefore, a certain distance between these times, and a certain continuance of them when they come, is more proper than others; which God knows and is able to determine, though perhaps we cannot.

**3.** It is unreasonable to suppose any other, than that God's working six days, and resting the seventh, and blessing and hallowing it, was to be of general use in determining this matter, and that it was written, that the practice of mankind in general might some way or other be regulated by it. What could be the meaning of God's resting the seventh day, and

hallowing and blessing it, which he did, before the giving of the fourth commandment, unless he hallowed and blessed it with respect to mankind? For he did not bless and sanctify it with respect to himself, or that he within himself might observe it: as that is most absurd. And it is unreasonable to suppose that he hallowed it only with respect to the Jews, a particular nation, which rose up above two thousand years after.

So much therefore must be intended by it, that it was his mind, that mankind should, after his example, work six days, and then rest, and hallow or sanctify the next following; and that they should sanctify every seventh day, or that the space between rest and rest, one hallowed time and another, among his creatures here upon earth, should be six days. — So that it hence appears to be the mind and will of God, that not only the Jews, but men in all nations and ages, should sanctify one day in seven: which is the thing we are endeavouring to prove.

**4.** The mind of God in this matter is clearly revealed in the fourth commandment. The will of God is there revealed, not only that the Israelitish nation, but that all nations, should keep every seventh day holy; or, which is the same thing, one day after every sixth. This command, as well as the rest, is doubtless everlasting and of perpetual obligation, at least, as to the substance of it, as is intimated by its being engraven on the tables of stone. Nor is it to be thought that Christ ever abolished any command of the ten; but that there is the complete number ten yet, and will be to the end of the world.

Some say, that the fourth command is perpetual, but not in its literal sense; not as designing any particular proportion of time to be set apart and devoted to literal rest and religious exercises. They say, that it stands in three only in a mystical senses viz. as that weekly rest of the Jews typified spiritual rest in the christian church; and that we under the gospel are not to make any distinction of one day from another, but are to keep all time holy, doing every thing in a spiritual manner.

But this is an absurd way of interpreting the command, as it refers to Christians. For if the command be so far abolished, it is entirely abolished. For it is the very design of the command, to fix the time of worship. The first command fixes the object, the second the means, the third the manner, the fourth the time. And, if it stands in force now only as signifying a

spiritual, Christian rest, and holy behaviour at all times, it doth not remain as one of the ten commands, but as a summary of all the commands.

The main objection against the perpetuity of this command is that the duty required is not moral. Those laws whose obligation arises from the nature of things and from the general state and nature of mankind, as well as from God's positive revealed will, are called moral laws. Others, whose obligation depends merely upon God's positive and arbitrary institution, are not moral; such as the ceremonial laws and the precepts of the gospel, about the two sacraments. Now, the objectors say they will allow all that is moral in the decalogue to be of perpetual obligation; but this command, they say, is not moral.

But this objection is weak and insufficient for the purpose for which it is brought, or to prove that the fourth command, as to the substance of it, is not of perpetual obligation. For,

(1.) If it should be allowed that there is no morality belonging to the command, and that the duty required is founded merely on arbitrary institution, it cannot therefore be certainly concluded that the command is not perpetual. We know that there may be commands in force under the gospel, and to the end of the world which are not moral: such are the institutions of the two sacraments. And why may there not be positive commands in force in all ages of the church? If positive, arbitrary institutions are in force in gospel-times, what is there which concludes that no positive precept given before the times of the gospel can yet continue in force? But,

(2.) As we have observed already the thing in general that there should be certain fixed parts of time set apart to be denoted to religious exercises, is founded in the fitness of the thing, arising from the nature of things and the nature and universal state of mankind. Therefore there is as much reason that there should be a command of perpetual and universal obligation about this, as about any other duty whatsoever. For if the thing in general that there be a time fixed, be founded in the nature of things there is consequent upon it a necessity, that the time be limited by a command for there must be a proportion of time fixed or else the general moral duty cannot be observed.


**(3.)** The particular determination of the proportion of time in the fourth commandment, is also founded in the nature of things, only our understandings are not sufficient absolutely to determine it of themselves. We have observed already, that without doubt one proportion of time is in itself fitter than another and a certain continuance of time fitter than any other considering the universal state and nature of mankind, which God may see though our understandings are not perfect enough absolutely to determine it. So that the difference between this command and others doth not lie in this that other commands are founded in the fitness of the things themselves, arising from the universal state and nature of mankind and this not; but only that the fitness of other commands is more obvious to the understandings of men and they might have seen it of themselves; but this could not be precisely discovered and positively determined without the assistance of revelation.

So that the command of God, that every seventh day should be devoted to religious exercises is founded in the universal state and nature of mankind as well as other commands; only man's reason is not sufficient, without divine direction; so exactly to determine it: though perhaps man's reason is sufficient to determine that it ought not to be much seldomer, nor much oftener, than once in seven days.

**5.** God appears in his word laying abundantly more weight on this precept concerning the sabbath, then on any precept of the ceremonial law. It is in the decalogue, one of the ten commands, which were delivered by God with an audible voice. It was written with his own finger on the tables of stone in the mount, and was appointed afterwards to be written on the tables which Moses made. The keeping of the weekly sabbath is spoken of by the prophets, as that wherein consists a great part of holiness of life and is inserted among moral duties, <sup>28810</sup> ~~28810~~ Isaiah 58:13, 14. "If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

**6.** It is foretold, that this command should be observed in gospel-times, as in Isaiah 56: at the beginning, where the due observance of the sabbath is spoken of as a great part of holiness of life, and is placed among moral duties. It is also mentioned as a duty that should be most acceptable to God from his people, even where the prophet is speaking of gospel-times, as in the foregoing chapter, and in the first verse of this chapter. And, in the third and fourth verses, the prophet is speaking of the abolition of the ceremonial law in gospel-times, and particularly of that law, which forbids eunuchs to come into the congregation of the Lord. Yet, here the man is pronounced blessed, who keeps the sabbath from polluting it, verse 2. And even in the very sentence where the eunuchs are spoken of as being free from the ceremonial law, they are spoken of as being yet under obligation to keep the sabbath, and actually keeping it, as that which God lays great weight upon: “For thus saith the Lord, unto the eunuchs that keep my sabbaths, and choose the things that please me, and take hold of my covenant; Even unto them will I give in mine house, find within my walls, a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off.”

Besides, the strangers spoken of in the sixth and seventh verses, are the Gentiles, that should be called in the times of the gospel, as is evident by the last clause in the seventh, and by the eighth verse: “For mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people. The Lord God, which gathereth the outcasts of Israel, saith, Yet will I gather others to him, besides those that are gathered unto him.” Yet it is represented here as their duty to keep the sabbath: “Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the Lord, to serve him, and to love the name of the Lord, to be his servants every one that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant; even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer.”

**7.** A further argument for the perpetuity of the sabbath, we have in  Matthew 24:20. “Pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath-day.” Christ is here speaking of the flight of the apostles and other Christians out of Jerusalem and Judea just before their final destruction, as is manifest by the whole context and especially by the 16th verse: “Then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains.” But this final destruction of Jerusalem was after the dissolution of the Jewish

constitution, and after the Christian dispensation was fully set up, Yet, it is plainly implied in these words of our Lord, that even then Christians were bound to a strict observation of the sabbath.

Thus I have shown, that it is the will of God, that every seventh day be devoted to rest and to religious exercises.

# SERMON 14

## THE PERPETUITY AND CHANGE OF THE SABBATH.

Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.

(~~1~~ 1 Corinthians 16:1, 2)

THE doctrine founded on these words was this that it is the mind and will of God, that the first day of the week should be especially set apart among Christians for religious exercises and duties.

I proposed to discourse upon this doctrine under two propositions; and having already, under the first, endeavoured to prove, That one day of the week is, throughout all ages, to be devoted to religious exercises; I proceed now to the

**II. PROP.** That it is the will of God, that under the gospel dispensation, or in the Christian church, this day should be the first day of the week.

In order to the confirmation of this, let the following things be considered.

**1.** The words of the fourth commandment afford no objection against this being the day that should be the sabbath, any more than against any other day. That this day, which, according to the Jewish reckoning, is the first of the week, should be kept as a sabbath, is no more opposite to any sentence or word of the fourth command, than that the seventh of the week should be the day. The words of the fourth command do not determine which day of the week we should keep as a sabbath; they merely determine, that we should rest and keep as a sabbath every seventh day, or one day after every six. It says, “Six days thou shalt labour, and the seventh thou shalt rest; which, implies no more, than that after six days of labour, we shall, upon the next to the sixth, rest and keep it holy.

And this we are obliged to do for ever. But the words no way determine where those six days shall begin, and so where the rest or sabbath shall fall. There is no direction in the fourth command how to reckon the time, *i.e.* where to begin and end it; but that is supposed to be determined otherwise.

The Jews did not know, by the fourth command, where to begin their six days, and on which particular day to rest; this was determined by another precept. The fourth command does indeed suppose a particular day appointed, but it does not appoint any. It requires us to rest and keep holy a seventh day, one after every six of labour, which particular day God either had or should appoint. The particular day was determined for that nation in another place, viz. in <sup><1912></sup>Exodus 16:23, 25, 26. “And he said unto them, this is that which the Lord hath said, Tomorrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the Lord: bake that which ye will bake, to-day, and seethe that ye will seethe, and that which remaineth over, lay up for you to be kept until the morning. And Moses said, Eat that to-day; for to-day is a sabbath unto the Lord: to-day ye shall not find it in the field. Six days ye shall gather it but on the seventh day, which is the sabbath, in it there shall be none.” This is the first place where we have any mention made of the sabbath, from the first sabbath on which God rested.

It seems that the Israelites, in the time of their bondage in Egypt, had lost the true reckoning of time by the days of the week, reckoning from the first day of the creation. They were slaves, and in cruel bondage, and had in a great measure forgotten the true religion: for we are told, that they served the gods of Egypt. And it is not to be supposed, that the Egyptians would suffer their slaves to rest from their work every seventh day. Now, they having remained in bondage for so long a time, had probably lost the weekly reckoning, therefore, when God had brought them out of Egypt into the wilderness, he made known to them the sabbath, on the occasion and in the manner recorded in the text just now quoted. Hence, we read in Nehemiah, that when God had led the children of Israel out of Egypt, etc. he made known unto them his holy sabbath; <sup><1914></sup>Nehemiah 9:14. “And madest known unto them thy holy sabbath.” To the same effect, we read in <sup><1910></sup>Ezekiel 20:10,12. “Wherefore I caused them to go forth out of the land of Egypt, and brought them into the wilderness. Moreover also, I gave them my sabbaths.”

But they never would have known where the particular day would have fallen by the fourth command. Indeed, the fourth command, as it was spoken to the Jews, did refer to their Jewish sabbath. But that doth not prove, that the day was determined and appointed by it. The precept in the fourth command is to be taken generally of such a seventh day as God should appoint, or had appointed. And because such a particular day had been already appointed for the Jewish church, therefore, as it was spoken to them, it did refer to that particular day. But this doth not prove, but that the same words refer to another appointed seventh day, now in the Christian church. The words of the fourth command may oblige the church, under different dispensations, to observe different appointed seventh days, as well as the fifth command may oblige different persons to honour different fathers and mothers.

The Christian sabbath, in the sense of the fourth command, is as much the seventh day, as the Jewish sabbath because it is kept after six days of labour as well as that it is the seventh, reckoning from the beginning of our first working-day, as well as that was the seventh from the beginning of their first working day. All the difference is, that the seven days formerly began from the day after God's rest from the creation, and now they begin the day after that. It is no matter by what names the days are called: if our nation had, for instance, called Wednesday the first of the week, it would have been all one as to this argument.

Therefore, by the institution of the Christians sabbath there is no change from the fourth command, but the change is from another law, which determined the beginning and ending of their working days. So that those words of the fourth command, viz. "Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work, but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God," afford no objection against that which is called the Christian sabbath, for these words remain in full force. Neither does any just objection arise from the words following, viz. "For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath-day, and hallowed it." These words are not made insignificant to Christians, by the institution of the Christian sabbath: they still remain in their full force as to that which is principally intended by them. They were designed to give us a reason why we are to work but six days at a time, and then rest on the seventh, because God hath set us the

example. And taken so, they remain still in as much force as ever they were. This is the reason still, as much as ever it was, why we may work but six days at a time. What is the reason that Christians rest every seventh, and not every eighth, or every ninth, or tenth day? It is because God worked six days and rested the seventh.

It is true, these words did carry something further in their meaning, as they were spoken to the Jews, and to the church before the coming of Christ: it was then also intended by them, that the seventh day was to be kept in commemoration of the work of creation. But this is no objection to the supposition, that the words, as they relate to us, do not import all that they did, as they related to the Jews. For there are other words which were written upon those tables of stone with the ten commandments, which are known and allowed not to be of the same import, as they relate to us, and as they related to the Jews, viz. these words, in the preface to the ten commands, “I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.” — These words were written on the tables of stone with the rest, and are spoken to us, as well as to the Jews: they are spoken to all to whom the commandments themselves are spoken; for they are spoken as an enforcement of the commandments. But they do not now remain in all the signification which they had, as they respected the Jews. For we never were brought out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, except in a mystical sense. — The same may be said of those words which are inserted in the commandments themselves,

~~CHR~~ Deuteronomy 5:15. “And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence, through a mighty hand and by a stretched-out arm: therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath-day.” So that all the arguments of those who are against the Christian sabbath, drawn from the fourth command, which are all their strength, come to nothing.

**2.** That the ancient church was commanded to keep a seventh day in commemoration of the work of creation, is an argument for keeping of a weekly sabbath in commemoration of the work of redemption, and not any reason against it.

We read in Scripture of two creations, the old and the new: and these words of the fourth command are to be taken as of the same force to those

who belong to the new creation, with respect to that new creation, as they were to those who belonged to the old creation, with respect to that. We read, That “in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth,” and the church of old were to commemorate that work. But when God creates a new heaven and a new earth, those that belong to this new heaven and new earth, by a like reason, are to commemorate the creation of their heaven and earth.

The Scriptures teach us to look upon the old creation as destroyed, and as it were annihilated by sin; or, as being reduced to a chaos again, without form and void, as it was at first. <sup>2402</sup>Jeremiah 4:22, 23. “They are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge. I beheld the earth, and lo, it was without form and void: and the heavens, and they had no light!” *i.e.* they were reduced to the same state in which they were at first, the earth was without form and void, and there was no light, but darkness was upon the face of the deep.

The Scriptures further teach us to call the gospel-restoration and redemption, a creation of a new heaven and a new earth; <sup>2517</sup>Isaiah 65:17, 18. “For behold, I create new heavens, and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be you glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy.” And <sup>2516</sup>Isaiah 51:16. “And I have put my words in thy mouth, and have covered thee in the shadow of mine hand, that I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth, and say unto Zion, Thou art my people.” And chapter 66:22. “For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make,” etc. — In these places we are not only told of a new creation, or new heavens and a new earth, but we are told what is meant by it, *viz.* The gospel renovation, the making of Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy; saying unto Zion, “Thou art my people,” etc. The prophet, in all these places, is prophesying of the gospel-redemption.

The gospel-state is every where spoken of as a renewed state of things, wherein old things are passed away, and all things become new: we are said to be created unto Christ Jesus unto good works: all things are restored and reconciled whether in heaven or in earth, and God hath caused light to shine out of darkness, as he did at the beginning; and the

dissolution of the Jewish state was often spoken of in the Old Testament as the end of the world. — But we who belong to the gospel-church, belong to the new creation; and therefore there seems to be at least as much reason, that we should commemorate the work of this creation, as that the members of the ancient Jewish church should commemorate the work of the old creation.

**3.** There is another thing which confirms it, that the fourth command teaches God's resting from the new creation, as well as from the old: which is that the Scriptures expressly speak of the one, as parallel with the other, *i.e.* Christ's resting from the work of redemption, is expressly spoken of as being parallel with God's resting from the work of creation.

“For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his ours works, as God did from his.” (~~ROM~~ Hebrews 4:10.)

Now, Christ rested from his works when he rose from the dead, on the first day of the week. When he rose from the dead, then he finished his work of redemption; his humiliation was then at an end, he then rested, and was refreshed. — When it is said, There remaineth a rest to the People of God;” in the original, it is, a sabbatism or the keeping of a sabbath: and this reason is given for it, “For he that entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.” — These three things at least we are taught by these words:

**(1.)** To look upon Christ's rest from his work of redemption, as parallel with God's rest from the work of creation; for they are expressly compared together, as parallel one with the other.

**(2.)** They are spoken of as parallel, particularly in this respect, viz. The relation which they both have to the keeping of a sabbath among God's people, or with respect to the influence which these two rests have, as to sabbatizing in the church of God: for it is expressly with respect to this that they are compared together. Here is an evident reference to God's blessing and hallowing the day of his rest from the creation to be a sabbath, and appointing a sabbath of rest in imitation of him. For the apostle is speaking of this, verse 4. “For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works.” Thus far is evident whatever the

apostle has respect to by this keeping of a sabbath by the people of God, whether it be a weekly sabbatizing on earth, or a sabbatizing in heaven.

(3.) It is evident in these words, that the preference is given to the latter rest, viz. The rest of our Saviour from his works, with respect to the influence it should have, or relation it bears, to the sabbatizing of the people of God, now under the gospel, evidently implied in the expression, “ There remaineth therefore a sabbatism to the people of God. For he that entered into his rest,” etc. For, in this expression, There remained, it is intimated that the old sabbatism appointed in remembrance of God’s rest from the work of creation, doth not remain, but ceases, and that this new rest, in commemoration of Christ’s resting from his works, remains in the room of it.

4. The Holy Ghost hath implicitly told us, that the Sabbath which was instituted in commemoration of the old creation, should not be kept in gospel-times. <sup>2367</sup>Isaiah 65:17,18. There we are told, the: when God should create new heavens and a new earth, the former should not be remembered, nor come into mind. If this be so, it is not to be supposed, that we are to keep a seventh part of time, on purpose to remember it, and call it to mind.

Let us understand this which may we will, it will not be well consistent with the keeping of one day in seven in the gospel-church, principally for the remembrance and calling to mind of the old creation. If the meaning of the place be only this, that the old creation shall not be remembered nor come into mind in comparison with the new — that the new will be so much more remarkable and glorious, will so much more nearly concern us, so much more notice will be taken of it and it will be thought so much more worthy to be remembered and commemorated that the other will not be remembered, nor come into mind, it is impossible that it should be more to our purpose. For then hereby the Holy Ghost teaches us, that the christian church has much more reason to commemorate the new creation than the old, insomuch, that the old is worthy to be forgotten in comparison with it.

And as the old creation was no more to be remembered nor come into mind, so, in the following verse, the church is directed for ever to

commemorate the new creation; “But be you glad, and rejoice for ever in that which I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy;” *i.e.* Though you forget the old, yet for ever to the end of the world, keep a remembrance of the new creation.

**5.** It is an argument that the Jewish sabbath was not to be perpetual, that the Jews were commanded to keep it in remembrance of their deliverance out of Egypt. One reason why it was instituted was, because God thus delivered them, as we are expressly told, <sup><BR></sup>Deuteronomy 5:15. “And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand, and by a stretched-out arm therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day.” Now, can any person think, that God would have all nations under the gospel, and to the end of the world, keep a day every week, which was instituted in remembrance of the deliverance of the Jews out of Egypt?

**6.** The Holy Ghost hath implicitly told us, that instituted memorials of the Jews’ deliverance from Egypt should be no longer upheld in gospel-times, <sup><BR></sup>Jeremiah 16:14, 15. The Holy Ghost, speaking of gospel-times, says “Therefore, behold the days come, saith the Lord, that it shall no more be said, The Lord liveth that brought up the chiltren of Israel out of Egypt; but the Lord liveth that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north, and from all the lands whither he had driven them: and I will bring them again into their own land.” They shall no more say, The Lord liveth that brought, etc. *i.e.* at least they shall keep up no more any public memorials of it.

If there be a sabbath kept up in gospel-times, as we have shown there must be, it is more, just from these words to suppose, that it should be as a memorial of that which is spoken of in the latter verse, the bringing up of the children of Israel from the land of the north: that is, the redemption of Christ, and his bringing home the elect, not only from Judea, but from the north, and from all quarters of the world. — See <sup><BR></sup>Isaiah 43:16-20.

**7.** It is no more than just to suppose, that God intended to intimate to us, that the sabbath ought by Christians to be kept in commemoration of Christ’s redemption, in that the Israelites were commanded to keep it in remembrance of their deliverance out of Egypt, because that deliverance

out of Egypt is an evident, known, and allowed type of it. It was ordered of God, on purpose to represent it; every thing about that deliverance was typical of this redemption, and much is made of it, principally for this reason, because it is so remarkable a type of Christ's redemption. And it was but a shadow, the work in itself was nothing in comparison with the work of redemption. What is a petty redemption of one nation from a temporal bondage, to the eternal salvation of the whole church of the elect in all ages and nations, from eternal damnation, and the introduction of them, not into a temporal Canaan, but into heaven, into eternal glory and blessedness? Was that shadow so much to be commemorated, as that a day once a week was to be kept on the account of it; and shall not we much more commemorate that great and glorious work of which it was designed on purpose to be a shadow.

Besides, the words in the fourth commandment, which speak of the deliverance out of Egypt, can be of no significancy unto us, unless they are to be interpreted of the gospel-redemption: but the words of the decalogue are spoken to all nations and ages. Therefore, as the words were spoken to the Jews, they referred to the type or shadow; as they are spoken to us, they are to be interpreted of the antitype and substance. For the Egypt from which we under the gospel are redeemed, is the spiritual Egypt; the house of bondage from which we are redeemed, is a state of spiritual bondage. — Therefore the words, as spoken to us, are to be thus interpreted, Remember, thou wast a servant to sin and Satan, and the Lord thy God delivered thee from this bondage, with a mighty hand and outstretched arm; therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath-day.

As the words in the preface to the ten commandments, about the bringing of the children of Israel out of Egypt, are interpreted in our catechism, and as they have respect to us, must be interpreted, of our spiritual redemptions, so by an exact identity of reason, must these words in Deuteronomy, annexed to the fourth command, be interpreted of the same gospel-redemption.

The Jewish sabbath was kept on the day that the children of Israel came up out of the Red sea. For we are told in ~~CHRIST~~ Deuteronomy 5:15. that this holy rest of the sabbath was appointed in commemoration of their coming

up out of Egypt. But the day of their going through the Red sea was the day of their coming up out of Egypt; for till then they were in the land of Egypt. The Red sea was the boundary of the land of Egypt. — The Scripture itself tells us, that the day on which they sung the song of Moses, was the day of their coming up out of the land of Egypt

“And she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt;” (<sup><XIV></sup>Hosea 2:15.)

referring plainly to that triumphant song which Moses and the children of Israel sang when they came up out of the Red sea.

The Scripture tells us, that God appointed the Jewish sabbath in commemoration of the deliverance of the children of Israel from their task-masters, the Egyptians, and of their rest from their hard bondage and slavery under them;

“That thy man-servant and thy maid-servant may rest as well as thou. And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence, through a mighty hand, and by a stretched-out arm: therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath-day.”  
(<sup><XIV></sup>Deuteronomy 5:14, 15.)

But the day that the children of Israel were delivered from their task-masters and had rest from them, was the day when the children of Israel came up out of the Red sea. They had no rest from them till then. For though they were before come forth on their journey to go out of the land of Egypt; yet they were pursued by the Egyptians, and were exceedingly perplexed and distressed. But on the morning that they came up out of the Red sea, they had complete and final deliverance; then they had full rest from their task-masters. Then God said to them, “The Egyptians which ye have seen this day, ye shall see no more for ever,” (<sup><XIV></sup>Exodus 14:13. Then they enjoyed a joyful day of rest, a day of refreshment. Then they sang the song of Moses; and on that day was their-sabbath of rest.

But this coming up of the children of Israel out of the Red sea, was only a type of the resurrection of Christ. That people was the mystical body of Christ, and Moses was a great type of Christ himself; and besides, on that day Christ went before the children of Israel in the pillar of cloud and of

fire, as their Saviour and Redeemer. On that morning Christ, in this pillar of cloud and fire, rose out of the Red sea, as out of great waters, which was a type of Christ's rising from a state of death, and from that great humiliation which he suffered in death.

The resurrection of Christ from the dead, is in Scripture represented by his coming up out of deep waters. So it is in Christ's resurrection, as represented by Jonah's coming out of the sea; <sup><1020></sup>Matthew 12:40. It is also compared to a deliverance out of deep waters, <sup><899></sup>Psalms 69:1, 2, 3. and verse 14, 15. These things are spoken of Christ, as is evident from this, that many things in this Psalm are in the New Testament expressly applied to Christ. — Therefore, as the Jewish sabbath was appointed on the day on which the pillar of cloud and fire rose out of the Red sea, and on which Moses and the church, the mystical body of Christ, came up out of the same sea, which is a type of the resurrection of Christ; it is a great confirmation that the Christian sabbath should be kept on the day of the rising of the real body of Christ from the grave, which is the antitype. For surely the Scriptures have taught us, that the type should give way to the antitype, and that the shadow should give way to the substance.

**8.** I argue the same thing from <sup><1182></sup>Psalms 118:22, 23, 24. There we are taught, that the day of Christ's resurrection is to be celebrated with holy joy by the church. "The stone which the builders refused is become the head-stone of the corner. This is the Lord's doing, it is marvellous in our eyes. This is the day which the Lord hath made, we will rejoice and be glad in it." The stone spoken of is Christ; he was refused and rejected by the builders, especially when he was put to death. That making him the head of the corner, which is the Lord's doing, and so marvellous in our eyes, is Christ's exaltation, which began with his resurrection. While Christ lay in the grave, he lay as a stone cast away by the builders. But when God raised him from the dead, then he became the head of the corner. Thus it is evident the apostle interprets it, <sup><4010></sup>Acts 4:10, 11. "Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead," etc. — "This is the stone which was set at nought by you builders, which is become the head of the corner." — And the day on which this was done, we are here taught, God hath made to be the day of the rejoicing of the church.

**9.** The abolition of the Jewish sabbath seems to be intimated by this, that Christ, the Lord of the sabbath, lay buried on that day. Christ, the author of the world, was the author of that work of creation of which the Jewish sabbath was the memorial. It was he that worked six days and rested the seventh day from all his works, and was refreshed. Yet he was holden in the chains of death on that day. — God, who created the world, now in his second work of creation, did not follow his own example if I may so speak; he remained imprisoned in the grave on that day, and took another day to rest in.

The sabbath was a day of rejoicing; for it was kept in commemoration of God's glorious and gracious works of creation and the redemption out of Egypt. Therefore we are directed to call the sabbath a delight. But it is not a proper day for the church, Christ's spouse, to rejoice, when Christ the bridegroom lies buried in the grave, as Christ says,

“That the children of the bridechamber cannot mourn, while the bridegroom is with them. But the time will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, then shall they mourn.”  
(~~1835~~ Matthew 9:15.)

While Christ was holden under the chains of death, then the bridegroom was taken from them, then it was a proper time for the spouse to mourn and not rejoice. But when Christ rose again, then it was a day of joy, because we are begotten again to a living hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

**10.** Christ hath evidently, on purpose and design, peculiarly honoured the first day of the week, the day on which he rose from the dead, by taking it from time to time to appear to the apostles; and he chose this day to pour out the Holy Ghost on the apostles? which we read of in the second chapter of Acts. For this was on Pentecost, which was on the first day of the week, as you may see by ~~1835~~ Leviticus 23:15, 16. And he honoured this day by pouring out his Spirit on the apostle John, and giving him his visions, ~~1811~~ Revelation 1:10. “I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day,” etc. — Now doubtless Christ had his meaning in thus distinguishingly honouring this day.

**11.** It is evident by the New Testament, that this was especially the day of the public worship of the primitive church, by the direction of the apostles. We are told that this was the day that they were wont to come together to break bread: and this they evidently did with the approbation of the apostles, inasmuch as they preached to them on that day; and therefore doubtless they assembled together by the direction of the apostles. <sup><400></sup>Acts 20:7. “And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them.” So the Holy Ghost was careful that the public contributions should be on this day, in all the churches, rather than on any other day, as appears by our text.

**12.** This first day of the week is in the New Testament called the Lord’s day; see <sup><400></sup>Revelation 1:10. — Some say, how do we know that this was the first day of the week? Every day is the Lord’s day. But it is the design of John to tell us when he had those visions. And if by the Lord’s day is meant any day, how doth that inform us when that event took place?

But what is meant by this expression we know, just in the same way as we know what is the meaning of any word in the original of the New Testament, or the meaning of any expression in an ancient language, viz. by what we find to be the universal signification of the expression in ancient times. This expression, the Lord’s day, is found by the ancient use of the whole christian church, by what appears in all the writing of ancient times, even from the apostles’ days, to signify the first day of the week.

And the expression implies in it the holiness of the day. For doubtless the day is called the Lord’s day, as the sacred supper is called the Lord’s supper, which is so called, because it is a holy supper, to be celebrated in remembrance of the Lord Christ, and of his redemption. So this is a holy day, to be kept in remembrance of the Lord Christ, and his redemption.

The first day of the week being in Scripture called the Lord’s day, sufficiently makes it out to be the day of the week that is to be kept holy unto God; for God hath been pleased to call it by his own name. When any thing is called by the name of God in Scripture, this denotes the appropriation of it to God. — Thus God put his name upon his people Israel of old; <sup><400></sup>Numbers 6:27.

“And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel.” They were called by the name of God, as it is said, <sup><474></sup>2 Chronicles 7:14. “If my people which are called by my name,” etc. *i.e.* They were called God’s people, or the Lord’s people. This denoted that they were a holy peculiar people above all others. <sup><870></sup>Deuteronomy 7:6. “Thou art a holy people unto the Lord;” and so in verse 14. and many other places.

So the city Jerusalem was called by God’s name; <sup><250></sup>Jeremiah 25:29. — Upon the city which is called by my name.” <sup><785></sup>Daniel 9:18,19. “And the city which is called by thy name,” etc. This denoted that it was a holy city, a city chosen of God above all other cities for holy uses, as it is often called the holy city, as in <sup><410></sup>Nehemiah 11:1. “To dwell in Jerusalem, the holy city;” and in many other places.

So the temple is said to be, a house called by God’s name; <sup><186></sup>1 Kings 8:43. “This house that is called by my name.” And often elsewhere. That is, it was called God’s house, or the Lord’s house. This denoted that it was called a holy place, a house devoted to holy uses, above all others.

So also we find that the first day of the week is called by God’s name, being called in Scripture God’s day, or the Lord’s day, which denotes that it is a holy day, a day appropriated to holy uses, above all others in the week.

**13.** The tradition of the church from age to age, though it be no rule, yet may be a great confirmation of the truth in such a case as this is. We find by all accounts, that it has been the universal custom of the Christian church, in all ages, even from the age of the apostles, to keep the first day of the week. We read in the writings which remain of the first, second, and third centuries, of the Christians keeping the Lord’s day; and so in all succeeding ages: and there are no accounts that contradict them. — This day hath all along been kept by Christians, in all countries throughout the world, and by almost all that have borne the name of Christians, of all denominations, however different in their opinions as to other things.

Now, although this be not sufficient of itself without a foundation in Scripture, yet it may be a confirmation of it, because here is really matter of conviction in it to our reason. Reason may greatly confirm truths revealed in the Scriptures. The universality of the custom throughout all

christian countries, in all ages, by what account we have of them, is a good argument, that the church had it from the apostles: and it is difficult to conceive how all should come to agree to set up such a custom through the world, of different sects and opinions, and we have no account of any such thing.


**14.** It is no way weakening to these arguments, that there is nothing more plainly said about it in the New Testament, till John wrote his Revelation, because there is a sufficient reason to be given for it. In all probability it was purposely avoided by the Holy Spirit, in the first settling of Christian churches in the world, both among the heathen and among the Jews, but especially for the sake of the Jews, and out of tenderness to the Jewish Christians. For it is evident that Christ and the apostles declared one thing after another to them gradually as they could bear it.

The Jews had a regard for their sabbath above almost any thing in the laws of Moses; and there was that in the Old Testament which tended to uphold them in the observance of this, much more strongly than any thing else that was Jewish. God had made so much of it, had so solemnly, frequently, and carefully commanded it, and had often so dreadfully punished the breach of it, that there was more colour for their retaining this custom than almost any other.

Therefore Christ dealt very tenderly with them in this point. Other things of this nature we find very gradually revealed. Christ had many things to say, as we are informed, which yet he said not, because they could not as yet bear them, and gave this reason for it, that it was like putting new wine into old bottles. They were so contrary to their old customs, that Christ was gradual in revealing them. He gave here a little and there a little, as they could bear; and it was a long time before he told them plainly the principal doctrines of the kingdom of heaven. He took the most favourable opportunities to tell them of his sufferings and death, especially when they were full of admiration at some signal miracle, and were confirmed in it, that he was the Messiah.

He told them many things much more plainly after his resurrection than before. But even then, he did not tell them all, but left more to be revealed by the Holy Ghost at Pentecost. They therefore were much more enlightened after that than before. However, as yet he did not reveal all.

The abolition of the ceremonial law about meats and drinks was not fully known till after this.

The apostles were in the same manner careful and tender of those to whom they preached and wrote. It was very gradually that they ventured to teach them the cessation of the ceremonial laws of circumcision and abstinence from unclean meats. How tender is the apostle Paul with such as scrupled, in the fourteenth chapter of Romans! He directs those who had knowledge, to keep it to themselves, for the sake of their weak brethren.  Romans 14:22. — But I need say no more to evince this.

However, I will say this, that it is very possible that the apostles themselves at first might not have this chance of the day of the sabbath fully revealed to them. The Holy Ghost at his descent, revealed much to them, yet after that, they were ignorant of much of gospel-doctrine: yea. they were so a great while after they acted the part of apostles, in preaching, baptizing, and governing the church. Peter was surprised when he was commanded to eat meat legally unclean; and so were the apostles in general, when Peter was commanded to go to the Gentiles, to preach to them.

Thus tender was Christ of the church while an infant. He did not feed them with strong meat, but was careful to bring in the observance of the Lord's day by degrees, and therefore took all occasions to honour it, by appearing from time to time of choice on that day, by sending down his Spirit on that day in that remarkable manner at Pentecost; by ordering Christians to meet in order to break bread on that day, and by ordering their contributions and other duties of worship to be holden on it; thus introducing the observance of it by degrees. And though as yet the Holy Ghost did not speak very plainly about it, yet God took special care that there should be sufficient evidences of his will, to be found out by the Christian church, when it should be more established and settled, and should have come to the strength of a man.

Thus I leave it with every one to judge, whether there be not sufficient evidence, that it is the mind and will of God, that the first day of the week should be kept by the Christian church as a sabbath?

# SERMON 15

## THE PERPETUITY AND CHANGE OF THE SABBATH.

Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.

(~~1~~ 1 Corinthians 16:1, 2)

It is the mind and will of God, that the first day of the week should be especially set apart among Christians for religious exercises and duties.

On this doctrine I have already discoursed, under two propositions, showing, first, That it is the will of God. that one day of the week be, in all ages, set apart for religious duties; and secondly, That under the gospel, this day ought to be the first day of the week. I now proceed to the

### APPLICATION.

This shall be in a use of exhortation.

**1.** Let us be thankful for the institution of the Christian sabbath. It is a thing wherein God hath shown his mercy to us, and his care for our souls. He shows, that he, by his infinite wisdom, is contriving for our good, as Christ I teaches us, that the sabbath was made for man, ~~1~~ Mark 2:27. “The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath.” It was made for the profit and for the comfort of our souls.

The sabbath is a day of rest: God hath appointed that I we should, every seventh day, rest from all our worldly labours. Instead of that, he might have appointed the hardest labours for us to go through, some severe hardships for us to endure. It is a day of outward. but especially of spiritual, rest. It is a day appointed of God, that his people thereon may find rest unto their souls; that the souls of believers may rest and be

refreshed in their Saviour. It is a day of rejoicing: God made it to be a joyful day to the church,

“This is the day which the Lord hath made, we will rejoice and be glad in it.” (~~Heb~~ Psalm 118:24.)

They that aright receive and improve the sabbath, call it a delight and honourable: it is a pleasant and a joyful day to them; it is an image of the future heavenly rest of the church. ~~Heb~~ Hebrews 4:9,10, 11. “There remaineth therefore a rest” (or sabbatism, as it is in the original) “to the people of God. For he that hath entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest.”

The Christian sabbath is one of the most precious enjoyments of the visible church. Christ showed his love to his church in instituting it, and it becomes the Christian church to be thankful to her Lord for it. The very name of this day, the Lord’s day, or Jesus’s day, should endear it to Christians, as it intimates the special relation it has to Christ, and also the design of it, which is the commemoration of our dear Saviour, and his love to his church in redeeming it.

**2.** Be exhorted to keep this day holy. — God hath given such evidences that this is his mind, that he will surely require it of you, if you do not strictly and conscientiously observe it. And if you do thus observe it, you may have this comfort in the reflection upon your conduct, that you have not been superstitious in it, but have done as God hath revealed it to be his mind and will in his word, that you should do; and that in so doing you are in the way of God’s acceptance and reward.

Here let me lay before you the following motives to excite you to this duty.

**(1.)** By a strict observation of the sabbath, the name of God is honoured, and that in such a way as is very acceptable to him. Isaiah Iviii. 13. “If thou call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, and shall honour him.” God is honoured by it, as it is a visible manifestation of respect to God’s holy law, and a reverencing of that which has a peculiar relation to God himself, and that more in some respects than the observance of many other commands. And man may

be just, and generous, and yet not so plainly show respect to the revealed mind and will of God, for many of the heathen have been so. But if a person, with evident strictness and care, observe the sabbath, it is a visible manifestation of a conscientious regard to God's declaration of his mind, and so is a visible honour done to his authority.

By a strict observance of the sabbath, the face of religion is kept up in the world. If it were not for the sabbath, there would be but little public and visible appearance of serving, worshipping, and reverencing the supreme and invisible Being. The sabbath seems to have been appointed very much for this end, viz. to uphold the visibility of religion in public, or among professing societies of men and by how much greater the strictness is with which the sabbath is observed, and with how much more solemnity the duties of it are observed among a people; by so much the greater is the manifestation among them of respect to the Divine Being,

This should be a powerful motive with us to the observation of the sabbath. It should be our study above all things to honour and glorify God. It should be the great thing, with all that bear the name of Christians, to honour their great God and King, and I hope is a great thing with many that hear me at this time. If it be your inquiry, if it be your desire, to honour God; by this subject you are directed to one way whereby you may do much in that way viz. by honouring the sabbath, and by showing a careful and strict observance of it.

**(2.)** That which is the business of the sabbath is the greatest business of our lives, viz. that of religion. To serve and worship God is that for which we were made, and for which we had our being given us. Other business, which is of a secular nature, and on which we are wont to attend on week day, is but subordinate, and ought to be subservient to the higher purposes and end and of religion. Therefore surely we should not think much of devoting one seventh part of our time, to be wholly spent in this business, and to be set apart to exercise ourselves in the immediate duties of religion.

**(3.)** Let it be considered, that all our time is God's, and therefore when he challenges of us one day in seven, he challenges his own. He doth not exceed his right, he would not have exceeded it, if he had challenged

a far greater proportion of our time to be spent in his immediate service. But he hath mercifully considered our state, and our necessities here; and, as he hath consulted the good of our souls in appointing a seventh day for the immediate duties of religion, so he hath considered our outward necessities, and hath allowed us six days for attendance on our outward affairs. — What unworthy treatment therefore will it be of God, if we refuse to allow him even the seventh day!

(4.) As the sabbath is a day which is especially set apart for religious exercises, so it is a day wherein God especially confers his grace and blessing. — As God hath commanded us to set it apart to have converse with him, so hath he set it apart for himself to have converse with us. As God hath commanded us to observe the sabbath, so God observes the sabbath too. It is with respect to the sabbath as Solomon prayed that it might be with respect to the temple, ~~140~~ 2 Chronicles 6:20. His eyes are open upon it: he stands ready then especially to hear prayers, to accept of religious services, to meet his people, to manifest himself to them to give his Holy Spirit and blessing to those who diligently and conscientiously sanctify it.

That we should sanctify the sabbath, as we have observed, is according to God's institution. God in a sense observes his own institutions; *i.e.* is wont to cause them to be attended with a blessing. The institutions of God are his appointed means of grace, and with his institutions he hath promised his blessing; ~~141~~ Exodus 20:24. "In all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee." For the same reason we may conclude, that God will meet his people and bless them, waiting upon him not only in appointed places, but at appointed times and in all appointed ways. Christ hath promised, that where two or three are gathered together in his name, he will be in the midst of them, ~~142~~ Matthew 18:20. One thing included in the expression, in his name is, that it is by his appointment, and according to his institution.

God hath made it our duty, by his institution, to set apart this day for a special seeking of his grace and blessing. From which we may argue, that he will be especially ready to confer his grace on those who thus seek it. If it be the day on which God requires us especially to seek him, we may

argue, that it is a day on which especially he will be found. That God is ready on this day especially to bestow his blessing on them that keep it aright, is implied in that expression of God's blessing the sabbath-day. God hath not only hallowed the sabbath-day but blessed it; he hath given his blessing to it, and will confer his blessing upon all the due observers of it. He hath hallowed it, or appointed that it be kept holy by us, and hath blessed it; he hath determined to give his blessing upon it.

So that here is great encouragement for us to keep holy the sabbath, as we would seek God's grace and our own spiritual good. The sabbath-day is an accepted time, a day of salvation, a time wherein God especially loves to be sought, and loves to be found. The Lord Jesus Christ takes delight in his own day, he delights to honour it he delights to meet with and manifest himself to his disciples on it, as he showed before his ascension, by appearing to them from time to time on this day. On this day he delights to give his Holy Spirit, as he intimated, by choosing it as the day on which to pour out the Spirit in so remarkable a manner on the primitive church, and on which to give his Spirit to the apostle John.

Of old God blessed the seventh day, or appointed it to be a day whereon especially he would bestow blessings on his people, as an expression of his own joyful remembrance of that day, and of the rest and refreshment which he had on it. <sup>42916</sup>Exodus 31:16, 17. "Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath day. — For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed." As princes give gifts on their birth-days, on their marriage-days, and the like, so God was wont to dispense spiritual gifts on the seventh day.

But how much more reason has Christ to bless the day of his resurrection, and to delight to honour it, and to confer his grace and blessed gifts on his people on this day. It was a day whereon Christ rested and was refreshed in a literal sense. It was a day of deliverance from the chains of death, the day of his finishing that great and difficult work of redemption, which had been upon his heart from all eternity; the day of his justification by the Father; the day of the beginning of his exaltation, and of the fulfilment of the promises of the Father; the day when he had eternal life, which he had purchased, put into his hands. — On this day Christ doth indeed delight

to distribute gifts, and blessings, and joy, and happiness, and will delight to do the same to the end of the world.

O therefore, how well is it worth our while to improve this day, to call upon God and seek Jesus Christ! Let awakened sinners be stirred up by these things to improve the sabbath-day, as they would lay themselves most in the way of the Spirit of God. Improve this day to call upon God, for then he is near. Improve it for reading the Holy Scriptures, and diligently attending his word preached; for then is the likeliest time to have the Spirit accompanying it. Let the saints who are desirous of growing in grace, and enjoying communion with Christ, improve the sabbath in order to it.

(5.) The last motive which I shall mention, is the experience of the influence which a strict observance of the sabbath has upon the whole of religion. It may be observed, that in those places where the sabbath is well kept, religion in general will be most flourishing; and that in those places where the sabbath is not much noticed, and much is not made of it, there is no great matter of religion any way. — But,

**INQ.** How ought we to keep the sabbath?

**ANS.** 1. We ought to be exceedingly careful on this day to abstain from sin. Indeed, all breaches on the sabbath are sinful; but we speak now of those things which are in themselves sinful, or sinful upon other accounts, besides that they are done upon the sabbath. The sabbath being holy time, it is especially defiled by the commission of sin. Sin by being committed on this day becomes the more exceeding sinful. We are required to abstain from sin at all times, but especially on holy time. The commission of immoralities on the sabbath is the worst way of profaning it, that which most provokes God, and brings most guilt upon the souls of men.

How provoking must it be to God, when men do those things on that day — which he has sanctified, and set apart to be spent in the immediate exercises of religion — which are not fit to be done on common days, which are impure and wicked whenever they are done!

Therefore if any persons be guilty of any such wickedness, as intemperance or any unclean actions, they do in a very horrid manner profane the sabbath. Or if they be guilty of wickedness in speech, of

talking profanely, or in an unclean and lascivious manner, or of talking against their neighbours, they do in a dreadful manner profane the sabbath. Yet very commonly those who are used to such things on week-days, have not a conscience to restrain them on the sabbath. It is well if those that live in the indulgence of the lust of uncleanness on week-days, be not some way or other unclean on the sabbath. They will be indulging the same lusts then; they will be indulging their impure flames in their imaginations at least: and it is well if they keep clear while in the house of God, and while they pretend to be worshipping God. The unclean young man gives this account of himself,

“I was almost in all evil in the midst of the congregation  
and the assembly.” ( ~~2184~~ Proverbs 5:14)

So those who are addicted to an impure way of talking in the week-time, have nothing to keep them from the same upon the sabbath, when they meet together. But dreadfully is God provoked by such things.

We might carefully to watch over our own hearts, and to avoid all sinful thoughts on the sabbath. We ought to maintain such a reverence for the sabbath, as to have a peculiar dread of sin, such as shall awe us to a very careful watch over ourselves.

**2.** We might to be careful to abstain from all worldly concerns. The reason, as we have showed, why it is needful and proper, that certain stated parts of time should be devoted to religious exercises, is because the state of mankind is such in this world, that they are necessitated to exercise their minds, and employ their thoughts, about secular matters. It is therefore convenient that there should be stated times, wherein all should be obliged to throw by all other concerns, that their minds may the more freely, and with less entanglement, be engaged in religious and spiritual exercises.

We are therefore to do thus, or else we frustrate the very design of the institution of a sabbath. We are strictly to abstain from being outwardly engaged in any worldly thing, either worldly business or recreations. We are to rest in remembrance of God’s rest from the work of creation, and of Christ’s rest from the work of redemption. We should be careful that we do not encroach upon the sabbath at its beginning, by busying ourselves about the world after the sabbath is begun. We should avoid talking about

worldly matters, and even thinking about them for whether we outwardly concern ourselves with the world or not, yet if our minds be upon it, we frustrate the end of the sabbath. The end of its separation from other days is, that our minds may be disengaged from worldly things: and we are to avoid being outwardly concerned with the world, only for this reason, that that cannot be without taking up our minds. — We ought therefore to give the world no place in our thoughts on the sabbath, but to abstract ourselves from all worldly concerns, and maintain a watch over ourselves, that the world do not encroach, as it is very apt to do. <sup>288</sup>Isaiah 58:13,14.

**3.** We ought to spend the time in religious exercises. This is the more ultimate end of the sabbath. We are to keep our minds separate from the world, principally for this end, that we may be the more free for religious exercises. — Though it be a day of rest, yet it was not designed to be a day of idleness. To rest from worldly employments, without employing ourselves about any thing, is but to lay ourselves so much more in the devil's way. The mind will be employed some way or other, and therefore doubtless the end for which we are to call off our minds from worldly things on the sabbath is, that we may employ them about things that are better.

We are to attend on spiritual exercises with the greatest diligence. That it is a day of rest, doth not hinder us in so doing, for we are to look on spiritual exercises but as the rest and refreshment of the soul. In heaven, where the people of God have the most perfect rest, they are not idle but are employed in spiritual and heavenly exercises. — We should take care therefore to employ our minds on a sabbath-day on spiritual objects by holy meditation; improving for our help therein the Holy Scriptures, and other books that are according to the word of God. We should also employ ourselves outwardly on this day in the duties of divine worship, in public and private. It is proper to be more frequent and abundant in secret duties on this day, than on other days, as we have time and opportunity, as well as to attend on public ordinances.

It is proper on this day, not only especially to promote the exercise of religion in ourselves, but also in others; to be assisting them, and endeavouring to promote their spiritual good, by religious conference. — Especially those who have the care of others ought, on this day, to

endeavour to promote their spiritual good: heads of families should be instructing and counselling their children, and quickening them in the ways of religion, and should see to it that the sabbath be strictly kept in their houses. A peculiar blessing may be expected upon those families where there is due care taken that the sabbath be strictly and devoutly observed.

**4.** We are on this day especially to meditate upon and celebrate the work of redemption. We are with special joy to remember the resurrection of Christ; because that was the finishing of that work. And this is the day whereon Christ rested and was refreshed, after he had endured those extreme labours which he endured for our perishing souls. This was the day of the gladness of Christ's heart; it was the day of his deliverance from the chains of death, and also of our deliverance; for we are delivered in him who is our head. He, as it were, rose with his elect. He is the first-fruits, those that are Christ's will follow. Christ, when he rose, was justified a, a public person, and we are justified in him. This is the day of our deliverance out of Egypt.

We should therefore meditate on this with joy; we should have a sympathy with Christ in his joy. As he was refreshed on this day, so we should be refreshed, as those whose hearts are united with his. When Christ rejoices, it becomes all his church every where to rejoice. — We are to say of this day, "This is the day that the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it."

But we are not only to commemorate the resurrection of Christ, but the whole work of redemption, of which this was the finishing. We keep the day on which the work was finished, because it is in remembrance of the whole work. — We should on this day contemplate the wonderful love of God and of Christ, as expressed in the work of redemption, and our remembrance of these things should be accompanied with suitable exercises of soul with respect to them. When we call to mind the love of Christ, it should be with a return of love on our part. When we commemorate this work it should be with faith in the Saviour. And we should praise God and the Lamb for this work, for the divine glory and love manifested in it, in our private and public prayers in talking of the wonderful works of God, and in singing divine songs.

Hence it is proper that Christ's disciples should choose this day to come together to break bread, or to celebrate the ordinance of the Lord's supper, ~~and~~ Acts 20:7. because it is an ordinance instituted in remembrance of the work of redemption.

**5.** Works of mercy and charity are very proper and acceptable to Christ on this day. They were proper on the ancient sabbath. Christ was wont to do such works on the sabbath-day. But they especially become the Christian sabbath, because it is a day kept in commemoration of the greatest work of mercy and love towards us that ever was wrought. What can be more proper than that on such a day we should be expressing our love and mercy towards our fellow-creatures, and especially our fellow-Christians. Christ loves to see us show our thankfulness to him in such ways as these. Therefore we find that the Holy Ghost was especially careful, that such works should be performed on the first day of the week in the primitive church, as we learn by our text.

# SEVEN SERMONS

ON

IMPORTANT SUBJECTS.

VIZ.

*The Best Portion.*

*Divine Sovereignty.*

*Pardon For Sinners.*

*The Prayer-Hearing God.*

*Excommunication.*

*Wrath To The Uttermost.*

*Wicked Men Useful In Their Destruction Only.*

## SERMON 1

### GOD THE BEST PORTION OF THE CHRISTIAN.

Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee. (<sup>1735</sup> Psalm 73:25)

In this psalm, the psalmist (Asaph) relates the great difficulty which existed in his own mind, from the consideration of the wicked. He observes, verse 2 and 3. “As for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipt. For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.” In the 4th and following verses, he informs us, what in the wicked was his temptation. In the first place, he observed, that they were; prosperous, and all things went well with them. He then observed their behaviour in their prosperity, and the use which they made of it; and that God, notwithstanding such abuse, continued their prosperity Then he tells us by what means he was helped out of this

difficulty, viz. by going into the sanctuary, verse 16, 17. and proceeds to inform us what considerations they were which helped him, viz. —

- (1.) The consideration of the miserable end of wicked men. However they prosper for the present, yet they come to a woeful end at last, verse 18 — 20. —
- (2.) The consideration of the blessed end of the saints. Although the saints, while they live, may be afflicted, yet they come to a happy end at last, verse 21 — 24 —
- (3.) The consideration, that the godly have a much better portion than the wicked, even though they have no other portion but God; as in the text and following verse.

Though the wicked are in prosperity, and are not in trouble as other men, yet the godly, though in affliction, are in a state infinitely better, because they have God for their portion. They need desire nothing else; he that hath God, hath all. Thus the psalmist professes the sense and apprehension which he had of things: Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee.

In the verse immediately preceding the psalmist takes notice how the saints are happy in God, both when they are in this world, and also when they are taken to another. They are blessed in God in this world, in that he guides them by his counsel; and when he takes them out of it, they are still happy, in that then he receives them to glory. This probably led him, in the text, to declare that he desired no other portion, either in this world or in that to come, either in heaven or upon earth. — Whence we learn, That it is the spirit of a truly godly man, to prefer God before all other things, either in heaven or on earth.

## **I.** A godly man prefers God before any thing else in heaven.

**1.** He prefers God before any thing else that actually is in heaven. Every godly man hath his heart in heaven his affections are mainly set on what is to be had there. Heaven is his chosen country and inheritance. He hath respect to heaven, as a traveller, who is in a distant land, hath to his own country. The traveller can content himself to be in a strange land for a while, but his own native land is preferred by him to all others:


Hebrews 11:13, etc. “These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things, declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned: but now they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly.” — The respect which a godly person hath to heaven may be compared to the respect which a child, when he is abroad hath to his father’s house. He can be contented abroad for a little while, but the place to which he desires to return, and in which to dwell, is his own home. Heaven is the true saint’s Father’s house: <sup>811B</sup>John 14:2. “In my Father’s house are many mansions.” <sup>811C</sup>John 20:17. “I ascend to my Father and your Father.”

Now, the main reason why the godly man hath his heart thus to heaven, is because God is there, that is the palace of the Most High. It is the place where God is gloriously present, where his love is gloriously manifested where the godly may be with him, see him as he is, and love, serve, praise, and enjoy him perfectly. If God and Christ were not in heaven, he would not be so earnest in seeking it, nor would he take so much pains in a laborious travel through this wilderness, nor would the consideration that he is going to heaven when he dies, be such a comfort to him under toils and afflictions. The martyrs would not undergo cruel sufferings, from their persecutors, with a cheerful prospect of going to heaven, did they not expect to be with Christ, and to enjoy God there. They would not with that cheerfulness forsake all their earthly posses signs, and all their earthly friends, as many thousands of them have done, and wander about in poverty and banishment, being destitute, afflicted, tormented, in hopes of exchanging their earthly for a heavenly inheritance, were it not that they hope to be with their glorious Redeemer and heavenly Father. — The believer’s heart is in heaven, because his treasure is there.

**2.** A godly man prefers God before any thing else that might be in heaven. Not only is there nothing actually in heaven, which is in his esteem equal with God; but neither is there any of which he can conceive as possible to be there, which by him is esteemed and desired equally with God. Some suppose quite different enjoyments to be in heaven, from those, which the Scriptures teach us. The Mahometans, for instance, suppose that in

heaven are to be enjoyed all manner of sensual delights and pleasures. Many things which Mahomet has feigned are to the lusts and carnal appetites of men the most agreeable that he could devise, and with them he flattered his followers. — But the true saint could not contrive one more agreeable to his inclination and desires, than such as is revealed in the word of God; a heaven of enjoying the glorious God and the Lord Jesus Christ. There he shall have all sin taken away, and shall be perfectly conformed to God, and shall spend an eternity in exalted exercises of love to him, and in the enjoyment of his love. If God were not to be enjoyed in heaven, but only vast wealth, immense treasures of silver, and gold, great honour of such kind as men obtain in this world, and a fulness of the greatest sensual delights and pleasures all these things would not make up for the want of God and Christ, and the enjoyment of them there. If it were empty of God, it would indeed be an empty melancholy place. — The godly have been made sensible, as to all creature-enjoyments, that they cannot satisfy the soul; and therefore nothing will content them but God. Offer a saint what you will, if you deny him God, he will esteem himself miserable. God is the centre of his desires; and as long as you keep his soul from its proper centre, it will not be at rest.

**II.** It is the temper of a godly man to prefer God before all other things on the earth.

**1.** The saint prefers that enjoyment of God, for which he hopes hereafter, to any thing in this world. He looketh not so much at the things, which are seen, and temporal as at those which are unseen and eternal,  1  
Corinthians 4:18 It is but a little of God that the saint enjoys in this world; he hath but a little acquaintance with God, and enjoys but a little of the manifestations of the divine glory and love. But God hath promised to give him himself hereafter in a full enjoyment. And these promises are more precious to the saint, than the most precious earthly jewels. The gospel contains greater treasures, in his esteem, than the cabinets of princes, or the mines of the Indies.

**2.** The Saints prefer what of God may be obtained in this life before all things in the world. There is a great difference in the present spiritual attainments of the saints. Some attain to much greater acquaintance and communion with God, and conformity to him, than others. But the highest

attainments are very small in comparison with what is future. The saints are capable of making progress in spiritual attainments, and they earnestly desire such further attainments. Not contented with those degrees to which they have already attained, they hunger and thirst after righteousness, and, as new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby. It is their desire, to know more of God, to have more of his image! and to be enabled more to institute God and Christ in their walk and conversation. <sup><1270></sup>Psalm 27:4. “One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple.” <sup><1280></sup>Psalm 13:1, 2. “As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?” <sup><1290></sup>Psalm 63:1, 2. “O God thou art my God, early will I seek thee: my soul thirsted; for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; to see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.” See also, <sup><1300></sup>Psalm 84:1, 2, 3. and Psalm 130. “My soul waiteth for the Lord, more than they that watch for the morning; I say, more than they that watch for the morning.”

Though every saint has not this longing desire after God to the same degree that the psalmist had, yet they are all of the same spirit; they earnestly desire to have more of his presence in their hearts. That this is the temper of the godly in general, and not of some particular saints only, appears from <sup><1310></sup>Isaiah 26:8, 9. where not any particular saint, but the church in general speaks thus: “Yea, in the way of thy judgments, O Lord, have we waited for thee, the desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee. With my soul have I desired thee in the night, and with my spirit within me will I seek thee early.” See also Cant. 3:1, 2. 5:6, 8.

The saints are not always in the lively exercise of grace but such a spirit they have, and sometimes they have the sensible exercise of it. They desire God and divine attainments, more than all earthly things; and seek to be rich in grace, more than they do to get earthly riches. They desire the honour which is of God, more than that which is of men, <sup><1320></sup>John 5:44. and communion with him, more than any earthly pleasures. They are of the same spirit which the apostle expresses,

“Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ.” (~~1000~~ Philippians 3:8.)

**3.** The saint prefers what he hath already of God before any thing in this world. That which was infused into his heart at his conversion, is more precious to him than any thing which the world can afford. The views, which ate sometimes given him of the beauty and excellency of God, are more precious to him than all the treasures of the wicked. The relation of a child in which he stands to God, the union which there is between his soul and Jesus Christ, he values more than the greatest earthly dignity. That image of God, which is instamped on his soul, he values more than any earthly ornaments. It is, in his esteem, better to be adorned with the graces of God’s Holy Spirit, than to be in the most costly pearls, or to be admired for the greatest external beauty. He values the robe of Christ’s righteousness, which he hath on his soul, more than the robes of princes. The spiritual pleasures and delights, which he sometimes has in God, he prefers far before all the pleasures of sin.

“A day in thy courts is better than a thousand: I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.” (~~1000~~ Psalm 84:10)

A saint thus prefers God before all other things in this world — 1. As he prefers God before any thing else that he possesses in the world. Whatever temporal enjoyments he has, he prefers God to them all.

~~1000~~ Psalm 16:5, 6. “The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot. The lines are fallen to me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage.” If he be rich, he chiefly sets his heart on his heavenly riches. He prefers God before any earthly friend, and the divine favour before any respect shown him by his fellow-creatures. Although inadvertently these have room in his heart, and too much room, yet he reserves the throne for God: ~~1000~~ Luke 14:26. “If man come to me, and hate not his father and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.”

**2.** He prefers God before any earthly enjoyment of which he hath a prospect. The children of men commonly set their hearts more on some earthly happiness for which they hope, and after which they are seeking,

than on what they have in present possession. But a godly man prefers God to any thing, which he has in prospect in this world. He may, indeed, through the prevalence of corruption, he for a season carried away with some enjoyment; how ever, he will again come to himself, this is not the temper of the man; he is of another spirit.

**3.** It is the spirit of a godly man to prefer God to any earthly enjoyments of which he can conceive. He not only prefers him to any thing, which he now possesses; but he sees nothing possessed by any of his fellow-creatures, so estimable. Could he have as much worldly prosperity as he would, could he have earthly things just to his mind, and agreeable to his inclination; he values the portion which he has in God, incomparably more. He prefers Christ to earthly kingdoms.

### APPLICATION.

**1.** Hence we may learn, that whatever changes a godly man passes through, he is happy; because God, who is unchangeable, is his chosen portion. Though he meet with temporal losses, and be deprived of many, yea, of all his temporal enjoyments; yet God, whom he prefers before all, still remains and cannot be lost. While he stays in this changeable, troublesome world, he is happy; because his chosen portion, on which he builds as his main foundation for happiness, is above the world, and above all changes. And when he goes into another world, still he is happy, because that portion get remains. Whatever he be deprived of, he cannot be deprived of his chief portion his inheritance remains sure to him. — Could worldly-minded men find out a way to secure to themselves these earthly enjoyments on which they mainly set their hearts so that they could not be lost nor impaired while they live, how great would they account the privilege, though other things which they esteem in a less degree, were liable to the same uncertainty as they now are! Whereas now, those earthly enjoyments, on which men chiefly set their hearts, are often most fading. But how great is the happiness of those who have chosen the Fountain of all good, who prefer him before all things in heaven or on earth, and who can never be deprived of him to all eternity!

**2.** Let all by these things examine and try themselves whether they be saints or not. As this, which hath been exhibited, is the spirit of the saints,

so it is peculiar to them: none can use the language of the text, and say whom have I in heaven but thee? there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee, but the saints. A man's choice is that which determines his state. He that chooses God for his portion, and prefers him to all other things, is a godly man, for he chooses and worships him as God. To respect him as God, is to respect him above all other things; and if any man respect him as his God, his God he is; there is an union and covenant relation between that man and the true God. — Every man is as his God is. If you would know what a man is whether he be a godly man or not, you most inquire what his God is. If the true God be he to whom he hath a supreme respect, whom he regards above all, he is doubtless a servant of the true God. But if the man have something else to which he pays a greater respect than to Jehovah, he is not a godly man.

Inquire, therefore, how it is with you, — whether you prefer God before all other things. It may sometimes be a difficulty for persons to determine this to their satisfaction; the ungodly may be deluded with false affections; the godly in dull frames may be at a loss about it. Therefore you may try yourselves, as to this matter, several ways; if you cannot speak fully to one thing, yet you may perhaps to others.

**1.** What is it, which chiefly makes you desire to go to heaven when you die? Indeed some have no great desire to go to heaven. They do not care to go to hell, but if they could be safe from that, they would not much concern themselves about heaven. If it be not so with you, but you find that you have a desire after heaven, then inquire what it is for. Is the main reason, that you may be with God, have communion with him, and be conformed to him? that you may see God, and enjoy him there? Is this the consideration, which keeps your hearts, and your desires, and your expectations towards heaven?

**2.** If you could avoid death, and might have your free choice, would you choose to live always in this world without God, rather than in his time to leave the world, in order to be with him? If you might live here in earthly prosperity to all eternity, but destitute of the presence of God and communion with him — having no spiritual intercourse between him and your souls, God and you being strangers to each other for ever — would you choose this rather than to leave the world, in order to dwell in heaven

as the children of God, there to enjoy the glorious privileges of children, in a holy and perfect love to God, and enjoyment of him to all eternity?

**3.** Do you prefer Christ to all others as the way to heaven? He who truly chooses God, prefers him in each person of the Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: the Father, as his Father the Son as his Saviour; the Holy Ghost, as his Sanctifier. Inquire, therefore, not only whether you choose the enjoyment of God in heaven as your highest portion and happiness, but also whether you choose Jesus Christ before all others, as your way to heaven, and that in a sense of the excellency of Christ, and of the way of salvation by him, as being that which is to the glory of Christ, and of sovereign grace. Is the way of free grace, by the blood and righteousness of the blessed and glorious Redeemer, the most excellent way to life in your esteem? Doth it add a value to the heavenly inheritance, that it is conferred in this way? Is this far better to you than to be saved by your own righteousness by any of your own performances, or by any other mediator?

**4.** If you might go to heaven in what course you please would you prefer to all others the way of a strict walk with God? They who prefer God as hath been represented, choose him, not only in the end, but in the way. They had rather be with God than with any other, not only when they come to the end of their journey, but also while they are in their pilgrimage. They choose the way of walking with God, though it be a way of labour, and care and self-denial, rather than a way of sin, though it be a way of sloth, and of gratifying their lusts.

**5.** Were you to spend your eternity in this world, would you choose rather to live in mean and low circumstances with the gracious presence of God, than to live for ever by earthly prosperity without him? Would you rather spend it in holy living, and serving and walking with God, and in the enjoyment of the privileges of his children? God often manifesting himself to you as your Father, discovering to you his glory, and manifesting his love, lifting the light of his countenance upon you! Would you rather choose these things, though in poverty, than to abound in worldly things, and to live in ease and prosperity, at the same time being an alien from the commonwealth of Israel? Could you be content to stand in no child-like relation to God, enjoying no gracious intercourse with him, having no right

to be acknowledged by him as his children? Or would such a life as this, though in ever so areas earthly prosperity, be esteemed by you a miserable life?


If, after all, there remain with you doubts, and a difficulty to determine concerning yourselves whether you do truly and sincerely prefer God to all other things, I would mention two things which are the surest ways to be determined in this matter, and which seem to be the best grounds of satisfaction in it.

**1.** The feeling of some particular, strong, and lively exercise of such a spirit. A person may have such a spirit as is spoken of in the doctrine, and may have the exercise of it in a low degree, and yet remain in doubt whether he have it or not, and be unable to come to a satisfying determination. But God is pleased sometimes to give such discoveries of his glory, and of the excellency of Christ, as do so draw forth the heart, that they know beyond all doubt, that they feel such a spirit as Paul spake of, when he said, “he counted all things but loss for the excellency of Christ Jesus his Lord,” and they can boldly say, as in the text, “Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee.” At such times the people of God do not need any help of ministers to satisfy them whether they have the true love of God, they plainly see and feel it; and the Spirit of God then witnesseth with their spirits, that they are the children of God. — Therefore, if you would be satisfied upon this point earnestly seek such attainments; seek that you may have such clear and lively exercises of this spirit. To this end you must labour to grow in grace. Though you have had such experiences in times past, and they satisfied you then yet you may again doubt. You should therefore seek that you may have them more frequently; and the way to that is, earnestly to press forward, that you may have more acquaintance with God, and have the principles of grace strengthened. This is the way to have the exercises of grace stronger, more lively, and more frequent, and so to be satisfied that you have a spirit of supreme love to God.

**2.** The other way is, To inquire whether you prefer God to all other things in practice, *i.e.* when you have occasion to manifest by your practice which you prefer — when you must either cleave to one or the other, and

must either forsake other things, or forsake God — whether then it be your manner practically to prefer God to all other things whatever, even to those earthly things to which your hearts are most wedded. Are your lives those of adherence to God, and of serving him in this manner?

He who sincerely prefers God to all other things in his heart, will do it in his practice. For when God and all other things come to stand in competition, that is the proper trial what a man chooses; and the manner of acting in such cases must certainly determine what the choice is in all free agents, or those who act on choice. Therefore there is no sign of sincerity so much insisted on in the Bible as this, that we deny ourselves, sell all, forsake the world, take up the cross, and follow Christ whithersoever he goeth. — Therefore, so run, not as uncertainly, so fight, not as those that beat the air but keep under your bodies, and taring them into subject on. Act not as though you counted yourselves to have apprehended; but this one thing do, “forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”

 2 Peter 1:5, etc. “And besides this, giving diligence, add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity. I or if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

## SERMON 2

### THE SOLE CONSIDERATION, THAT GOD IS GOD, SUFFICIENT TO STILL ALL OBJECTIONS TO HIS SOVEREIGNTY.

Be still, and know that I am God. (~~9th~~ Psalm 46:10)

THIS psalm seems to be a song of the church in a time of great revolutions and desolations in the world. Therefore the church glories in God as her refuge, and strength, and present help, even in times of the greatest troubles and overturnings, verse 1, 2, 3. “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof” The church makes her boast of God, not only as being her help, by defending her from the desolations and calamities in which the rest of the world were involved, but also by supplying her, as a never-failing river, with refreshment, comfort, and joy, in the times of public calamities. See verse 4, 5. “There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early.”

In the 6th and 8th verses are set forth the terrible changes and calamities which were in the world: “The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted. Come, behold the works of God, what desolations he hath made in the earth.” In the verse preceding the text is elegantly set forth the manner in which God delivers the church from these calamities, and especially from the desolations of war, and the rage of their enemies: “He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire;” i.e. he maketh wars to cease when they are against his people; he breaketh the bow when bent against his saints.

Then follow the words of the text: “Be still, and know that I am God.” The great works of God, wherein his sovereignty appeared, had been described in the foregoing verses. In the awful desolations that he made, and by delivering his people by terrible things, he showed his greatness and dominion. Herein he manifested his power and sovereignty, and so commands all to be still, and know that he is God. For, says he, “I will be exalted among the heathen; I will be exalted in the earth.”

In the words may be observed,

- 1.** A duty described, to be still before God, and under the dispensations of his providence; which implies that we must be still as to words; not speaking against the sovereign dispensations of Providence, or complaining of them; not darkening counsel by words without knowledge, or justifying ourselves, and speaking great swelling words of vanity. We must be still as to actions and outward behaviour, so as not to oppose God in his dispensations; and as to the inward frame of our hearts, cultivating a calm and quiet submission’ of soul to the sovereign pleasure of God, whatever it be.
- 2.** We may observe the ground of this duty, viz. the divinity of God. His being God is a sufficient reason why we should be still before him, in no wise murmuring, or objecting, or opposing, but calmly and humbly submitting to him.
- 3.** How we must fulfil this duty, of being still before God, viz. with a sense of’ his divinity as seeing the ground of this duty, in that we know him to be God. Our submission is to be such as becomes rational creatures. God doth not require us to submit contrary to reason, but to submit as seeing the reason and ground of submission. — Hence, the bare consideration that God is God, may well be sufficient to still all objections and opposition against the divine sovereign dispensations.

This may appear by the following things.

- 1.** In that he is God, he is an absolutely and infinitely perfect being; and it is impossible that he should do amiss. As he is eternal, and receives not his existence from any other, he cannot be limited in his being, or any attribute, to any certain determinate quantity. If any thing have bounds fixed to it, there must be some cause or reason why those bounds are fixed

just where they are. Whence it will follow, that every limited thing must have some cause; and therefore that being which has no cause must be unlimited.

It is most evident by the works of God, that his understanding and power are infinite; for he that hath made all things out of nothing, and upholds, and governs, and manages all things every moment, in all ages, without growing weary, must be of infinite power. He must also be of infinite knowledge; for if he made all things, and upholds and governs all things continually, it will follow, that he knows and perfectly sees all things, great and small, in heaven and earth, continually at one view; which cannot be without infinite understanding.

Being thus infinite in understanding and power, he must also be perfectly holy; for unholiness always argues some defect, some blindness. Where there is no darkness or delusion, there can be no unholiness. It is impossible that wickedness should consist with infinite light. God being infinite in Power and knowledge, he must be self-sufficient and all-sufficient; therefore it is impossible that he should be under any temptation to do any thing amiss; for he can have no end in doing it. When any are tempted to do amiss, it is for selfish ends. But how can an all-sufficient Being, who wants nothing, be tempted to do evil for selfish ends? So that God is essentially holy, and nothing is more impossible than that God should do amiss.

**2.** As he is God, he is so great, that he is infinitely above all comprehension; and therefore it is unreasonable in us to quarrel with his dispensations, because they are mysterious. If he were a being that we could comprehend, he would not be God. It would be unreasonable to suppose any other, than that there should be many things in the nature of God, and in his works and government, to us mysterious, and which we never can fully find out.

What are we and what do we make of ourselves, when we expect that God and his ways should be upon a level with our understandings? We are infinitely unequal to any such thing, as comprehending God. We may less unreasonably expect that a nut-shell should contain the ocean: ~~see~~ Job 11:7, etc. “Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven, what canst thou do?

deeper than hell, what canst thou know! The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea.” If we were sensible of the distance which there is between God and us, we should see the reasonableness of that interrogation of the apostle,

“Who art thou, O man, that repliest against God?”

(~~ROM~~ Romans 9:20.)

If we find fault with God’s government, we virtually suppose ourselves fit to be God’s counsellors; whereas it becomes us rather, with great humility and adoration, to cry out With the apostle, ~~ROM~~ Romans 9:33, etc. “O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who bath been his counsellor? or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him are all things: to whom be glory for ever.” If little children should rise up and find fault with the supreme legislature of a nation, or quarrel with the mysterious administrations of the sovereign, would it not be looked upon that they meddled with things too high for them! And what are we but babes? Our understandings are infinitely less than those of babes, in comparison with the wisdom of God. It becomes us therefore to be sensible of it, and to behave ourselves accordingly. ~~PSALM~~ Psalm 131:1, 2. “Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty: neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me. Surely I have behaved and quieted myself as a child.” This consideration alone of the infinite distance between God and us, and between God’s understanding and ours, should be enough to still and quiet us concerning all that God does, however mysterious and unintelligible to us. — Nor have we any right to expect, that God should particularly explain to us, the reason of his dispensations. It is fit that God should not give any account of his matters to us, worms of the dust, that we may be sensible of our distance from him, and adore and submit to him in humble reverence.

Therefore we find, that when Job was so full of difficulty about the divine dispensations, God did not answer him particularly explaining the reasons of his mysterious providence; but by showing him what a poor worm, what a nothing he was, and how much he himself was above him. This

more became God than it would have done, to enter into a particular debate with him, or to unfold the mysterious difficulties. It became Job to submit to God in those things that he could not understand, and to this the reply tended to bring him. It is fit that God should dwell in thick darkness, or in light to which no man can approach, which no man hath seen nor can see. No wonder that a God of infinite glory shines with a brightness too strong and mighty for mortal eyes. For the angels themselves, those mighty spirits, are represented as covering their faces in this light; Isaiah 6.

**3.** As he is God, all things are his own, and he hath a right to dispose of them according to his own pleasure. All things in this lower world are his; <sup><84111></sup>Job 41:11. “Whatsoever is under the whole heaven is mine.” Yea, the whole universe is God’s; <sup><6504></sup>Deuteronomy 10:14. “Behold the heaven, and the heaven of heavens is the Lord’s; the earth also with all that is therein.” All things are his, because all things are from him; they are wholly from him, and from him alone. Those things which are made by men, are not wholly from them. When a man builds a house, it is not wholly from him: nothing of which the house is made has its being from him. But all creatures are wholly and entirely the fruits of God’s power, and therefore it is fit that they should be subject to, and for, his pleasure. <sup><110></sup>Proverbs 16:4 — And as all things are from God, so they are upheld in being by him, and would sink into nothing in a moment, if he had not uphold them. And all things are to him. <sup><613></sup>Romans 11:36. “For by him, and through him, and to him are all things.” <sup><511></sup>Colossians 1:16, 17. “For by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, principalities or powers: all things were created by him and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist.” All mankind are his; their lives, and breath, and being; “for in him we live, and move, and have our being.” Our souls and capacities are from him. <sup><380></sup>Ezekiel 18:4. “All souls are mine: as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son, is mine.”

**4.** In that he is God, he is worthy to be sovereign over all things. Sometimes men are the owners of more than they are worthy of. But God is not only the owner of the whole world, as all is from and dependent on him; but such is his perfection, the excellency and dignity of his nature, that he is worthy of sovereignty over all. No man ought in the temper of his mind to be opposite to God’s exercising the sovereignty of the

universe, as if he were not worthy of it; for to be the absolute sovereign of the universe is not a glory or dignity too great for him. All things in heaven and earth, angels and men, are nothing in comparison with him; all are as the drop of the bucket, and as the light dust of the balance. It is therefore fit that every thing should be in his hands, to be disposed of according to his pleasure. — His will and pleasure are of infinitely greater importance than the will of creatures. It is fit that his will should take place, though contrary to the will of all other beings; that he should make himself his own end; and order all things for himself. — God is possessed of such perfections and excellencies as to qualify him to be the absolute sovereign of the world. — Certainly it is more fit that all things be under the guidance of a perfect unerring wisdom, than that they should be left to themselves to fall in confusion, or be brought to pass by blind causes. Yea, it is not fit that any affairs within the government of God should be left without the direction of his wise providence; least of all, things of the greatest importance.

It is absurd to suppose, that God is obliged to keep every creature from sinning and exposing himself to an adequate punishment. For if so, then it will follow, that there can be no such thing as a moral government of God over reasonable creatures ; and it would be an absurdity for God to give commands; for he himself would be the party bound to see to the performance, and there could be no use of promises or threatenings. But if God may leave a creature to sin, and to expose himself to punishment, then it is much fitter and better that the matter should be ordered by wisdom, who should justly lie exposed by sin to punishment, and who not; than that it be left to come to pass by confused chance. It is unworthy of the Governor of the world to leave things to chance; it belongs to him to govern all things by wisdom. — And as God has wisdom to qualify him to be sovereign so he has power also to enable him to execute the determinations of wisdom. And he is essentially and invariably holy and righteous, and infinitely good; whereby he is qualified to govern the world in the best manner. — Therefore, when he acts as sovereign of the World, it is fit that we should be still, and willingly submit, and in no wise oppose his having the glory of his sovereignty; but should in a sense of his worthiness, cheerfully ascribe it to him, and say,

“Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory for ever;” and say with those in ~~MSB~~ Revelation 5:13.

“Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power,  
be to him that sitteth upon the throne.”

**5.** In that he is God, he will be sovereign, and will act as such. he sits on the throne of his sovereignty, and his kingdom ruleth over all. He will be exalted in his sovereign power and dominion, as he himself declares; “I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.” He will have all men to know, that he is most high over all the earth. He doth according to his will in the armies of heaven and amongst the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay his hand. — There is no such thing as frustrating, or baffling, or undermining his designs; for he is great in counsel, and wonderful in working. His counsel shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure. There is no wisdom, nor understanding, nor counsel against the Lord; whatsoever God doth, it shall be for ever; nothing shall be put to it, nor any thing taken from it. He will work, and who shall let it? He is able to dash in pieces the enemy. If men join hand in hand against him, to hinder or oppose his designs, he breaks the bow, he cuts the spear in sunder, he burneth the chariot in the fire. — He kills and he makes alive, he brings down and raises up just as he pleases. ~~MSB~~ Isaiah 45:6, 7. “That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none besides me. I am the Lord, and there is none else: I form the light and create darkness; I make peace and create evil; I the Lord do all these things.”

Great men, and rich men, and wise men cannot hinder God from doing his pleasure. He leadeth counsellors away spoiled, he accepteth not the persons of princes, nor regardeth the rich more than the poor. There are many devices in a man’s heart, but the counsel of the Lord that shall stand, and the thoughts of his heart to all generations. — When he gives quietness, who can make trouble? When he hides his face, who can behold him? He breaketh down, and it cannot be built up again: he shutteth up a man, and there can be no opening; when he purposeth, who shall disannul it? And when his hand is stretched out, who shall turn it back? — So there is no hindering God from being sovereign, and acting as such. “He hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.” He

hath the keys of hell and of death: he openeth, and no man shutteth: he shutteth, and no man openeth. This may show us the folly of opposing ourselves against the sovereign dispensations of God: and how much more wisely they act who quietly sweetly submit to his sovereign will.

**6.** In that he is God, he is able to avenge himself on those who oppose his sovereignty. He is wise of heart, and mighty in strength; who hath hardened himself against God and prospered? He that will contend with God must answer it. And what a poor creature is man to fight against God! Is he able to make his part good with him? Whoever of God's enemies deal proudly, he will show that he is above them. They will be but as the chaff before the whirlwind, and shall be as the fat of lambs; they shall consume into smoke, they shall consume away.

“Who would set the briers and thorns against him in battle? He would go through them, he would burn them together.”

 Isaiah 27:4.

### APPLICATION.

A manifold improvement might be made of this doctrine, which a little reflection may suggest to each of us. But the improvement which I shall at this time make of it, shall be only in a use of reproof to such under convictions of sin, and fears of hell, as are not still, but oppose the sovereignty of God in the disposals of his grace. This doctrine shows the unreasonableness, and dreadful wickedness, of your refusing heartily to own the sovereignty of God in this matter. It shows that you know not that God is God. If you knew this, you would be inwardly still and quiet; you would humbly and calmly lie in the dust before a sovereign God, and would see sufficient reason for it.

In objecting and quarrelling about the righteousness of God's laws and threatenings, and his sovereign dispensations towards you and others, you oppose his divinity, you show your ignorance of his divine greatness and excellency, and that you cannot bear that he should have divine honour. It is from low, mean thoughts of God, that you do in your minds oppose his sovereignty, that you are not sensible how dangerous your conduct is; and what an audacious thing it is for such a creature as man to strive with his Maker.

What poor creatures are you, that you should set up yourselves for judges over the Most High; that you should take it upon you to call God to an account; that you should say to the great Jehovah, what dost thou? and that you should pass sentence against him! If you knew that he is God, you would not act in this manner; but this knowledge would be sufficient to still and calm you concerning all God's dispensations, and you would say with Eli, in <sup>CHAPS</sup>1 Samuel 3:18. "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth good in his sight." — But here I shall be more particular in several things.

**1.** It is from mean thoughts of God that you are not convinced that you have by your sins deserved his eternal wrath and curse. If you had any proper sense of the infinite majesty, greatness, and holiness of God, you would see, that to be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, and there to have no rest day nor night, is not a punishment more than equal to the demerit of sin. — You would not have so good a thought of yourselves; you would not be so clean and pure in your own eyes; you would see what vile, unworthy, hell-deserving creatures you are. If you had not little thoughts of God, and were to consider how you have set yourselves against him — how you have slighted him, his commandments and threatenings, and despised his goodness and mercy, how often you have disobeyed, how obstinate you have been, how your whole lives have been filled up with sin against God — you would not wonder that God threatens to destroy you for ever, but would wonder that he hath not actually done it before now.

If you had not mean thoughts of God, you would not find fault with him for not setting his love on you who never exercised any love to him. You would not think it unjust in God not to seek your interest and eternal welfare, who never would be persuaded at all to seek his glory; you would not think it unjust in him to slight and disregard you, who have so often and so long made light of God. If you had not mean thoughts of God, you never would think him obliged to bestow eternal salvation upon you, who have never been truly thankful for one mercy which you have already received of him. — What do you think of yourselves? what great ideas have you of yourselves? and what thoughts have you of God, that you think he is obliged to do so, much for you though you treat him ever so ungratefully for the kindness which he hath already bestowed upon you all the days of your lives? It must be from little thoughts of God, that you

think it unjust in him not to regard you when you call him; when he hath earnestly called to you, so long and so often, and you would not be persuaded to hearken to him. What thoughts have you of God, that you think he is more obliged to hear what you say to him, than you are to regard what he says to you?

It is from diminutive thoughts of God, that you think he is obliged to show mercy to you when you seek it, though you have been for a long time wilfully sinning against him, provoking him to anger, and presuming that he would show you mercy when you should seek it. What kind of thoughts have you of God, that you think he is obliged, as it were, to yield himself up to be abused by men, so that when they have done, his mercy and pardoning grace shall not be in his own power, but he must be obliged to dispense them at their call?

**2.** It is from little thoughts of God, that you quarrel against his justice in the condemnation of sinners, from the doctrine of original sin. It must be because you do not know him to be God, and will not allow him to be sove reign. It is for want of a sense how much God is above you, that those things in him which are above your comprehension, are such difficulties and stumbling-blocks to you: it is for want of a sense how much the wisdom an understanding of God are above yours, and what poor short-sighted, blind creatures you are, in comparison with him. If you were sensible what God is, you would see it most reasonable to expect that his ways should be fit above the reason of man, and that he dwells in light which no man can approach unto, which no man hath seen, no can see. — If men were sensible how excellent and perfect a Being he is, they would not be so apt to be jealous of him, and to suspect him in things which lie beyond their understandings. It would be no difficulty with them to trust God out of sight. What horrid arrogance in worms of the dust, that they should think they have wisdom enough to examine and determine concerning what God doth, and to pass sentence on it as unjust! If you were sensible how great and glorious a being God is, it would not be such difficulty with you to allow him the dignity of such absolute sovereignty, as that he should order as he pleases whether every single man should stand for himself, or whether a common father should stand for all.

**3.** It is from mean thoughts of God, that you trust in your own righteousness, and think that God ought to respect you for it. If you knew how great a Being he is, if you saw that he is God indeed, you would see how unworthy, how miserable a present it is to be offered to such a Being. It is because you are blind, and know not what a Being he is with whom you have to do, that you make so much of your own righteousness. If you had your eyes open to see that he is God indeed, you would wonder how you could think to commend yourselves to so great a Being by your gifts, by such poor affections, sue broken prayers wherein is so much hypocrisy, and much selfishness. — If you had not very mean thoughts of God, you would wonder that ever you could think of purchasing the favour and love of so great a God by your services. You would see that it would be unworthy of God to bestow such a mercy upon you, as peace with him, and his everlasting love, and the enjoyment of himself, for such a price as you have to offer: and that he would exceedingly dishonour himself in so doing. — If you saw what God is, you would exclaim, as Job did, <sup><805></sup>Job 42:5, 6. “Now mine eye seeth thee; wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.” And as Isaiah did, chapter 6:5. “Woe is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.”

**4.** It is from mean thoughts of God, that you contend with him, because he bestows grace on some, and not on others. Thus God doth: he hath mercy on whom he will have mercy; he takes one, and leaves another, of those who are in like circumstances; as it is said of Jacob and Esau, while they were not yet born, and had done neither good nor evil, <sup><806></sup>Romans 9:10-13. With this sinners often quarrel; but they who upon this ground quarrel with God, suppose him to be bound to bestow his grace on sinners. For if he be bound to none, then he may take his choice, and bestow it on whom he pleases; and his bestowing it on some brings no obligation on him to bestow it on others. Has God no right to his own grace? is it not at his own disposal? and is God incapable of making of a gift or present of it to any man? for a person cannot make a present of that which is not his own, or in his own right. It is impossible to give a debt. But what a low thought of God does this argue! Consider what it is you would make of God. Must he be so tied up, that he cannot use his own pleasure in bestowing his own gifts? Is he obliged to bestow them on one, because it is his pleasure to

bestow them on another? Is not God worthy to have the same right to dispose of his gifts, as a man has of his money? or is it because God is not so great, and therefore should be more subject, more under bounds, than men? Is not God worthy to have as absolute a propriety in his goods as man has in his? At this rate, God cannot make a present of any thing; he has nothing of his own to bestow. If he have a mind to show a peculiar favour to some, to lay some under special obligations, he cannot do it, on the supposition, because his favour is not at his own disposal! The truth is, men have low thoughts of God, or else they would willingly ascribe sovereignty to him in this matter.

“Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good?” ( Matthew 20:15.)

God is pleased to show mercy to his enemies, according to his own sovereign pleasure. And surely it is fit he should. How unreasonable is it to think that God stands bound to his enemies! Therefore consider what you do in quarrelling with God, and opposing his sovereignty. Consider with whom it is you contend. Let all who are sensible of their misery, and afraid of the wrath of God, consider these things. Those of you who have been long seeking salvation, but are in great terrors through fear that God will destroy you, consider what you have heard, be still, and know that he is God. When God seems to turn a deaf ear to your cries; when he seems to frown upon you; when he shows mercy to, others, your equals, or those who are worse, and who have been seeking a less time than you; — be still. Consider who he is that disposes and orders these things. You shall consider it; you shall know it: he will make all men to know that he is God. You shall either know it for your good here, by submission, or to your cost hereafter.

## SERMON 3

### PARDON FOR THE GREATEST SINNERS

For thy name's sake, O Lord, pardon my iniquity; for it is great.

(~~1251~~ Psalm 25:11)

It is evident by some passages in this psalm, that when it was penned, it was a time of affliction and danger with David. This appears particularly by the 15th and following verses: "Mine eyes are ever towards the Lord; for he shall pluck my feet out of the net," etc. His distress makes him think of his sins, and leads him to confess them, and to cry to God for pardon, as is suitable in a time of affliction. See verse 7. "Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions;" and verse 18. "Look upon mine affliction, and my pain, and forgive all my sins."

It is observable in the text, what arguments the psalmist makes use of in pleading for pardon.

**1.** He pleads for pardon for God's name's sake. He has no expectation of pardon for the sake of any righteousness or worthiness of his for any good deeds he had done, or any compensation he had made for his sins; though if man's righteousness could be a just plea, David would have had as much to plead as most. But he begs that God would do it for his own name's sake, for his own glory, for the glory of his own free grace, and for the honour of his own covenant-faithfulness.

**2.** The psalmist pleads the greatness of his sins as an argument for mercy. He not only doth not plead his own righteousness, or the smallness of his sins; he not only doth not say, Pardon mine iniquity, for I have done much good to counterbalance it; or, Pardon mine iniquity, for it is small, and thou hast no great reason to be angry with me; mine iniquity is not so great, that thou hast any just cause to remember it against me; mine offence is not such but that thou mayest well enough overlook it: but on the contrary he says, Pardon mine iniquity, for it is great: he pleads the

greatness of his sin, and not the smallness of it; he enforces his prayer with this consideration, that his sins are very heinous.

But how could he make this a plea for pardon? I answer, Because the greater his iniquity was, the more need he had of pardon. It is as much as if he had said, Pardon mine iniquity, for it is so great that I cannot bear the punishment; my sin is so great that I am in necessity of pardon; my case will be exceedingly miserable, unless thou be pleased to pardon me. He makes use of the greatness of his sin, to enforce his plea for pardon, as a man would make use of the greatness of calamity in begging for relief. When a beggar begs for bread, he will plead the greatness of his poverty and necessity. When a man in distress cries for pity, what more suitable plea can be urged than the extremity of his case? — And God allows such a plea as this: for he is moved to mercy towards us by nothing in us but the miserableness of our case. He doth not pity sinners because they are worthy, but because they need his pity.

DOCTRINE. If we truly come to God for mercy, the greatness of our sin will be no impediment to pardon. — If it were an impediment, David would never have used it as a plea for pardon, as we find he does in the text. — The following things are needful in order that we truly come to God for mercy:

**I.** That we should see our misery, and be sensible of our need of mercy. They who are not sensible of their misery cannot truly look to God for mercy; for it is the very notion of divine mercy, that it is the goodness and grace of God to the miserable. Without misery in the object, there can be no exercise of mercy. To suppose mercy without supposing misery, or pity without calamity, is a contradiction: therefore men cannot look upon themselves as proper objects of mercy, unless they first know themselves to be miserable; and so, unless this be the case, it is impossible that they should come to God for mercy. They must be sensible that they are the children of wrath; that the law is against them, and that they are exposed to the curse of it: that the wrath of God abideth on them; and that he is angry with them every day while they are under the guilt of sin. — They must be sensible that it is a very dreadful thing to be the object of the wrath of God; that it is a very awful thing to have him for their enemy; and that they cannot bear his wrath. They must be sensible that the guilt

of sin makes them miserable creatures, whatever temporal enjoyments they have; that they can be no other than miserable, undone creatures, so long as God is angry with them; that they are without strength, and must perish, and that eternally, unless God help them. They must see that their case is utterly desperate, for any thing that any one else can do for them; that they hang over the pit of eternal misery; and that they must necessarily drop into it, if God have not mercy on them.

**II.** They must be sensible that they are not worthy that God should have mercy on them. They who truly come to God for mercy, come as beggars, and not as creditors: they come for mere mercy, for sovereign grace, and not for any thing that is due. Therefore, they must see that the misery under which they lie is justly brought upon them, and that the wrath to which they are exposed is justly threatened against them; and that they have deserved that God should be their enemy, and should continue to be their enemy. They must be sensible that it would be just with God to do as he hath threatened in his holy law, viz. make them the objects of his wrath and curse in hell to all eternity. — They who come to God for mercy in a right manner are not disposed to find fault with his severity; but they come in a sense of their own utter unworthiness, as with ropes about their necks, and lying in the dust at the foot of mercy.

**III.** They must come to God for mercy in and through Jesus Christ alone. All their hope of mercy must be from the consideration of what he is, what he hath done, and what he hath suffered; and that there is no other name given under heaven, among men, whereby we can be saved, but that of Christ; that he is the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world; that his blood cleanses from all sin, and that he is so worthy, that all sinners who are in him may well be pardoned and accepted. — It is impossible that any should come to God for mercy, and at the same time have no hope of mercy. Their coming to God for it, implies that they have some hope of obtaining, otherwise they would not think it worth the while to come. But they that come in a right manner have all their hope through Christ, or from the consideration of his redemption, and the sufficiency of it. — If persons thus come to God for mercy, the greatness of their sins will be no impediment to pardon. Let their sins be ever so many, and great, and aggravated, it will not make God in the least degree more backward to pardon them. This may be made evident by the following considerations:

**1.** The mercy of God is as sufficient for the pardon of the greatest sins, as for the least; and that because his mercy is infinite. That which is infinite, is as much above what is great, as it is above what is small. Thus God being infinitely great, he is as much above kings as he is above beggars; he is as much above the highest angel, as he is above the meanest worm. One finite measure doth not come any nearer to the extent of what is infinite than another. — So the mercy of God being infinite, it must be as sufficient for the pardon of all sin, as of one. If one of the least sins be not beyond the mercy of God, so neither are the greatest, or ten thousand of them. — However, it must be acknowledged, that this alone doth not prove the doctrine. For though the mercy of God may be as sufficient for the pardon of great sins as others; yet there may be other obstacles, besides the want of mercy. The mercy of God may be sufficient, and yet the other attributes may oppose the dispensation of mercy in these cases. — Therefore I observe,

**2.** That the satisfaction of Christ is as sufficient for the removal of the greatest guilt, as the least: ~~ROM~~ 1 John 1:7. “The blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin.” ~~ACTS~~ Acts 13:39. “By him all that believe are justified from all things from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.” All the sins of those who truly come to God for mercy, let them be what they will, are satisfied for, if God be true who tells us so; and if they be satisfied for, surely it is not incredible, that God should be ready to pardon them. So that Christ having fully satisfied for all sin, or having wrought out a satisfaction that is sufficient for all, it is now no way inconsistent with the glory of the divine attributes to pardon the greatest sins of those who in a right manner come unto him for it. — God may now pardon the greatest sinners without any prejudice to the honour of his holiness. The holiness of God will not suffer him to give the least countenance to sin, but inclines him to give proper testimonies of his hatred of it. But Christ having satisfied for sin, God can now love the sinner, and give no countenance at all to sin, however great a sinner he may have been. It was a sufficient testimony of God’s abhorrence of sin, that he poured out his wrath on his own dear Son, when he took the guilt of it upon himself. Nothing can more show God’s abhorrence of sin than this. If all mankind had been eternally damned, it would not have been so great a testimony of it.

God may, through Christ, pardon the greatest sinner without any prejudice to the honour of his majesty. The honour of the divine majesty indeed requires satisfaction; but the sufferings of Christ fully repair the injury. Let the contempt be ever so great, yet if so honourable a person as Christ undertakes to be a Mediator for the offender, and suffers so much for him, it fully repairs the injury done to the Majesty of heaven and earth. The sufferings of Christ fully satisfy justice. The justice of God, as the supreme Governor and Judge of the world, requires the punishment of sin. The supreme Judge must judge the world according to a rule of justice. God doth not show mercy as a judge, but as a sovereign; therefore his exercise of mercy as a sovereign, and his justice as a judge, must be made consistent one with another; and this is done by the sufferings of Christ, in which sin is punished fully, and justice answered. <sup><B></sup>Romans 3:25, 26.

“Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time, his righteousness; that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.” — The law is no impediment in the way of the pardon of the greatest sin, if men do but truly come to God for mercy: for Christ hath fulfilled the law, he hath borne the curse of it, in his sufferings;

“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.” (<sup><B></sup>Galatians 3:13.)

**3.** Christ will not refuse to save the greatest sinners, who in a right manner come to God for mercy; for this is his work. It is his business to be a Saviour of sinners; it is the work upon which he came into the world; and therefore he will not object to it. He did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance, <sup><B></sup>Matthew 9:13. Sin is the very evil which he came into the world to remedy: therefore he will not object to any man, that he is very sinful. The more sinful he is, the more need of Christ. — The sinfulness of man was the reason of Christ’s coming into the world; this is the very misery from which he came to deliver men. The more they have of it, the more need they have of being delivered; “They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick,” <sup><B></sup>Matthew 9:12. The physician will not make it an objection against healing a man who applies to him, that he stands in great need of his help. If a physician of

compassion comes among the sick and wounded, surely he will not refuse to heal those that stand in most need of healing, if he be able to heal them.

**4.** Herein doth the glory of grace by the redemption of Christ much consist, viz. in its sufficiency for the pardon of the greatest sinners. The whole contrivance of the way of salvation is for this end, to glorify the free grace of God. God had it on his heart from all eternity to glorify this attribute; and therefore it is, that the device of saving sinners by Christ was conceived. The greatness of divine grace appears very much in this, that God by Christ saves the greatest offenders. The greater the guilt of any sinner is, the more glorious and wonderful is the grace manifested in his pardon: Romans 5 “Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.” The apostle, when telling how great a sinner he had been, takes notice of the abounding of grace in his pardon, of which his great guilt was the occasion: <sup>5013</sup>1 Timothy 1:13. “Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious. But I obtained mercy; and the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant, with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.” The Redeemer is glorified, in that he proves sufficient to redeem those who are exceeding sinful, in that his blood proves sufficient to wash away the greatest guilt, in that he is able to save men to the uttermost, and in that he redeems even from the greatest misery. It is the honour of Christ to save the greatest sinners, when they come to him, as it is the honour of a physician that he cures the most desperate diseases or wounds. Therefore, no doubt, Christ will be willing to save the greatest sinners, if they come to him; for he will not be backward to glorify himself, and to commend the value and virtue of his own blood. Seeing he hath so laid out himself to redeem sinners, he will not be unwilling to show, that he is able to redeem to the uttermost.

**5.** Pardon is as much offered and promised to the greatest sinners as any, if they will come aright to God for mercy. The invitations of the gospel are always in universal terms: as, Ho, every one that thirsteth; Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden; and, Whosoever will, let him come. And the voice of Wisdom is to men in general: <sup>2100</sup>Proverbs 8:4. “Unto you, O men, I call, and my voice is to the sons of men.” Not to moral men, or religious men, but to you, O men. So Christ promises, <sup>4165</sup>John 6:37. “Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.” This is the direction of Christ to his apostles, after his resurrection, <sup>4165</sup>Mark 16:15, 16. “Go ye

into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature: he that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved.” Which is agreeable to what the apostle saith, that

“the gospel was preached to every creature which is under heaven,” (<sup>Col</sup>Colossians 1:23.)

## APPLICATION

The proper use of this subject is, to encourage sinners whose consciences are burdened with a sense of guilt, immediately to go to God through Christ for mercy. If you go in the manner we have described, the arms of mercy are open to embrace you. You need not be at all the more fearful of coming because of your sins, let them be ever so black. If you had as much guilt lying on each of your souls as all the wicked men in the world, and all the damned souls in hell; yet if you come to God for mercy, sensible of your own vileness, and seeking pardon only through the free mercy of God in Christ, you would not need to be afraid; the greatness of your sins would be no impediment to your pardon. Therefore, if your souls be burdened, and you are distressed for fear of hell, you need not bear that burden and distress any longer. If you are but willing, you may freely come and unload yourselves, and cast all your burdens on Christ, and rest in him.

But here I shall speak to some **OBJECTIONS** which some awakened sinners may be ready to make against what I now exhort them to.

**I.** Some may be ready to object, I have spent my youth and all the best of my life in sin, and I am afraid God will not accept of me, when I offer him only mine old age. — To this I would answer,

— **1.** Hath God said anywhere, that he will not accept of old sinners who come to him? God hath often made offers and promises in universal terms; and is there any such exception put in? Doth Christ say, All that thirst, let them come to me and drink, except old sinners? Come to me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, except old sinners, and I will give you rest? Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out, if he be not an old sinner? Did you ever read any such exception any where in the Bible? and why should you give way to exceptions which you make out of your own

heads, or rather which the devil puts into your heads, and which have no foundation in the word of God? — Indeed it is more rare that old sinners are willing to come, than others; but if they do come, they are as readily accepted as any whatever.

**2.** When God accepts of young persons, it is not for the sake of the service which they are like to do him afterwards, or because youth is better worth accepting than old age. You seem entirely to mistake the matter, in thinking that God will not accept of you because you are old; as though he readily accepted of persons in their youth, because their youth is better worth his acceptance; whereas it is only for the sake of Jesus Christ, that God is willing to accept of any.

You say, your life is almost spent, and you are afraid that the best time for serving God is past; and that therefore God will not now accept of you; as if it were for the sake of the service which persons are like to do him, after they are converted, that he accepts of them. But a self-righteous spirit is at the bottom of such objections. Men cannot get off from the notion, that it is for some goodness or service of their own, either done or expected to be done, that God accepts of persons, and receives them into favour. — Indeed they who deny God their youth, the best part of their lives, and spend it in the service of Satan, dreadfully sin and provoke God; and he very often leaves them to hardness of heart when they are grown old. But if they are willing to accept of Christ when old, he is as ready to receive them as any others; for in that matter God hath respect only to Christ and kits worthiness.

**II.** But, says one, I fear I have committed sins that are peculiar to reprobates. I have sinned against light, and strong convictions of conscience; I have sinned presumptuously; and have so resisted the strivings of the Spirit of God, that I am afraid I have committed such sins as none of God's elect ever commit. I cannot think that God will ever leave one whom he intends to save, to go on and commit sins against so much light and conviction, and with such horrid presumption. Others may say, I have had risings of heart against God; blasphemous thoughts, a spiteful and malicious spirit; and have abused mercy and the strivings of the Spirit, trampled upon the Saviour, and my sins are such as are peculiar to those who are reprobated to eternal damnation. To all this I would answer,

**1.** There is no sin peculiar to reprobates but the sin against the Holy Ghost. Do you read of any other in the word of God? And if you do not read of any there, what ground have you to think any such thing? What other rule have we, by which to judge of such matters, but the divine word? If we venture to go beyond that, we shall be miserably in the dark. When we pretend to go further in our determinations than the word of God, Satan takes us up, and leads us. It seems to you that such sins are peculiar to the reprobate, and such as God never forgives. But what reason can you give for it, if you have no word of God to reveal it? Is it because you cannot see how the mercy of God is sufficient to pardon, or the blood of Christ to cleanse from such presumptuous sins? If so, it is because you never yet saw how great the mercy of God is; you never saw the sufficiency of the blood of Christ, and you know not how far the virtue of it extends. Some elect persons have been guilty of all manner of sins, except the sin against the Holy Ghost; and unless you have been guilty of this, you have not been guilty of any that are peculiar to reprobates.

**2.** Men may be less likely to believe, for sins which they have committed, and not the less readily pardoned when they do believe. It must be acknowledged that some sinners are in more danger of hell than others. Though all are in great danger, some are less likely to be saved. Some are less likely ever to be converted and to come to Christ: but all who do come to him are alike readily accepted; and there is as much encouragement for one man to come to Christ as another. — Such sins as you mention are indeed exceeding heinous and provoking to God, and do in an especial manner bring the soul into danger of damnation, and into danger of being given to final hardness of heart; and God more commonly gives men up to the judgment of final hardness for such sins, than for others. Yet they are not peculiar to reprobates; there is but one sin that is so, viz. that against the Holy Ghost. And notwithstanding the sins which you have committed, if you can find it in your hearts to come to Christ, and close with him, you will be accepted not at all the less readily because you have committed such sins. — Though God doth more rarely cause some sorts of sinners to come to Christ than others, it is not because his mercy or the redemption of Christ is not as sufficient for them as others, but because in wisdom he sees fit so to dispense his grace, for a restraint upon the wickedness of men; and because it is his will to give converting grace in the

use of means, among which this is one, viz. to lead a moral and religious life, and agreeable to our light, and the convictions of our consciences. But when once any sinner is willing to come to Christ, mercy is as ready for him as for any. There is no consideration at all had of his sins; let him have been ever so sinful, his sins are not remembered; God doth not upbraid him with them.

**III.** But had I not better stay till I shall have made myself better, before I presume to come to Christ. I have been, and see myself to be very wicked now; but am in hopes of mending myself, and rendering myself at least not so wicked: then I shall have more courage to come to God for mercy. — In answer to this,

**1.** Consider how unreasonably you act. You are striving to set up yourselves for your own saviours; you are striving to get something of your own, on the account of which you may the more readily be accepted. So that by this it appears that you do not seek to be accepted only on Christ's account. And is not this to rob Christ of the glory of being your only Saviour? Yet this is the way in which you are hoping to make Christ willing to save you.

**2.** You can never come to Christ at all, unless you first see that he will not accept of you the more readily for any thing that you can do. You must first see, that it is utterly in vain for you to try to make yourselves better on any such account. You must see that you can never make yourselves any more worthy, or less unworthy, by any thing which you can perform.

**3.** If ever you truly come to Christ, you must see that there is enough in him for your pardon, though you be no better than you are. If you see not the sufficiency of Christ to pardon you, without any righteousness of your own to recommend you, you never will come so as to be accepted of him. The way to be accepted is to come — not on any such encouragement, that now you have made yourselves better, and more worthy, or not so unworthy, but — on the mere encouragement of Christ's worthiness, and God's mercy.

**4.** If ever you truly come to Christ, you must come to him to make you better. You must come as a patient comes to his physician, with his diseases or wounds to be cured. Spread all your wickedness before him,

and do not plead your goodness; but plead your badness, and your necessity on that account. and say, as the psalmist in the text, not Pardon mine iniquity, for it is not so great as it was, but, “Pardon mine iniquity, for it is great.”

## SERMON 4

### THE MOST HIGH A PRAYER-HEARING GOD.

O thou that hearest prayer. (~~Psalm~~ Psalm 65:2)

This psalm seems to be written, either as a psalm of praise to God for some remarkable answer of prayer, in the bestowment of some public mercy; or else on occasion of some special faith and confidence which David had that his prayer would be answered. It is probable that this mercy bestowed, or expected to be bestowed, was some great public mercy, for which David had been very earnest and importunate, and had annexed a vow to his prayer; and that he had vowed to God, that if he would grant him his request he would render him praise and glory. — This seems to be the reason why he expresses himself as he does in the first verse of the psalm: “Praise waiteth for thee, O God, in Sion, and unto thee shall the vow be performed,” *i.e.* that praise which I have vowed to give thee on the answer of my prayer, waiteth for thee, to be given thee as soon as thou shalt have answered my prayer; and the vow which I made to thee shall be performed. In the verse of the text, there is a prophecy of the glorious times of the gospel, when “all flesh shall come” to the true God, as to the God who heareth prayer, which is here mentioned as what distinguishes the true God from the gods to whom the nations prayed and sought, those gods, who cannot hear, and cannot answer their prayer. The time was coming when all flesh should come to that God who doth hear prayer. — Hence we gather this doctrine that it is the character of the Most High, that he is a God who hears prayers. I shall handle this point in the following method:

1. Show that the Most High is a God that hears prayer.
2. That he is eminently such a God.
3. That herein he is distinguished from all false gods.
4. Give the reasons of the doctrine.

**I.** The Most High is a God that hears prayer. Though he is infinitely above all, and stands in no need of creatures, yet he is graciously pleased to take a merciful notice of poor worms of the dust. He manifests and presents himself as the object of prayer, appears as sitting on a mercy-seat, that men may come to him by prayer. When they stand in need of any thing, he allows them to come, and ask it of him; and he is wont to hear their prayers. God in his word hath given many promises that he will hear their prayers; the Scripture is full of such examples; and in his dispensations towards his church, manifests himself to be a God that hears prayer.

Here it may be inquired, What is meant by God's hearing prayer? There are two things implied in it.

- 1.** His accepting the supplications of those who pray to him. Their address to him is well taken; he is well pleased with it. He approves of their asking such mercies as they request of him, and approves of their manner of doing it. He accepts of their prayers as an offering to him: he accepts the honour they do him in prayer.
- 2.** He acts agreeably to his acceptance. He sometimes manifests his acceptance of their prayers, by special discoveries of his mercy and sufficiency, which he makes to them in prayer, or immediately after. While they are praying, he gives them sweet views of his glorious grace, purity, sufficiency, and sovereignty, and enables them with great quietness, to rest in him, to leave themselves and their prayers with him, submitting to his will, and trusting in his grace and faithfulness. Such a manifestation God seems to have made of himself in prayer to Hannah, which quieted and composed her mind, and took away her sadness. We read (1 Samuel i.) how earnest she was, and how exercised in her mind, and that she was a woman of a sorrowful spirit. First she came and poured out her soul before God, and spake out of the abundance of her complaint and grief, then we read, that she went away, and did eat, and her countenance was no more sad, verse 13. which seems to have been from some refreshing discoveries which God had made of himself to her, to enable her quietly to submit to his will, and trust in his mercy whereby God manifested his acceptance of her. — Not that I conclude persons can hence argue, that the particular thing which they ask will certainly be given them, or that they

can particularly foretell from it what God will do in answer to their prayers, any further than he has promised in his word; yet God may, and doubtless does, thus testify his acceptance of their prayers, and from hence they may confidently rest in his providence, in his merciful ordering and disposing, with respect to the thing which they ask. — Again, God manifests his acceptance of their prayers, by doing for them agreeably to their needs and supplications. He not only inwardly and spiritually discovers his mercy to their, souls by his Spirit, but outwardly by dealing mercifully with them in his providence, in consequence of their prayers, and by causing an agreeableness between his providence and their prayers. — I proceed now,

**II.** To show that the Most High is eminently a God that hears prayer. This appears in several things.

**1.** In his giving such free access to him by prayer. God in his word manifests himself ready at all times to allow us this privilege. He sits on a throne of grace, and there is no veil to hide this throne, and keep us from it. The veil is rent from the top to the bottom; the way is open at all times, and we may go to God as often as we please. Although God be infinitely above us, yet we may come with boldness: ~~scrip~~ Hebrews 4:14, 16. “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.” How wonderful is it that such worms as we should be allowed to come boldly at all times to so great a God! — Thus God indulges all kinds of persons, of all nations, ~~scrip~~ 1 Corinthians 1:2,3. “Unto all that in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours; grace he unto you,” etc. Yea, God allows the most vile and unworthy; the greatest sinners are allowed to come through Christ. And he not only allows, but encourages, and frequently invites them; yea, manifests himself as delighting in being sought to by prayer: ~~scrip~~ Proverbs 15:8. “The prayer of the upright is his delight;” and in Cant. in 14. we have Christ saying to the spouse, “O my dove, let me hear thy voice; for so sweet is thy voice.” The voice of the saints in prayer is sweet unto Christ; he delights to hear it. He allows them to be earnest and importunate; yea, to the degree as to take no denial, and as it were to give him no rest, and even encouraging them so to do: ~~scrip~~ Isaiah 62:6, 7. “Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give him no rest.” Thus Christ encourages us, in the parable of the

importunate widow and the unjust judge, Luke 18: So, in the parable of the man who went to his friend at midnight, <sup><2115></sup> Luke 11:5, are.

Thus God allowed Jacob to wrestle with him, yea, to be resolute in it; “I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.” It is noticed with approbation, when men are violent for the kingdom of heaven, and take it by force. Thus Christ suffered the blind man to be most importunate and unceasing in his cries to him, <sup><2138></sup> Luke 18:38, 39. He continued crying, “Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me.” Others who were present rebuked him, that he should hold his peace, looking upon it as too great a boldness, and an indecent behaviour towards Christ, thus to cry after him as he passed by. But Christ did not rebuke him, but stood, and commanded him to be brought unto him, saying, “What wilt thou that I should do to thee?” And when the blind man had told him, Christ graciously granted his request. — The freedom of access that God gives, appears also in allowing us to come to him by prayer for every thing we need, both temporal and spiritual; whatever evil we need to be delivered from, or good eye would obtain:

“Be careful for nothing, but in every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.” (<sup><2146></sup> Philippians 4:6.)

**2.** That God is eminently of this character, appears in his hearing prayer so readily. He often manifests his readiness to hear prayer, by giving an answer so speedily, sometimes while they are yet speaking, and sometimes before they pray, when they only have a design of praying. So ready is God to hear prayer, that he takes notice of the first purpose of praying, and sometimes bestows mercy thereupon: <sup><2152></sup> Isaiah 65:24. “And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.” We read, that when Daniel was making humble and earnest supplication, God sent an angel to comfort him, and to assure him of an answer, <sup><2153></sup> Daniel 9:20-24. When God defers for the present to answer the prayer of faith, it is not from any backwardness to answer, but for the good of his people sometimes, that they may be better prepared for the mercy before they receive it, or because another time would be the best and fittest on some other account: and even then, when God seems to delay an answer, the answer is indeed hastened, as in <sup><2154></sup> Luke 18:7, 8. “And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day

and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you, that he will avenge them speedily.” Sometimes, when the blessing seems to tarry, God is even then at work to bring it about in the best time and the best manner: **Habakkuk 2:3**. “Though it tarry, wait for it; it will come, it will not tarry.”

**3.** That the Most High is eminently one that hears prayer, appears by his giving so liberally in answer to prayer; **James 1:5, 6**. “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all liberally, and upbraideth not.” Men often show their backwardness to give, both by the scantiness of their gifts, and by upbraiding those who ask of them. They will be sure to put them in mind of some faults, when they give them any thing, but, on the contrary, God both gives liberally, and upbraids us not with our undeservings. He is plenteous and rich in his communications to those who call upon him: **Psalm 86:5**. “For thou art good and ready to forgive, and plenteous hi mercy unto all that call upon thee;” and **Romans 10:12**. “For there is no difference between the few and the Greek; for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.” — Sometimes, God not only gives the thing asked, but he gives them more than is asked. So he did to Solomon, **1 Kings 3:12,13**. “Behold, I have done according to thy words: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart, so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee. And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches and honour, so that there shall not be and among the kings like unto thee, all the days.” Yea, God will give more to his people than they can either ask or think, as is implied in **Ephesians 3:20**.

“Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly  
above all that we ask or think.”

**4.** That God is eminently of this character, appears by the greatness, of the things which he hath often done in answer to prayer. Thus, when Esau was coming out against his bother Jacob, with four hundred men, without doubt fully resolved to cut him off, Jacob prayed and God turned the heart of Esau, so that he met Jacob in a very friendly manner, **Genesis 32**: So in Egypt, at the prayer of Moses, God brought those dreadful plagues, and at his prayer removed them again. When Samson was ready to perish with thirst, he prayed to God and he brought water out of a dry jaw-bone, for

his supply, <sup><0758></sup>Judges 15:18,19. And when he prayed, after his strength was departed from him, God strengthened him, so as to pull down the temple of Dagon on the Philistines: so that those whom he slew at his death were more than all those whom he slew in his life. — Joshua prayed to God, and said, “Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon;” and God heard his prayer, and caused the sun and moon to stand still accordingly. The prophet “Elijah was a man of like passion” with us; “and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain; and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit;” as the apostle James observes, <sup><3057></sup>James 5:17, 18. So God confounded the army of Zerah, the Ethiopian, of a thousand thousand, in answer to the prayer of Asa., <sup><1449></sup>2 Chronicles 14:9, etc. And God sent an angel, and slew in one night an hundred and eighty-five thousand men of Sennacherib’s army, in answer to Hezekiah’s prayer, <sup><1264></sup>2 Kings 19:14 — 16, 19, 35.

**5.** This truth appears, in that God is, as it were, overcome by prayer. When God is displeased by sin, he manifests his displeasure, comes out against us in his providence, and seems to oppose and resist us; in such cases, God is, speaking after the manner of men, overcome by humble and fervent prayer. “The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much,” <sup><3056></sup>James 5:16. It has a great power in it; such a prayer-hearing God is the Most High, that he graciously manifests himself as conquered by it. Thus God appeared to oppose Jacob in what he sought of him, yet Jacob was resolute, and overcame Therefore God changed his name from Jacob to Israel; for, says he, “as a prince thou hast power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.” <sup><1228></sup>Genesis 32:28. A mighty prince indeed! <sup><3074></sup>Hosea 12:4. “Yea, he had power over the angel and prevailed: he wept and made supplication unto him.” — When his anger was provoked against Israel, and he appeared to be ready to consume them in his hot displeasure, Moses stood in the gap, and by his humble and earnest prayer and supplication averted the stroke of divine vengeance, <sup><1239></sup>Exodus 32:9, etc. and <sup><0441></sup>Numbers 14:11, etc.

**III.** Herein the most high God is distinguished from false gods. The true God is the only one of this character; there is no other of whom it may be said, that he heareth prayer.

Many of those things that are worshipped, as gods are idols made by their worshippers, mere stocks and stones that know nothing. They are indeed made with ears; but they hear not the prayers of them that cry to them. They have eyes; but they see not, etc. <sup><11875></sup>Psalm 115:5, 6. — Others, though not the work of men's hands, yet are things without life. Thus, many worship the sun, moon, and stars, which, though glorious creatures, yet are not capable of knowing any thing of the wants and desires of those who pray to them. — Some worship certain kinds of animals, as the Egyptians were wont to worship bulls, which, though not without life, yet are destitute of that reason whereby they would be capable of knowing the requests of their worshippers. Others worship devils instead of the true God:

“But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they  
sacrifice to devils.” (<sup><11800></sup>1 Corinthians 10:20.)

These though beings of great powers, have not knowledge necessary to capacitate them fully to understand the state, circumstances, necessities, and desires of those who pray to them. But the true God perfectly knows the circumstances of every one that prays to him throughout the world. Though millions pray to him at once, in different parts of the world, it is no more difficult for him who is infinite in knowledge, to take notice of all than of one alone. God is so perfect in knowledge, that he doth not need to be informed by us, in order to a knowledge of our wants, for he knows what things we need before we ask him. The worshippers of false gods were wont to lift their voices and cry aloud, lest their gods should fail of hearing them, as Elijah tauntingly bid the worshippers of Baal do, <sup><11827></sup>1 Kings 18:27. But the true God hears the silent petitions of his people. He needs not that we should cry aloud; yea, he knows and perfectly understands when we only pray in our hearts, as Hannah did, <sup><11813></sup>1 Samuel 1:13.

Idols are but vanities and lies, in them is no help. As to power or knowledge, they are nothing; as the apostle says, <sup><11804></sup>1 Corinthians 8:4. “An idol is nothing in the world.” As to images, they are so far from having power to answer prayer, that they are not able to act, “They have hands, and handle not; feet have they, but they walk not; neither speak they through their throat.” They, therefore, that make them and pray to

them, are senseless and sottish, and make themselves, as it were, stocks and stones, like unto them: <sup>PSALM</sup> Psalm 115:7, 8. and <sup>JEREMIAH</sup> Jeremiah 10:5. “They are upright as the palm tree, but speak not: they must needs be borne, because they cannot go. Be not afraid of them for they cannot do evil; neither also is it in them to do good.” As to the hosts of heaven, the sun, moon, and stars, although mankind receives benefit by them, yet they act only by necessity of nature; therefore they have no power to do any thing in answer to prayers. And devils though worshipped as gods, are not able, if they had disposition, to make those happy who worship them, and can do nothing at all but by divine permission, and as subject to the disposal of Divine Providence. When the children of Israel departed from the true God to idols, and yet cried to him in their distress, he reproveth them for their folly, by bidding them cry to the gods whom they had served, for deliverance in the time of their tribulation. <sup>JOSHUA</sup> Joshua 10:14. So God challenges those gods themselves <sup>ISAIAH</sup> Isaiah 12:23, 24. “Show the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods, yea, do good or do evil, that we may be dismayed and behold it together. Behold, ye are of nothing, and your work of nought, an abomination is he that chooseth you.” — These false gods, instead of helping those who pray to them cannot help themselves. The devils are miserable tormented spirits, they are bound in chains of darkness for their rebellion against the true God, and cannot deliver themselves. Nor have they any more disposition to help mankind, than a parcel of hungry wolves or lions would have to protect and help a flock of lambs. And those that worship and pray to them get not their good-will by serving them: all the reward that Satan will give them for the service which they do him, is to devour them. — I proceed now

**IV.** To give the reasons of the doctrine, which I would do in answer to these two inquiries: first, Why God requires prayer in order to the bestowment of mercies, and secondly, Why God is so ready to hear the prayers of men?

**INQ.** 1. Why doth God require prayer in order to the bestowment of mercies?

It is not in order that God may be informed of our wants or desires. He is omniscient, and with respect to his knowledge unchangeable. God never

gains any knowledge by information. He knows what we want, a thousand times more perfectly than we do ourselves before we ask him. For though, speaking after the manner of men, God is sometimes represented as if he were moved and persuaded by the prayers of his people; yet it is not to be thought that God is properly moved or made willing prayers; for it is no more possible that there should be any new inclination or will in God, than new knowledge. The mercy of God is not moved or drawn by any thing in the creature; but the spring of God's beneficence is within himself only; he is self-moved; and whatsoever mercy he bestows, the reason and ground of it is not to be sought for in the creature, but in God's own good pleasure. It is the will of God to bestow mercy in this way, viz. in answer to prayer, when he designs beforehand to bestow mercy, yea, when he has promised it; as <sup>chap</sup> Ezekiel 36:36, 37. "I the Lord have spoken it, and will do it. Thus saith the Lord, I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them." God has been pleased to constitute prayer to be antecedent to the bestowment of mercy, and he is pleased to bestow mercy in consequence of prayer, as though he were prevailed on by prayer. — When the people of God are stirred up to prayer, it is the effect of his intention to show mercy; therefore he pours out the spirit of grace and supplication.

There may be two reasons given why God requires prayer in order to the bestowment of mercy, one especially respects God, and the other respects ourselves.

**1.** With respect to God, prayer is but a sensible acknowledgment of our dependence on him to his glory. As he hath made all things for his own glory, so he will be glorified and acknowledged by his creatures; and it is fit that he should require this of those who would be the subjects of his mercy. That we, when we desire to receive any mercy from him, should humbly supplicate the Divine Being for the bestowment of that mercy, is but a suitable acknowledgment of our dependence on the power and mercy of God for that which we need, and but a suitable honour paid to the great Author and Fountain of all good.

**2.** With respect to ourselves, God requires prayer of us in order to the bestowment of mercy, because it tends to prepare us for its reception. Fervent prayer many ways tends to prepare the heart. Hereby is excited a

sense of our need, and of the value of the mercy which we seek and at the same time earnest desires for it, whereby the mind is more prepared to prize it, to rejoice in it when bestowed, and to be thankful for it. Prayer, with suitable confession, may excite a sense of our unworthiness of the mercy we seek; and the placing of ourselves in the immediate presence of God, may make us sensible of his majesty, and in a sense fit to receive mercy of him. Our prayer to God may excite in us a suitable sense and consideration of our dependence on God for the mercy we ask, and a suitable exercise of faith in God's sufficiency thereof so we may be prepared to glorify his name when the mercy is received.

## INQ. II.

Why is God so ready to hear the prayers of men. — To this I answer,

**1.** Because he is a God of infinite grace and mercy. It is indeed a very wonderful thing, that so great a God should be so ready to hear our prayers, though we are so despicable and unworthy: that he should give free access at all times to every one: should allow us to be importunate without esteeming it an indecent boldness, should be so rich in mercy to them that call upon him, that worms of the dust should have such power with God by prayer; that he should do such great things in answer to their prayers, and should show himself, as it were, overcome by them. This is very wonderful, when we consider the distance between God and us, and how we have provoked him by our sins, and how unworthy we are of the least gracious notice. It cannot be from any need that God stands in of us; for our goodness extendeth not to him. Neither can it be from any thing in us to incline the heart of God to us; it cannot be from any worthiness in our prayers, which are in themselves polluted things. But it is because God delights in mercy and condescension. He is herein infinitely distinguished from all other gods: he is the great fountain of all good, from whom goodness flows as light from the sun.

**2.** We have a glorious Mediator, who has prepared the way, that our prayers may be heard consistently with the honour of God's justice and majesty. Not only has God in himself mercy sufficient for this, but the Mediator has provided that this mercy may be exercised consistently with the divine honour. Through him we may come to God for mercy, he is the way, the truth, and the life; no man can come to the Father but by him.

This Mediator hath done three things to make way for the hearing of our prayers.


**(1.)** He hath by his blood made atonement for sin; so that our guilt need not stand in the way, as a separating wall between God and us, and that our sins might not be a cloud through which our prayers cannot pass. By his atonement he hath made the way to the throne of grace open. God would have been infinitely gracious if there had been no Mediator; but the way to the mercy-seat would have been blocked up. But Christ hath removed whatever stood in the way. The veil which was before the mercy-seat “is rent from the top to the bottom,” by the death of Christ. If it had not been for this, our guilt would have remained as a wall of brass to hinder our approach. But all is removed by his blood, ~~and~~ Hebrews 10:17, etc.

**(2.)** Christ, by his obedience, has purchased this privilege, viz. that the prayers of those who believe in him should be heard. He has not only removed the obstacles to our prayers, but has merited a hearing of them. His merits are the incense that is offered with the prayers of the saints, which renders them a sweet savour to God, and acceptable in his sight. Hence the prayers of the saints have such power with God; hence at the prayer of a poor worm of the dust God stopped the sun in his course for about the space of a whole day; hence Jacob as a prince had power with God, and prevailed. Our prayers would be of no account, and of no avail with God, were it not for the merits of Christ.

**(3.)** Christ enforces the prayers of his people, by his intercession at the right hand of God in heaven. He hath entered for us into the holy of holies, with the incense which he hath provided, and there he makes continual intercession for all that come to God in his name; so that their prayers come to God the Father through his hands, if I may so say; which is represented in ~~and~~ Revelation 8:3, 4.

“And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer, and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar, which is before the throne. And the smoke of the incense which

came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God, out of the angel's hand."

This was typified of old by the priest's offering incense in the temple, at the time when the people were offering up their prayers to God; as  Luke 1:10. "And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense."

### APPLICATION.

Hence we may learn how highly we are privileged, in that we have the Most High revealed to us, who is a God that heareth prayer. The greater part of mankind are destitute of this privilege. Whatever their necessities are, whatever their calamities or sorrows, they have no prayer-hearing God to whom they may go. If they go to the gods whom they worship, and cry to them ever so earnestly, it will be in vain. They worship either, lifeless things, that can neither help them; nor know that they need help or wicked cruel spirits, who are their enemies, and wish nothing but their misery; and who, instead of helping them, are from day to day working their ruin, and watching over them as a hungry lion watches over his prey.

How are we distinguished from them, in that we have the true God made known to us; a God of infinite grace and mercy a God full of compassion to the miserable, who is ready to pity us under all our troubles and sorrows, to hear our cries, and to give us all the relief which we need, a God who delights in mercy, and is rich unto all that call upon him! How highly privileged are we, in that ye have the holy word of this same God, to direct us how to seek for mercy! And whatever difficulties or distress we are in, we may so to him with confidence and great encouragement. What a comfort may this be to us! And what reason have we to rejoice in our privileges, to prize them so Highly, and to bless God that he hath been so merciful to us, as to give us his word, and reveal himself to us; and that he hath not left us to cry for help to stocks and stones, and devils, as he has left many thousands of others.

### OBJECTION.

I have often prayed to God for certain mercies, and he has not heard my prayers. — To this I answer,

**1.** It is no argument, that God is not a prayer-hearing God, if he gives not to men what they ask of him to consume upon their lusts. Oftentimes when men pray for temporal good things, they desire them for no good end, but only to gratify their pride or sensuality. If they pray for worldly good things chiefly from a worldly spirit; and make an idol of the world; it is no wonder that God doth not hear their prayers: ~~SOME~~ James 4:3. “Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, to consume it upon your lusts.” If you request him to give you something of which you will make an idol, and set up in opposition to him — or will use as weapons of warfare against him, or as instruments to serve his enemies — no wonder that God will not hear you. If God should hear such prayers, he would act as his own enemy, inasmuch as he would bestow them to serve his enemies.

**2.** It is no argument that God is not a prayer-hearing God, that he heareth not insincere and unbelieving prayers. How can we expect that he should have any respect to that which has no sincerity in it! God looketh not at words, but at the heart, and it is fit that he should do so. If men pray only in words, and not in heart, what are their prayers good for? and why should that God who searches the heart, and tries the reins, have any respect to them? — Sometimes men do nothing but dissemble in their prayers, and when they do so, it is no argument that God is the less a prayer-hearing God, that he doth not hear such prayers, for it is no argument of want of mercy. Sometimes they pray for that in words which they really desire not in their hearts, as that he would purge them from sin, when at the same time they show by their practice, that they do not desire to be purged from sin, while they love and choose it, and are utterly averse to parting with it. In like manner, they often dissemble in the presence and show, which they make in their prayers, of dependence on God for mercies, and of a sense of his sufficiency to supply them. In our coming to God, and praying to him for such and such things, there is a show that we are sensible we are dependent on him for them, and that he is sufficient to give them to us. But men sometimes seem to pray, while not sensible of their dependence on God, nor do they think him sufficient to supply them; for all the while they trust in themselves, and have no confidence in God. — They show in words as though they were beggars; but in heart they come as creditors, and look on God as their debtor. In words they seem to ask for things as the fruit of free grace; but in heart they account it

would be hard, unjust, and cruel, if God should deny them. In words they seem humble and submissive, but in heart they are proud and contentious; there is no prayer but in their words.

It doth not render God at all the less a prayer-hearing God, that he distinguishes, as an all-seeing God, between real prayers and pretended ones. Such prayers as those which I have just now been mentioning, are not worthy of the name in the eyes of him who searches the heart, and sees things as they are. — That prayer which is not of faith, is insincere; for prayer is a show or manifestation of dependence on God, and trust in his sufficiency and mercy. Therefore, where this trust or faith is wanting, there is no prayer in the sight of God. And however God is sometimes pleased to grant the requests of those who have no faith, yet he has not obliged himself so to do, nor is it an argument of his not being a prayer-hearing God, when he hears them not.

**3.** It is no argument that he is not a prayer-hearing God that he exercises his own wisdom as to the time and manner of answering prayer. Some of God's people are sometimes ready to think, that he doth not hear their prayers, because he doth answer them at the times when they expected, when indeed God doth hear them, and will answer them, in the time and way to which his own wisdom directs. — The business of prayer is not to direct God, who is infinitely wise, and needs not any of our directions; who knows what is best for us ten thousand times better than we, and knows what time and what way are best. It is fit that he should answer prayer's and, as an infinitely wise God, in the exercise of his own wisdom, and not ours. God will deal as a father with us, in answering our requests. But a child is not to expect that the father's wisdom be subject to his nor ought he to desire it, but should esteem it a privilege, that the parent will provide for him according to his own wisdom.

As to particular temporal blessings for which we pray, it is no argument that he is not a prayer-hearing God, because he bestows them not upon us; for it may be that God sees the things for which we pray, not to be best for us. If so, it would be no mercy in him to bestow them upon us, but a judgment. Such things, therefore, ought to always to be asked with submission to the divine will. God can answer prayer, though he bestow not the very thing for which we pray. He can sometimes better answer the

lawful desires and good end we have in prayer another way. If our end be our own good and happiness, God can perhaps better answer that end in bestowing something else than in the bestowment of that very thing which we ask. And if the main good we aim at in our prayer be attained, our prayer is answered, though not in the bestowment of the individual thing which we sought. And so that may still be true which was before asserted, that God always hears the prayer OF FAITH. God never once failed of hearing a sincere and believing prayer; and those promises for ever hold good, “Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you: for every one that asketh, receiveth and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened.”

Another use of this doctrine may be, of reproof to those that neglect the duty of prayer. If we enjoy so great a privilege as to have the prayer hearing God revealed to us, how great will be our folly and inexcusableness if we neglect the privilege, or make no use of it, and deprive ourselves of the advantage by not seeking this God by prayer. They are hereby reprov'd who neglect the great duty of secret prayer, which is more expressly required in the word of God than any other kind. What account can those persons give of themselves, who neglect so known a duty? It is impossible that any among us should be ignorant of this command of God. How daring, therefore, is their wickedness who live in the neglect of this duty! and what can they answer to their Judge, when he shall call them to an account for it?

Here I shall briefly say something to an EXCUSE which some may be ready to make for themselves. Some may be ready to say, If I do pray, my prayer will not be the prayer of faith, because I am in a natural condition, and have no faith.

This excuses not from obedience to a plain command of God. The command is to all to whom the command shall come. God not only directs godly persons to pray, but others also. In the beginning of the second chapter of Proverbs, God directs all persons to cry after wisdom, and to lift up their voices for understanding, in order to their obtaining the fear and knowledge of God; and in <sup>5005</sup>James 1:5. the apostle says, “If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God;” and Peter directed Simon Magus to repent, and pray to God, if perhaps the thought of his heart might be

forgiven him, <sup><482></sup>Acts 8:22. Therefore when God says, do thus or thus, it is not for us to make excuses, but we must do the thing required. Besides,

God is pleased sometimes to answer the prayers of unbelievers. Indeed he hears not their prayers for their goodness or acceptableness, or because of any true respect to him manifested in them, for there is none; nor has he obliged himself to answer such prayers; yet he is pleased sometimes, of his sovereign mercy, to pity wicked men, and hear their cries. Thus he heard the cries of the Ninevites, (Jonah 3.) and the prayer of Ahab, <sup><127></sup>1 Kings 21:27, 28. Though there be no regard to God in their prayers, yet he, of his infinite grace, is pleased to have respect to their desires of their own happiness, and to grant their requests. He may, and sometimes does, hear the cries of wicked men as he hears the hungry ravens, when they cry, <sup><470></sup>Psalms 147:9. and as he opens his bountiful hand, and satisfies the desires of every living thing, <sup><450></sup>Psalms 145:16. Besides the prayers of sinners, though they have no goodness in them, yet are made a means of a preparation for mercy.

Finally, seeing we have such a prayer-hearing God as we have heard, let us be much employed in the duty of prayer: let us pray with all prayer and supplication: let us live prayerful lives, continuing instant in prayer, watching thereunto with all perseverance; praying always, without ceasing, earnestly, and not fainting.

# SERMON 5

## THE NATURE AND END OF EXCOMMUNICATION.

But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat. (~~4th~~ 1 Corinthians 5:11)

THE apostle reproves the church at Corinth for not excommunicating an offending person, and directs them speedily to cast him out from among them, thus delivering him to Satan. He orders them to purge out such scandalous persons, as the Jews were wont to purge leaven out of their houses when they kept the passover. In the text and two foregoing verses he more particularly explains their duty with respect to such vicious persons, and enjoins it on them not to keep company with such. But then shows the difference they ought to observe in their carriage towards those who were vicious among the heathen, who had never joined with the church, and towards those of the same vicious character who had been their professed brethren see verse 9-2. “I wrote unto you, not to company with fornicators. Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters, for then must ye needs go out of the world. But now I have written unto you, not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.”

In the words of the text we may observe,

- 1.** The duty enjoined; including the behaviour required, negatively expressed, not to keep company; and the manner or degree, no not to eat.
- 2.** The object; a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner. We are not to understand merely these particular vices, but also any other gross sins, or visible wickedness. It is

evident, that the apostle here, and in the context, intends that we should exclude out of our company all those who are visibly wicked men. For in the foregoing verses he expresses his meaning by this, that we should purge out the old leaven; and, explaining what he means by leaven, he includes all visible wickedness; as in verse 8. “Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.”

Another thing, by which the object of this behaviour or dealing is characterized, is, that he be one that is called “brother, or one that hath been a professed Christian, and a member of the church.

### DOCTRINE.

Those members of the visible Christian church, who are become visibly wicked, ought not to be tolerated in the church, but should be excommunicated.

In handling this subject, I shall speak,

- (1.) Of the nature of excommunication;
- (2.) Of the subject, and,
- (3.) Of the ends of it.

**I.** I shall say something of the nature of excommunication. It is a punishment executed in the name and according to the will of Christ, whereby a person who hath heretofore enjoyed the privileges of a member of the visible church of Christ, is cast out of the church and delivered unto Satan. It is a punishment inflicted; it is expressly called a punishment by the apostle, in ~~1~~2 Corinthians 2:6. Speaking of the excommunicated Corinthian, he says, “Sufficient to such a man is this punishment.” For though it be not designed by man for the destruction of the person, but for his correction, and so is of the nature of a castigatory punishment, at least so far as it is inflicted by men, yet it is in itself a great and dreadful calamity, and the most severe punishment that Christ hath appointed in the visible church. Although in it the church is to seek only the good of the person and his recovery from sin — there appearing, upon proper trial, no season to hope for his recovery by gentler means — yet it is at God’s

sovereign disposal, whether it shall issue in his humiliation and repentance, or in his dreadful and eternal destruction; as it always doth issue in the one or the other. — In the definition of excommunication now given, two things are chiefly worthy of consideration; viz. Wherein this punishment consists, and by whom it is inflicted.

**First**, I would show wherein this punishment consists; and it is observable that there is in it something privative, and something positive.

*First*, There is something-privative in excommunication, which consists in being deprived of a benefit heretofore enjoyed. This part of the punishment, in the Jewish church, was called putting out of the synagogue, <sup><RMP></sup>John 16:2. The word synagogue is of the same signification as the word church. So this punishment in the Christian church is called casting out of the church. The apostle John, blaming Diotrephes for inflicting this punishment without cause, says, 3 John 10. “He casteth them out of the church.” It is sometimes expressed by the church’s withdrawing from a member,

“Now we commend you, brethren, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that we withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly.” (<sup><SRM></sup>2 Thessalonians 3:6.)

The privative part of excommunication consists in being cut off from the enjoyment of the privileges of God’s visible people. The whole world of mankind is divided into these two sorts, those that are God’s visible people; and those that are of the visible kingdom of Satan. Now it is a great privilege to be within the visible church of Christ. On the other hand, it is very doleful to be without this visible kingdom, to be cut off from its privileges, treated as belonging to the visible kingdom of Satan. For,

**1.** They are cut off from being the objects of that charity of God’s people, which is due to Christian brethren. They are not indeed cut off from all the charity of God’s people, for all men ought to be the objects of their love. But I speak of the brotherly charity due to visible saints. — Charity, as the apostle represents it, is the bond by which the several members of the church of Christ are united together: and therefore he calls it the bond of perfectness; <sup><SRM></sup>Colossians 3:14. “But on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.” But when a person is justly excommunicated, it is like a

physician's cutting off a diseased member from the body, and then the bond which before united it to the body is cut or broken. — A scandal is the same as a stumbling-block, and therefore while the scandal remains, it obstructs the charity of others: and if it finally remain after proper endeavours to remove it, then it breaks their charity, and so the offender is cut off from the charitable opinion and esteem of the church. It cannot any longer look upon him as Christian and so rejects him; fore excommunication is called a rejection,

“A man that is an heretic, after the first and  
second admonition, reject.” (✠ Titus 3:10.)

This implies that the church disapproves the person as a Christian: it cannot any longer charitably look upon him as a saint, or fellow-worshipper of God, and can do no other than, on the contrary, esteem him an enemy of God, and so doth openly withdraw its charity from him ceasing to acknowledge him as a fellow-Christian, any more than the heathens. He is also cut off from that honour which is due to brethren and fellow-Christians. To be a visible Christian is an honourable character but excommunicated persons forfeit this honour. Christians ought not to pay that honour and respect to them which they pay to others, but should treat them as unworthy of such honour, that they may be ashamed. Christ tells us, they should

“be unto us as heathen men and publicans,” (✠ Matthew 18:17)

which implies a withdrawing from them that common respect which we pay to others. We ought to treat them so as to let them plainly see that we do not count them worthy of it, to put them to shame.

Much love and complacency is due to those whom we are obliged in charity to receive as saints, because they are visible Christians. But this complacency excommunicated persons forfeit. We should still wish well to them. and seek their good. Excommunication itself is to be performed as an act of benevolence. We should seek their good by it, and it is to be used as a means of their eternal salvation. But complacency and delight in them as visible Christians is to be withdrawn; and on the contrary they are to be the objects of displacency, as visibly and apparently wicked. We are to cast them out as an unclean thing which defiles the church of God. — In

this sense the psalmist professes a hatred of those who were the visible enemies of God. <sup><AD2></sup>Psalm 139:21, 22. “Do I not hate them, O Lord, that hate thee! And am I not grieved with those that rise up against thee? I hate them with perfect hatred.” Not that he hated them with a hatred of malice or ill will, but with displacency and abhorrence of their wickedness. In this respect we ought to be the children of our Father who is in heaven, who, though he loves many wicked men with a love of benevolence, yet cannot love them with a love of complacency. Thus excommunicated persons are cut off from the charity of the church.

**2.** They are cut off also from the society, which Christians have together as brethren. Thus we are commanded to withdraw, from such; <sup><SR2></sup>2 Thessalonians 3:6. To avoid them; <sup><SG7></sup>Romans 16:17. To have no company with them; <sup><SR4></sup>2 Thessalonians 3:14. And to treat them as heathens and publicans; <sup><SG7></sup>Matthew 18:17. The people of God are, as much as may be, to withdraw from them as to that common society which is proper to subsist among Christians. — Not that they should avoid speaking to them on any occasion. All manner and all degrees of society are not forbidden, but all unnecessary society, or such as is wont to be among those who delight in the company of each other. We should not associate ourselves with them so as to make them our companions. Yea, there ought to be such an avoiding of their company as may show great dislike.

Particularly, we are forbidden such a degree of associating ourselves with them, as there is in making them our guests at our tables, or in being their guests at their tables, as is manifest in the text, where we are commanded to have no company with them, no not to eat. That this respects not eating with them at the Lord’s supper, but a common eating, is evident by the words, that the eating here forbidden, is one of the degrees of keeping company, which are forbidden. Keep no company with such an one, saith the apostle, no not to eat: as much as to say, no not in so low a degree as to eat with him. But eating with him at the Lord’s supper, is the very highest degree of visible Christian communion. Who can suppose that the apostle meant this, Take heed and have no company with a man, no not so much as in the highest degree of communion that you can have? Besides, the apostle mentions this eating as a way of keeping company which, however, they might hold with the heathen. He tells them, not to keep company with fornicators; then he informs them, he means not with

fornicators of this world, that is, the heathens; but, saith he, “if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, etc. with such an one keep no company, no not to eat.” This makes it most apparent, that the apostle doth not mean eating at the Lord’s table, for so, they might not keep company with the heathens, any more than with an excommunicated person. Here naturally arise two questions.

**QUEST. 1.** How far is the church to treat excommunicated persons as they would those who never have been of the visible church? I answer, they are to treat them as heathens, excepting in these two things, in which there is a difference to be observed.

**1.** They are to have a greater concern for their welfare still, than if they never had been brethren, and therefore ought to take more pains, by admonitions and otherwise, to reclaim and save them, than they are obliged to take towards those who have been always heathens. This seems manifest by that of the apostle, <sup>ROM</sup> 2 Thessalonians 3:14, 16. “And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, mite that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.” The consideration that he hath been a brother heretofore, and that we have not finally cast him off from that relation, but that we are still hoping and using means for his recovery, obliges us to concern ourselves more for the good of his soul than for those with whom we never had any such connexion, and so to play for him, and to take pains by admonishing him. — The very reason of the thing shows the same. For this very ordinance of excommunication is used for this end, that we may thereby obtain the good of the person excommunicated. And surely we should be more concerned for the good of those who have been our brethren, and who are now under the operation of means used by us for their good, than for those with whom we never had any special connexion. Thus, there should be more of the love of benevolence exercised towards persons excommunicated, than towards those whenever were members of the church. — But then,

**2.** On the other hand, as to what relates to the love of complacency, they ought to be treated with greater displacency and disrespect than the heathen. This is plain by the text and context. For the apostle, plainly doth not require of us to avoid the company of the heathen, or the

fornicators of the world, but expressly requires us to avoid the company of any brother who shall be guilty of any of the vices pointed out in the text, or any other like them. — This is also plain by the reason of the thing. For those who have once been visible Christians and have apostatized and cast off that visibility, deserve to be treated with more abhorrence than those who have never made any pretensions to Christianity. The sin of such, in apostatizing from their profession, is more aggravated, than the sin of those who never made any profession. They far more dishonour religion, and are much more abhorred of God. Therefore when Christ says,

“Let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican,”  
(~~Q107~~ Matthew 18:17.)

it is not meant that we should treat an excommunicated brother as Christians ought to treat heathens and publicans, for they might eat with them, as Christ himself did, and the apostle gives leave to eat with such, ~~Q107~~ 1 Corinthians 10:27. and in the context gives leave to keep company with such, yet forbids to eat with an excommunicated person. — Christ’s meaning must be, that we should treat an excommunicated person as the Jews were wont to treat the heathens and publicans, and as the disciples had been always taught among the Jews, and brought up, and used to treat them. They would by no means eat with publicans and sinners; they would not eat with the Gentiles, or with the Samaritans. Therefore Peter durst not eat with the Gentiles when the Jews here present, ~~Q102~~ Galatians 2:12.

**QUEST. 2.** What kindness and respect may and ought to be shown to such persons? — I answer, There are some things by which the members of the church are obliged to show kindness to them; and these things are chiefly, to pray for them, and to admonish them. — And the common duties and offices of humanity ought to be performed towards them; such as relieving them when they are sick, or under any other distress; allowing them those benefits of human society, and that help, which are needful for the support and defense of their lives and property. — The duties of natural and civil relations are still to be performed towards them. Excommunication doth not release children from the obligation of duty to their parents, nor parents from parental affection and care toward their

children. Nor are husbands and wives released from the duties proper to their relation. And so of all other less relations, whether natural, domestic, or civil.

**3.** They are cut off from the fellowship of the Christian church. the true notion of the visible church of Christ, is that part of mankind, which, as his people, is united in upholding his appointed worship. And the notion of a particular visible church of Christ, is a particular society of worshippers, or of visible saints, united for the social worship of God according to his institutions or ordinances. One great and main privilege then, which the members of such a church enjoy, is fellowship in the worship, which God hath appointed in his church. But they that are excommunicated are cut off from this privilege, they have no fellowship, no communion with the people of God in any part of their worship.

He who is the mouth of the worshipping congregation in offering up public prayers is the mouth only of the worshipping society; but the excommunicated are cast out of that society. The church may and ought to pray for such; but they cannot have fellowship with such in prayer. The minister, when speaking, in prayer, doth not speak in their name; he speaks only in the name of the united society of visible saints or worshippers. If the people of God were to put up prayers in their name, it would imply a receiving of them into charity, or that they charitably looked upon them as the servants or worshippers of God. But, as was observed before, excommunicated persons are in this respect cast out of the charity of the church, and it looks upon them as wicked men and enemies of God, and treats them as such.

So when a congregation of visible saints join in singing the praises of God, as the psalmist says, <sup>Psalm 34:3</sup> “Let us extol his name together,” they do it only as joining with those who are, in their charitable estimation fellow-servants and fellow-worshippers of God. They do it not as joining with heathens; nor do the people of God say to the open enemies of God, remaining such, “Come let us extol his name together,” but they say it to their brethren in God’s service. If we ought not to join with excommunicated persons in familiar society, much less ought we to hold fellowship with them in solemn worship, though they may be present.

**4.** There are privileges of a more internal nature, which those who are members of the visible church enjoy, from which excommunicated persons are cut off. They being God's covenant-people, are in the way of covenant-blessings: and therefore have more encouragement to come to God by prayer for any mercy they need. The visible church is the people among whom God hath set his tabernacle, and among whom he is wont to bestow his blessings. But the excommunicated are, in a sense, cast out of God's sight into a land of banishment, as Cain was, though not debarred from common means. ~~Gen~~ Genesis 4:14, 16. They are not in the way of those smiles of providence, those tokens of God's favour, and that light of God's countenance, like those who are within Nor, as they are cast out from among God's covenant people, have they the divine covenant to plead, as the members of the church have. — Thus far I have considered the privative part of the punishment of excommunication. — I now, proceed

*Secondly*, to the positive part, which is expressed by being delivered to Satan, in verse 5. By which two things seem to be signified:

- 1.** A being delivered over to the calamities to which they are subject, who belong to the visible kingdom of the devil. As they who are excommunicated are thrust out from among the visible people of God; so they are to be looked upon, in most respects at least, as being in the miserable, deplorable circumstances in which those are who are under the visible tyranny of the devil as the heathens are And in many respects they doubtless suffer the cruel tyranny of the devil, in a manner agreeable to their condition, being cast out into his visible kingdom
- 2.** It is reasonable to suppose that God is wont to make the devil the instrument of those peculiar, severe chastise meets which their apostacy deserves. As they deserve more severe chastisement than the heathens, and are delivered to Satan for the destruction of the flesh; so we may well suppose, either that God is wont to let Satan loose, sorely to molest them outwardly or inwardly, and by such severe means to destroy the flesh, and to humble them, or that he suffers the devil to take possession of them dreadfully to harden them, and so to destroy them for ever. For although what men are to aim at, is only the destruction of the flesh, yet whether it shall prove the destruction of the flesh, or the eternal and more dreadful

destruction of themselves, is at God's sovereign disposal. — So much for the nature of excommunication.

**Secondly**, I come to show by whom the punishment is to be inflicted.

**1.** When it is regularly and duly inflicted, it is to be looked upon as done by Christ himself. That is imported in the definition, that it is according to his will, and to the directions of his word. And therefore he is to be looked upon as principal in it, and we ought to esteem it as really and truly from him, as if he were on earth personally inflicting it.

**2.** As it is inflicted by men, it is only done ministerially. They do not act of themselves in this, any more than in preaching the word. When the word is preached, it is the word of Christ, which is spoken, as the preacher speaks in the name of Christ, as his ambassador. So when a church excommunicates a member, the church acts in the name of Christ, and by his authority, not by its own. It is governed by his will, not by its own. Indeed it is only a particular application of the word of Christ. — Therefore it is promised, that when it is duly done, it shall be confirmed in heaven *i.e.* Christ will confirm it, by acknowledging it to be his own act, and he will, in his future providence, have regard to what is done thus as done by himself: he will look on the Person, and treat him as cast out and delivered to Satan by himself; and if he repent not, will for ever reject him: ◀1835 Matthew 18:18. "Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven." ◀1835 John 20:23. "Whosoever sins he retain, they are retained." — I shall now, as was proposed,

**II.** Endeavour to show who are the proper subjects of excommunication. They are those Members of the church who are now become visibly wicked; for the very name and nature of the visible church show, that it is a society of visible saints, or visibly holy persons. When any of these visible saints become visibly wicked men, they ought to be cast out of the church. Now, the members of the church become visibly wicked by these two things:

**1.** By gross sin. Saints may be guilty of other sins, and very often are, without throwing any just stumbling-block in the way of public charity, or of the charity of their Christian brethren. The common failures of humanity, and the daily short-comings of the best of men, do not

ordinarily obstruct the charity of their brethren, but when they fall into any gross sin, this effect follows; for we naturally argue, that he who hath committed some gross sin hath doubtless much more practiced less and more secret sins; and so we doubt concerning the soundness and sincerity of his heart. Therefore all those who commit any gross sin, as they obstruct the charity of their brethren, we are proper subjects of discipline: and unless they confess their sin, and manifest their repentance, are proper subjects of excommunication. — This leads me to say,

**2.** That the members of the church do especially become visibly wicked, when they remain impenitent in their sins, after proper means used to reclaim them Merely being guilty of any gross sin, is a stumbling block to charity, unless repentance immediately succeed; but especially when the guilty person remains obstinate and contumacious; in such a case he is most clearly a visibly wicked person, and therefore to be dealt with as such; to be cast out into the wicked world, the kingdom of Satan, where he appears to belong. — Nor is contumacy in gross sins only a sufficient ground of excommunication. In the text the apostle commands us to inflict this censure, not only on those who are guilty of the gross sins of fornication, idolatry, and drunkenness, but also on those who are guilty of covetousness, railing, and extortion, which, at least in some degrees of them, are too generally esteemed no very heinous crimes. And in

~~6107~~ Romans 16:17. the same apostle commands the church to excommunicate “them who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine they had learned,” and in ~~6108~~ 2 Thessalonians 3:14. to excommunicate every one who should “not obey his word by that epistle.” Now, according to these precepts, every one who doth not observe the doctrine of the apostles, and their word contained in their epistles, and so, by parity of reason, the divine instructions contained in the other parts of Scripture, is to be excommunicated, provided he continue impenitent and contumacious. So that contumacy and impenitence in any real and manifest sin whatsoever deserve excommunication.

**III.** I come to speak of the ends of this ecclesiastical censure. The special ends of it are these three.

**1.** That the church may be kept pure, and the ordinances of God not be defiled. This end is mentioned in the context, verse 6, etc. “Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.” — When the ordinances of God are defiled by the toleration of wicked men in the church, God the Father, Jesus Christ the head and founder of the church, the religion of the gospel, and the church itself, are dishonoured and exposed to contempt. — And that the other members themselves may not be defiled, it is necessary that they bear a testimony against sin, by censuring it whenever it appears among them, especially in the grosser acts of wickedness. If they neglect so to do, they contract guilt by the very neglect, and not only so, but they expose themselves to learn the same vices, which they tolerate in others: for “a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.” Hence that earnest caution of the apostle,

“Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; test any root of bitterness springing up, trouble you, and thereby many he defiled.” (~~scrips~~ Hebrews 12:15.)

**2.** That others may be deterred from wickedness. As the neglect of proper censure, with respect to visibly wicked church-members, tends to lead and encourage others to commit the same wickedness, so the infliction of proper censure tends to restrain others, not only from the same wickedness, but from sin in general. This therefore is repeatedly mentioned as one end of the punishments appointed to be inflicted by the law of Moses:

“And all Israel shall hear, and fear, and shall do no more such wickedness as this is among you.” (~~scrips~~ Deuteronomy 13:11.)

**3.** That the persons themselves may be reclaimed, and that their souls may be saved. When other more gentle means have been used in vain, then it is the duty of the church to use this, which is more severe, in order to bring them to conviction, shame, and humiliation: and that, by being rejected and avoided by the church, and treated with disrespect, they may be convinced how they deserve to be for ever disowned of God; that by being delivered unto Satan, they may learn how they deserve for ever to be delivered up to

him; that by his being made the instrument of their chastisement, they may learn how they deserve to be tormented by him, without any rest day or night, for ever and ever. — This, with the counsels and admonitions by which it is to be followed, is the last mean that the church is to use, in order to reclaim those members which are become visibly wicked; If this be ineffectual, what is next to be expected is destruction without remedy.

### APPLICATION.

I shall apply this subject in a brief use of exhortation to this church, to maintain strictly the proper discipline of the gospel in general, and particularly that part of it which consists in excommunication. To this end I shall just suggest to you the following motives.

- 1.** That if you tolerate visible wickedness in your members, you will greatly dishonour God, our Lord Jesus Christ, the religion which you profess, the church in general, and yourselves in particular. As those members of the church who practice wickedness, bring dishonour upon the whole body, so do those who tolerate them in it. The language of it is, that God doth not require holiness in his servants, that Christ doth not require it in his disciples, that the religion of the gospel is not a holy religion, that the church is not a body of holy servants of God and that this church, in particular, hath no regard to holiness or true virtue.
- 2.** Your own good loudly calls you to the same thing. From what hath been already said, you see how liable you, as individuals, will be to catch the contagion, which is easily communicated by reason of the natural depravity, in a degree at least, remaining in the best of men. — Beside, if strict discipline be maintained among you, it will not only tend to prevent the spread of wickedness, but to make you more fruitful in holiness. If you know that the eyes of your brethren observe all your conduct, it will not only make you more guarded against sin, but more careful, “to maintain good works,” and to abound in “the fruits of the Spirit.” Thus you will have more abundant joy and peace in believing.
- 3.** The good of those who are without should be another motive. What the apostle saith with reference to another subject, <sup>4301</sup>1 Corinthians 14:24, 25. is perfectly applicable to the case before us: “But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of

all, he is judged of all, and thus are the secrets of his bears made manifest; and so falling down on his face, he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth." If strict discipline, and thereby strict morals, were maintained in the church, it would in all probability be one of the most powerful means of conviction and conversion towards those who are without.

**4.** Benevolence towards your offending brethren themselves calls upon you to maintain discipline in all its parts. Surely, if we love our brethren it will grieve us to see them wandering from the path of truth and duty, and in proportion as our compassion is moved, shall we be disposed to use all proper means to reclaim and bring them back to the right way. Now, the rules of discipline contained in the gospel are the most proper, and best adapted to this end, that infinite wisdom itself could devise. Even excommunication is instituted for this very end, the destruction of the flesh, and the salvation of the spirit. If, therefore, we have any love of benevolence to our offending and erring brethren, it becomes us to manifest it, in executing strictly the rules of gospel discipline, and even excommunication itself, whenever It is necessary.

**5.** But the absolute authority of Christ ought to be sufficient in this case if there were no other motive. Our text is only one of many passages in the Scripture, wherein strict discipline is expressly commanded, and peremptorily enjoined. Now, how can you be the true Disciples of Christ, if you live in the neglect of these plain positive commands? "If ye love me," saith Christ, "keep my commandments;" and, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I have commanded you." But, "he that loveth me not, keepeth not my sayings." "And why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" If you strictly follow the rules of discipline instituted by Christ, you have reason to hope for his blessing; for he is wont to bless his own institutions, and to smile upon the means of grace which he hath appointed.

## SERMON 6

### WHEN THE WICKED SHALL HAVE FILLED UP THE MEASURE OF THEIR SIN, WRATH WILL COME UPON THE UTTERMOST.

To fill up their sins always; for the wrath is come upon them to  
the uttermost. (<sup>5126</sup>1 Thessalonians 2:16)

IN verse 14. the apostle commends the Christian Thessalonians that they became the followers of the churches of God in Judea, both in faith and in sufferings, in faith, in that they received the word, not as the word of man but as it is in truth the word of God, in sufferings, in that they had suffered like things of their own countrymen, as they had of the Jews. Upon which the apostle sets forth the persecutions, cruel, and perverse wickedness of that people, “who both killed the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and have,” says he, “persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men, forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles. that they might be saved.” Then comb in the words of the text; “To fill up their sins always; for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.”

In these words we may observe two things:

**1.** To what effect was the heinous wickedness and obstinacy of the Jews, viz. to fill up their sins. God hath set bounds to every man’s wickedness; he suffers men to live, and to go on in sin, till they have filled up their measure, and then mats them off. To this effect was the wickedness and obstinacy of the Jews: they were exceedingly wicked, and thereby filled up the measure of their sins a great pace. And the reason why they were permitted to be so obstinate under the preaching and miracles of Christ, and of the apostles, and under all the means used with them, was, that they might fill up the measure of their sins. This is agreeable to what Christ said, <sup>4133</sup>Matthew 23:31, 32. “Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children; of them which killed the prophets. Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers.”

**2.** The punishment of their wickedness: “The wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.” There is a connexion between the measure of men’s sin, and the measure of punishment. When they have filled up the measure of their sin, then is filled up the measure of God’s wrath.

The degree of their punishment, is the uttermost degree. This may respect both a national and personal punishment. If we take it as a national punishment, a little after the time when the epistle was written, wrath came upon the nation of the Jews to the uttermost, in their terrible destruction by the Romans, when, as Christ said

“was great tribulation, such as never was since the beginning of the world to that time,” (~~ABC~~ Matthew 24:21.)

That nation had before suffered many of the fruits of divine wrath for their sins; but this was beyond all, this was their highest degree of punishment as a nation. If we take it as a personal punishment, then it respects their punishment in hell. God often punishes men very dreadfully in this world; but in hell “wrath comes on them to the uttermost.” — By this expression is also denoted the certainty of this punishment. For though the punishment has then future, yet it is spoken of as present

“The wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.” It was as certain as if it had already taken place. God, who knows all things, speaks of things that are not as though they were, for things present and things future are equally certain with him. It also denotes the near approach of it. The wrath is come, *i.e.* it is just at hand, it is at the door; as it proved with respect to that nation; their terrible destruction by the Romans was soon after the apostle wrote this epistle.

## DOCTRINE.

When those that continue in sin shall have filled up the measure of their sin, then wrath will come upon them to the uttermost.

**I.** PROP. There is a certain measure that God hath set to the sin of every wicked man. God says concerning the sin of man, as he says to the raging waves of the sea, Hitherto shalt thou come, and no further. The measure of some is much greater than of others. Some reprobates commit but a little sin in comparison with others, and so are to endure proportionately a

smaller punishment. There are many vessels of wrath; but some are smaller and others greater vessels; some will contain comparatively but little wrath, others a greater measure of It. Sometimes, when we see men go to dreadful lengths, and become very heinously wicked, we are ready to wonder that God lets them alone. He sees them go on in such audacious wickedness, and keeps silence, nor does any thing to interrupt them, but they go smoothly on, and meet with no hurt. But sometimes the reason why God lets them alone is, because they have not filled up the measure of their sins. When they live in dreadful wickedness, they are but filling up the measure which God hath limited for them. This is sometimes the reason why God suffers very wicked men to live so long; because their iniquity is not full:

“The iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.” (~~15:16~~ Genesis 15:16.)

For this reason also God sometimes suffers them to live in prosperity. Their prosperity is a snare to them, and an occasion of their sinning a great deal more. Wherefore God suffers them to have such a snare, because he suffers them to fill up a larger measure. So, for this cause, he sometimes suffers them to live under great light, and great means and advantages, at the same time to neglect and misimprove all. Every one shall live till he hath filled up his measure.

**II. PROP.** While men continue in sin, they are filling the measure set them. This is the work in which they spend their whole lives; they begin in their childhood; and if they live to grow old in sin, they still go on with this work. It is the work with which every day is filled up. They may alter their business in other respects; they may sometimes be about one thing, and sometimes about another; but they never change from this work of filling up the measure of their sins. Whatever they put their hands to, they are still employed in this work. This is the first thing that they set themselves about when they awake in the morning, and the last thing they do at night. They are all the while treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath, and the revelation of the righteous judgment of God. It is a gross mistake of some natural men, who think that when they read and pray they do not add to their sins; but, on the contrary, think they diminish their guilt by these exercises. They think, that instead of adding to their sins, they do something to satisfy for their past offences, but instead of that,

they do but add to the measure by their best prayers, and by those services with which they themselves are most pleased.

**III. PROP.** When once the measure of their sins is filled up, then wrath will come upon them to the uttermost. God will then wait no longer upon them. Wicked men think that God is altogether such as one as themselves, because, when they commit such wickedness, he keeps silence. “Because judgment against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the children of men is fully set in them to do evil.” But when once they shall have filled up the measure of their sins, judgment will be executed; God will not bear with them any longer. Now is the day of grace, and the day of patience, which they spend in filling up their sins; but when their sins shall be full, then will come the day of wrath, the day of the fierce anger of God. — God often executes his wrath on ungodly men, in a less degree, in this world. He sometimes brings afflictions upon them, and that in wrath. Sometimes he expresses his wrath in very sore judgments; sometimes he appears in a terrible manner, not only outwardly, but also in the inward expressions of it on their consciences. Some, before they died, have had the wrath of God inflicted on their souls in degrees that have been intolerable. But these things are only forerunners of their punishment only slight foretastes of wrath. God never stirs up all his wrath against wicked men while in this world; but when once wicked men shall have filled up the measure of their sins, then wrath will come upon them to the uttermost; and that in the following respects:

**1.** Wrath will come upon them without any restraint or moderation in the degree of it. God doth always lay, as it were, a restraint upon himself, he doth not stir up his wrath; he stays his rough wind in the day of his east wind, he lets not his arm light down on wicked men with its full weight. But when sinners shall have filled up the measure of their sins, there will be no caution, no restraint. His rough wind will not be staved nor moderated. The wrath of God will be poured out like fire. He will come forth, not only in anger, but in the fierceness of his anger, he will execute wrath with power, so as to show what his wrath is, and make his power known. There will be nothing to alleviate his wrath; his heavy wrath will lie on them, without any thing to lighten the burden, or to keep off, in any measure the full weight of it from pressing the soul. — His eye will not spare, neither will he regard the sinners cries and lamentations, however

loud and bitter. Then shall wicked men know that God is the Lord, they shall know how great that majesty is which they have despised, and how dreadful that threatened wrath is which they have so little regarded. Then shall come on wicked men that punishment which they deserve. God will exact of them the uttermost farthing. Their iniquities are marked before him, they are all written in his book, and in the future world he will reckon with them and they must pay all the debt. Their sins are laid up in store with God; they are sealed up among his treasures; and them he will recompense, even recompense into their bosoms. The consummate degree of punishment will not be executed till the day of judgment but the wicked are sealed over to this consummate punishment immediately after death; they are cast into hell, and there bound in chains of darkness to the judgment of the great day and they know that the highest degree of punishment is coming upon them. Final wrath will be executed without ally mixture; all mercy, all enjoyments will be taken away. God sometimes expresses his wrath in this world; but here good things and evil are mixed together; in the future there will be only evil things.

**2.** Wrath will then be executer! without any merciful circumstances. The judgments, which God executes on ungodly men in this world, are attended with many merciful circumstances. There is much patience and longsuffering, together with judgment; judgments are joined with continuance of opportunity to seek mercy. But in hell there will be no more exercises of divine patience. The judgments which God exercises on ungodly men in this world are warnings to them to avoid greater punishments: but the wrath which will come upon them, when they shall have filled up the measure of their sin, will not be of the nature of warnings. Indeed they will be effectually awakened, and made thoroughly sensible, by what they shall suffer, yet their being awakened and made sensible will do them no good. Many a wicked man hath suffered very awful things from God in this world, which have been a means of saving good; but that wrath which sinners shall suffer after death will be no way for their good. God will have no merciful design in it; neither will it be possible that they should get any good by that or by any thing else.

**3.** Wrath will be so executed, as to perfect the work to which wrath tends, viz. utterly to undo the subject of it. Wrath is often so executed in this life, as greatly to distress persons, and bring them into great calamity; yet not

so as to complete the ruin of those who suffer it, but in another world, it will be so executed, as to finish their destruction and render them utterly and perfectly undone: it will take away all comfort, all hope, and all support. The soul will be, as it were, utterly crushed, the wrath will be wholly intolerable. It must sink, and will utterly sink, and will have no more strength to keep itself from sinking, than a worm would have to keep itself from being crushed under the weight of a mountain. The wrath will be so great, so mighty and powerful, as wholly to abolish all manner of welfare:

“But on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.”

( Matthew 21:44.)

**4.** When persons shall have filled up the measure of their sin, that wrath will come upon them which is eternal. Though men may suffer very terrible and awful judgments in this world, yet those judgments have an end. They may be long continued, yet they commonly admit of relief. Temporal distresses and sorrows have intermissions and respite, and commonly by decrees abate and wear off; but the wrath that shall be executed, when the measure of sin shall have been filled up, will have no end. Thus it will be to the uttermost as to its duration it will be of so long continuance, that it will be impossible it should be longer. Nothing can be longer than eternity.

**5.** When persons shall have filled up the measure of their sin, then wrath will come upon them to the uttermost of what is threatened. Sin is an infinite evil; and the punishment which God hath threatened against it is very dreadful. The threatening of God against the workers of iniquity are very awful, but these threatenings are never fully accomplished in this world. However dreadful things some men may suffer in this life, yet God never fully executes his threatenings for so much as one sin, till they have filled up the whole measure. The threatenings of the law are never answered by any thing that any man suffers here. The most awful judgment in this life doth not answer God's threatenings, either in degree, or in circumstances, or in duration. If the greatest sufferings that ever are endured in this life should be eternal, it would not answer the threatening. Indeed temporal judgments belong to the threatenings of the law; but these are not answered by them; they are but foretastes of the punish meet.

“The wages of sin is death.” No expressions of wrath that are suffered before men have filled up the measure of their sin, are its full wages. But then, God will reckon with them, and will recompense into their bosoms the full deserved sum.

### APPLICATION.

The use I would make of this doctrine is, of warning to natural men, to rest no longer in sin, and to make haste to flee from it. The things which have been said, under this doctrine, may well be awakening, awful considerations to you. It is awful to consider whose wrath it is that abides upon you, and of what wrath you are in danger. It is impossible to express the misery of a natural condition. It is like being in Sodom, with a dreadful storm of fire and brimstone hanging over it, just ready to break forth, and to be poured down upon it. The clouds of divine vengeance are full, and just ready to burst. Here let those who yet continue in sin, in this town, consider particularly,

**1.** Under what great means and advantages you continue in sin. God is now favouring us with very great and extraordinary means and advantages, in that we have such extraordinary tokens of the presence of God among us; his Spirit is so remarkably poured out, and multitudes of all ages, and all sorts, are converted and brought home to Christ. God appears among us in the most extraordinary manner, perhaps, that ever he did in New England. The children of Israel saw many mighty works of God, when he brought them out of Egypt; but we at this day see works more mighty, and of a more glorious.

We who live under such light, have had loud calls but now above all. Now is a day of salvation. The fountain hath been set open among us in an extraordinary manner, and hath stood open for a considerable time: yet you continue in sin, and the calls that you have hitherto had have not brought you to be washed in it. What extraordinary advantages have you lately enjoyed, to stir you up! How hath every thing in the town, of late, been of that tendency! Those things which used to be the greatest hinderances have been removed. You have not the ill examples of immoral persons to be a temptation to you. There is not now that vain worldly talk, and ill company, to divert you, and to be a hinderance to you, which there

used to be. Now you have multitude of good examples set before you, there are many now all around you, who instead of diverting and hindering you, are earnestly desirous of your salvation, and willing to do all that they can to move you to flee to Christ: they have a thirsting desire for it. The chief talk in the town has of late been about the things of religion, and has been such as hath tended to promote, and not to hinder, your souls' good. Every thing all around you hath tended to stir you up; and will you yet continue in sin?

Some of you have continued in sin till you are far advanced in life. You were warned when you were children; and some of you had awakenings then: however, the time went away. You became men and women; and then you were stirred up again, you had the strivings of God's Spirit; and some of you have fixed the times when you would make thorough work of seeking salvation. Some of you perhaps determined to do it when you should be married and settled in the world; others when you should have finished such a business, and when your circumstances should be so and so altered. Now these times have come, and are past; yet you continue in sin.

Many of you have had remarkable warnings of providence. Some of you have been warned by the deaths of near relations; you have stood by, and seen others die and go into eternity; yet this hath not been effectual. Some of you have been near death yourselves, have been brought nigh the grave in sore sickness, and were full of your promises how you would behave yourselves, if it should please God to spare your lives. Some of you have very narrowly escaped death by dangerous accidents; but God was pleased to spare you, to give you a further space to repent; yet you continue in sin.

Some of you have seen times of remarkable outpourings of the Spirit of God, in this town in times past; but it had no good effect on you. You had the strivings of the Spirit of God too, as well as others. God did not so pass by your door, but that he came and knocked; yet you stood it out. Now God hath come again in a more remarkable manner than ever before, and hath been pouring out his Spirit for some months, in its most gracious influence, yet you remain in sin until now. In the beginning of this awakening, you were warned to flee from wrath, and to forsake your sins.

You were told what a wide door there was open, what an accepted time it was, and were urged to press into the kingdom of God. And many did press in, they forsook their sins, and believed in Christ; but you, whom you had seen it, repented not, that you might believe him.

Then you were warned again, and still others have been pressing and thronging into the kingdom of God. Many have fled for refuge, and have laid hold on Christ; yet you continue in sin and unbelief. You have seen multitudes of all sorts, of all ages, young and old, flocking to Christ, and many of about your age and your circumstances; but you still are in the same miserable condition in which you used to be. You have seen persons daily flocking to Christ, as doves to their windows. God hath not only poured out his Spirit on this town, but also on other towns around us, and they are flocking in there, as well as here. This blessing spreads further and further; many, far nod near, seem to be sitting their faces Zion-ward: yet you who live here, where this work first began, continue behind still; you have no lot or portion in this matter.

**2.** How dreadful the wrath of God is, when it is executed to the uttermost. To make you in some measure sensible of that, I desire you to consider whose wrath it is. The wrath of a king is the roaring of a lion, but this is the wrath of Jehovah, the Lord God Omnipotent. Let us consider, what can we rationally think of it? How dreadful must be the wrath of such a Being, when it comes upon a person to the uttermost, without any pity, or moderation or merciful circumstances! What must be the uttermost of his wrath, who made heaven and earth by the word of his power, who spake, and it was done, who commanded, and it stood fast! What must his wrath be, who commandeth the sun, and it rises not, and sealeth up the stars! What must his wrath be, who shaketh the earth out of its place, and causeth the pillars of heaven to tremble! What must his wrath be, who rebuketh the sea, and maketh it dry, who removeth the mountains out of their places, and overturneth them in his anger! What must his wrath be, whose majesty is so awful that no man could live in the sight of it! What must the wrath of such a Being be, when it comes to the uttermost, when he makes his majesty appear and shine bright in the misery of wicked men! And what is a worm of the dust before the fury and under the weight of this wrath, which the stoutest devils cannot bear, but utterly sink, and are crushed under it. — Consider how dreadful the wrath of God is

sometimes in this world, only in a little taste or view of it. Sometimes, when God only enlightens conscience, to have some sense of his wrath, it causes the stout-hearted to cry out; nature is ready to sink under it, when indeed it is but a little glimpse of divine wrath that is seen. This hath been observed in many cases. But if a slight taste and apprehension of wrath be so dreadful and intolerable, what must it be, when it comes upon persons to the uttermost! When a few drops or little sprinkling of wrath is so distressing and overbearing to the soul, how must it be when God opens the flood-gates, and lets the mighty deluge of his wrath come pouring down upon men's guilty heads, and brings in all his waves and billows upon their souls! How little of God's wrath will sink them!

“When his wrath is kindled but a little, blessed are all they that put their trust in him.” (~~Psalm~~ Psalm 2:12.)

**3.** Consider, you know not what wrath God may be about to execute upon wicked men in this world. Wrath may, in some sense, be coming upon them, in the present life, to the uttermost, for might we know. When it is said of the Jews, “The wrath is come upon them to the uttermost,” respect is had, not only to the execution of divine wrath on that people in hell, but that terrible destruction of Judea and Jerusalem, which was then near approaching, by the Romans. We know not but the width is now coming, in some peculiarly awful manner, in the wicked world. God seems, by the things, which he is doing among us, to be coming forth for some great thing. The work, which hath been lately wrought among us, is no ordinary thing. He doth not work in his usual way, but in a way very extraordinary, and it is probable, that it is a forerunner of some very great revolution. We must not pretend to say what is in the womb of providence, or what is in the book of God's secret decrees, yet we may and ought to discern the signs of these times.

Though God be now about to do glorious shines for his church and people, yet it is probable that they will be accompanied with dreadful things to his enemies. It is the manner of God, when he brings about any glorious revolution for his people, at the same time to execute very awful judgments on his enemies: Dueteronomy 32:43. “Rejoice, O ye nations, with his peoples for he will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries, and will be merciful unto his land, and

to his people.” <sup><2380></sup>Isaiah 3:10, 11. “Say ye to the righteous, It shall be well with him: for they shall eat the fruit of their doings. Woe unto the wicked, it shall be ill with him: for the reward of his hands shall be given him.”

<sup><2380></sup>Isaiah 65:13 14. “Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, my servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry: behold, my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty: behold, my servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed: behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for vexation of spirit.” We find in Scripture, that where glorious times are prophesied to God’s people, there are at the same time awful Judgments foretold to his enemies. What God is now about to do, we know not: but this we may know, that there will be no safety to any but those who are in the ark. — Therefore it behoves all to haste and flee for their lives, to get into a safe condition, to get into Christ; then they need not fear, though the earth be removed, and the mountains carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled; though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof: for God will be their refuge and strength; they need not be afraid of evil tidings; their hearts may be fixed, trusting in the Lord.

# SERMON 7

## WICKED MEN USEFUL IN THEIR DESTRUCTION ONLY

“Son of man, What is the vine tree more than any tree? Or than a branch which is among the trees of the forest? Shall wood be taken thereof to do any work? Or will men take a pin of it to hang any vessel thereon? Behold, it is cast into the fire for fuel; The fire devoureth both the ends of it, and the midst of it is burnt: Is it meet for any work?” (~~281~~ Ezekiel 15:2-4)

THE visible church of God is here compared to the vine tree, as is evident by God’s own explanation of the allegory, in verses 6, 7, and 8.

“Therefore thus saith the Lord God, As the vine tree among the trees of the forest, which I have given to the fire for fuel, so will I give the inhabitants of Jerusalem,” etc.

And it may be understood of mankind in general. We find man often in scripture compared to a vine. So in chapter 32 of Deuteronomy, “Their vine is the vine of Sodom, and of the fields of Gomorrah. Their grapes are grapes of gall.” And ~~280B~~ Psalm 80:8. “Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt;” verse 14. “Look down from heaven, behold, and visit this vine.” And Canticles 2:15. “The foxes that spoil the vines; for our vines have tender grapes.” Isaiah 5 at the beginning, “My beloved hath a vineyard, and he planted it with the choicest vine.” ~~280B~~ Jeremiah 2:21. “I had planted thee a noble vine.” ~~280B~~ Hosea 10:1. “Israel is an empty vine.” So in chapter 15 of John, visible Christians are compared to the branches of a vine.

Man is very fitly represented by the vine. The weakness and dependence of the vine on other things which support it, well represents to us what a poor, feeble, dependent creature man is, and how, if left to himself, he must fall into mischief, and cannot help himself. The visible people of God are fitly compared to a vine, because of the care and cultivation of the husbandman, or vine dresser. The business of husbandmen in the land of

Israel was very much in their vineyards, about vines; and the care they exercised to fence them, to defend them, to prune them, to prop them up, and to cultivate them, well represented that merciful care which God exercises towards his visible people; and this latter is often in scripture expressly compared to the former.

In the words now read is represented,

**1.** How wholly useless and unprofitable, even beyond other trees, a vine is, in case of unfruitfulness: “What is a vine tree more than any tree, or than a branch which is among the trees of the forest?” *i.e.* if it do not bear fruit. Men make much more of a vine than of other trees; they take great care of it, to wall it in, to dig about it, to prune it, and the like. It is much more highly esteemed than any one of the trees of the forest; they are despised in comparison with it. And if it bear fruit, it is indeed much preferable to other trees; for the fruit of it yields a noble liquor; as it is said in Jotham’s parable, <sup><JUDGES</sup> Judges 9:13. “And the vine said unto them, Should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man?” But if it bear no fruit, it is more unprofitable than the trees of the forest; for the wood of them is good for timber; but the wood of the vine is fit for no work; as in the text, “Shall wood be taken thereof to do any work? Or will men take a pin of it to hang any vessel thereon?”

**2.** The only thing for which a vine is useful, in case of barrenness, viz. for fuel: “Behold, it is cast into the fire for fuel.” It is wholly consumed; no part of it is worth a saving, to make any instrument of it, for any work.

### DOCTRINE

If men bring forth no fruit to God, they are wholly useless, unless in their destruction. For the proof of this doctrine, I shall show,

**1.** That it is very evident, that there can be but two ways in which man can be useful, viz. either in acting, or in being acted upon, and disposed of.

**2.** That man can no otherwise be useful actively than by bringing forth fruit to God.

2 That if he bring not forth fruit to God, there is no other way in which he can be passively useful, but in being destroyed.

**4.** In that way he may be useful without bearing fruit.

**I.** There are but two ways in which man can be useful, viz. either in acting or being acted upon. If man be an useful sort of creature, he must be so either actively or passively: There is no medium. If he be useful to any purpose, he must be so either in acting himself, or else in being disposed of by some other; either in doing something himself to that purpose, or else in having something done upon him by some other to that purpose. What can be more plain, than that if man do nothing himself, and nothing be done with him or upon him by any other, he cannot be any way at all useful? If man do nothing himself to promote the end of his existence, and no other being do any thing with him to promote this end, then nothing will be done to promote this end; and so man must be wholly useless. So that there are but two ways in which man can be useful to any purpose, viz. either actively or passively, either in doing something himself, or in being the subject of something done to him.

**II.** Man cannot be useful actively, any otherwise than in bringing forth fruit to God, than in serving God, and living to his glory. This is the only way wherein he can be useful in doing; and that for this reason, that the glory of God is the very thing for which man was made, and to which all other ends are subordinate. Man is not an independent being, but he derives his being from another; and therefore hath his end assigned him by that other: And he that gave him his being, made him for the end now mentioned. This was the very design and aim of the Author of man, this was the work for which he made him, viz. to serve and glorify his Maker. Other creatures are made for inferior purposes. Inferior creatures were made for inferior purposes. But it is to be observed, that man is the creature that is highest, and nearest to God, of any in this lower world; and therefore his business is with God, although other creatures are made for lower ends. There may be observed a kind of gradation, or gradual ascent, in the order of the different kinds of creatures, from the meanest clod of earth to man, who hath a rational and immortal soul. A plant, an herb, or tree, is superior in nature to a stone or clod, because it hath a vegetable life. The brute creatures are a degree higher still; for they have sensitive life. But man, having a rational soul, is the highest of this lower creation, and is next to God; therefore his business is with God.

Things without life, as earth, water, etc. are subservient to things above them, as the grass, herbs and trees. These vegetables are subservient to that order of creatures which is next above them, the brute creation; they are for food to them. Brute creatures, again, are made for the use and service of the order above them; they are made for the service of mankind. But man being the highest of this lower creation, the next step from him is to God. He therefore is made for the service and glory of God. This is the whole work and business of man; it is his highest end, to which all other ends are subordinate.

If it had not been for this end, there never would have been any such sort of creature as man; there would have been no occasion for it. Other inferior ends may be answered as well, without any such creature as man. There would have been no sort of occasion for making so noble a creature, and endowing him with such faculties, only to enjoy earthly good, to eat, and to drink, and to enjoy sensual things. Brute creatures, without reason, are capable of these things, as well as man; Yea, if no higher end be aimed at than to enjoy sensitive good, reason is rather an hindrance than an help. It doth but render man the more capable of afflicting himself with care, and fears of death, and other future evils, and of vexing himself with many anxieties, from which brute creatures are wholly free, and therefore can gratify their senses with less molestation. Besides, reason doth but make men more capable of molesting and impeding one another in the gratification of their senses. If man have no other end to seek but to gratify his senses, reason is nothing but an impediment.

Therefore if man be not made to serve and glorify his Creator, it is wholly to no purpose that such a creature is made. Doubtless then the all wise God, who doth all things in infinite wisdom, hath made man for this end. And this is agreeable to what he hath taught us in many places in the scriptures. This is the great end for which man was made, and for which he was made such a creature as he is, having a body and soul, bodily senses, and rational powers. For this is he placed in such circumstances as he is, and the earth is given him for a possession. For this he hath dominion given him over the rest of the creatures of this world. For this the sun shines on him, and the moon and stars are for signs and seasons to him, and the rain falls on him, and the earth yields him her increase. All other ends of man are subordinate to this. There are inferior ends for which man

was made. Men were made for one another; made for their friends and neighbors, and for the good of the public. But all these inferior ends are designed to be subordinate to the higher end of glorifying God; and therefore man cannot be actively useful, or actively answer any purpose, otherwise than by actively glorifying God, or bringing forth fruit to God. Because,

**1.** That is not actively useful which doth not actively answer its end. That which doth not answer its end is in vain; for that is the meaning of the proposition, that any thing is in vain. So that which doth not actively answer its end, is, as to its own activity, in vain.

**2.** That is as to its own activity altogether useless which actively answers only subordinate ends, without answering the ultimate end; and that because the ultimate end is the end of subordinate ends. The notion of a supreme end is, that it is the end of all inferior ends. Subordinate ends are to no purpose, only as they stand related to the highest end. The very notion of a subordinate end is, that it is in order to a further end. Therefore these inferior ends are good for nothing though they be obtained, unless they also obtain their end. Inferior ends are not aimed at for their own sake, but only for the sake of the ultimate end. Therefore he that fails of his great end of all, doth as much altogether fail of his end, and is as much to no purpose, as if he did not obtain his subordinate end.

I will illustrate this by two or three examples. The subordinate end of the underpinning of an house is to support the house; and the subordinate end of the windows is to let in the light. But the ultimate end of the whole is the benefit of the inhabitants. Therefore, if the house be never inhabited, the whole is in vain. The underpinning is in vain, though it be ever so strong and support the building ever so well. The windows also are wholly in vain, though they be ever so large and clear, and though they obtain the subordinate end of letting in the light: They are as much in vain, as if they let in no light.

So the subordinate end of the husbandman in plowing and sowing, and well manuring his field is, that it may bring forth a crop. But his more ultimate end is, that food may be provided for him and his family. Therefore though his inferior end be obtained, and his field bring forth ever so good a crop, yet if after all it be consumed by fire, or otherwise

destroyed, he plowed and sowed his field as much in vain, as if the seed had never sprung up. So if man obtain his subordinate ends ever so fully; yet if he altogether fail of his ultimate end, he is wholly an useless creature. Thus if men be very useful in temporal things to their families, or greatly promote the temporal interest of the neighborhood, or of the public; yet if no glory be brought to God by it, they are altogether useless. If men actively bring no glory to God, they are, as to their own activity, altogether useless, how much soever they may promote the benefit of one another. How much soever one part of mankind may subserve another; yet if the end of the whole be not answered, every part is useless.

Thus if the parts of a clock subserve ever so well one to another, mutually to assist each other in their motions; one wheel moving another ever so regularly; yet if the motion never reach the hand or the hammer, it is altogether in vain, as much as if it stood still. As in a clock one wheel moves another, and that another, till at last the motion comes to the hand and hammer, which immediately respect the eye and the ear, otherwise all the motions are in vain; so it is in the world, one man was made to be useful to another, and one part of mankind to another; but the use of the whole is to bring glory to God the maker or else all is in vain; and however a man may serve among his fellow creatures, in a private or public capacity, upon the whole he is in vain.

It may perhaps be objected, that a wicked man may, by being serviceable to the public, be useful to many who do bring forth fruit to God, and thus glorify him.

**Answer 1.** If he be so, he is no further useful than he brings glory to God. It all hath an ultimate respect to that glory that is brought to God, and is useful no further; as the motion of no one wheel of a clock is any further useful, than as it finally respects the right pointing of the hand, and striking of the hammer.

**Answer 2.** When it is thus, wicked men are useful only accidentally, and not designedly. Although a wicked man may, by being serviceable to good men, do what will be an advantage to them to their bringing forth fruit to God; yet that serviceableness is not what he aims at; this is not his end; he doth not look so far for an ultimate end. And how ever this end be obtained, no thanks are due to him; it is as to him

accidental. He is only the occasion, and not the designing cause of it. That fruit which is brought forth to the glory of God, is not brought forth by him, but by others. The usefulness of such a man, being not designed, is not to be attributed to him as though it were his fruit. He is not useful as a man, or as a rational creature, because he is not so designedly. He is useful as things without life may be. Things without life may be useful to put the godly under advantages to bring forth fruit, as the timber and stones with which his house is built, the wool and flax with which he is clothed; but the fruit which is brought forth to God's glory, cannot be said for all that to be the fruit of these lifeless things, but of the godly man who makes use of them. So it is when wicked men put the godly under advantages to glorify God, as Cyrus, and Artaxerxes, and others have done.

**III.** If men bring not forth fruit to God, there is no other way in which they can be useful passively, but in being destroyed. They are fit for nothing else.

**1.** They are not fit to be suffered to continue always in this world. God suffers them to live for the present, but it is only for a certain season. They are here in a transitory state. It is not fit that this world should be the constant abode of those who bring forth no fruit to God. It is not fit that the barren tree should be allowed always to stand in the vineyard. The husbandman lets it stand for a while, till he digs about it, dungs it, and proves it to be incurable, or till a convenient time to cut it down come; but it is not fit that such a tree should stand here always. It is not fit that they who bring forth no fruit to God, should be suffered to live always in a world which is so full of the goodness of God, or that his goodness should be spent upon them forever.

This world, though it is fallen, and is under a curse, and is a miserable place to what it once was, yet is full of the streams of divine goodness. But it is not fit that those who bring forth no fruit to God, should always be continued in partaking of these streams. There are these three different states; a state wherein is nothing but good, which is the state of the blessed in heaven; a state wherein is a mixture of good and evil, which is the earthly state; and a state wherein is nothing but evil, which is the state of eternal destruction and damnation. Now they that bring forth no fruit to

God, are not fit for either of the former; it is not fit that they should be continued in the enjoyment of any of the goodness of God.

It is not fit that an unprofitable, unfruitful creature, who will not glorify his Creator, should always live here to devour the fruits of the earth, and consume the fruits of divine bounty; to have the good things of this life, as God's wool and his flax, his corn, and wine, and oil, spent with him in vain. While a man lives in this world, the other creatures of the world are subjected to him. The brute creatures serve him with their labor and with their lives. The sun, moon, and stars, the clouds, fields and trees, all serve him. But it is not fit that these creatures should always be made to serve him, who brings forth no fruit to the Creator. Why should God always keep his creatures in subjection to that man, who will not be subject to him? Why should the creation be always kept in such bondage, as to be subject to wicked men? The creatures are made subject to vanity for a little time; God hath subjected them to wicked men, and given them for their use. This however he would not have done, but as it is only for a little while; and the creatures can bear it through the hope of approaching deliverance; and otherwise it would have been intolerable. ✠ Romans 8:20.

“For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope.”

The creature doth, as it were, groan by reason of this subjection to wicked men, although it be but for a while. ✠ Romans 8:22.

“For we know that the whole creation groaneth, and travaileth in pain together until now.”

Therefore surely it would be no way fit that wicked men, who do no good, and bring forth no fruit to God, should live here always, to have the various creatures subservient to them, as they are now. The earth can scarcely bear wicked men during that short time for which they stay here, but is ready to spew thee out. It is no way fit, therefore, that it should be forced to bear them always. Men who bring forth no fruit to God are cumberers of the ground.

“And it is not meet that they should be suffered to cumber the ground always.” (✠ Luke 13:7)

God cannot be glorified in this way of disposing of unfruitful persons. If such men should be suffered to live always in such a state as this, it would be so far from being to the glory of God, that it would be to the disparagement of the wisdom of God, to continue them in a state so unsuitable for them, forever spending the fruits of his bounty in vain upon them. It would also be a disparagement to his justice; for this is a world where, “all things come alike to all, and there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked.” If there were no other state but this for wicked men to be in, justice could not possibly take place. It would also reflect upon the holiness of God. Forever to uphold this world for an habitation of such persons, and forever to continue the communications of his bounty and goodness to them, would appear as though he were disposed to countenance and encourage sin and wickedness.

**2.** If men do not bring forth fruit to God, they are not fit to be disposed of in heaven. Heaven, above all others, is the most improper place for them. Every thing appertaining to that state is unsuitable for them. The company is most unsuitable. The original inhabitants of that world are the angels. But what a disagreeable union would that be, to unite wicked men and angels in the same society? The employments of that world are unsuitable. The employments are serving and glorifying God. How unsuitable then would it be to plant barren trees in that heavenly paradise, trees that would bring forth no fruit to the divine glory? The enjoyments of heaven are unsuitable. The enjoyments are holy and spiritual enjoyments, the happiness of beholding the glory of God, and praising his name, and the like. But these enjoyments are as unsuitable as can be to the carnal earthly minds of wicked men. They would be no enjoyments to them; but on the contrary would be most disagreeable, and what they cannot relish, but entirely nauseate. The design of heaven is unsuitable to them. The design of God in making heaven was, that it might be a place of holy habitation, for the reward of the righteous, and not an habitation for wicked men. It would greatly reflect on the wisdom of God to dispose of wicked men there; for it would be the greatest confusion. But God is not the author of confusion, <sup><443></sup>1 Corinthians 14:33. It would be contrary to the holiness of God, to take wicked men so near to himself into his glorious presence, to dwell forever in that part of the creation which is, as it were, his own palace, and to sit at his table. We read in <sup><443></sup>Psalm 5:4.

“Thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness,  
neither shall evil dwell with thee.”

Therefore it would doubtless be impossible that the end of the existence of wicked men should be in any wise answered by the placing of them in heaven. IV. Men who bring forth no fruit to God, yet in suffering destruction may be useful. Although they be not useful actively, or by any thing which they do; yet they may be useful in what they may suffer; just as a barren tree, which is no way useful standing in the vineyard, yet may be good fuel, and be very useful in the fire. God can find use for the most wicked men; he hath his use for vessels of wrath as well as for vessels of mercy; as in an house there is use for vessels unto dishonor, as well as for vessels unto honor. ~~2~~ Timothy 2:20.

“In a great house there are not only vessels of gold, and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honor, and some to dishonor.”

~~16~~ Proverbs 16:4. “The Lord hath made all things for himself; yea, even the wicked for the day of evil.” I shall briefly take notice of what ends God accomplishes by it.

**1.** Unfruitful persons are of use in their destruction for the glory of God’s justice. It was the will of God to glorify his justice, as well as his mercy, on his creatures. The vindictive justice of God is a glorious attribute, as well as his mercy; and the glory of this attribute appears in the everlasting destruction and ruin of the barren and unfruitful. The glory of divine justice in the perdition of ungodly men appears wonderful and glorious in the eyes of the saints and angels in heaven. Hence we have an account, that they sing praises to God, and extol his justice at the sight of the awful judgments which he inflicts on wicked men. ~~16~~ Revelation 16:5, “Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art and wast, and art to come, because thou hast judged thus; for they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy:” And ~~19~~ Revelation 19:1, 2:

“And after these things I heard a great voice, saying, Alleluia:  
Salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our  
God; for true and righteous are his judgments for he hath judged the

great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand.”

2. Unfruitful persons in their destruction are of use for God to glorify his majesty upon them. The awful majesty of God remarkably appears in those dreadful and amazing punishments which he inflicts on those who rise up against him, and condemn him. A sense of the majesty of an earthly prince is supported very much by a sense of its being a dreadful thing to affront him. God glorifies his own majesty in the destruction of wicked men; and herein he appears infinitely great, in that it appears to be an infinitely dreadful thing to offend him. How awful doth the majesty of God appear in the dreadfulness of his anger! This we may learn to be one end of the damnation of the wicked, from <sup><412></sup>Romans 9:22.

“What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction?”

It is often spoken of God, that he is a terrible God. It is a part of the majesty and glory of God, that he is a terrible God. God tells Pharaoh, that for this cause he raised him up, that he might show his power in him, and that his name might be declared through all the earth, in his destruction.

<sup><415></sup>Exodus 9:15, 16; and again, chapter 14:17: “I will get me honor upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen.”



3. The destruction of the unfruitful is of use, to give the saints a greater sense of their happiness, and of God’s grace to them. The wicked will be destroyed and tormented in the view of the saints, and other inhabitants of heaven. This we are taught in <sup><440></sup>Revelation 14:10.

“The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture, into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone, in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb.”

And in <sup><264></sup>Isaiah 66:24. “And they shall go forth and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: For their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched, and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.”

When the saints in heaven shall look upon the damned in hell, it will serve to give them a greater sense of their own happiness, seeing how vastly different their case is from their own. The view of the doleful condition of the damned will make them the more prize their own blessedness. When they shall see how dreadful the anger of God is, it will make them the more prize his love. They will rejoice so much the more that they are not the objects of God's anger, but of his favor; that they are not the subjects of his dreadful wrath, but are treated as his children, are taken near to him, to dwell in the everlasting embraces of his love.

When they shall see the misery of the damned, it will give them a greater sense of the distinguishing grace and love of God to them, that God should from all eternity set his love on them, and make so great a difference between them and others who are of the same species with them, are no worse by nature than they, and have deserved no worse of God than they. When they shall look upon the misery of the damned, and consider how different their own state is from theirs, and that it is only free and sovereign grace that makes the difference, what a great sense will this give them of the wonderful grace of God to them! And how will it heighten their praises! With how much greater admiration and exultation of soul will they sing of the free and sovereign grace of God to them!

When they shall look upon the damned, and see their misery, how will heaven ring with the praises of God's justice towards the wicked, and his grace towards the saints! And with how much greater enlargement of heart will they praise Jesus Christ their Redeemer, that ever he was pleased to set his love upon them, his dying love! And that he should so distinguish them as to spill his blood, and make his soul an offering, to redeem them from that so great misery, and to bring them to such exceeding happiness! With what love and ecstasy will they sing that song in  Revelation 5:9. 10. "Thou art worthy: For thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every tongue, and kindred, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests." One end which the apostle mentions why God appointed vessels of wrath, is the more to make known the wonderfulness of his mercy towards the saints. In  Romans 9:22, 23. there are two ends mentioned: "What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction?"

That is one end, then another is mentioned immediately after: “And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory?”

## APPLICATION

**I.** Hence we may learn, how just and righteous God is in the destruction of those who bring forth no fruit to God. Seeing there is no other way in which they can be useful, or in which the end of their being can be obtained, certainly it is most just that God should thus dispose of them. Why should God be frustrated of his end through their perverseness? If men will not do the work for which he hath made and fitted them; if they, through a spirit of opposition and rebellion against God, refuse; yet why should God suffer himself to be disappointed of his end in making them? It doth not become the infinite greatness and majesty of God, to suffer himself to be disappointed and frustrated by the wickedness and perverseness of sinful worms of the dust. If God should suffer this, it would seem to argue, either a want of wisdom in God to fix upon a good end, or a want of power to accomplish it.

God made all men that they might be useful; and if they will not be useful in their conduct and actions, how just is it that God should make them useful in their sufferings! God made all men for his own glory; and if they, contrary to the revealed will of God, refuse to glorify him actively and willingly, how just is it that God should glorify himself upon them in what he doth with them! It hath been shown, that there is no other way wherein this can be done, but by their destruction. Surely, therefore, it must be just and righteous that God should destroy them.

Men are under no natural necessity of being put to this use of glorifying God in their sufferings. God gives them opportunity of glorifying him in doing, in bringing forth fruit, puts them under advantages for it, and uses many means to bring them to it. But if they will not be useful this way, it is very just that God should make them useful in the only remaining way in which they can be useful, viz. in their destruction. God is not forward to put them to this use. He tells us, that he hath “no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way, and live;” עזקל Ezekiel 33:11. God represents the destruction of sinners as a work to which he is

backward; yet it is meet that they should be destroyed, rather than that they should be suffered to frustrate God of the end of their being. Who can blame the husbandman for cutting down and burning a barren tree, after he hath digged about it, and dunged it, and used all proper means to make it fruitful? Let those among us consider this, who have lived all their lives hitherto unprofitably, and never have brought forth any fruit to God's glory, notwithstanding all the means that have been used with them. Consider how just it would be if God should utterly destroy you, and glorify himself upon you in that way; and what a wonder of patience it is, that God hath not done it before now.

**II.** This subject ought to put you upon examining yourselves, whether you be not wholly useless creatures. You have now heard, that those who bring forth no fruit to God, are, as to any good they do, wholly useless. Inquire, therefore, whether you have ever in your lives brought forth any fruit to God. Have you ever done any thing from a gracious respect to God, or out of love to God? By only seeking your worldly interest, you do not bring forth fruit to God. It is toot bringing forth fruit to God, for you to come to public worship on the Sabbath, to pray in your families, and other such like things, merely in compliance with the general custom. It is not to bring forth fruit to God, that you be sober, moral and religious, only to be seen of men, or out of respect to your own credit and honor. How is that for God which is only for the sake of custom, or the esteem of men?

It is not to bring forth fruit to God, for men to pray, and read, and hear, and to be strict and diligent in religious and moral duties, merely from the fear of hell. What thanks are due to you for not loving your own misery, and for being willing to take some pains to escape burning in hell to all eternity? There is ne'er a devil in hell but would gladly do the same.

“Israel is an empty vine; he bringeth forth fruit unto himself.”  
( Hosea 10:1.)

There is no fruit brought forth to God, where there is nothing done in any wise from love to God, or from any true respect to him. God looketh at the heart. He doth not stand in need of our services, neither is he benefited by any thing that we can do. He doth not receive any thing of us, because it benefits him, but only as a suitable testimony of our love and respect to

him. This is the fruit that he seeks. Men themselves will not accept of those shows of friendship, which they think are hypocritical, and come not from the heart. How much less should God, who searcheth the hearts and trieth the reins of the children of men!

“God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.” (~~402~~ John 4:23.)

Inquire, therefore, whether you ever in your lives did the least thing out of love to God. Have you not done all for yourselves? ~~405~~ Zechariah 7:5, 6. “When ye fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh month, even those seventy years, did ye at all fast unto me, even unto me? And when ye did eat, and when ye did drink, did ye not eat for yourselves, and drink for yourselves?”

**III.** Another use of this subject may be of conviction and humiliation to those who never have brought forth any fruit to God. If, upon examination, you find that you have never in all your lives done any thing out of a true respect to God, then it hath been demonstrated, that, as to any thing which you do, you are altogether useless creatures. And consider, what a shameful thing it is for such rational beings as you are, and placed under such advantages for usefulness, yet to be wholly useless, and to live in the world to no purpose! We esteem it a very mean character in any person, that he is a worthless, insignificant person; and to be called so is taken as a great reproach. But consider seriously, whether you can clear yourselves of this character. Set reason to work; can you rationally suppose, that you do in any measure answer the end for which God gave you your being, and made you of a nature superior to the beasts? But that you may be sensible what cause you have to be ashamed of your unprofitableness, consider the following things.

**1.** How much God hath bestowed upon you, in the endowments of your nature. God hath made you rational, intelligent creatures, hath endowed you with noble powers, those endowments wherein the natural image of God consists. You are vastly exalted in your nature above other kinds of creatures here below. You are capable of a thousand times as much as any of the brute creatures. He hath given you a power of understanding, which is capable of vastly extending itself, of looking back to the beginning of time, and of considering what was before the world was, and of looking

forward beyond the end of time. It is capable of extending beyond the utmost limits of the universe; and is a faculty whereby you are akin to angels, and are capable even of knowing God, of contemplating the divine Being, and his glorious perfections, manifested in his works and in his word. You have souls capable of being the habitation of the Holy Spirit of God, and his divine grace. You are capable of the noble employments of angels.

How lamentable and shameful it is, that such a creature should be altogether useless, and live in vain! How lamentable that such a noble and excellent piece of divine workmanship should fail of its end, and be to no purpose! Was it ever worth while for God to make you such a creature, with such a noble nature, and so much above other kinds of creatures, only to eat, and drink, and gratify your sensual appetites? How lamentable and shameful to you, that such a noble tree should be more useless than any tree of the forest; that man, whom God hath thus set in honor, should make himself more worthless than the beasts that perish! 2. How much God hath done for you in the creation of the world. He made the earth, and seas, and all the fullness of them, for the use of man, and hath given them to him.

“The earth hath he given to the children of men.” He made the vast variety of creatures for man’s use and service. (ⲉⲥⲁⲓⲥ Psalm 115:16.)

“Have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.” For the same purpose he made all the plants, and herbs, and trees of the field. (ⲉⲃⲁⲓⲥ Genesis 1:28.)

“I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree, yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.” (ⲉⲃⲁⲓⲥ Genesis 1:29.)

He made the sun in the heavens, that glorious luminary, that wonderful globe of light, to give light to man, and to constitute the difference between day and night. He also made the moon, and the vast multitude of stars, for the use of man, to be to him for signs and seasons. What great provision hath God made for man! What a vast variety of good things for food, and otherwise to be for his convenience, to put him under advantages to be

useful! How lamentable is it, that after all these things he should be an useless creature in the world!

**3.** How much is done for you in the course of God's common providence! Consider how nature is continually laboring for you. The sun is, at it were, in a ferment for mankind, unweariedly running his course from year to year, and from day to day, and spending his rays upon man, to put him under advantage to be useful; every day giving him light that he may have opportunity to behold the glorious wisdom of God, and to see and serve God. The winds and clouds are continually laboring for you, and the waters are going in a constant circulation, ascending in the air from the seas, descending in rain, gathering in streams and rivers, returning to the sea, and again ascending and descending, for you. The earth is continually laboring to bring forth her fruit for your support. The trees of the field are laboring and spending their strength for you. And how many of the poor brute creatures are continually laboring for you, and spending their strength for you! How much of the earth is spent upon you! How many of God's creatures are devoured by you! How many of the lives of the living creatures of God are destroyed for your sake, for your support and comfort!

Now, how lamentable will it be, if, after all, you be altogether useless, and live to no purpose! What mere cumberers of the ground will you be! Agreeably to <sup>CRIV</sup>Luke 13:7. Nature, which thus continually labors for you, will be burdened with you. This seems to be what the apostle means, <sup>CRIV</sup>Romans 8:20, 21, 22, where he tells us, that the creation is made subject to vanity, and brought into the bondage of corruption; and that the whole creation groans, and travails in pain, under this bondage.

**4.** How much is done for you in the use of the means of grace. How much hath God done to provide you with suitable means and advantages for usefulness! How many prophets hath God sent into the world, in different ages, inspiring them with his Holy Spirit, and enabling them to work many miracles to confirm their word, whereby you now have the written word of God to instruct you!

How great a thing hath God done for you, to give you opportunity and advantage to be useful, in that he hath sent his own Son into the world! He who is really and truly God, united himself to the human nature, and

became a man, to be a prophet an teacher to you and other sinners. Yea, he laid down his life to make atonement for sin, that you might have encouragement to serve God with hopes of acceptance.

How many ordinances have been instituted for you! How much of the labor of the ministers of God hath been spent upon you! Is not that true concerning you which is written in Isaiah 5 at the beginning, concerning the vineyard planted in a very fruitful hill, and fenced and cultivated with peculiar care and pains, which yet proved unfruitful? How much hath the dresser of the vineyard digged about the barren tree, and dunged it, and yet it remains barren!

Consider what a shame it is that you should live in vain, when all the other creatures, that are inferior to you, do glorify their Creator, according to their nature. You who are so highly exalted in the world, are more useless than the brute creation; yea, than the meanest worms, or things without life, as earth and stones: For they all do answer their end, in the way in which nature hath fitted them for it; none of them fail of it. They are all useful in their places, all render their proper tribute of praise to their Creator; while you are mere nuisances in the creation, and burdens to the earth; as any tree of the forest is more useful than the vine, if it bear not fruit.

**IV.** Let me, in a farther application of this doctrine, exhort you by all means to bring forth fruit to God. Let it be your constant endeavor to be in this way actively useful in the world. Here consider three things.

**1.** What an honor it will be to such poor creatures as you are, to bring forth fruit to the divine glory. What is such a poor worm as man, that he should be enabled to bring forth any fruit to God! It is the greatest honor of the nature of man, that God hath given him a capacity of glorifying the great Creator. It is what no other creature in this lower world can do, in the same manner as man. There is no creature in the visible world that is capable of actively glorifying God, but man.

**2.** In bringing forth fruit to God, you will be so profitable to none as to yourselves; you cannot thereby be profitable to God. ~~Job~~ Job 22:2. “Can a man be profitable to God?” You may thereby be profitable to your fellow creatures; yet not so much as to yourselves. The fruit which you bring

forth to God will be a greater benefit to yourselves than to any one living. You will be more useful to yourselves than to any one else. Although you are under a natural obligation to bring forth fruit to God, yet God doth not require it of you without a reward. He will richly reward you for it. In requiring you to bring forth fruit to him, he doth but require you to bring forth fruit to your own happiness. You will taste the sweetness of your own fruit. It will be most profitable for you in this world to bring forth fruit to God; it will be exceedingly to your benefit while here. It will be pleasant to you to lead a fruitful and holy life; the pleasure will be beyond the labor. Beside this, God hath promised to such a life everlasting rewards, unspeakable, infinite benefits. So that by it you will infinitely advance your own interest.

**3.** If you remain thus unprofitable, and be not actively useful, surely God will obtain his end of you, in your destruction. He will say concerning the barren tree, “Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?” Christ, in ~~John~~ John 15:6, tells us, “if a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.”

This is spoken of the barren branches in the vine. How would you yourselves do in such a case with a barren tree in an orchard, or with weeds and tares in your fields? Doubtless, it were in your power, you would utterly destroy them.

God will have his end; he will accomplish it. Though all men and devils unite their endeavors, they cannot frustrate God in any thing; and “though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished;” ~~Proverbs~~ Proverbs 11:1. God hath sworn by his great name, that he will have his glory of men, whether they will actively glorify him or no. ~~Numbers~~ Numbers 14:21, 22, 23.

“But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord. Because all those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice; surely they shall not see the land which I swear unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me, see it.” “The ax lieth at the root of the trees; and every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down, and cast into the fire;”

~~4180~~ Matthew 3:10. The end of those men who bring forth nothing but briers and thorns is to be burned, as in ~~4187~~ Hebrews 6:7, 8.

“For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: But that which beareth thorns and briers, is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned.”

So we read of the tares, ~~4190~~ Matthew 13:30. “Let both grow together until the harvest; and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them;” and in verses 40, 41, 42, “As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so shall it be at the end of the world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: There shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.”

So it is said of the chaff, ~~4192~~ Matthew 3:12. “Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”

If you continue not to bring forth any fruit to the divine glory, as you have hitherto done, hell will be the only fit place for you. It is a place prepared on purpose to be a receptacle of such persons. In hell nature ceases to labor any more for sinners: The sun doth not run his course to shine upon them, the earth doth not bring forth her fruit to be consumed upon them there. There they will have no opportunity to consume the fruits of divine goodness on their lusts. In hell they can prejudice or encumber nothing, upon which God sets any value. There the faithful servants and ministers of God will no longer spend their strength in vain upon them. When the barren tree is in the fire, the servants of the husbandman are freed from any further labor or toil in digging about it, and manuring it. In hell they will no more have opportunity to clog and discourage the flourishing of religion, and to destroy much good, as they often do in this world. In hell they will no more have opportunity to corrupt others by their ill example. In hell they will no more have it in their power to offend the godly; they may hurt and torment one another; but the godly will be out of their reach. In hell there will be no ordinances, no Sabbaths, no sacraments, no sacred

things, for them to profane and defile by their careless and hypocritical attendance.

Hell, therefore, if you remain unfruitful and cumberers of the ground, will be the fittest place for you, and there you will surely have your portion assigned you. There God will get himself honor upon you; there he will magnify himself in your ruin, in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb; and will be praised upon that account by the saints, at the day of judgment; and by all the host of heaven throughout everlasting ages.

# MISCELLANEOUS DISCOURSES

## MEN NATURALLY ARE GOD'S ENEMIES.

For if; when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son. (✠ Romans 5:10)

THE apostle, from the beginning of the epistle, to the beginning of this chapter, had insisted on the doctrine of justification by faith alone. In this chapter he goes on to consider the benefits that are consequent on justification, viz. Peace with God, present happiness, and hope of glory. Peace with God is mentioned in the first verse, “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.” In the following verses he speaks of present blessedness, and hope of glory. “By whom also we have access by faith into this grace, wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” — And concerning this benefit, the hope of glory the apostle particularly takes notice of two things, viz. the blessed nature of this hope, and the sure ground of it.

**1.** He insists on the blessed nature of this hope, in that it enables us to glory in tribulations. This excellent nature of true Christian hope is described in the following words: (verse 3-5.) “And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience hope; and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.” As if he had said, Through hope of a blessed reward, that will abundantly more than make up for all tribulation, we are enabled to bear tribulation with patience; patiently bearing, and patiently waiting for the reward. And patience works experience; for when we thus bear tribulation with patient waiting for the reward, this brings experience of the earnest of the reward, viz. the earnest of the Spirit, in our feeling the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost. So that our hope does not make us ashamed: it is not disappointed; for in the midst of our tribulation, we experience those blessed incomes of the Spirit in our

souls, that make even a time of tribulation sweet to us; and is such an earnest as abundantly confirms our hope; and so experience works hope.

**2.** The apostle takes notice of the sure ground there is for this hope; or the abundant evidence we have, that we shall obtain the glory hoped for, in that peace we have with God, by our justification through Christ's blood. For while we were without strength, in due time Christ died for us; even while we were ungodly and sinners enemies to God and Christ. (See verse 6-10.) The apostle's argument is exceeding clear and strong. If God has done already so great a thing for us, as to give us Christ to die and shed his precious blood for us, which was vastly the greatest thing, we need not doubt but that he will bestow life upon us. It is but a small thing for God actually to bestow eternal life, after it is purchased; to what it is for him to give his own Son to die, in order to purchase it. The giving Christ to purchase it, was virtually all: it included the whole grace of God in salvation. When Christ had purchased salvation at such a dear rate, all the difficulty was got through, all was virtually over and done. It is a small thing, in comparison, for God to bestow, salvation, after it has been thus purchased at a full price. Sinners who are justified by the death of Christ, are already virtually saved: the thing is, as it were, done: what remains, is no more than the necessary consequence of what is done. Christ when he died made an end of sin: and when he rose from the dead, he did virtually rise with the elect: he brought them up from death with him, and ascended into heaven with them. And therefore, when this is already done, and we are thus reconciled to God through the death of his Son, we need not fear but that we shall be saved by his life. The love of God appears much more in his giving his Son to die for sinners, than in giving eternal life after Christ's death.

The giving of Christ to die for us is here spoken of as a much greater thing, than the actual bestowment of life, because this is all that has any difficulty in it. — When God did this for us, he did it for us as sinners and enemies. But in actually bestowing salvation on us after we are justified, we are not looked upon as sinners, but as perfectly righteous persons: he beholds no iniquity in us. We are no more enemies but reconciled. When God gave Christ to die for the elect, he looked on them as they are in themselves, but in actually bestowing eternal life, he looks on them as they are in Christ.

There are three epithets used in the text and context, as appertaining to sinners as they are in themselves, verse 6-8.

They are without strength, they cannot help themselves. — They are ungodly or sinners, — and they are enemies: as in the text. — NATURAL MEN ARE GOD'S ENEMIES.

God, though the Creator of all things, yet has some enemies in the world. — Men in general will own, that they are sinners. There are few, if any, whose consciences are so, blinded, as not to be sensible they have been guilty of sin. And most sinners will own that they have bad hearts. They will own that they do not love God so much as they should do; that they are not so thankful as they ought to be for mercies, and that in many things they fail. And yet few of them are sensible that they are God's enemies. They do not see how they can be truly so called; for they are not sensible that they wish God any hurt, or endeavour to do him any.

But we see that the Scripture speaks of them as enemies to God. So in our text, and elsewhere,

“And you that were sometime alienated, and enemies in your minds by wicked works.” (<sup>502</sup>Colossians 1:21.)

“The carnal mind is enmity against God.” <sup>500</sup>Romans 7:7. — And that all natural or unregenerate men are indeed such, is what I shall endeavour now particularly to show. Which I propose to do in the following method. Particularly — in what respects they are enemies to God — To how great a degree they are enemies — And why they are enemies. Then I shall answer some objections

## SECTION 1

*In what respects natural men are God's enemies.*

**1.** THEIR enmity appears in their judgments, their natural relish, their wills, affections, and practice. They have a very mean esteem of God. Men are ready to entertain a good esteem of those with whom they are friends: they are apt to think highly of their qualities, to give them their due praises; and If be defects, to cover them. But of those to whom they are enemies, they are disposed to have mean thoughts; they are apt to

entertain a dishonourable opinion of them: they will be ready to look contemptibly upon any thing that is praiseworthy in them.

So it is with natural men towards God. They entertain very low and contemptible thoughts of God. Whatever honour and respect they may pretend, and make a show of towards God, if their practice be examined, it will show, that they certainly look upon him as a Being that is but little to be regarded. The language of their hearts is, “Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice?” ~~Exodus~~ Exodus 5:2. “What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? and what profit should we have if we pray unto him?” ~~Job~~ Job 21:15. They count him worthy neither to be loved nor feared. They dare not behave with that slight and disregard towards one of their fellow-creatures, when a little raised above them in power and authority, as they dare, and do, towards God. They value one of their equals much more than God, and are ten times more afraid of offending such, than of displeasing the God that made them. They cast such exceeding contempt on God, as to prefer every vile lust before him. And every worldly enjoyment is set higher in their esteem, than God. A morsel of meat, or a few pence of worldly gain, is preferred before him. God is set last and lowest in the esteem of natural men.

**2.** They are enemies in the natural relish of their souls. They have an inbred distaste and disrelish of God’s perfections. God is not such a being, as they would have. Though they are ignorant of God, yet from what they hear of him, and from what is manifest by the light of nature, they do not like him. By his being endowed with such attributes as he is, they have an aversion to him. They hear God is an infinitely holy, pure, and righteous Being, and they do not like him upon this account, they have no relish of such qualifications: they take no delight in contemplating them. It would be a mere task, a bondage to a natural man, to be obliged to set himself to contemplate those attributes of God. They see no manner of beauty or loveliness, nor taste any sweetness, in them. And on account of their distaste of these perfections, they dislike all his other attributes. They have greater aversion to him because he is omniscient and knows all things, and because his omniscience is a holy omniscience. They are not pleased that he is omnipotent, and can do whatever he pleases, because it is a holy omnipotence. They are enemies even to his mercy, because it is a holy

mercy. They do not like his immutability, because by this he never will be otherwise than he is, an infinitely holy God.

It is from this disrelish that natural men have of the attributes of God, that they do not love to have much to do with God. The natural tendency of the heart of man is to fly from God, and keep at a distance from him, as far off as possible. — A natural man is averse to communion with God, and is naturally disinclined to those exercises of religion, wherein he has immediately to do with him. It is said of wicked men <sup><900></sup>Psalm 10:4. “God is not in all their thoughts.” It is evident, that the mind of man is naturally averse to thinking about God: and hence if any thoughts of him be suggested to the mind, they soon go away; such thoughts are not apt to rest in the minds of natural men. If any thing is said to them of God, they are apt to forget it: it is like seed that falls upon the hard path, the fowls of the air soon take it away: or like seed that falls upon a rock. Other things will stick; but divine things rebound: and if they were cast into the mind, they meet with that there which soon thrusts them out again: they meet with no suitable entertainment, but are soon chased away.

Hence also it is, that natural men are with difficulty persuaded to be constant in the duty of secret prayer. They would not be so averse to spending a quarter of an hour, night and morning, in some bodily labour; but it is because they are averse to a work, wherein they have so immediately to do with God; and they naturally love to keep at a distance from him.

**3.** Their wills are contrary to his will. God’s will and theirs are exceeding cross the one to the other. God wills those things that they hate, and are most averse to; and they will those things that God hates. Hence they oppose God in their wills: there is a dreadful, violent, and obstinate opposition of the will of natural men to the will of God.

They are very opposite to the commands of God. It is from the enmity of the will, (<sup><900></sup>Romans 7:7.) that “the carnal mind is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” Hence natural men are enemies to God’s government. They are not loyal subjects, but enemies to God, considered as Lord of the world. They are entire enemies to God’s authority.

**4.** They are enemies to God in their affections. There is in every natural man a seed of malice against God. And it often dreadfully breaks forth. Though it may in great measure lie hid in secure times, when God lets men alone and they meet with no great disturbance of body or mind, yet, if God does but touch men in their consciences, by manifesting to them a little of his wrath for their sins, this oftentimes brines out the principle of malice against him. This is exercised in dreadful heart risings, inward wranglings and quarrelings, and blasphemous thoughts; wherein the heart is like a viper, hissing and spitting poison at God. And however free from it the heart may seem to be, when let alone and secure, yet a very little thing will set it in a rage. Temptations will show what is in the heart. The alteration of a men's circumstances will often discover the heart. Pharaoh had no more natural enmity against God than other men; and if other natural men had been in Pharaoh's circumstances, the same corruptions would have put forth themselves in as dreadful a manner. The scribes and Pharisees had naturally no more malice in their hearts against Christ than other men, and other natural men would, in their case, and having as little restraint, exercise as much malice against Christ as they did. When wicked men come to be cast into hell, then their malice against God will appear. Then their hearts will appear as full of malice, as hell is full of fire. But when wicked men come to be in hell, there will be no new corruptions put into their heart, but only old ones will then break forth without restraint. That is all the difference between a wicked man on earth, and a wicked man in hell, that in hell there will be more to stir up the exercise of corruption, and less to restrain it, than on earth: but there will be no new corruption put in. A wicked man will have no principle of corruption in hell, but what he carried to hell with him. There are now the seeds of all the malice that will be exercised then. The malice of damned spirits is but a branch of the root, that is in the hearts of natural men now. A natural man has a heart like the heart of a devil only corruption is more under restraint in man than in devils.

**5.** They are enemies in their practice. They walk contrary to him. In their enmity against God, they are exceeding active. They are engaged in war against God. Indeed they cannot injure God, he is so much above them, but yet they do what they can. They oppose themselves to his honour and glory they oppose themselves to the interest of his kingdom in the

world they oppose themselves to the will and command of God: and oppose him in his government. They oppose God in his works, and in his declared designs; while he is doing one work, they are doing the contrary. God seeks one thing, and they seek directly the contrary. They list under Satan's banner, and are his willing soldiers in opposing the kingdom of God.

## SECTION 2

### *The degree of men's natural enmity to God.*

I now proceed to say something with respect to the degree of this enmity: tending in some measure to show, how great enemies to God are natural men.

**1.** They have no love to God; their enmity is mere enmity without any mixture of love. A natural man is wholly destitute of any principle of love to God, and therefore never had the least exercise of this love. Some natural men have better tempers than others; and some are better educated than others; and some live a great deal more soberly than others: but one has no more love to God than another; for none have the least spark of that. The heart of a natural man is as destitute of love to God, as a dead, stiff; cold corpse is of vital heat.

“I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you.”

(~~4156~~ John 5:43.)

**2.** Every faculty and principle of action is wholly under the dominion of enmity against God. The nature of man is wholly infected with this enmity against God. He is tainted with it throughout, in all his faculties and principles. And not only so, but every faculty is entirely and perfectly subdued under it, and enslaved to it. This enmity against God, has the absolute possession of the man. The apostle Paul, speaking of what he was naturally says, ~~4174~~ Romans 7:14. “I am carnal, sold under sin.”

The understanding is under the reigning power of this enmity against God, so that it is entirely darkened and blinded with regard to the glory and excellency of God. The will is wholly under the reigning power of it. All the objections are governed by enmity against God: there is not one affection, nor one desire, that a natural man has, or that he is ever stirred

up to act from, but what contains in it enmity against God. A natural man is as full of enmity against God, as any viper, or any venomous beast, is full of poison.

**3.** The power of the enmity of natural men against God, is so great, that it is insuperable by any finite power. It has too great and strong a possession of the heart, to be overcome by any created power. Indeed, a natural man never sincerely strives to look out his enmity against God his endeavors are hypocritical; he delights in his enmity and chooses it. Neither can others do it, though they sincerely, and to their utmost, endeavour to overcome this enmity. If godly friends and neighbours labour to persuade them to cast away their enmity, and become friends to God, they cannot persuade them to it. Though ministers use never so many arguments and entreaties, and set forth the loveliness of God; tell them of the goodness of God to them, hold forth God's own gracious invitations and entreat them never so earnestly to cast off their opposition, and be reconciled; yet they cannot overcome it: still they will be as bad enemies to God, as ever they were. — The tongue of men or of angels cannot persuade them to relinquish their opposition to God. Miracles will not do it. — How many miracles did the children of Israel see in the wilderness! yet their enmity against God remained; as appeared by their often murmuring. And how often did Christ use miracles to this end without effect, but the Jews obstinately stood out.

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings and ye would not.” (<sup>4237</sup>Matthew 23:37.)

And how great did the enmity of these people appear to be after all; how spiteful and venomous were their hearts towards Christ. As appears by their cruel treatment of him, in his last sufferings!

**4.** They are mortal enemies to God; *i.e.* They have that enmity in their hearts, that strikes at the life of God. A man may be no friend to another, and may have an ill spirit towards him; and yet not be his mortal enemy: his enmity will be satisfied with something short of the death of the person. But it is not so with natural men, with respect to God: they are

mortal enemies. Their imbecility is no argument that this is not the tendency of the principle.

Natural men are enemies to the dominion of God, and their nature shows their good-will to dethrone him if they could! Yea, they are enemies to the being of God, and would be glad if there was no God. And therefore it necessarily follows, that they would cause that there should be none, if they could.

“The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.” (◀541▶ Psalm 14:1.)


This implies, not only an aptness to question the being of God; but, that he inclines it should be so. His heart says, *i.e.* his inclination says. The words in the original are, “The fool hath said in his heart, No God.” That is, I would have none I do not desire any, I wish there was none, that would suit my inclination best. Let the world be emptied of a God, he stands in my way. And hence he is an atheist in his heart.

The viper’s poison is deadly poison; and when he bites he seeks the precious life. And men are in this respect a generation of vipers. Their poison, which is enmity against God, seeks the life of God. (◀487▶ Matthew 3:7. “O generation of vipers.” (◀488▶ Psalm 58:3, 4. “he wicked are estranged from the womb — Their poison is like the poison of a serpent.”

(◀489▶ Deuteronomy 32:32, 33. “For their tine is the vine of Sodom, and of the fields of Gomorrah: their grapes are the grapes of gall, their clusters are bitter. Their vine is the poison of dragons, and the cruel venom of asps.” The divine nature being immortal, and infinitely out of our reach, there is no other trial possible, whether the enmity that is naturally in the heart against God, be mortal or no, but only for God to take on him the human nature, and become man; so as to come within man’s reach. There can be no other experiment. And what has been the event? Why, when once God became man, and came down to dwell here, among such vipers as fallen men, they hated and persecuted him, and never desisted till they had imbrued their hands in his blood. There was a multitude of them that appealed combined in this design. Nothing would do, but he must be put to death. All cry out, Crucify him, crucify him. Away with him. They had rather Barabbas, who greatly deserved death, should live, than he should not die. Nothing would restrain them from it, even all his preaching, and all his miracles: but they would kill him. And it was not the ordinary kind of

execution that would satisfy them, but it must be the most cruel and most ignominious they possibly could invent. And they aggravated it as much as they could, by mocking him, and spitting on him, and scourging him. This shows what the nature and tendency of man's enmity against God is; here it appeared in its true colours.

**5.** Natural men are greater enemies to God than they are to any other being whatsoever. Natural men may be very great enemies to their fellow-creatures; but not so great as they are to God. There is no other being that so much stands in sinners' way, in those things that they chiefly set their hearts upon, as God. Men are wont to hate their enemies in proportion to two things, viz. their opposition to what they look upon to be their interest, — and their power and ability. A great and powerful enemy will be more hated, than one who is weak and impotent. But none is so powerful as God.

Man's enmity to others may be got over: time may wear it out, and they may be reconciled. But natural men, without a mighty work of God to change their hearts, will never get over their enmity against God. They are greater enemies to God, than they are to the devil. Yea, they treat the devil as their friend and master, and join with him against God.  John 8:44. "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do: he was a murderer from the beginning."

### SECTION 3

*On what account men are enemies to God.*

THE general reason is, That God is opposite to them in the worship of their idols. The apostacy of man summarily consists in departing from the true God, to idols, forsaking his Creator, and setting up other things in his room. When God at first created man, he was united to his Creator, the God that made him was his God. The true God was the object of his highest respect, and had the possession of his heart. Love to God was the principle in his heart, that ruled over all other principles, and every thing in the soul was wholly in subjection to it. But when man fell, he departed from the true God, and the union that was between his heart and his Creator was broken: he wholly lost his principle of love to God. And henceforward man clave to other gods. He gave that respect to the

creature, which is due to the Creator. — When God ceased the object of his supreme love and respect.

Man will necessarily have something that he respects as his god. If man do not give his highest respect to the God that made him, there will be something else that has the possession of it. Men will either worship the true God, or some idol: it is impossible it should be otherwise: something will have the bears of man. And that which a man gives his heart to, may be called his god: and therefore when man by the fall extinguished all love to the true God, he set up the creature in his room. For having lost his esteem and love of the true God, and set up other gods in his room, and in opposition to him; and God still demanding their worship, and opposing them; enmity necessarily follows.

That which a man chooses for his god, he sets his hear mainly upon. And nothing will so soon excite enmity, as opposition in that which is dearest. A man will be the greatest enemy to him who opposes him in what he chooses for his god: he will look on none as standing so much in kits way, as he that would deprive him of his god. <sup><17824></sup>Judges 18:24. “Ye have taken away my gods; and what have I more?” A man, in this respect, cannot serve two masters, that stand in competition for his service. And not only, if he serves one, he cannot serve the other; but if he cleaves to one, he will necessarily hate the other. <sup><17824></sup>Matthew 6:24. “No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other, or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and man.” And this is the very reason that men hate God. In this case it is, as when two kings set up in one kingdom, in opposition one to the other; and they both challenge the same throne, and are competitors for the same crown: they who are loyal, hearty subjects to the one, will necessarily be enemies to the other. As that, which is a man’s god, is the object of his highest love; so that God who chiefly opposes him in it, must be the object of his greatest hatred.

The gods, which a natural man worships, instead of the God that made him, are himself and the world. He has withdrawn his esteem and honour from God, and proudly exalts himself. As Satan was not willing to be in subjection, and therefore rebelled, and set up himself, so a natural man, in the proud and high thoughts he has of himself, sets up himself upon God’s

throne. He gives his heart to the world, worldly riches, worldly pleasures, and worldly honours: they have the possession of that regard which is due to God. The apostle sums up all the idolatry of wicked men in their love of the world. <sup><615></sup>1 John 2:15, 16. “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.” And the apostle James observes, that a man must necessarily be the enemy of the true God, if he be a friend of the world.

“Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world,  
is the enemy of God.” (<sup><500></sup>James 4:4.)

All the sin that men commit, is what they do in the service of their idols: there is no one act of sin, but what is an act of service to some false god. And therefore where in soever God opposes sin in them, he is opposite to their worship of their idols: on which account they are his enemies. God opposes them in their service of their idols, in the following respects:

**1.** He manifests his utter abhorrence of their attachment to their idols. Their idols are what they love above all things: they would by no means part with them. This wickedness is sweet unto them. <sup><510></sup>Job 20:12. If you take them away, what have they more? If they lose their idols, they lose their all. — To rend away their idols from them, would be more grievous to them, than to rend body and soul asunder: it is like rending their heart in twain. They love their idolatry: but God does not approve of it, but exceedingly hates it: he will by no means be reconciled to it, and therefore they hate him. God declares an infinite hatred of every act they do, in the service of their false gods. He declares himself to be a holy and a jealous God, a God who is very jealous of his own honour, and that greatly abhors giving, that honour to another.

**2.** He utterly forbids their cleaving to those idols and all the service that they do to them. He not only shows that he dislikes it, but he utterly forbids it; and demands that they should worship him; serve him only, and give their hearts wholly to him: without tolerating any competitor. He allows them to serve their idols in no degree; but requires them to cast them away utterly, and pay no more worship to them, at any time. He requires a final parting with their idols. Not only that they should refrain

from them for a while, but cast them away for ever, and never gratify their idolatrous respect to them any more. This is so exceeding contrary to them, and what they are so averse to, that they are enemies to God for it. They cannot endure God's commands, because they forbid all that in which their hearts are so engaged. And as they hate God's commands, so they hate him whose commands they are.

**3.** He threatens them with everlasting damnation for their service of their idols. He threatens them for their past idolatry. He threatens them with his eternal wrath for their having departed from him, and their having chosen to themselves other gods. He threatens them for that disposition they have in their hearts to cleave to other gods: he threatens the least degrees of that respect which they have in their hearts to their idols. He manifests that he will not tolerate any regard to them, but has fixed eternal death, as the wages of every degree of it. And he will not release them from their guilt; he holds them to their obligations; and he will accept of no atonement that they can make. He will not forgive them for whatever they do in religion; whatever pains they take, whatever tears they shed. He will accept of no money or price that they have to offer.

And he threatens every figure act of their idolatry. He not only forbids them ever to be guilty of the least act but forbids them on pain of eternal damnation. So strictly does God prohibit them from the service of their beloved idols! He threatens them with everlasting wrath for all exercises of inordinate love of worldly profit; for all manifestations of inordinate regard to worldly pleasures, or worldly honours. He threatens them with everlasting torments for their self-exaltation. He requires them to deny and renounce themselves, and to abase themselves at his feet, on pain of bearing his wrath to all eternity.

The strictness of God's law is a principal cause of man's enmity against God. If God were one that did not so much hate sin; if he would allow them in the gratification of their lusts in some degree, and his threatenings were not so awful against all criminal indulgence; if his threatenings were not so absolute; if his displeasure could be appeased by a few tears, a little reformation, or the like; they would not be so great enemies, nor hate him so much as they do. But God shows himself to be an implacable enemy to their idols, and has threatened everlasting wrath, infinite calamity, for all

that they do in the service of their lusts; and this makes them irreconcilable enemies to him.

For this reason, the scribes and Pharisees were such bitter enemies to Christ; because he showed himself to be such an enemy to their pride, conceit of their own wisdom self-righteousness, and inordinate affectation of their own honour, which was their god. Natural men are enemies to God, because he is so opposite to them, in that in which they place there all. If you go to take away that which is very dear to a man, nothing will provoke him more. God is infinitely opposite to that in which natural men place all their delight, and all their happiness. He is an enemy to that which natural men value as they're greatest honour and highest dignity; and to which they wholly trust; viz. their own righteousness.

Hence natural men are greater enemies to God, than they are to any other being. Some of their fellow-creatures may stand very much in their way, with regard to some things on which they set their hearts; but God opposes them with respect to ALL. Their idols, and his opposition to them is infinitely great. None of our fellow-creatures ever oppose us in any of our interests so much as God opposes wicked men in their idolatry. His infinite opposition is manifested by his threatening an infinite punishment, viz. his dreadful wrath to all eternity, misery without end. Hence we need not wonder that natural men are enemies to God.

## SECTION 4

*The objection, that men are not conscious of this enmity, answered.*

NATURAL men do not generally conceive themselves to be so bad, they have not this notion of themselves, that they are enemies to God. And therefore when they hear such doctrine as this taught them, they stand ready to make objections. Some may be ready to say, "I do not know, I am not sensible, that I hate God, and have a mortal enmity against him. I feel no such thing in myself, and if I have such enmity, why do not I feel it? If I am a mortal enemy, why should not I know it better than any body else? How can others see what is in my heart better than I myself? If I hate one of my fellow-creatures, I can feel it inwardly working." To such an objection I would answer,

“If you do but observe yourself, and search your own heart, unless you are strangely blinded, you may be sensible of those things, wherein enmity does fundamentally consist. Particularly, you may be sensible that you have at least had a low and contemptible estimation of God and that, in your esteem, you set the trifles and vanities of this world far above him, so as to regard the enjoyment of these things far before the enjoyment of God, and to value these things better than his love. — And you may be sensible that you despise the authority of God, and value his commands and his honour but very little. Or if by some means you have blinded yourself, so as to think you do regard them now, doubtless you can look back and see that you have not regarded them. You may be sensible that you have had a disrelish and aversion towards God; an opposition to thinking of him, so that it would have been a very uncomfortable task to have been confined to that exercise for any time. The vanities of the world, at the same time have been very pleasing to you, and you have been all swallowed up in them, while you have been averse to the things of religion. If you look into your heart, it is there plain to be seen, that there is an enmity in your will, that it is contrary to God’s will, for you have been opposing the will of God all your life long. — These things are plain, it is nothing but some great delusion that can hide them from you. These are the foundation of all enmity: and if these things be in you, all the rest that we have spoken of will follow of course.

**2.** One reason why you have not more sensibly felt the exercises of malice against God, is that your enmity is now exercised partly in your unbelief of God’s being, and this prevents its appearing in other ways. Man has naturally a principle of atheism in him, an indisposition to realize God’s being, and a disposition to doubt of it. The being of God does not ordinarily seem real to natural men. All the discoveries that there are of God’s being in his works, will not overcome the principle of atheism in the heart. And though they seem in some measure to be rationally convinced, yet it does not appear real, the conviction is faint, there is no strong conviction impressed on the mind, that there is a God: and oftentimes they are ready to think that there is none. Now this will prevent the exercise of this enmity, which otherwise would be felt, particularly, it may be an occasion of there not being sensible exercises of hatred.

It may in some measure be thus illustrated: if you had a rooted malice against another man, a principle that had been long established there, and if you should hear that he was dead, the sensible workings of your malice would not be felt, as when you realized it that he was alive. But if you should afterwards hear the news contradicted, and perceive that your enemy was still alive, you would feel the same workings of hatred that you did before. And thus your not realizing the fact, that God has a being may prevent those sensible workings of hatred, that otherwise you would have. If wicked men in this world were sensible of the reality of God's being, as the wicked are in another, they would feel more of that hatred which men in another world do. The exercise of corruption in one way, may, and often does, prevent it working in other ways. As covetousness may prevent the exercise of pride so atheism may prevent malice, and yet it may be no argument of there being any less enmity in the heart; for it is the same enmity, working in another world. The same enmity that in this world works by atheism, will in another world, where there will be no room for atheism, work by malice and blasphemy. The same mortal enmity, which, if you saw there was a God, might make you to wish there were none, may now dispose and incline you to think there is none. Men are very often apt to think things are, as they would have them to be. The same principle disposes you to think God has no existence, which, if you knew he had, would dispose you, if it were possible, to dispossess him of it.

**3.** If you think that there is a God, yet you do not realize it, that he is such a God as he really is. You do not realize it, that he is so holy as he is, that he has such a hatred of sin as indeed he has that he is so just a God as he is, who will by no means clear the guilty. But that in the Psalms is applicable to you:

“these things hast thou done, and I kept silence: thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself.” (~~Psalm~~ Psalm 1:21.)

So that your atheism appears in this, as well as in thinking there is no God. So that your objection arises from this, that you do not find such a sensible hatred against that god which you have formed, to suit yourself, a god that you like better than the true God. But this is no argument that you have not bitter enmity against the true God, for it was your enmity

against the true God, and your not liking him, that has put you upon forming up another in your imagination, that you like better. It is your enmity against those attributes of God's holiness and justice, and the like, that has put you upon conceiting another, who is not so holy as he is, and does not hate sin so much, and will not be so strictly just in punishing it; and whose wrath against sin is not so terrible.

But if you were sensible of the vanity of your own conceits, and that God was not such an one as you have imagined, but that he is, as he is indeed, an infinitely holy, just, sin hating and sin revenging God, who will not tolerate nor endure the worship of idols, you would be much more liable to feel the sensible exercises of enmity against him, than you are now. And this experience confirms. For we see that when men come to be under convictions, and to be made sensible that God is not as they have heretofore imagined, but that he is such a jealous, sin hating God, and whose wrath against sin is so dreadful, they are much more apt to have sensible exercises of enmity against him than before.

**4.** Your having always been taught that God is infinitely above you, and out of your reach, has prevented your enmity being exercised in those ways, that otherwise it would have been. And hence your enmity has not been exercised in revengeful thoughts; because revenge has, never found any room here; it has never found any handle to take hold of: there has been no conception of any such thing, and hence it has lain still. A serpent will not bite, or spit poison, at that which it sees at a great distance, which if it saw near, would do it immediately. Opportunity often shows what men are, whether friends or enemies. Opportunity to do puts men in mind of doing, wakens up such principles as lay dormant before. Opportunity stirs up desire to do, where there was before a disposition that without opportunity would have lain still. If a man has had an old grudge against another, and has a fair opportunity to be revenged, this will revive his malice, and waken up a desire of revenge.

If a great and sovereign prince injures a poor man, and what he does is looked upon as very cruel, that will not ordinarily stir up passionate revenge, because he is so much above him, and out of his reach. Many a man has appeared calm and meek, when he has had no power in his hands, and has not appeared, either to himself or others, to have any disposition

to cruel acts; yet afterwards, when he came to have opportunity by unexpected advancement, or otherwise, has appeared like a ravenous wolf, or devouring lion. So it was with Hazael. “And Hazael said, Why weepeth my lord? And he answered, Because I know the evil that thou wilt do unto the children of Israel: their strong holds wilt thou set on fire, and their young men wilt thou slay with the sword, and wilt dash their children, and rip up their women with child. And Hazael said, But what is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing! And Elisha answered, the Lord hath showed me that thou shalt be king over Syria,” ~~1180~~ 2 Kings 8:12,13. Hazael was then a servant; he had no power in his hands to do as he pleased; and so his cruel disposition had lain hid, and he did not himself imagine that it was there: but afterwards, when he became king of Syria, and was absolute, having none to control him; then it broke out and appeared, and he did as the prophet had foretold. He committed those very acts of cruelty, that he thought it was not in his heart to do. It was want of opportunity that made the difference. It was all in his heart before; he was such a dog then as to do this thing, but only had not opportunity. And therefore when he seems surprised that the prophet should say so of him, all the reason the prophet gives is, “The Lord hath showed me that thou shalt be king over Syria.”

Some natural men are such “dogs” as to do things, if they had opportunity, which they do not imagine it is in their hearts to do. You object against your having a moral hatred against God; that you never felt any desire to dethrone him. But one reason has been, that it has always been conceived so impossible by you. But if the throne of God were within your reach, and you knew it, it would not be safe one hour. Who knows what thoughts would presently arise in your heart by such an opportunity, and what disposition would be raised up in your heart. Who would trust your heart, that there would not presently be such thoughts as these, though they are enough to make one tremble to mention them? “Now I have opportunity to set myself at liberty — that I need not be kept in continual slavery by the strict law of God. — Then I may take my liberty to walk in that way I like best, and need not be continually in such slavish fear of God’s displeasure. And God has not done well by me in many instances. He has done most unjustly by me, in holding me bound to destruction for unbelief, and other things which I cannot help. — He has

shown mercy to others and not to me. I have now an opportunity to deliver myself, and there can be no danger of my being hurt for it. There will be nothing for us to be terrified about, and so keep us in slavery.”

Who would trust your heart that such thoughts would not arise? or others much more horrid and too dreadful to be mentioned? And therefore I forbear. Those natural men are foolishly insensible of what is in their own hearts, who think there would be no danger of any such workings of heart, if they knew they had opportunity.

**5.** You little consider, how much your having no more of the sensible exercises of hatred to God, is owing to a being restrained by fear. You have always been taught what a dreadful thing it is to hate God, and how terrible his displeasure; that God sees the heart and knows all the thoughts; and that you are in his hands, and he can make you as miserable as he pleases, and as soon as he pleases. And these things have restrained you: and the fear that has risen from them, has kept you from appearing what you are; it has kept down your enmity, and made that serpent afraid to show its head, as otherwise it would do. If a wrathful man were wholly under the power of an enemy, he would be afraid to exercise his hatred in outward acts, unless it were with great disguise. And if it be supposed that such an enemy, in whose power he was, could see his heart, and know all his thoughts; and apprehended that he would put him to a terrible death, if he saw the workings of malice there, how greatly would this restrain! He would be afraid so much as to believe himself that he hated his enemy: but there would be all manner of disguise and hypocrisy, and feigning even of thoughts and affections.

Thus your enmity has been kept under restraint, and thus it has been from your infancy. You have grown up in it, so that it is become a habitual restraint. You dare not so much as think you hate God. If you do exercise hatred, you have a disguise for it, whereby you endeavour even to hide it from your own conscience, and so have all along deceived yourself. Your deceit is very old and habitual: there has been only restraint; not mortification. There has been an enmity against God in its full strength it has been only restrained, like an enemy that durst not rise up and show himself.

**6.** One reason why you have not felt more sensible hatred to God may be, because you have not had much trial of what is in your heart. It may be God has hitherto, in a great measure, let you alone. The enmity that is in men's hearts against God, is like a serpent, which, if it be let alone lies still: but if any body disturbs it, will soon hiss, and be enraged, and show its serpentine spiteful nature.

Notwithstanding the good opinion you have of yourself, yet a little trial would show you to be a viper, and your heart would be set all on rage against God. One thing that restrains you now is your hope. You hope to receive many things from God. Your own interest is concerned. So that both hope and fear operate together, to restrain your enmity from sensible exercises. But if once hope was gone, you would soon show what you were you would feel your enmity against God in a rage.

**7.** If you pretend that you do not feel enmity against God, and yet act as an enemy, you may certainly conclude that it is not because you are no enemy, but because you do not know your own heart. Actions are the best interpreters of the disposition: they show, better than any thing else, what the heart is. It must be because you do not observe your own behaviour, that you question whether you are an enemy to God.

What other account can you give of your own carriage but only your being God's enemy? What other account can be given of your opposing God in your ways; walking so exceeding contrary to him, contrary to his counsels, contrary to his commands, and contrary to his glory? What other account can be given of your casting so much contempt upon God; your setting him so low, your acting so much against his authority and against his kingdom and interest in the world? What other account can be given of your so setting your will in opposition to God's will, and that so obstinately, for so lone a time, against so many warnings as you have had? What other account can be given of your joining so much with Satan, in the opposition he is making to the kingdom of God in the world? And that you will join with him against God though it be so much against your own interest, and though you expose yourself by it to everlasting misery?

Such like behaviour in one man towards another, would be sufficient evidence of enmity. If he should be seen to behave thus, and that it was his constant manner, none would want better evidence that he was an enemy

to his neighbour. If you yourself had a servant that carried it towards you, as you do towards God, you would not think there was need of any greater evidence of his being your enemy. Suppose your servant should manifest much contempt of you, and disregard your commands as much as you do the commands of God; should go directly contrary, and in many ways act the very rever. of your commands; should seem to set himself in ways that were contrary to your will obstinately and incorrigibly, without any amendment from your repeated calls, warnings, and threatenings; and should act so cross to you day and night, as you do to God; would he not be justly deemed your enemy? Suppose, further, when you sought one thing, he would seek the contrary; when you did any work, he would, as much as in him lay, undo and destroy that work; and suppose he should continually drive at such ends, as tended to overthrow the ends you aimed at: when you sought to bring to pass any design, he would endeavour to overthrow your design; and set himself as much against your interest, as you do yourself against God's honour. And suppose you should moreover see him, from time to time, with those who were your declared mortal enemies; making them his counsellors, and hearkening to their counsels, as much as you do to Satan's temptations: should you not think you had sufficient evidence that he was your enemy? — Therefore consider seriously your own ways, and weigh your own behaviour. "How canst thou say, I am not polluted? — see thy way in the valley, know what thou hast done." <sup>4023</sup>Jeremiah 2:23.

## SECTION 5

*The objections, that they show respect to God, and experience some religious affections, answered.*

NATURAL men may be ready to object, the respect they show to God, from time to time. This makes many to think that they are far from being such enemies to God. They pray to him in secret, and attend on public worship, and take a great deal of pains to do it in a decent manner. It seems to them that they show God a great deal of respect: they use many very respectful terms in their prayer: they are respectful in their manner of speaking, their voice, gestures, and the like. — But to this answer, that all this is done in mere hypocrisy. All this seeming respect is feigned there is no sincerity in it: there is external respect, but none in the heart: there is a

show, and nothing else. You only cover your enmity with a painted veil. You put on the disguise of a friend, but in your heart you are a mortal enemy. There is external honour, but inward contempt; there is a show of friendship and regard, but inward hatred. You do but deceive yourself with your show of respect; and endeavour to deceive God; not considering that God looks not on the outward appearance, but on the heart.-Here consider particularly,

**1.** That much of that seeming respect which natural men show to God, is owing to their education. They have been taught from their infancy that they ought to show great respect to God. They have been taught to use respectful language, when speaking about God, and to behave with solemnity, when attending on those exercises of religion, wherein they have to do with him. From their childhood, they have seen that this is the manner of others, when they pray to God, to use reverential expressions, and a reverential behaviour before him.

Those who are brought up in places where they have commonly from their infancy, heard men take the name of God in vain, and swear and curse, and blaspheme, they learn to do the same, and it becomes habitual to them. And it is the same way and no other that you have learned to behave respectfully towards God: not that you have any more respect to God than they; but they have been brought up one way, and you another. In some parts of the world, men are brought up in the worship of idols of silver, and gold, and wood, and stone, made in the, shape of men and beast.

“They say of them, Let the men that sacrifice, kiss the calf.”

(~~AND~~ Hosea 13:2.)

In some parts of the world, they are brought up to worship serpents, and are taught from their infancy to show great respect to them. And in some places, they are brought up in worshipping the devil who appears to them in a bodily shape; and to behave wit a show of great reverence and honour towards him. And what respect you show to God has no better foundation; it comes the same way, and is worth no more.

**2.** That show of respect which you make is forced. You come to God, and make a great show of respect to him, and use very respectful terms, with a reverential tone and manner of speaking, and your countenance is grave

and solemn: you put on an humble aspect, and use humble, respectful postures, out of fear. You are afraid that God will execute his wrath upon you, and so you feign a great deal of respect, that he may not be angry with you.

“Through the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies submit themselves unto thee.” (◀RMS Psalm 66:3.)

In the original it is, shall shine enemies lie to thee. It is rendered therefore in the margin, shall yield feigned obedience to thee. All that you do in religion is forced and feigned. Through the greatness of God’s power, you yield feigned obedience. You are in God’s power, and he is able to destroy you; and so you feign a great deal of respect to him, that he might not destroy you. As one might do towards an enemy that had taken him captive, though he at the same time would gladly make his escape, if he could, by taking away the life of him who had taken him captive.

**3.** It is not real respect that moves you to behave so towards God: you do it because you hope you shall get by it. It is respect to yourself, and not respect to God, that moves you. You hope to move God by it to bestow the rewards of his children. You are like the Jews who followed Christ, and called him Rabbi, and make him a king. Not that they honoured him so much in their hearts, as to think him worthy of the honour of a king; or that they had the respect of sincere subjects; but they did it for the sake of the loaves. “Jesus perceived that they would come and make him a king. And when they had found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, how earnest thou hither? Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily, verily I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because you saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.” ◀RMS John 6:15, 25, 26.

These things do not argue but that you are implacable enemies to God. If you examine your prayers and other duties, your own consciences will tell you, that the seeming respect which you have shown to God in them, has been only in hypocrisy. Oftentimes you have set forth in your prayers, that God was a great, a glorious, and an infinitely holy God, as if you greatly honoured him on the account of these attributes; and, at the same time, you had no sense in your heart of the greatness and glory of God, or of any excellency in his holiness. Your own consciences will tell you, that

you have often pretended to be thankful; you have told God, that you thanked him you was alive, and thanked him for various mercies, when you have not found the least jot of thankfulness in your heart. And so you have told God of your own unworthiness, and set forth what a vile creature you was; when you have had no humble sense of your own unworthiness.

If these forementioned restraints were thrown off, you would soon throw off all your show of respect. Take away fear, and a regard to your own interest, and there would soon be an end to all those appearances of love, honour, and reverence, which now you make. All these things are not at all inconsistent with the most implacable enmity. The devil himself made a show of respect to Christ, when he was afraid that he was going to torment him, and when he hoped to persuade Christ to spare him longer.

“When he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, What have to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God most high? I beseech thee, torment me not.”

(~~418~~ Luke 8:28.)

Some may perhaps object against this doctrine of their being God’s enemies, the religious affections they have sometimes experienced. They may be ready to say, That when they have come before God in prayer, they have not only used respectful terms and gestures, but they have prayed with affection, their prayers have been attended with tears, which they are ready to think showed something in the heart. — But to this it is answered, that these affections have risen from other causes, and not from any true respect to God.

**1.** They have risen from self-love, and not love to God. If you have wept before God, from the consideration of your own pitiful case, that has been because you loved yourself, and not because you had any respect to God. If your tears have been from sorrow for your sins; you have mourned for your sins, because you have sinned against yourself, and not because you have sinned against God.

“When ye fasted and mourned, did ye at all fast unto me, even unto me?” (~~301~~ Zechariah 7:5.)

**2.** Pride, and a good thought of themselves, very commonly has a great hand in the affections of natural men. They have a good opinion of what they are doing when they are praying; and the reflection on that affects them they are affected with their own goodness. Men's self-righteousness often occasions tears. A high opinion of themselves before God, and an imagination of their being persons of great account with him, as affected them in their transactions with God. There is commonly abundance of pride in the midst of tears; and often pride is in a great measure the source of them. And then they are so far from being an argument that you are not an enemy to God, that on the contrary, they are an argument, that you are. In your very tears, you are, in a vain conceit of yourself, exalting yourself against God.

**3.** The affections of natural men often arise from wrong notions they have of God. They conceive of God after the manner they do of men, as though he were a being liable to be wrought upon in his affections. They conceive of him as one whose heart could be drawn, whose affections can be overcome, by what he sees in them. They conceive of him as being taken with them, and their performances; and this works on their affections; and thus one tear draws another, and their affections increase by reflection. And oftentimes they conceive of God as one that loves them, and is a friend to them: and such a mistake may work much on their affections. But such affections that arise towards God, as they conceit him to be, is no argument that they have not the same implacable hatred towards God, considered as he really is. There is no concluding that men are not enemies, because they are affected and shed tears in their prayers, and the like. Saul was very much affected when David expostulated with him about pursuing after him, and seeking to kill him. David's words wrought exceedingly upon Saul's affections. "And it came to pass when David had made an end of speaking these words unto Saul, that Saul said, Is this thy voice, my son David? and Saul lift up his voice and wept." <sup>1</sup> Samuel 24:16. chapter 26:1, etc. He was so affected that he wept aloud, and called David his son, though he was but just before seeking his life. But this affection of Saul was no argument that he did not still continue in his enmity against David. He was David's mortal enemy before, and sought his life; and so he did afterwards. It was but a pang: his enmity was not

mortified or done away. The next news we hear of Saul is, that he was pursuing David, and seeking his life again.

## SECTION 6

### *Restraining grace a great privilege.*

IF natural men are God's enemies; then hence we may learn, how much we are indebted to God for his restraining grace. If all natural men are God's enemies, what would they not do, if they were not restrained! For what has one that is an enemy in his disposition, to restrain him from acting against him to whom he is an enemy? Hatred will not restrain a man from acting any thing against him that is hated. Nothing is too bad for hatred, if it be mere hatred and no love. Hatred shows no kindness either in doing, or forbearing; it will never make a man forbear to act against God; for the very nature of hatred is to seek evil. But wicked men, as has been shown, are mere enemies to God; they have hatred, without any love at all. And hence natural men have nothing within them, in their own nature, to restrain them from any thing that is but, and therefore their restraint must not be owing to nature, but to restraining grace. And therefore whatever wickedness we have been kept from, it is not because we have not been bad enough to commit it; but it is God has restrained us, and kept us back from sin. There can be no worse principle, than a principle of hatred to God. And there can be no principle that will go further in wickedness than this, if it be neither mortified nor restrained. But it is not mortified in natural men and therefore all that keeps them from any degree of wickedness, is restrained. If we have seen others do things that we never did; and if they have done worse than we, this is owing to restraining grace. If we have not done as bad as Pharaoh, it is owing to divine restraints. If we have not done as bad as Judas, or as the scribes and Pharisees, or as bad as Herod, or Simon Magus, it is because God has restrained our corruption. If we have ever heard or read of any that have done worse than he; if we have not gone the length in sinning, that the most wicked pirates or carnal persecutors have gone, this is owing to restraining grace. For we are all naturally the enemies of God as much as they. If we have not committed the unpardonable sin, it is owing to restraining grace. There is no worse principle in exercise in that sin, than enmity against God. There is the entire fountain, and all the foundation of

the sin against the Holy Ghost, in that enmity against God that naturally reigns in us.

It is not we that restrain ourselves from the commission of the greatest imaginable wickedness; for enmity against God reigns in us and over us; we are under its power and dominion, and are sold under it. We do not restrain that which reigns over us. A slave, as long as he continues a mere slave, cannot control his master.

“He that committeth sin, is the servant of sin.” (~~John~~ John 8:34.)

So that the restraint of this our cruel tyrant, is owing to God, and not to us. What does a poor, impotent subject do to restrain the absolute Lord, that has him wholly under his power? How much will it appear that the world is indebted to the restraining grace of God, if we consider that the world is full of enemies to God. The world is full of inhabitants; and almost all are God’s enemies, his implacable and mortal enemies. What therefore would they not do, what work would they not make, if God did not restrain them?

God’s work in the restraint that he exercises over a wicked world, is a glorious work. God’s holding the reins upon the corruptions of a wicked world, and setting hounds to their wickedness, is a more glorious work, than his ruling the raving of the sea, and setting bounds to its proud waves, and saying Hitherto shalt thou come, and no further. In hell, God lets the wickedness of wicked spirits have the reins, to rage without restraint; and it would be in a great measure upon earth as it is in hell, did not God restrain the wickedness of the world. But in order to the better understanding how it is owing to the restraining grace of God, that we are kept and withheld from the highest acts of sin, I would here observe several things.

**1.** Whenever men are withheld from sinning by the common influence of God’s Spirit, they are withheld by restraining grace. If sinners are awakened, and are made sensible of the great guilt that sin brings, and that it exposes to a dreadful punishment, under such circumstances they dare not allow themselves in wilful sin: God restrains them by the convictions of his Spirit; and therein their being kept from sin, is owing to restraining grace. And unawakened sinners that live under the gospel, who are in a

great measure secure, commonly have some degrees of the influence of God's Spirit, with his ordinances influencing natural conscience. And though they be not sufficient thoroughly to rouse them out of security, or make them reform, yet they keep them from going such lengths in sin, as otherwise they might do. And this is restraining grace. They are indeed very stupid and sottish: yet they would be a great deal more so, if God should let them wholly alone.

**2.** All the restraints that men are under from the word and ordinances, is from grace. The word and ordinances of God might have some degree of influence on men's natural principles of self-love, to restrain them from sin, without any degree of the influence of God's Spirit: but this would be the restraining grace of God; for God's goodness and mercy to a sinful world appears in his giving his word to be a restraint on the wickedness of the world. When men are restrained by fear of those punishments that the word of God threatens; or by the warnings, the offers, and promises of it; when the word of God works upon hope, or fear, or natural conscience, to restrain men from sin, this is the restraining grace of God and is owing to his mercy. It is an instance of God's mercy that he has revealed hell, to restrain men's wickedness, and that he has revealed a way of salvation, and a possibility of eternal life. This, which has great influence on men to keep them from sin, is the restraining grace of God.

**3.** When men are restrained from sin, by the light of nature, this also is of grace. If men are destitute of the light of God's word, yet the light of natural conscience teaches that sin brings guilt, and exposes to punishment. The light of nature teaches that there is a God, who governs the world, and will reward the good and punish the evil. God is the author of the light of nature, as well as the light of revelation. He in mercy to mankind makes known many things by natural light to work upon men's fear and self-love, in order to restrain their corruptions.

**4.** When God restrains men's corruptions by his providence, this is from grace. And that whether it be his general providence in ordering the state of mankind, or his providential disposals towards them in particular.

**(1.)** God greatly restrains the corruption of the world, by ordering the state of mankind. He hath set them here in a mortal state, and in a state of probation for eternity and that is a great restraint to corruption.

God hath so ordered the state of mankind, that ordinarily many kinds of sin and wickedness are disgraceful, and what tend to the hurt of a man's character and reputation amongst his fellow-men; and that is a great restraint. He hath so disposed the world, that many kinds of wickedness are many ways very contrary to men's temporal interest; and mankind is led to prohibit many kinds of wickedness by human laws; and that is a great restraint. God hath set up a church in the world, made up of those who, if they are answerable to their profession, have the fear and love of God in their hearts; and they by holding forth revealed light, by keeping up the ordinances of God, and by warning others, are a great restraint to the wickedness of the world.

In all these things, the restraining grace of God appears. — It is God's mercy to mankind, that he has so ordered their state, that they should have so many things, by fear and a regard to their own interest, to restrain their corruptions. It is God's mercy to the world, that the state of mankind here differs from the state of the damned in hell, where men will have none of these things to restrain them. The wisdom of God, as well as the attributes of his grace, greatly appears in thus disposing things for the restraining of the wickedness of men.

**(2.)** God greatly restrains the corruptions of men by his providence towards particular persons; by placing men in such circumstances as to lay them under restraints. And to this it is often owing that some natural men never go such lengths in sinning, or are never guilty of such atrocious wickedness, as some others, that Providence has placed them in different circumstances. If it were not for this, many thousands of natural men, who now live sober and orderly lives, would do as Pharaoh did. The reason why they do not, is, that Providence has placed them in different circumstances. If they were in the same circumstances as Pharaoh was in, they would do as he did. And so, if in the same circumstances as Manassah, as Judas or Nero. But Providence restrains their corruptions, by putting them in such circumstances, as not to open such a door or outlet for their corruption, as he did to them. So some do not perpetrate such horrid things, they do not live such horribly vicious lives, as some others, because Providence has restrained them, by ordering that they should have a better education than others. Providence has ordered that they

should be the children of pious parents, it may be, or should live where they should enjoy many means of grace, and so Providence has laid them under restraints. Now this is restraining grace, or the attribute of God's grace exercised in thus restraining persons.

And oftentimes God restrains men's corruptions by particular event of providence. By particular afflictions they are brought under, or by Particular occurrences, whereby God does, as it were, block up men's way in their course of sin, or in some wickedness that they had devised and that otherwise they would perpetrate. Or something happens unexpected to hold men back from that which they were about to commit. Thus God restrained David by his providence from shedding blood, as he intended to do.

“Now therefore, my lord as the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, seeing the Lord hath withholder thee from coming to shed blood, and from avenging thyself with shine own hand, — “  
(~~1~~ 1 Samuel 25:26.)

God withheld him from it no otherwise, than by ordering it so in his providence that Abigail should come, and by her wisdom should cool, pacify, and persuade him to alter his purpose.” See verse 32, 33, 34.

**5.** Godly persons are greatly indebted to restraining grace, in keeping them from dreadful act of sin. So it was in that instance of David, just mentioned. Even godly persons, when God has left, and has not restrained them, have fallen into dreadful acts of sin. So did David, in the case of Uriah; and Lot, and Peter. And when other godly persons are kept from falling into such sins, or much worse sins than these, it is owing to the restraining grace of God. Merely having a principle of grace in their hearts, or merely their being godly persons, without God's presence to restrain them, will not keep them from great acts of sin. That the godly do not fall into the most horrid sins that can be conceived of is owing not so much to any inconsistency between their falling into such sins, and the having a principle of grace in the heart, as it is owing to the covenant mercy of God' whereby he has promised never to leave nor forsake his people; and that he will not suffer them to be tempted above what they are able; but with the temptation will make a way for them to escape. If saving grace restrains men from great acts of sin, that is owing to God who gives such

exercises of grace at that time when the temptation comes, that they are restrained.

Let not the godly therefore be insensible of their obligations to the restraining grace of God. Though they cannot be said to be enemies to God, because a principle of enmity does not reign; yet they have the very same principle and seed of enmity in them, though it be mortified. Though it be not in reigning power, yet it has great strength; and is too strong for them, without God's almighty power to help them against it. Though they be not enemies to God, because they have a principle of love; yet their old man, the body of sin and death that yet remains in them, is a mortal enemy to God. Corruption in the godly, is not better than it is in the wicked, but is of as bad a nature every whit, as that which is in a mortal enemy to God. And though it be not in reigning power; yet it would dreadfully rage, were it not for God's restraining grace.

God gives his restraining grace to both natural and godly men; hut there is this difference; he gives his restraining grace to his children in the way of covenant mercy: it is part of the mercy promised in his covenant. God is faithful, and will not leave them to sin in like manner as wicked men do; otherwise they would do every thing as bad. — Let not therefore the godly attribute it to themselves, or merely to their own goodness, that they are not guilty of such horrid crimes as they hear of in others; let them consider it as not owing to them, but to God's restraints. — Thus all, both godly and ungodly, may learn from this doctrine, their great obligations to the restraining grace of God.

## SECTION 7

*Why natural men are not willing to come to Christ,  
and their dreadful condition.*

HENCE we may learn the reason why natural men will not come to Christ: they do not come because they will not come. “Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.” <sup><B50></sup> John 5:40. When we say that natural men are not willing to come to Christ, it is not meant that they are not willing to be delivered from hell; for without doubt, no natural man is willing to go to hell. Nor is it meant, that they are not willing that Christ should keep them from going to hell. Without doubt, natural men under awakenings often

greatly desire this. But this does not argue that they are willing to come to Christ: for, notwithstanding their desire to be delivered from hell, their hearts do not close with Christ, but are averse to him. They see nothing in Christ wherefore they should desire him; no beauty nor comeliness to draw their hearts to him. And they are not willing to take Christ as he is, they would fain divide him. There are some things in him that they like, and others that they greatly dislike, but consider him as he is, and as he is offered to, them in the gospel, and they are not willing to accept of Christ; for in doing so, they must of necessity part with all their sins; they must sell the world, and part with their own righteousness. But they had rather, for the present, run the venture of going to hell, than do that.

When men are truly willing to come to Christ, they are freely willing. It is not what they are forced and driven to by threatenings; but they are willing to come, and choose to come without being driven. But natural men have no such free willingness; but on the contrary have an aversion. And the ground of it is that which we have heard, viz. That they are enemies to God. Their having such a reigning enmity against God, makes them obstinately refuse to come to Christ. If a man is an enemy to God, he will necessarily be an enemy to Christ too, for Christ is the Son of God, he is infinitely near to God, yea, has the nature of God, as well as the nature of man. He is a Saviour appointed of God, he anointed him, and sent him into the world. And in performing the work of redemption, he wrought the works of God, always did those things that pleased him; and all that he does as a Saviour, is to his glory. And one great thing he aimed at in redemption, was to deliver them from their idols, and bring them to God. The case being so, and sinners being enemies to God, they will necessarily be opposite to coming to Christ, for Christ is of God, and as a Saviour seeks them to bring them to God only: but natural men are not of God, but are averse to him.

Hence we see, how dreadful is the condition of natural men Their state is a state of eternity with God. If we consider what God is, and what men are, it will be easy for us to conclude that such men as are God's enemies, must be miserable. Consider, ye that are enemies to God, how great he is. He is the eternal God who fills heaven and earth, and whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain. He is the God that made you; in whose hand your breath is, and whose are all your ways; the God in whom you live, and

move, and have your being; who has your soul and body in his hands every moment.

You would look on yourself as in very unhappy circumstances, if your neighbours were all your enemies, and none of your fellow-creatures were your friends. If every body were set against you, and all despised and hated you, you would be ready to think, you had better be out of the world than in it. But if it be such a calamity to have enmity maintained between you and your fellow-creatures, what is it, when you and the almighty God are enemies? What avails either the friendship or enmity of your neighbours, poor worms of the dust, in comparison of the friendship or enmity of the great God of heaven and earth? — Consider,

**1.** If you continue in your enmity a little longer, there will be a mutual enmity between God and you to all eternity. God will appear to be your dreadful and irreconcilable enemy. If you should die an enemy to God, there will be no such thing as any reconciliation after death. God will then appear to you in hatred, without any love, any pity, and any mercy at all. As you hate God, he will hate you. And that will be verified of you:

**“My soul loathed them, and their soul abhorred me.”**

( Zechariah 11:8.)

And then God will be your enemy forever. If you be not reconciled so as to become his friend in this life, God never will become your friend after death. If you continue an enemy to God till death, God will continue an enemy to you to all eternity. You will have no mediator offered you; there will be no day's-man betwixt you. So that it becomes you to consider what it will be to have God your enemy to all eternity, without any possibility of being reconciled.

Consider, What will be to have this enmity to be mutual, and maintained forever on both sides? For as God will forever continue an enemy to you, so you will forever continue an enemy to God. If you continue God's enemy until death, you will always be his enemy. And after death your enmity will have no restraint, but it will break out and rage without control. When you come to be a fire-brand of hell, you will be so in two respects, viz.

As you will be full of the fire of God's wrath, and as you will be all on a blaze with spite and malice towards God. You will be as full of the fire of malice as you will with the fire of divine vengeance, and both will make you full of torment. Then you will appear, as you are a viper indeed. You are now under great disguise, a wolf in sheep's clothing: but then your mask will be pulled off; you shall loose your garments, and walk naked.

~~Revelation~~ Revelation 16:15. Then will you vent your rage and malice in fearful blasphemies. That same tongue, to which you will wish for a drop of water, will be eternally employed in cursing and blaspheming God and Christ. And that not from any new corruption being put into your heart; but only from God's withdrawing his hand from restraining your old corruption. And what a miserable way will this be of spending your eternity!

**2.** Consider, What will be the consequence of a mutual enmity between God and you, if it be continued? Though hitherto you have met with no very great changes yet they will come. After a little while, dying time will come, and then what will be the consequence of this enmity? God, whose enemy you are has the frame of your body in his hands. Your times are in his hand, and he it is that appoints your bounds. And when he sends death to arrest you, change your countenance, to dissolve your frame, and to take you away from all your earthly friends, and from all that is dear and pleasant to you in the world what will be the issue? Will not you then stand in need of God's help? Would not he be the best friend in such a case, worth more than ten thousand earthly friends? If God be your enemy, then to whom will you betake yourself for a friend? When you launch forth into the boundless gulf of eternity, then you will need some friend to take care of you, but if God be your enemy, where will you betake yourself! Your soul must go naked into another world, in eternal separation from all worldly shines, and your soul will not be in its own power, to defend or dispose of itself Will you not then need to have God for a friend, into whose hands you may commend your spirit? But how dreadful will it be, to have God your enemy! The time is coming when the frame of this world shall be dissolved. Christ shall descend in the clouds of heaven in the glory of his Father; and you, with all the rest of mankind, must stand before his judgment seat. Then what will be the consequence of this mutual enmity between God and you? If God be your enemy, who

will stand your friend? Now, it may be, it does not appear to be very terrible to you to have God for your enemy; but when such changes as these are brought to pass, it will greatly alter the appearance of things. Then God's favour will appear to you of infinite worth. They, and they only, will then appear happy, who have the love of God: and then you will know that God's enemies are miserable. — But under this head, consider more particularly several things.

(1.) What God can do to his enemies. Or rather, what can he not do? How miserable can he who is almighty make his enemies! Consider, you that are enemies to God, whether or no you shall be able to make your part good with him.

“Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he?”

(~~1~~1 Corinthians 10:22.)

Have you such a conceit of your own strength, as that you think to try it out with God? Do you intend to run the risk of an encounter with him? Do you imagine that your hands can be strong, or your heart can endure? Do you think you shall be well able to defend yourself, or to escape out of his hand? Do you think that you shall be able to urn hold your spirits; when God-acts as an enemy towards you? If so, then gird up your loins, and see what the event will be. Therefore thus will I do unto thee — “and because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God.” — ~~Amos~~ Amos 4:12. Is it not in vain to set the briers and thorns in battle array against devouring flames; which though they seemed to be armed with natural weapons, yet the fire will pass through them; and burn them together! See ~~Isaiah~~ Isaiah 27:4.

And if you endeavour to support yourself under God's wrath, cannot God lay you under such misery, as to cause your spirit quite to fail; so that you shall find no strength to resist him, or to uphold yourself? Why should a worm think of supporting himself against an omnipotent adversary? Consider, God has made your soul; and he can fill it with misery: he made your body, and can bring what torments he will upon it. God who made you, has given you a capacity to bear torment; and he has that capacity in his hands. How dreadful must it be to fall into the hands of such an enemy! Surely,

“it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”

( Hebrews 10:31.)


**(2.)** If God be your enemy, you may rationally conclude that he will act as such in his dealings with you. We have already observed that you have enmity without any love or true respect. So, if you continue to be so, God will appear to be your mere enemy; and will be so forever, without being reconciled. But if it be so, he will doubtless act as such. If he eternally hates you, he will act in his dealings with you, as one that hates you without any love or pity. The proper tendency and aim of hatred is the misery of the object hated; so that you may expect God will make you miserable, and that you will not be spared. — Now, God does not act as your mere enemy: if he corrects you, it is in measure. He now exercises abundance of mercy to you. He threatens you now; but it is in a way of warning, and so in a merciful way. He now calls, invites, and strives with you, and waits to be gracious to you. But hereafter there will be an end to all these things: in another world God will cease to show you mercy.

**(3.)** If you will continue God’s enemy, you may rationally conclude that God will deal with you so as to make it appear how dreadful it is to have God for an enemy. It is very dreadful to have a mighty prince for an enemy.

“The wrath of a king is as the roaring of a lion.”

( Proverbs 19:12.)

But if the wrath of a man, a fellow-worm, be so terrible, what is the wrath of God! And God will doubtless show it to be immensely more dreadful. If you will be an enemy, God will act so as to glorify those attributes which he exercises as an enemy, which are his majesty his power, and justice. His great majesty, his awful justice, and mighty power, shall be showed upon you.

“What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction.” ( Romans 9:22.)

**(4.)** Consider, What God has said he will do to his enemies. He has declared that they shall not escape; but that he will surely punish

them. “Thine hand shall find out all thine enemies, thy right hand shall find out all those that hate thee.” <sup><1218></sup>Psalm 21:8. “And repayeth them that hate him to their face to destroy them: he will not be slack to him that hateth him, he will repay him to his face.” <sup><1217></sup>Deuteronomy 7:10. “The Lord shall wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalp of such an one as goeth on still in his trespasses.” <sup><1218></sup>Psalm 68:21.

Yea, God hath sworn that he will be avenged on them, and that in a most awful and dreadful manner. “For I lift up my hand to heaven, and say, I live for ever. If I whet my glittering sword, and mine hand take bold on Judgment, I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and I will reward them that hate me. I will make mine arrows drunk with blood, (and my sword shall devour flesh,) and that with the blood of the slain — from the beginning of revenges on the enemy.” <sup><1220></sup>Deuteronomy 32:40, 41, 42. The terribleness of the threatened destruction is here variously set forth. God “whets his glittering sword,” as one that prepares himself to do some great execution. “His hands take hold on judgment,” to signify that he will surely reward them as they deserve. “He will render vengeance to his enemies, and reward them that hate him.” *i.e.* He will render their full reward. “I will make mine arrows drunk with blood.” This signifies the greatness of the destruction. It shall not be a little of their blood that shall satisfy; but his arrows shall be glutted with their blood. “And his sword shall devour flesh.” That is, it shall make dreadful waste of it. This is the terrible manner in which God will one-day rise up and execute vengeance on his enemies!

Again, the completeness of their destruction is represented in the following words: “The wicked shall perish the enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lambs, they shall consume: into smoke shall they consume away.” <sup><1221></sup>Psalm 37:20. The fat of lambs, when it is burnt in the fire burns all up; there is not so much as a cinder left, it all consumes into smoke. This represents the perfect destruction of God’s enemies in his wrath. So God hath promised Christ; that he would make his enemies his footstool. <sup><1221></sup>Psalm 110:1. *i.e.* He would pour the greatest contempt upon them, and as it were tread them under foot. Consider, that all these things will be executed on you, if you continue God’s enemies.

## SECTION 8

*God may justly withhold mercy.*

IF natural men are God's enemies, hence we may learn how justly God may refuse to show you mercy. For is God obliged to show mercy to his enemies? Is God bound to set his love on them that have no love to him, but hate him with perfect hatred? Is he bound to come and dwell with them that have an aversion to him, and choose to keep at a distance from him, and fly from him as one that is hateful to them? Even should you desire the salvation of your soul, is God bound to comply with your desires when you always resist and oppose his will? Is God bound to put honour upon you, and to advance you to such dignity as to be a child of the King of kings, and the heir of glory, while at the same time you set him too low to have even the lowest place in your heart?

This doctrine affords a strong argument for the absolute sovereignty of God, with respect to the salvation of sinners. If God is pleased to show mercy to his haters, it is certainly fit that he should do it in a sovereign way, without acting as any way obliged. God will show mercy to his mortal enemies; but then he will not be bound, he will have his liberty to choose the objects of his mercy; to show mercy to what enemy he pleases, and to punish and destroy which of his haters he pleases. And certainly this is a fit and reasonable thing. It is fit that God should distribute saving blessings in this way, and in no other, viz. in a sovereign and arbitrary way. And that ever any body thought of or devised any other way for God to show mercy, than to have mercy on whom he will have mercy, must arise from ignorance of their own hearts, whereby they were insensible what enemies they naturally are to God. But consider here the following things:

**1.** How carelessly you are enemies to God. You have no manner of reason for it, either from what God is, or from what he has done. You have no reason for this from what he is. For he is an infinitely lovely and glorious Being; the fountain of all excellency, all that is amiable and lovely in the universe, is originally and eminently in him. Nothing can possibly be conceived of that could be lovely in God, that is not in him, and that in the greatest possible degree.

And you have no reason for this, from what God has done. For he has been a good and bountiful God to you. He has exercised abundance of kindness to you; has carried you from the womb, preserved your life, taken care of you, and provided for you, all your life long. He has exercised great patience and long-suffering towards you. If it had not been for the kindness of God to you, what would have become of you? What would have become of your body? And what, before this time, would have become of your soul? And you are now, every day and hour, maintained by the goodness and bounty of God. Every new breath you draw, is new guilt of his to you. How causelessly then are you such dreadful enemies to God! And how justly might he for it eternally deprive you of all mercy, seeing you do thus requite God for his mercy and kindness to you!

**2.** Consider, how you would resent it, if others were such enemies to you, as you are to God. If they had their hearts so full of enmity to you; if they treated you with such contempt, and opposed you, as you do God, how would you resent it! Do you not find that you are apt greatly to resent it, when any oppose you, and show an ill spirit towards you? And though you excuse your own enmity against God from your corrupt nature that you brought into the world with you, which you could not help; yet you do not excuse others for being enemies to you from their corrupt nature that they brought into the world, which they could not help; but are ready bitterly to resent it notwithstanding.

Consider therefore, if you, a poor, unworthy, unlovely creature, do so resent it, when you are hated, how may God justly resent it when you are enemies to him, an infinitely glorious Being; and a Being from whom you have received so much kindness!

**3.** How unreasonable is it for you to imagine that you can oblige God to have respect to you by any thing that you can do, continuing still to be his enemy. If you think you have prayed, and read, and done something considerable for God; yet who cares for the seeming kindness of an enemy? What value would you yourself set upon a man making a show of friendship, when you knew at the same time, that he was inwardly your mortal enemy? Would you look upon yourself obliged for such respect and kindness? Would you not rather abhor it? Would you count such respect to be valued, as Joab's towards Amasa, who took him by the

beard, and kissed him, and said, Art thou in health; my brother? And smote him at the same time under the fifth rib, and killed him! What if you do pray to God? Is he obliged to hear the prayers of an enemy? What if you have taken a great deal of pains, is God obliged to give heaven for the prayers of an enemy? He may justly abhor your prayers, and all that you do in religion, as the flattery of a mortal enemy.

## SECTION 9

### *Practical Improvement.*

HENCE we may learn,

**1.** How wonderful is the love that is manifested in giving Christ to die for us. For this is love to enemies. “While we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son.” How wonderful was the love of God the rather, in giving such a gift to those who not only could not be profitable to him, but were his enemies and to so great a degree! They had great enmity against him; yet so did he love them, that he gave his own Son to lay down his life, in order to save their lives. Though they had enmity that sought to pull God down from his throne yet he so loved them, that he sent down Christ from heaven, from his throne there, to be in the form of a servant, and instead of a throne of glory, gave him to be nailed to the cross, and to be laid in the grave, that so we might be brought to a throne of glory.

How wonderful was the love of Christ, in thus exercising dying love towards his enemies! He loved those that hated him, with hatred that sought to take away his life, so as voluntarily to lay down his life, that they might have life through him. “Herein is love, not that we loved him, but that he loved us, and laid down his life for us.”

**2.** If we are all naturally God’s enemies, hence we may learn what a spirit it becomes us as Christians to possess towards our enemies. Though we are enemies to God, yet we hope that God has loved us, that Christ has died for us, that God has forgiven or will forgive us; and will do us good, and bestow infinite mercies and blessings upon us, so as to make us happy for ever. All this mercy we hope has been, or will be, exercised towards us.

Certainly then, it will not become us to be bitter in our spirits against those that are enemies to us, and have injured and ill treated us, and though they have yet an ill spirit towards us. Seeing we depend so much on God's forgiving us, though enemies, we should exercise a spirit of forgiveness towards our enemies. And therefore our Saviour inserted it in that prayer, which he dictated as a general directory to all, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors," to enforce the duty upon us, and to show us how reasonable it is. And we ought to love them even while enemies, for so we hope God hath done to us. We should be the children of our Father, who is kind to the unthankful and evil. <sup><0165></sup>Luke 6:35.

If we refuse thus to do, and are of another spirit, we may justly expect that God will deny us his mercy, as he has threatened! "If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." <sup><0164></sup>Matthew 6:14, 15. The same we have in the parable of the man, who owed his lord ten thousand talents. <sup><0163></sup>Matthew 18:23-35.

## WISDOM OF GOD.

### DISPLAYED IN THE WAY OF SALVATION.

To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God. (~~CHR~~ Ephesians 3:10.)

### INTRODUCTION.

THE apostle is speaking in the context of the glorious doctrine of the redemption of sinners by Jesus Christ; and how it was in a great measure kept hid in the past ages of the world. It was a mystery that before they did not understand, but now it was in a glorious manner brought to light. (Verse 3-5.) — “By revelation he made known unto me the mystery, (as I wrote afore in few words; whereby when ye read ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ,) which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets, by the Spirit” And (verse 8, 9.) “Unto me who am less than the least of all saints is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which, from the beginning of the world, hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ.”

And the apostle in the text informs us, that what Christ had accomplished towards his church, in the work of redemption, had not only in a great measure unveiled the mystery to the church in this world; but God had more clearly and fully opened it to the understanding even of the angels themselves, and that this was one end of God in it, to discover the glory of his wisdom to the angels. “To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God.”

One end of revealing God’s counsels concerning the work of redemption, is making known God’s wisdom. It is called manifold wisdom; because of the manifold glorious ends that are attained by it. The excellent designs, hereby accomplished, are very manifold. The wisdom of God in this is of

vast extent. The contrivance is so manifold, that one may spend an eternity in discovering mote of the excellent ends and designs accomplished by it; and the multitude and vast variety of things that are, by divine contrivance, brought to conspire to the bringing about those ends.

We may observe to whom it is that God would manifest this his wisdom, by revealing the mystery of our redemption, — and they are not only men, but the angels. “To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known — the manifold wisdom of God.” The angels are often called principalities and powers, because of the exalted dignity of their nature. The angels excel in strength and wisdom. Those who are the wise men of the earth are called princes in the style of the apostle,

“Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect, yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world.”

(~~1~~ 1 Corinthians 2:6.)

— verse 8. “Which none of the princes of this world knew; for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.” So the angels are called principalities for their great wisdom. They may also be so called for the honour God has put upon them, in employing them as his ministers and instruments, wherewith he governs the world: and therefore are called thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers, ~~5116~~ Colossians 1:16.

They are called principalities and powers in heavenly places, as distinguishing them from those that are in places of earthly power and dignity. The offices or places of dignity and power that the angels sustain are not earthly, but heavenly. They are in places of honour and power in the heavenly city and the heavenly kingdom.

One end of God in revealing his design or contrivance for redemption, as he hath so folly and gloriously done by Jesus Christ, is that the angels in heaven may behold the glory of his wisdom by it, Though they are such bright intelligence's, and do always behold the face of God the Father, and know so much, yet here is matter of instruction for them. Here they may

see more of the divine wisdom than ever they had seen before. It was a new discovery of the wisdom of God to them.

The time when this display of the wisdom of God was especially made to the angels is, when Christ introduced the gospel-dispensation, implied in those words, “To the intent that now unto the principalities,” etc. When Christ came into the world and died, and actually performed the work of redemption — when he had fully and plainly revealed the counsels of God concerning it; and accordingly introduced the evangelical dispensation, and erected the gospel-church — then the angels understood more of the mystery of man’s redemption, and the manifold designs and counsels of divine wisdom, than ever they had done before.

In the foregoing verse the apostle, after speaking of revealing this wisdom of God to man, “And to make all men see, what is the fellowship of this mystery,” etc. speaks of this mystery as a thing from the beginning kept hid till now, “The mystery, which from the beginning of the world had been hid in God — that now,” etc. In this verse he mentions another end, viz. that he may, at the same time, make the angels also see God’s wisdom in his glorious scheme of redemption. — “Now at this time,” Implies that it was before a mystery kept hid from them in comparison of what it is now. And here is room enough for the angels to discover more and more to all eternity of the wisdom of God in this work.

Observe the medium by which the angels come by this knowledge, viz. the church. — “That now unto principalities — might be known by the church,” — *i.e.* by the things they see done in the church, or towards the church: and by what they see concerning the church. So hath it pleased the sovereign God, that the angels should have the most glorious discoveries of divine wisdom by his doings towards his church, a sort of beings much inferior to themselves. It hath pleased God to put this honour upon us.

The wisdom appearing in the way of salvation by Jesus Christ is far above the wisdom of the angels. For here it is mentioned as one end of God in revealing the contrivance of our salvation, that the angels thereby might see and know how great and manifold the wisdom of God is, to hold forth the divine wisdom to the angels view and admiration. But why is it so, if this wisdom be not higher than their own wisdom? It never would have been mentioned as one end of revealing the contrivance of redemption, that the

angels might see how manifold God's wisdom is, if all the wisdom to be seen in it was no greater than their own. It is mentioned as a wisdom such as they had never seen before, not in God, much less in themselves. That now might be known how manifold the wisdom of God is, now, four thousand years since the creation. — In all that time the angels had always beheld the face of God, and had been studying God's works of creation, yet they never, till that day, had seen any thing like that never knew how manifold God's wisdom is, as now they knew it by the church:

## SECTION 1

Wonderful things done, by which salvation is procured.

SUCH is the choice of the person chosen to be our redeemer, — the substituting of him in our room; — his incarnation — his life — his death — and exaltation. And,

**1.** We will consider the choice of the person to be our redeemer. When God designed the redemption of mankind, his great wisdom appears in that he pitched upon his own, his only-begotten, Son, to be the Person to perform the work. He was a redeemer of God's own choosing, and therefore he is called in Scripture, God's elect, (~~2~~<sup>1</sup> Isaiah 62:1.) The wisdom of choosing this person to be the redeemer, appears in his being every way a fit person for this undertaking. It was necessary, that the person that is the redeemer, should be a divine person. — None but a divine person was sufficient for this great work. The work is infinitely unequal to any creature. It was requisite, that the redeemer of sinners, should be himself infinitely holy. None could take away the infinite evil of sin, but one that was infinitely far from and contrary to sin himself. Christ is a fit person upon this account.

It was requisite, that the person, in order to be sufficient for this undertaking, should be one of infinite dignity and worthiness, that he might be capable of meriting infinite blessings The Son of God is a fit person on this account. It was necessary, that he should be a person of infinite power and wisdom, for this work is so difficult, that it requires such a one. Christ is a fit person also upon this account. It was requisite, that he should be a person infinitely dear to God the Father, in order to give an infinite value to his transactions in the Father's esteem, and that

the Father's love to him might balance the offence and provocation by our sins. Christ is a fit person upon this account. Therefore called the beloved, (~~and~~ Ephesians 1:6.) He hath made us accepted in the beloved.

It was requisite, that the person should be one that could act in this as of his own absolute right: one that, in himself, is not a servant or subject, because, if he is one that cannot act of his own right, he cannot merit any thing. He that is a servant, and that can do no more than he is bound to do, cannot merit. And then he that has nothing that is absolutely his own, cannot pay any price to redeem another. Upon this account Christ is a fit person, and none but a divine person can be fit. — And he must be a person also of infinite mercy and love, for no other person hut such an one would undertake a work so difficult, for a creature so unworthy as man. Upon this account also Christ is a fit person. — It was requisite that he should be a person of unchangeable perfect truth and faithfulness, otherwise he would not be fit to be depended on by us in so great an affair. Christ is also a fit person upon this account.

The wisdom of God in choosing his eternal Son, appears, not only in that he is a fit person, but in that he was the only fit person of all persons, whether created or uncreated. No created person, neither man, nor angel, was fit for this undertaking; fur we have just now shown) that he must be a person of infinite holiness — dignity — power — wisdom; infinitely dear to God — of infinite love and mercy; and one that may act of his own absolute right. But no creature, how excellent soever, has any one of these qualifications. — There are three uncreated persons, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and Christ alone of these was a suitable person for a redeemer. It was not meet, that the redeemer should be God the Father; because he, in the divine economy of the persons of the Trinity, was the person that holds the rights of the Godhead, and so was the person offended, whose justice required satisfaction; and was to be appeared by a mediator. It was not meet it should be the Holy Ghost, for in being mediator between the Father and the saints, he is in some sense so between the Father and the Spirit. The saints, in all their spiritual transactions with God, act by the Spirit: or rather, it is the Spirit of God that acts in them; they are the temples of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Spirit dwelling in them, is their principle of action, in all their transacting with God. But in these their spiritual transacting with God, they act by a

mediator. These spiritual and holy exercises cannot be acceptable, or avail any thing with God, as from a fallen creature, but by a mediator. Therefore Christ, in being mediator between the Father and the saints, may be said to be mediator between the Father and the Holy Spirit that acts in the saints. And therefore it was meet, that the mediator should not be either the Father or the Spirit, but a middle person between them both. It is the Spirit in the saints, that seeks the blessing of God, by faith and prayer; and, as the apostle says, with groanings that cannot be uttered, (~~8:26~~ Romans 8:26.) “Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us, with groaning that cannot be uttered.” The Spirit in the saints seeks divine blessings of God, by and through a mediator, and therefore that mediator must not be the Spirit, but another person.

It shows a divine wisdom, to know that he was a fit person. No other but one of divine wisdom could have known it. None but one of infinite wisdom could have thought of him to be a redeemer of sinners. For he, as he is God, is one of the persons offended by sin; against whom man by his sin had rebelled. Who but God infinitely wise could ever have thought of him to be a redeemer of sinners, against whom they had sinned, to whom they were enemies, and of whom they deserved infinitely ill? Who would ever have thought of him as one that should set his heart upon man, and exercise infinite love and pity to him, and exhibit infinite wisdom, power, and merit in redeeming him? We proceed,

**2.** To consider the substituting of this person in our room. After choosing the person to be our redeemer, the next step of divine wisdom is, to contrive the way how he should perform this work. If God had declared who the person was, that should do this work, and had gone no further; no creature could have thought which way this person could have performed the work. If God had told them, that his own Son must be the redeemer, and that he alone was a fit person for the work, and that he was a person every way fit and sufficient for it, — but had proposed to then to contrive a way how this fit and sufficient person should proceed, — we may well suppose that all created understandings would have been utterly at a loss.

The first thing necessary to be done, is, that this Son of God should become our representative and surety, and so be substituted in the sinner’s

room. But who of created intelligence's would have thought of any such thing as the eternal and infinitely beloved Son of God being substituted in the room of sinners? his standing in stead of a sinner, a rebel, an object of the wrath of God? Who would have thought of a person of infinite glory representing sinful worms, that had made themselves by sin infinitely provoking and abominable?

For, if the Son of God be substituted in the sinner's room, then his sin must be charged upon him: he will thereby take the guilt of the sinner upon himself; he must be subject to the same law that man was, troth as to the commands, and threatenings: but who would have thought of any such thing concerning the Son of God? But we proceed,

**3.** To consider the incarnation of Jesus Christ. The next step of divine wisdom in contriving how Christ should perform the work of redeeming sinners, was in determining his incarnation. Suppose God had revealed his counsels thus far to created understandings, that his own Son was the person chosen for this work, that he had substituted him in the sinner's room, and appointed him to take the sinner's obligations and guilt on himself — and had resealed no more, but had left the rest to them to find out, it is no way probable, that even then they could ever have thought of a way, whereby this person might actually have performed the work of redemption. For if the Son of God be substituted in the sinner's stead, then he takes the sinner's obligations on himself. For instance, he must take the obligation the sinner is under to perform perfect obedience to the divine law. But it is not probable, that any creature could have conceived how that could be possible. — How should a person who is the eternal JEHOVAH, become a servant, be under law, and perform obedience even to the law of man?

And again, if the Son of God be substituted in the sinner's stead, then he comes under the sinner's obligation to suffer the punishment which man's sin had deserved. And who could have thought that to be possible? For how should a divine person, who is essentially, unchangeably, and infinitely happy, suffer pain and torment? And how should he who is the object of God's infinitely dear love, suffer the wrath of his Father? It is not to be supposed, that created wisdom ever would have found out a way how to have got over these difficulties. But divine wisdom hath found out

a way, viz. by the incarnation of the Son of God. That the Word should be made flesh, that he might be both God and man, in one person: what created understanding could have conceived that such a thing was possible? Yet these things could never be proved to be impossible. This distinction duly considered will show the futility of many Socinian objections.

And if God had revealed to them, that it was possible, and even that it should be, but left them to find out how it should be; we may well suppose that they would all have been puzzled and confounded, to conceive of a way for so uniting a man to the eternal Son of God, that they should be but one person: that one who is truly a man in all respects, should indeed be the very same Son of God, that was with God from all eternity. This is a great mystery to us. Hereby, a person that is infinite, omnipotent, and unchangeable, is become, in a sense, a finite, a feeble man, a man subject to our sinless infirmities, passions, and calamities! The great God, the sovereign of heaven and earth, is thus become a worm of the dust. (<sup>15216</sup> Psalm 22:6.) “I am a worm, and no man.” He that is eternal and self-existent is by this union born of a woman! He who is the great original Spirit, is clothed with flesh and blood like one of us! He who is independent, self-sufficient, and all sufficient, now is come to stand in need of food and clothing: he becomes poor, “has not where to lay his head;” — stands in need of the charity of men; and is maintained by it! It is far above us, to conceive how it is done. It is a great wonder and mystery to us; but it was no mystery to divine wisdom.

**4.** The next thing to be considered is, the life of Christ in this world. The wisdom of God appears in the circumstances of his life — and in the work and business of his life.

**(1.)** The circumstances of his life. If God had revealed that his own Son should be incarnate, and should live in this world in the human nature, and it had been left to men to determine what circumstances of life would have been most suitable for him, human wisdom would have determined, that he should appear in the world in a most magnificent manner; with very extraordinary outward ensigns of honour, authority, and power, far above any of the kings of the earth: that here he should reign in great visible pomp and splendour over all nations. — And thus

it was that men's wisdom did determine, before Christ came. The wise, the great men among the Jews, scribes and Pharisees, who are called "Princes of this world," did expect that the Messiah would thus appear. But the wisdom of God chose quite otherwise: it chose that when the Son of God became man, he should begin his life in a stable; for many years dwell obscurely in a family of low degree in the world, and be in low outward circumstances: that he should be poor, and not have where to lay his head: that he should be maintained by the charity of some of his disciples; that he should "Grow up as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground," (<sup>281B</sup> Isaiah 53:2.) "That he should not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the streets," (<sup>281B</sup> Isaiah 13:2.) That he should come to Zion in a lowly manner, "riding on an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass." — "That he should be despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief."

And now the divine determination in this matter is made known, we may safely conclude that it is far the most suitable; and that it would not have been at all suitable for God, when he was manifest in flesh, to appear with earthly pomp, wealth, and grandeur. No! these things are infinitely too mean and despicable, for the Son of God to show as if he affected or esteemed them. Men, if they had this way proposed to them, would have been ready to condemn it, as foolish and very unsuitable for the Son of God. "But the foolishness of God is wiser than men," (<sup>4125</sup> 1 Corinthians 1:25.) "And God hath brought to nought the wisdom of this world, and the princes of this world," (<sup>4116</sup> 1 Corinthians 2:6.) Christ, by thus appearing in mean and low outward circumstances in the world, has poured contempt upon all worldly wealth and glory; and has taught us to despise it. And if it becomes mean men to despise them, how much more did it become the Son of God! And then Christ hereby hath taught us to be lowly in heart. If he, who was infinitely high and great, was thus lowly; how lowly should we be, who are indeed so vile!

**(2.)** The wisdom of God appears in the work and business of the life of Christ. Particularly, that he should perfectly obey the law of God, under such great temptations: that he should have conflicts with, and overcome for us, in a way of obedience, the powers of earth and hell: that he should be subject to, not only the moral law, but the ceremonial

also, that heavy yoke of bondage. Christ went through the time of his public ministry, in delivering to us divine instructions and doctrines. The wisdom of God appears in giving us such a one to be our prophet and teacher, who is a divine person: who is himself the very wisdom and word of God; and was from all eternity in the bosom of the Father. His word is of greater authority and weight than if delivered by the mouth of an ordinary prophet. And how wisely ordered that the same should be our teacher and Redeemer; in order that his relations and offices, as Redeemer, might the more sweeten and endear his instructions to us. We are ready to give heed to what is said by those who are dear to us. Our love to their persons makes us to delight in their discourse. It is therefore wisely ordered, that he who has done so much to endear himself to us, should be appointed our great prophet, to deliver to us divine doctrines.

**5.** The next thing to be considered is the death of Christ. This is a means of salvation for poor sinners, that no other but divine wisdom would have pitched upon; and when revealed, it was doubtless greatly to the surprise of all the hosts of heaven, and they never will cease to wonder at it. How astonishing is it, that a person who is blessed forever, and is infinitely and essentially happy, should endure the greatest sufferings that ever were endured on earth! That a person who is the supreme Lord and judge of the world, should be arraigned, and should stand at the judgment-seat of mortal worms, and then be condemned. That a person who is the living God, and the fountain of life, should be put to death. That a person who created the world, and gives life to all his creatures, should be put to death by his own creatures. That a person of infinite majesty and glory, and so the object of the love, praises, and adoration's of angels, should be mocked and spit upon by the vilest of men. That a person, infinitely good, and who is love itself, should suffer the greatest cruelty. That a person who is infinitely beloved of the Father, should be put to inexpressible anguish under his own Father's wrath. That he who is King of heaven, who hath heaven for his throne, and the earth for his footstool, should be buried in the prison of the grave. How wonderful is this! And yet this is the way that God's wisdom hath fixed upon, as the way of sinner's salvation, as neither unsuitable nor dishonourable to Christ.

**6.** The last thing done to procure salvation for sinners, is Christ's exaltation. Divine wisdom saw it needful, or most expedient, that the same person who died upon the cross, should sit at his right hand, on his own throne, as supreme Governor of the world, and should have particularly the absolute disposal of all things relating to man's salvation, and should be the judge of the world. This was needful, because it was requisite that the same person who purchased salvation, should have the bestowing of it for it is not fit, that God should at all transact with the fallen creature in a way of mercy, but by a mediator. And this is exceedingly for the strengthening of the faith and comfort of the saints, that he who hath endured so much to purchase salvation for them, has all things in heaven and in earth delivered unto him, that he might bestow eternal life on them for whom he purchased it. And that the same person that loved them so greatly as to shed his precious blood for them, has to be their final judge.

This then was another thing full of wonders, that he who was man as well as God; he who was a servant, and died like a malefactor; should be made the sovereign Lord of heaven and earth, angels and men; the absolute disposer of eternal life and death; the supreme judge of all created intelligent beings, for eternity: and should have committed to him all the governing power of God the Father; and that, not only as God, but as God-man, not exclusive of the human nature.

As it is wonderful, that a person who is truly divine should be humbled so as to become a servant, and to suffer as a malefactor; so it is in like manner wonderful, that he who is God-man, not exclusive of the manhood, should be exalted to the power and honour of the great God of heaven and earth. But such wonders as these have infinite wisdom contrived, and accomplished in order to our salvation.

## SECTION 2

*In this way of salvation God is greatly glorified.*

GOD has greatly glorified himself in the work of creation and providence. All his works praise him, and his glory shines brightly from them all: but as some stars differ from others in glory, so the glory of God shines brighter in some of his works than in others. And amongst all these, the

work of redemption is like the sun in his strength. The glory of the author is abundantly the most resplendent in this work.

**I.** Each attribute of God is glorified in the work of redemption. How God has exceedingly glorified his wisdom may more fully appear before we have done with this subject. But more particularly,

**1.** God hath exceedingly glorified his power in this work. — It shows the great and inconceivable power of God to unite natures so infinitely different, as the divine and human nature, in one person. If God can make one who is truly God, and one that is truly man, the self-same person, what is it that he cannot do? This is a greater and more marvellous work than creation.

The power of God most gloriously appears in man's being actually saved and redeemed in this way. In his being brought out of a state of sin and misery, into a conformity to God; and at last to the full and perfect enjoyment of God. This is a more glorious demonstration of divine power, than creating things out of nothing, upon two accounts. One is, the effect is greater and more excellent. To produce the new creature is a more glorious effect, than merely to produce a creature. — Making, a holy creature, a creature in the spiritual image of God, in the image of the divine excellencies, and a partaker of the divine nature — is a greater effect than merely to give being. And therefore as the effect is greater, it is a more glorious manifestation of power.

And then, in this effect of the actual redemption of sinners, the term from which, is more distant from the term to which, than in the work of creation. The term from which, in the work of creation, is nothing, and the term to which, is being. But the term from which, in the work of redemption, is a state infinitely worse than nothing; and the term to which, a holy and a happy being, a state infinitely better than mere being. The terms in the production of the last, are much more remote from one another, than in the first.

And then the production of this last effect, is a more glorious manifestation of power, than the work of creation; because, though in creation, the terms are very distant — as nothing is very remote from being — yet there is no opposition. Nothing makes no opposition to the

creating power of God. — But in redemption, the divine power meets with and overcomes great opposition. There is great opposition in a state of sin to a state of grace. Men's lusts and corruption's are exceedingly opposite to grace and holiness; and greatly resist the production of the effect. But this opposition is completely overcome in actual redemption.

Besides, there is great opposition from Satan. The power of God is very glorious in this work, because it therein conquers the strongest and most powerful enemies. Power never appears more illustrious than in conquering Jesus Christ. in this work, conquers and triumphs over thousands of devils, strong and mighty spirits, uniting all their strength against him. <sup><112></sup>Luke 11:21. "When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: but when a stronger than he shall overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoil." <sup><115></sup>Colossians 2:15. "And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in the cross."


**2.** The justice of God is exceedingly glorified in this work. God is so strictly and immutability just, that he would not spare his beloved Son when he look upon him the guilt of men's sins, and was substituted in the room of sinners. He would not abate him the least mite of that debt which justice demanded. Justice should take place, though it cost his infinitely dear Son his precious blood; and his enduring such extraordinary reproach, and pain, and death in its most dreadful form.

**3.** The holiness of God is also exceedingly glorious in this work. Never did God so manifest his hatred of sin as in the death and sufferings of his only-begotten Son Hereby he showed himself unappeasable to sin, and that it was impossible for him to be at peace with it.

**4.** God hath also exceedingly glorified his truth in this way, both in his threatenings and promises. Herein is fulfilled the threatenings of the law, wherein God said, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. And cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them." God showed hereby, that not only heaven and earth should pass away, but which is more that the blood of him who is the eternal Jehovah should be spilt, rather than one jot or tittle of his word should fail, till all be fulfilled.

**5.** And lastly, God has exceedingly glorified his mercy and love in this work. The mercy of God was an attribute never seen before in its exercises, till it was seen in this work of redemption, or the fruits of it. The goodness of God appeared towards the angels in giving them being and blessedness. It appeared glorious towards man in his primitive state, a state of holiness and happiness. But now God hath shown that he can find in his heart to love sinners, who deserve his infinite hatred. And not only hath he shown that he can love them, but love them so as to give them more and do greater things for them than ever he did for the holy angels, that never sinned nor offended their Creator. He loved sinful men so as to give them a greater gift than ever he gave the angels; so as to give his own Son, and not only to give him to be their possession and enjoyment, but to give him to be their sacrifice. And herein he has done more for them, than if he had given them all the visible world; yea, more than if he had given them all the angels, and all heaven besides. God hath loved them so, that hereby he purchased for them deliverance from eternal misery, and the possession of immortal glory.

**II.** Each person of the Trinity is exceedingly glorified in this work. Herein the work of redemption is distinguished from all the other works of God. The attributes of God are glorious in his other works; but the three persons of the Trinity are distinctly glorified in no work as in this of redemption. In this work every distinct person has his distinct parts and offices assigned him. Each one has his particular and distinct concern in it, agreeable to their distinct, personal properties, relations, and economical offices. The redeemed have an equal concern with and dependence upon each person, in this affair, and owe equal honour and praise to each of them.

The Father appoints and provides the Redeemer, and accepts the price of redemption. The Son is the Redeemer and the price. He redeems by offering up himself. The Holy Ghost immediately communicates to us the thing purchased; yea, and he is the good purchased. The sum of what Christ purchased for us is holiness and happiness. But the Holy Ghost is the great principle both of all holiness and happiness. The Holy Ghost is the sum of all that Christ purchased for men.  Galatians 3:13, 14. “He was made a curse for us, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit, through faith.”

The blessedness of the redeemed consists in partaking of Christ's fulness, which consists in partaking of that Spirit, which is given not by measure unto him. This is the oil that was poured upon the head of the church, which ran down to the members of his body; to the skirts of his garment. Thus we have an equal concern with and dependence upon each of the persons of the Trinity, distinctly; upon the Father, as he provides the Redeemer, and the person of whom the purchase is made, — the Son as the purchaser, and the price; — the Holy Ghost, as the good purchased.

### SECTION 3

*The good attained by salvation is wonderfully various  
and exceeding great.*

HERE we may distinctly consider — the variety — and the greatness — of the good procured for men.

**II.** The good procured by salvation is wonderfully various. Here are all sorts of good procured for fallen man, that he does or can really need, or is capable of. The wisdom of God appears in the way of salvation, in that it is most worthy of an infinitely wise God, because every way perfect and sufficient. We, in our fallen state, are most necessitous creatures, full of wants: but they are here all answered. Every sort of good is here procured; whatever would really contribute to our happiness, and even many things we could not have thought of, had not Christ purchased them for us, and revealed them to us. Every demand of our circumstances, and craving of our natures, is here exactly answered. — For instance,

**1.** We stand in need of peace with God. We had provoked God to anger, his wrath abode upon us, and we needed to have it appeased. This is done for us in this way of salvation, for Christ, by shedding his blood, has fully satisfied justice, and appeased God's wrath, for all that shall believe in him. By the sentence of the law we were condemned to hell, and we needed to have our sins pardoned that we might be delivered from hell. But in this work, pardon of sin and deliverance from hell, is fully purchased for us.

**2.** We needed not only to have God's wrath appeased, and our sins pardoned; but we needed to have the favour of God. To have God, not

only not our enemy, but our friend. Now God's favour is purchased for us by the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

**3.** We needed not only to be delivered from hell, but also to have some satisfying happiness bestowed. Man has a natural craving and thirst after happiness; and will thirst and crave, till his capacity is filled. And his capacity is of vast extent, and nothing but an infinite good can fill and satisfy his desires. But, notwithstanding, provision is made in this way of salvation to answer those needs, there is a satisfying happiness purchased for us; that which is fully answerable to the capacity and cravings of our souls.

Here is food procured to answer all the appetites and faculties of our souls. God has made the soul of man of a spiritual nature, and therefore he needs a corresponding happiness, some spiritual object, in the enjoyment of which he may be happy. Christ has purchased the enjoyment of God, who is the great and original Spirit, as the portion of our souls. And he hath purchased the Spirit of God to come and dwell in us as an eternal principle of happiness.

God hath made man a rational, intelligent creature, and man needs some good that shall be a suitable object of his understanding, for him to contemplate, wherein he may have full and sufficient exercise for his capacious faculties, in their utmost extent. Here is an object that is great and noble, and worthy of the exercise of the noblest faculties of the rational soul. — God himself should be theirs, for them for ever to behold and contemplate, his glorious perfection's and works are most worthy objects, and there is room enough for improving them, and still to exercise their faculties to ail eternity. — What object can be more worthy to exercise the understanding of a rational soul, than the glories of the Divine Being, with which the heavenly intelligence's, and even the infinite understanding of God himself is entertained?

Our souls need some good that shall be a suitable object of the will and affections; a suitable object for the choice, the acquiescence, the love, and the joy of the rational soul. Provision is made for this also in this way of salvation. There is an infinitely excellent Being offered to be chosen, to be rested in, to be loved, to be rejoiced in, by us: even God himself, who is infinitely lovely, the fountain of all good, a fountain that can never be

exhausted, where we can be in no danger of going to excess in our love and joy: and here we may be assured ever to find our joy and delight in enjoyments answerable to our love and desires.

4. There is all possible enjoyment of this procured in this way of salvation. When persons entirely set their love upon another, they naturally desire to see that person: merely to hear of the person, does not satisfy love. So here is provision made that we should see God, the object of our supreme love. Not only that we should hear and read of him in his word, but that we should see him with a spiritual eye here: and not only so, but that we should have the satisfaction of seeing God face to face hereafter. This is promised,

“Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God. it is promised, that we shall not see God, as through a glass darkly, as we do now, but face to face.” (408 Matthew 5:8.)

430 1 Corinthians 13:12. That we shall see Christ as he is. 418 1 John 3:2.

We naturally desire not only to see those whom we love, but to converse with them. Provision is made for this also, that we should have spiritual conversation with God while in this world, and that we should be hereafter admitted to converse with Christ in the most intimate manner possible. Provision is made in this way of salvation, that we should converse with God much more intimately, than otherwise it would have been possible for us; for now Christ is incarnate, is in our nature: he is become one of us, whereby we are under advantages for an immensely more free and intimate converse with him, than could have been, if he had remained only in the divine nature, and so in a nature infinitely distant from us. — We naturally desire not only to converse with those whom we greatly love, but to dwell with them. Provision, through Christ, is made for this. It is purchased and provided that we should dwell with God in his own house in heaven, which is called our Father’s house. — To dwell for ever in God’s presence, and at his right hand.

We naturally desire to have a right in that person whom we greatly love. Provision is made, in this way of salvation, that we should have a right in God; a right to him. This is the promise of the covenant of grace, “That he will be our God.” God, with all his glorious perfections and attributes,

with all his power and wisdom, and with all his majesty and glory, will be ours; so that we may call him our inheritance, and the portion of our souls: what we can humbly claim by faith, having this portion made over to us by a firm instrument, by a covenant ordered in all things and sure. — And we may also hereby claim a right to Jesus Christ. Love desires that the light should be mutual. The lover desires, not only to have a right to the beloved, but that the beloved should also have a right to him: he desires to be his beloved's, as well as his beloved should be his. Provision is also made for this, in this wise method of salvation, that God should have a special propriety in the redeemed, that they should be in a distinguishing manner his that they should be his peculiar people. We are told that God sets apart the godly for himself, ~~<B>~~ Psalm 4:3. They are called God's jewels. The spouse speaks it with great satisfaction and rejoicing, Cant. 2:16. "My beloved is mine, and I am his."

Love desires to stand in some near relation to the beloved. Provision is made by Christ, that we should stand in the nearest possible relation to God; that he should be our Father, and we should be his children. We are often instructed in the Holy Scriptures, that God is the Father of believers, and that they are his family. — And not only so, but they stand in the nearest relation to Christ Jesus. There is the closest union possible. The souls of believers are marked to Christ. The church is the bride, the Lamb's wife. Yea, there is yet a nearer relation than can be represented by such a similitude. Believers are as the very members of Christ, and of his flesh and of his bones, ~~<B>~~ Ephesians 5:30. Yea, this is not near enough yet, but they are one spirit, ~~<B>~~ 1 Corinthians 6:17.

Love naturally inclines to a conformity to the beloved. To have those excellencies, upon the account of which he is beloved, copied in himself Provision is made in this way of salvation, that we may be conformed to God, that we shall be transformed into the same image.

"We all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory."  
(~~<B>~~ 2 Corinthians 3:18.)



— And that hereafter we shall see him as he is, and be like him.

It is the natural desire of love to do something for the beloved, either for his pleasure or honour. Provision is made for this also in this way of salvation; that we should be made instruments of glorifying God, and promoting his kingdom, here, and of glorifying him to all eternity.

**5.** In this way of salvation, provision is made for our having every sort of good that man naturally craves; as honour, wealth, and pleasure. — Here is provision made that we should be brought to the highest honour. This is what God has promised, that those that honour him, he will honour. And that a true Christians shall be kings and priests unto God. — Christ has promised, that as his Father has appointed unto him a kingdom, so he will appoint unto them, that they may eat and drink at his table in his kingdom. He has promised to crown them with a crown of glory, and that they shall sit with him in his throne. That he will confess their names before his Father, and before his angels. That he will give them a new name; and that they shall walk with him in white.

Christ has also purchased for them the greatest wealth. All those that are in Christ are rich. They are now rich. They have the best riches; being rich in faith, and the graces of the Spirit of God. They have gold tried in the fire. They have durable riches and righteousness. They have treasure in heaven, where neither thief approacheth, nor moth corrupteth. An inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and fadeth not away. They are possessors of all things.

Christ has also purchased pleasure for them, pleasures that are immensely preferable to all the pleasures of sense, most exquisitely sweet, and satisfying. He has purchased for them fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore at God's right hand; and they shall drink of the river of God's pleasure.

**6.** Christ has purchased all needed good both for soul and body. While we are here, we stand in need of these earthly things, and of these Christ has purchased all that are best for us. He has purchased for the body that God should feed, and clothe us.  Matthew 6:26. "How much more shall he feed you, O ye of little faith!" How much more shall he clothe you! Christ has purchased, that God should take care of us, and provide what is needed of these things, as a father provides for his children.  1 Peter 5:7. "Casting your care upon him, for he careth.

**7.** Christ has purchased good that is suitable for his people in all conditions. There is, in this way of salvation, respect had to, and provision made for, all circumstances that they can be in. Here is provision made, for a time of affliction for a time of poverty and pinching want — for a time of bereavement and mourning — for spiritual darkness — for a day of temptation — for a time of persecution — and for a time of death. Here is such a provision made that is sufficient to carry a person above death, and all its terrors; and to give him a complete triumph over that king-of terrors. Here is enough to sweeten the grave, and make it cease to seem terrible. Yea, enough to make death in prospect to seem desirable; and in its near approach to be not terrible but joyful.

**8.** There is provision made in this way of salvation for the life and blessedness of soul and body to all eternity. Christ has purchased, that we should be delivered from a state of temporal death, as well as spiritual and eternal. The bodies of the saints shall be raised to life. He has purchased all manner of perfection for the body of which it is capable. It shall be raised a spiritual body in incorruption and glory, and be made like Christ's glorious body, to shine as the sun in the kingdom of his Father, and to exist in a glorified state in union with the soul to all eternity.

**9.** But man in his fallen state still needs something else in order to his happiness, than that these fore-mentioned blessings should be purchased for him, viz. He needs to be qualified for the possession and enjoyment of them. In order to our having a title to these blessings of the covenant of grace, [so that we can scripturally claim an interest in them,] there is a certain condition must be performed by us. We must believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and accept of him as offered in the gospel for a Saviour. But as we cannot do this of ourselves, Christ has purchased this also for all the elect. He has purchased, that they shall have faith given them, whereby they shall be [actively] united to Christ, and so have a [pleadable] title to his benefits.

But still something further is necessary for man, in order to his coming to the actual possession of the inheritance. A man, as soon as he has believed, has a title to the inheritance: but in order to come to the actual possession of it, he must persevere in a way of holiness. There is not only a gate that must be entered, but there is a narrow way that must be travelled, before

we can arrive at heavenly blessedness, and that is a way of universal and persevering holiness. But men, after they have believed, cannot persevere in a way of holiness, of themselves. But there is sufficient provision made for this also, in the way of salvation by Jesus Christ. The matter of a saint's perseverance is sufficiently secured by the purchase that Christ has made.

But still there is something else needful in order to qualify a person for the actual entering upon the enjoyments and employments of a glorified estate, viz. that he should be made perfectly holy, that all remainders of sin should be taken away; for there cannot any sin enter into heaven. No soul must go into the glorious presence of God, with the least degree of the filth of sin. But there is provision made: for Christ has purchased that all sin shall be taken away out of the hearts of believers at death, and that they should be made perfectly holy: whereby they shall be fully and perfectly qualified to enter upon the pleasures and enjoyments of the new Jerusalem.

Christ has purchased all, both objective and inherent good: not only a portion to be enjoyed by us; but all those inherent qualifications necessary to our enjoyment of it. He has purchased not only justification, but sanctification and glorification; both holiness and happiness. — Having considered the good attained in the way of salvation as mankind and various, I now proceed, as proposed,

**II.** To consider the good attained for us by this way of salvation, as exceeding great.

There is not only every sort of good we need, but of every sort in that degree, so as to answer the extent of our capacity, and the greatest stretch of our desires, and indeed of our conceptions. They are not only greater than our conceptions are here, but also greater than ever they could be, were it not that God's relation, and our own experience, will teach us. They are greater than the tongue of angels can declare, the deliverance that we have in it is exceeding great; it is deliverance from guilt, from sin itself, from the anger of God, and from the miseries of hell.

How great is the good conferred! The objective good is the infinite God, and the glorious Redeemer, Jesus Christ. How great is the love of the

Father, and the Son I And how near the relation between them and the true believer! How close the union, how intimate the communion, and ultimately how clear will be the vision in glory!

There are great communications made to the believing soul on earth, but how much greater in heaven! Then their conformity to God will be perfect, their enjoyment of him will be full, their honour great and unsullied, and the glory of body and soul ineffable. The riches of the Christian are immense; all things are included in his treasure. Pleasures unspeakably and inconceivably great await him; rivers of delight, fulness of joy; and all of infinite duration.

The benefit procured for us, is doubly infinite. Our deliverance is an infinite benefit, because the evil we are delivered from is infinite, and the positive good bestowed is eternal; viz. the full enjoyment of all those blessings merited.

## SECTION 4

*Now angels are benefited by the salvation of men.*

So hath the wisdom of God contrived this affair, that the benefit of what he has done therein should be so extensive, as to reach the elect angels. It is for men that the work of redemption is wrought out; and yet the benefit of the things done in this work is not confined to them, though all that is properly called redemption, or included in it, is confined to men. The angels cannot partake in this, having never fallen, yet they have great indirect benefit by it. God hath ordered, at what has been done in this directly and especially for men, should redound to the exceeding benefit of all intelligent creatures who are in favour with God. The benefit of it is so diffusive as to reach heaven itself. So great and manifold is the good attained in this work, that those glorious spirits who are so much above us, and were so highly exalted in happiness before, yet should receive great addition hereby. — I will show how in some particulars.

**1.** The angels hereby see a great and wonderful manifestation of the glory of God. The happiness of angels as well as of men consists very much in beholding the glory of God. The excellency of the Divine Being is a most delightful subject of contemplation to the saints on earth but much more to

the angels in heaven. The more holy any being is, the more sweet and delightful will it be to him to behold the glory and beauty of the Supreme Being. — Therefore the beholding of the glory of God must be ravishing to the holy angels, who are perfect in holiness, and never had their minds leavened with sin. The manifestations of the glory of God, are as it were the food that satisfies the angels; they live thereon. It is their greatest happiness.

It is without doubt much of their employment to behold the glory of God appearing in his works. Therefore this work of redemption greatly contributes to their happiness and delight, as the glory of God is so exceedingly manifested by it. For what is done, is done in the sight of the angels, as is evident by many passages of Holy Scripture And they behold the glory of God appearing herein with; entertainment and delight, as it is manifest by <sup>(1)</sup>1 Peter 1:12. “Which things the angels desire to look into.”

The angels have this advantage, that now they may behold the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, where it shines with a peculiar lustre and brightness.

“Great is the mystery of godliness, God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels.” (<sup>(2)</sup>1 Timothy 3:5.)

Perhaps all God’s attributes are more gloriously manifested in this work, than in any other that ever the angels saw There is certainly a fuller manifestation of some of his attributes, than ever they saw before, as is evident by the text. And especially, it is so with respect to the mercy of God, that sweet and endearing attribute of the divine nature. The angels of heaven never saw so much grace manifested before, as in the work of redemption nor in any measure equal to it. How full of joy doth it fill the hearts of the angels, to see such a boundless and bottomless ocean of love and grace in their God. And therefore with what rejoicing do all the angels praise Christ for his being slain! <sup>(3)</sup>Revelation 5:11, 12. “And I beheld and heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.”

**2.** They have this benefit by it, that hereby Jesus Christ, God-man, is become their head. God, subsisting in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, was the king of angels, and would have been, if it had not been for our redemption. But it was owing to what is done in this work, that Jesus Christ, as God-man, becomes the head of the angels. Christ is now not only the head of angels simply as God, but as God-man. ◀Colossians 2:10. “And ye are complete in him, who is the head of all principality and power.” ◀Ephesians 1:20-22. “Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him on his own right hand in heavenly places, far above all principality and power, and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come. And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church.”

This is a part of the exaltation and glory of Christ which God confers on him as his reward. And not only so, but it is greatly to the angels’ benefit. It is God’s manner in his dealings with his elect creatures, in the same works wherein he glorifies himself, or his Son, greatly to benefit them. The same dealings of his that are most for his glory, shall be most for their good. — That Christ, God-man, should be made the head of the angels, is greatly to their benefit several ways.

**(1.)** Because they become hereby more nearly related to so glorious a person, the Son of God, than otherwise they would have. The angels esteem it a great honour done them to be related to such a person as Jesus Christ, God-man, who is an infinitely honourable person.

The angels, by Christ becoming their head, are with the saints gathered together in one in Christ, ◀Ephesians 1:10. They by virtue hereof, though Christ be not their Redeemer as he is ours, have a right and propriety in this glorious person, as well as we. He is theirs: though not their Saviour, yet he is their head of government, and head of influence.

**(2.)** Again, this is greatly to their benefit; as they are under advantages for a far more intimate converse with God. The divine nature is at an infinite distance from the nature of angels, as well as from the nature of man. This distance forbids a familiarity and intimacy of intercourse. — It is therefore a great advantage to the angels, that God is come down to them in a created nature, and in that nature is become their head, so

that their intercourse and enjoyment may be more intimate. They are invited by the similar qualifications of the created nature, with which the Son of God is invested.

**(3.)** It is for the benefit of the angels, as hereby the elect of mankind are gathered into their society. Christ, by the work of redemption, gathers in the elect of mankind to join the angels of heaven.

“That in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him.” (<sup>4110</sup>Ephesians 1:10.)

Men are brought in to join with the angels in their work of praising God, to partake with them of their enjoyments. The angels greatly rejoice at this. They rejoice when but one person is gathered in, as Christ teaches us, <sup>4250</sup>Luke 15:10. “Likewise I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.” The heavenly society is made more complete by this accession of the saints to it, they contribute to the happiness of each other. The angels rejoice that others are added to join them and assist them in praising God. — And thus the vacancy by the fall of angels is filled up.

**(4.)** It tends to make the angels to prize their happiness the more, when they see how much it cost to purchase the same happiness for man. Though they knew so much, yet they are not incapable of being taught more and more the worth of their own happiness. For when they saw how much it cost to purchase the same happiness for man even the precious blood of the Son of God, this tended to give them a great sense of the infinite value of their happiness. They never saw such a testimony of the value of the eternal enjoyment of God before.

Thus we have shown, how the wisdom of God appears in the work of redemption in the good ends attained thereby, with respect to God, men, and good angels.

But are there any good ends obtained with respect to bad angels, God’s grand enemies? Undoubtedly there are, as may appear from the few following considerations. Satan and his angels rebelled against God in heaven, and proudly presumed to try their strength with his. And when God by his almighty cower overcame the strength of Satan, and sent him

like lightning from heaven to hell with all his army Satan still hoped to get the victory by subtlety. Though he could not overcome by power; yet he hoped to succeed by craft, and so by his subtlety to disappoint God of his end in creating this lower world. — God therefore has shown his great wisdom in overthrowing Satan's design. He has disappointed the devices of the crafty, so that they cannot perform their enterprise; he has carried their counsel headlong.

**1.** Satan thought to have disappointed God of his glory, which he designed in creating this lower world, and to make mankind be for his own glory in setting up himself god over them. Now Christ, by what he has done in the work of redemption, has overthrown Satan; and utterly frustrated him as to this end. God is exceedingly glorified in the elect, to the surprise of angels and devils. God by redemption has all the glory that he intended, and more than either men, angels, or devils imagined that God intended. God might have glorified his justice in the destruction of all mankind. But it was God's design in creating the world, to glorify his goodness and love; and not only to be glorified eventually, but to be served and glorified actually by men. Satan intended to frustrate God of this end, but, by the redemption of Jesus Christ, his design is confounded.

**2.** Another design of the devil, was to gratify his envy in the utter destruction of mankind. But, by the redemption of Jesus Christ, this malicious design of Satan is crossed: because all the elect are brought to their designed happiness, which is much greater than ever Satan thought it was in God's heart to bestow on man. And though some of mankind are left to be miserable, yet that does not answer Satan's end; for this also is ordered for God's glory. No more are left miserable than God saw meet to glorify his justice upon.

One end why God suffered Satan to do what he did in procuring the fall of man, was that his Son might be glorified in conquering that strong, subtle, and proud spirit and triumphing over him. How glorious doth Christ Jesus appear in baffling and triumphing over this proud king of darkness, and all the haughty confederate rulers of hell. How glorious a sight is it to see the meek and patient Lamb of God leading that proud, malicious, and mighty enemy in triumph! What songs doth this cause in heaven! It was a glorious sight in Israel to see David carrying the head of Goliath in triumph to

Jerusalem. It appeared glorious to the daughters of Israel, who came out with timbrels and with dances, and sang, “Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands.” But how much more glorious to see the Son of David, the Son of God, carrying the head of the spiritual Goliath, the champion of the armies of hell, in triumph to the heavenly Jerusalem! It is with a principal view to this, that Christ is called, “the Lord of hosts, or armies, and a man of war,” ~~Exodus~~ Exodus 15:3. And ~~Psalm~~ Psalm 24:8. “Who is this king of glory! The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.”

## SECTION 5

*In this way of salvation wonderful glory redounds to God,  
as the effect of divine wisdom.*

**1.** BY this contrivance for our redemption, God’s greatest dishonour is made an occasion of his greatest glory. Sin is a thing by which God is greatly dishonoured; the nature of its principle is enmity against God, and contempt of him. And man, by his rebellion, has greatly dishonoured God. But this dishonour, by the contrivance of our redemption, is made an occasion of the greatest manifestation of God’s glory that ever was. Sin, the greatest evil, is made an occasion of the greatest good. It is the nature of a principle of sin that it seeks to dethrone God: but this is hereby made an occasion of the greatest manifestation of God’s royal majesty and glory that ever was. By sin, man has slighted and despised God: but this is made an occasion of his appearing the more greatly honourable. Sin casts contempt upon the authority and law of God: but this, by the contrivance of our redemption, is made the occasion of the greatest honour done to that same authority, and to that very law. It was a greater honour to the law of God that Christ was subject to it, and obeyed it, than if all mankind had obeyed it. It was a greater honour to God’s authority that Christ showed such great respect, and such entire subjection to it, than the perfect obedience of all the angels in heaven. Man by his sin showed his enmity against the holiness of God: but this is made an occasion of the greatest manifestation of God’s holiness. The holiness of God never appeared to so great a degree, as when God executed vengeance upon his own dear Son.

**2.** So has the wisdom of God contrived that those attributes are glorified in man's salvation, whose glory seemed to require his destruction. When man had fallen, several attributes of God seemed to require his destruction. The justice of God requires, that sin be punished, as it deserves: but it deserves no less than eternal destruction. God's it deserves: but it deserves no less than eternal destruction. God proclaims it as a part of the glory of his nature, that he will in no wise clear the guilty, <sup>Exodus 34:7</sup>. The holiness of God seemed to require man's destruction, for God by his holiness infinitely hates sin. This seemed to require therefore that God should manifest a proportional hatred of the sinner, and that he should be forever an enemy unto him. The truth of God seemed also to require man's destruction, for eternal death was what God had threatened for sin, one jot or tittle of which threatening cannot by any means pass away. But yet so has God contrived, that those very attributes not only allow of man's redemption, and are not inconsistent with it, but they are glorified in it. Even vindictive justice is glorified in the death and sufferings of Christ. The holiness of God or his holy hatred of sin, that seemed to require man's damnation, is seen in Christ's dying for sinners. So herein also is manifested and glorified the truth of God, in the threatenings of the law.

**3.** Yea, it is so ordered now that the glory of these attributes requires the salvation of those that believe. The justice of God that required man's damnation, and seemed inconsistent with his salvation, now as much requires the salvation of those that believe in Christ, as ever before it required their damnation. Salvation is an absolute debt to the believer from God, so that he may in justice demand it, on account of what his surety has done. For Christ has satisfied justice fully for his sin, so that it is but a thing that may be challenged, that God should now release the believer from the punishment, it is but a piece of justice, that the creditor should release the debtor, when he has fully paid the debt. And again, the believer may demand eternal life, because it has been merited by Christ, by a merit of dignity. So is it contrived, that that justice that seemed to require man's destruction, now requires his salvation.

So the truth of God that seemed to require man's damnation, now requires his salvation. At the same time that the threatening of the law stands good, there is a promise of eternal life to many who have broken the law. They both stand good at the same time, and the truth of God requires that both

should be fulfilled. How much soever they seemed to clash, yet so is the matter contrived in this way of salvation, that both are fulfilled, and do not interfere one with another.

At the very time that God uttered the threatening, “In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die;” and at the time that Adam had first eaten the forbidden fruit; there was then an existing promise, that many thousands of Adam’s race should obtain eternal life. This promise was made to Jesus Christ, before the world was. What a difficulty and inconsistency did there seem to be here? But it was no difficulty to the wisdom of God, that the promise and the threatening should be both fully accomplished to the glory of God’s truth in each of them.

“Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other.” (PSALM 85:10.)

**4.** Those very attributes which seemed to require man’s destruction, are more glorious in his salvation, than they would have been in its destruction. The revenging justice of God is a great deal more manifested in the death of Christ, than it would have been if all mankind had been sufferers to all eternity. If man had remained under the imputation of sin, the justice of God would not have had such a trial, as it had, when his own Son was under the imputation of sin. If all mankind had stood guilty, and justice had called for vengeance upon them, that would not have been such a trial of the inflexibleness and unchangeableness of the justice of God, as when his own Son, who was the object of his infinite love, and in whom he infinitely delighted, stood with the imputation of guilt upon him.

This was the greatest trial that could be, to manifest whether God’s justice was perfect and unchangeable, or not; whether God was so just that he would not upon any account abate of what justice required; and whether God would have any respect to persons in judgment.

So the majesty of God appears much more in the sufferings of Christ than it would have done in the eternal sufferings of all mankind. The majesty of a prince appears greater in the just punishment of great personages under the guilt of treason, than of inferior persons. The sufferings of Christ have this advantage over the eternal sufferings of the wicked, for impressing upon the minds of the spectators a sense of the dread majesty of God, and

his infinite hatred of sin, viz. that the eternal sufferings of the wicked never will be seen actually accomplished, and finished, whereas they have seen that which is equivalent to those eternal sufferings actually fulfilled and finished in the sufferings of Christ.

**5.** Such is the wisdom of this way of salvation, that the more any of the elect have dishonored God, the more is God glorified in this redemption. Such wonders as these are accomplished by the wisdom of this way of salvation. Such things as these, if they had been proposed to any created intelligence, would have seemed strange and unaccountable paradoxes, till the counsels of divine wisdom concerning the matter were unfolded.

So sufficient is this way, of salvation, that it is not inconsistent with any of God's attributes to save the chief of sinners. However great a sinner any one has been, get God can, if he pleases, save without any injury to the glory of any one attribute. And not only so, but the more sinful any one has been, the more doth God glorify himself in his salvation. The more doth he glorify his power, that he can redeem one in whom sin so abounds, and of whom Satan hath such strong possession. — The greater triumph has Christ over his grand adversary, in redeeming and setting at liberty from his bondage those that were his greatest vessels. The more doth the sufficiency of Christ appear, in that it is sufficient for such vile wretches.

The more is the sovereignty and boundless extent of the mercy of God manifested, in that it is sufficient to redeem those that are most undeserving.

“Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.”

( Romans 5:20.)

## SECTION 6

*How the wisdom of God appears in the manner and circumstances of obtaining the good intended.*

WE now come to take notice of some wonderful circumstances of the attainment of our good, hereby; which shows the great wisdom of this contrivance.

**1.** So hath God contrived in this way,, that a sinful creature should become not guilty; and that he who has no righteousness of his own, should become righteous. These things, if they had been proposed, would have appeared contradictions to any but the divine understanding.

If it had been proposed to any created intelligence, to find out a way in which a sinful creature should not be a guilty creature, how impossible would it have been judged, that there should be any way at all. It would doubtless have been judged impossible but that he who has committed sin, must stand guilty of the sin he has committed; and if sin necessarily obliges to punishment, it must oblige him who has committed it. If punishment and sin be inseparable, then that punishment and the sinner are inseparable. If the law denounces death to the person who is guilty of sin, and if it be impossible that the law should not take place, then he who has committed sin must die. Thus any created understanding would have thought.

And if it had been proposed, that there should be some way found out, wherein man might be righteous without fulfilling righteousness himself; so that he might reasonably and properly be looked upon and accepted as a righteous person, and adjudged to the reward of righteousness, and yet have no righteousness of his own, but the contrary — that he should be righteous by the righteousness of the law, by a perfect righteousness, and yet have broken the law, and done nothing else but break it — this doubtless would have been looked upon as impossible and contradictions.

But yet the wisdom of God has truly accomplished each of these things. He hath accomplished that men, though sinners, should be without guilt, in that he hath found out a way that the threatenings of the law should truly and properly be fulfilled, and punishment be executed on sin, and yet not on the sinner. The sufferings of Christ answer the demands of the law, with respect to the sins of those who believe in him; and justice is truly satisfied thereby. And the law is fulfilled and answered by the obedience of Christ, so that his righteousness should properly be our righteousness. Though not performed by us, yet it is properly and reasonably accepted for us, as much as if we had performed it ourselves. Divine wisdom has so contrived, that such an interchanging of sin and righteousness should be consistent, and most agreeable with reason, with the law, and God's holy

attributes. For Jesus Christ has so united himself to us, and us to him, as to make himself ours, our head. The love of Christ to the elect is so great, that God the Father looks upon it proper and suitable to account Christ and the elect as one; and accordingly to account what Christ does and suffers, as if they did and suffered it. — That love of Christ which is so great as to render him willing to put himself in the stead of the elect, and to bear the misery that they deserved, does, in the Father's account, so unite Christ and the elect, that they may be looked upon as legally one.

**2.** It shows wonderful wisdom that our good should be procured by such seemingly unlikely and opposite means, as the humiliation of the Son of God. When Christ was about to undertake that great work of redemption, he did not take that method that any creature-wisdom would have thought the most proper. Creature-wisdom would have determined that in order to his effectual and more gloriously accomplishing such a great work, he should rather have been exalted higher, if it had been possible, rather than humbled so low. — Earthly kings and princes, when they are about to engage in any great and difficult work, will put on their strength, and will appear in all their majesty and power, that they may be successful. — But when Christ was about to perform the great work of redeeming a lost world, the wisdom of God took an opposite method, and determined that he should be humbled and abased to a mean state, and appear in low circumstances. He did not fleck himself with glory, but laid it aside. He emptied himself. ~~am~~ **Philippians 2:6, 7, 8.** “Being in the form of God — he made himself of no reputation, and took on him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” — Creature-wisdom would have thought that Christ, in order to perform this great work, should deck himself with all his strength; but divine wisdom determined, that he should be made weak, or put on the infirmities of human nature.

And why did divine wisdom determine that he should become thus weak? It was that he might be subject to want, and to suffering, and to the power and malice of his enemies. But then what advantage could it be to him in this work, to be subject to the power and malice of his enemies? It was the very design on which he came into the world, to overcome his enemies. Who would have thought that this was the way to overthrow them, that

he should become weak and feeble, and for that very end that he might be subject to their power and malice. But this is the very means by which God determined, that Christ should prevail against his enemies, even that he should be subject to their power, that they might prevail against him, so as to put him to disgrace, and pain, and death.

What other but divine wisdom could ever have determined, that this was the way to be taken in order to being successful in the work of our redemption. This would have appeared to creature-wisdom the most direct course to be frustrated that could be devised. But it was indeed the way to glorious success, and the only way.

“The foolishness of God is wiser than men.”

(~~1~~1 Corinthians 1:25.)

God has brought strength out of weakness glory out of ignominy and reproach. Christ’s shame and reproach are the only means by which a way is made to our eternal honour.

The wisdom of God hath made Christ’s humiliation the means of our exaltation; his coming down from heaven is that which brings us to heaven. The wisdom of God hath made life the fruit of death. The death of Christ was the only means by which we could have eternal life. The death of a person who was God, was the only way by which we could come to have life in God. — Here favour is made to arise out of wrath, our acceptance into God’s favour out of God’s wrath upon his own Son. A blessing rises out of a curse; our everlasting blessedness, from Christ being made a curse for us. Our righteousness is made to rise out of Christ’s imputed guilt. Me was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God. ~~2~~2 Corinthians 5:21. By such wonderful means hath the wisdom of God procured our salvation.

**3.** Our sin and misery, by this contrivance, are made an occasion of our greater blessedness. This is a very wonderful thing. It would have been a very wonderful thing if we had been merely restored from sin and misery, to be as we were before, but it was a much more wonderful thing that we should be brought to a higher blessedness than ever; and that our sin and misery should be the occasion of it, and should make way for it.

**(1.)** It was wonderful that sin should be made the occasion of our greater blessedness; for sin deserves misery. By our sin we had deserved to be everlastingly miserable; but this is so turned by divine wisdom, that it is made an occasion of our being more happy. — It was a strange thing that sin should be the occasion of any thing else but misery: but divine wisdom has found out a way whereby the sinner might not only escape being miserable, but that he should be happier than before he sinned; Yea, than he would have been if he had never sinned at all. And this sin and unworthiness of his, are the occasion of this greater blessedness.

**(2.)** It was a wonderful thing that man's own misery, should be an occasion of his greater happiness. For happiness and misery are contraries; and man's misery was very great. He was under the wrath and curse of God, and condemned to everlasting burnings. — But the sin and misery of man, by this contrivance, are made an occasion of his being more happy, not only than he was before the fall, but than he would have been if he never had fallen.

Our first parents, if they had stood and persevered in perfect obedience, till God had given them the fruit of the tree of life as a seal of their reward, would probably have been advanced to higher happiness: for they before were but in a state of probation for their reward. And it is not to be supposed but that their happiness was to have been greater after they had persisted in obedience, and had actually received the reward, than it was while they were in a state of trial for it. But by the redemption of Christ, the sin and misery of the elect are made an occasion of their being brought to a higher happiness than mankind would have had if they had persisted in obedience till they had received the reward. — For,

**1st,** Man is hereby brought to a greater and nearer union with God. If man had never fallen, God would have remained man's friend; he would have enjoyed God's favour, and so would have been the object of Christ's favour, as he would have had the favour of all the persons of the Trinity. — But now Christ becoming our surety and Saviour, and having taken on him our nature, occasions between Christ and us an union of a quite different kind, and a nearer relation than otherwise would have been. The fall is the occasion of Christ's becoming our head, and the church his body.

And believers are become his brethren, and spouse, in a manner that otherwise would not have been. And by our union with Christ we have a greater union with God the Father. We are sons by virtue of our union with the natural Son of God. <sup><804></sup>Galatians 4:4-6. “When the fullness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father.” And therefore Christ has taught us, in all our addresses to God, to call him our Father, in like manner as he calls him Father <sup><817></sup>John 20:17. “Go tell my brethren, behold I ascend to my Father, and your Father:”

This is one of the wonderful things brought about by the work of redemption, that thereby our separation from God, is made an occasion of a greater union than was before, or otherwise would have been. — When we fell, there was a dreadful separation made betwixt God and us, but this is made an occasion of a greater union. <sup><872></sup>John 17:20-23. “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word, that they all may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me; that they may be made perfect in one.”

**2dly**, Man now has greater manifestations of the glory and love of God, than otherwise he would have had. In the manifestations of these two things, man’s happiness principally consists. Now, man by the work of redemption, has greater manifestation of both, than otherwise he would have had. We have already spoken particularly of the glory of God, and what advantages even the angels have by the discoveries of it in this work, but if they have such advantages, much more will man who is far more directly concerned in this affair than they. — Here are immediately greater displays of the love of God, than man had before he fell, or, as we may well suppose, than he would have had, if he had never fallen. God now manifests his love to his people, by sending his Son into the world, to die for them. There never would have been any such testimony of the love of God, if man had not fallen.

Christ manifests his love, by coming into the world, and laying down his life. This is the greatest testimony of divine love that can be conceived. Now surely the greater discoveries God's people have of his love to them, the more occasions will they have to rejoice in that love. Here will be a delightful theme for the saints to contemplate to all eternity, which they never could have had, if man never had fallen, viz. the dying love of Christ. They will have occasion now to sing that song for ever, ~~and~~ Revelation 1:5, 6. "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to whom be glory and dominion for ever Amen."

**3rdly**, Man now has greater motives offered him to love God than otherwise he ever would have had. Man's happiness consists in mutual love between God and man, in seeing God's love to him, and in reciprocally loving God. And the more he sees of God's love to him, and the more he loves God, the more happy must he be. His love to God is as necessary in order to his happiness, as the seeing of God's love to him; for he can have no joy in beholding God's love to him, any otherwise than as he loves God. — This makes the saints prize God's love to them, for they love him. If they did not love God, to see his love to them would not make them happy. But the more any person loves another, the more will he be delighted in the manifestations of that other's love. — There is provision therefore made for both in the work of redemption. There are greater manifestations of the love of God to us, than there would have been if man had not fallen; and also there are greater motives to love him than otherwise there would have been. There are greater obligations to love him, for God has done more for us to win our love. Christ hath died for us.

Again, man is now brought to a more universal and immediate and sensible dependence on God, than otherwise he would have been. All his happiness is now of him, through him, in him. If man had not fallen, he would have had all his happiness of God by his own righteousness, but now it is by the righteousness of Christ. He would have had all his holiness of God, but not so sensibly, because then he would have been holy from the beginning, as soon as he received his being, but now, he is first sinful and universally corrupt, and afterwards is made holy. If man had held his integrity misery would have been a stranger to him, and therefore happiness would not have been so sensible a derivation from

God, as it is now, when man looks to God from the deeps of distress, cries repeatedly to him, and waits upon him. He is convinced by abundant experience, that he has no place of resort but God, who is graciously pleased, in consequence of man's earnest and persevering suit, to appear to his relief, to take him out of the miry clay and horrible pit, set him upon a rock, establish his goings, and put a new song into his mouth. — By man's having thus a more immediate, universal, and sensible dependence, God doth more entirely secure man's undivided respect. There is a greater motive for man to make God his all in all, — to love him and rejoice in him as his only portion.

**4thly**, By the contrivance for our salvation, man's sin man's misery are but an occasion of his being brought to a more full and free converse with and enjoyment of God than otherwise would have been. For as we have observed already, the union is greater; and the greater the union, the more full the communion, and intimate the intercourse. Christ is come down to man in his own nature; and hereby he may converse with Christ more intimately, than the infinite distance of the divine nature would allow. This advantage is more than what the angels have. For Christ is not only in a created nature, but he is in man's own nature. — We have also advantages for a more full enjoyment of God. By Christ's incarnation, the saints may see God with their bodily eyes, as well as by an intellectual view. The saints, after the day of judgment, will consist of both body and soul; they will have outward as well as spiritual sight. It is now ordered by divine wisdom, that God himself, or a divine person, should be the principal entertainment of both these kinds of sight, spiritual and corporal: and the saints in heaven shall not only have an intellectual sight of God, but they shall see a divine person as they see one another; not only spiritually, but outwardly. The body of Jesus Christ will appear with that transcendent visible majesty and beauty, which is exceedingly expressive of the divine majesty, beauty, and glory. The body of Christ shall appear with the glory of God upon it, as Christ tells us,

“The Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father.”

( Matthew 16:27.)

Thus to see God will be a great happiness to the saints. Job comforted himself that he should see God with his bodily eyes,

“And though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my  
flesh shall I see God.” (~~Job~~ Job 19:26.)

**5thly**, Man’s sin and misery is made an occasion of his greater happiness, as he has now a greater relish of happiness, by reason of his knowledge of both. In order to happiness, there must be two things, viz. union to a proper object — and a relish of the object. Man’s misery is made an occasion of increasing both these by the work of redemption. We have shown already, that the union is increased; and so is the relish too, by the knowledge man now has of evil. These contraries, good and evil; heighten the sense of one another. The forbidden tree was called the tree of knowledge of good and evil; of evil, because by it we came to the experience of evil; of good, because we should never have known so well what good was, if it had not been for that tree. We are taught the value of good by our knowledge of its contrary, evil. This teaches us to prize good, and makes us the more to relish and rejoice in it. The saints know something what a state of sin and alienation from God is. They know something what the anger of God is, and what it is to be in danger of hell. And this makes them the more exceedingly to rejoice in the favour and in the enjoyment of God.

Take two persons; one who never knew what evil was, but was happy from the first moment of his being, having the favour of God, and numerous tokens of it; another who is in a very doleful and undone condition. Let there be bestowed upon these two persons the same blessings, [subjectively,] the same good things; and let them be objectively in the same glorious circumstances, — and which will rejoice most? Doubtless he that was brought to this happiness out of a miserable and doleful state. So the saints in heaven will forever the more rejoice in God, and in the enjoyment of his love, for their being brought to it out of a most lamentable state and condition.

## SECTION 7

*Some wonderful circumstances of the overthrow of Satan.*

THE wisdom of God greatly and remarkably appears in so exceedingly baffling and confounding all the subtlety of the old serpent. Power never appears so conspicuous as when opposed and conquering opposition. The

same may be said of wisdom; it never appears so brightly, and with such advantage, as when opposed by the subtlety of some very crafty enemy; and in baffling and confounding that subtlety. — The devil is exceeding subtle. The subtlety of the serpent is emblematically of his, ~~Gen~~ Genesis 3:1. He was once one of the brightest intelligences of heaven, and one of the brightest, if not the very brightest, of all. And all the devils were once morning of a glorious brightness of understanding. They still have the same faculties, though they ceased to be influenced and guided by the Holy Spirit of God, and so their heavenly wisdom is turned into hellish craft and subtlety. — God in the work of redemption hath wondrously baffled the utmost craft of the devils, and though they are all combined to frustrate God's designs of glory to himself, and goodness to men. — The wisdom of God appears very glorious herein. For,

**1.** Consider the weak and seemingly despicable means and weapons that God employs to overthrow Satan. Christ poured the greater contempt upon Satan in the victory that he obtained over him by reason of the means of his preparing himself for it, and the weapons he hath used. Christ chooses to encounter Satan in the human nature, in a poor frail, afflicted state. He did as David did. David when going against the Philistine refused Saul's armour, a helmet of brass, a coat of mail, and his sword. No, he puts them all off. Goliath comes mightily armed against David, with a helmet of brass upon his head, a coat of mail weighing five thousand shekels of brass, greaves of brass upon his legs, and a target of brass between his shoulders; a spear, whose staff was like a weaver's beam; and the spear's head weighing six hundred shekels of iron. And besides all this, he had one bearing a shield before him. But David takes nothing but a staff in his hand, and a shepherd's bag and a sling; and he goes against the Philistine. So the weapons that Christ made use of were his poverty, afflictions and reproaches, sufferings and death. His principally weapon was his cross: the instrument of his own reproachful death. These were seemingly weak and despicable instruments, to wield against such a giant as Satan. And doubtless the devil disdained them as much as Goliath did David's staves and sling. But with such weapons as these has Christ in a human, weak, mortal nature overthrown and baffled all the craft of hell.

Such disgrace and contempt has Christ poured upon Satan. David had a more gibbous victory over Goliath for his conquering him with such mean instruments, and Samson over the Philistines, for killing so many of them with such a despicable weapon as the jaw-bone of an ass. It is spoken of in Scripture as a glorious triumph of Christ over the devil, that he should overcome him by such a despicable weapon as his cross. <sup><SID></sup>Colossians 2:14, 15. “Blotting out the hand-writing of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross: and having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.” — God shows his great and infinite wisdom in taking this method, to confound the wisdom and subtlety of his enemies. He hereby shows how easily he can do it, and that he is infinitely wiser than they. <sup><SID></sup>1 Corinthians 1:27-29. “God hath chosen the foolish things of the world, to confound the wise, and God hath chosen the weak things of the world, to confound the things that are mighty: and the base things of the world, and things that are despised, hath God chosen; yea, and things that are not, to bring to nought the things that are.”

**2.** God has thereby confounded Satan with his own v capons. It is so contrived in the work of redemption that our grand enemy should be made a means of his own confusion, and that; by those very things whereby he endeavours to rob God of his glory, and to destroy mankind, he is made an instrument of frustrating his own designs. His most subtle and powerful endeavours for accomplishing his designs ate made a means of confounding, them, and of promoting the contrary. Of this, I will mention but two instances. First, His procuring man’s fall is made an occasion of the contrary to what he designed. Indeed he has hereby procured the ruin of multitudes of mankind which he aimed at. But in this he does not frustrate God’s design from all eternity to glorify himself, and the misery of multitudes of mankind will prove no content to him, but will enhance his own misery.

What Satan did in tempting man to fall, is made an occasion of the contrary to what he intended, in that it gave occasion for God to glorify himself the more; and giveth occasion for the elect being brought to higher happiness.

The happy state of man was envied by Satan. That man who was of earthly original should be advanced to such honours, when he who was originally of a so much more noble nature should be cast down to such disgrace, his pride could not bear. How then would Satan triumph, when he had brought him down!

The devil tempted our first parents with this, that if they would eat of the forbidden fruit, they should be as gods. — It was a lie in Satan's mouth; for he aimed at nothing else but to fool man out of his happiness, and make him his I own slave and vassal, with a blinded expectation of being like a god. — But little did Satan think that God would turn it so, as to make man's fall an occasion of God's becoming man, and so an occasion of our nature being advanced to a state of closer union to God.

By this means it comes to pass, that one in man's nature now sits at the right hand of God, invested with divine power and glory, and reigns over heaven and earth with a God-like power and dominion. Thus is Satan disappointed in his subtlety. As he intended that saying, Ye shall be as gods, it was a lie, to decoy and befool man. Little did he think, that it would be in such manner verified, by the incarnation of the Son of God. And this is the occasion also of all the elect being united to this divine person, so that they become one with Christ. Believers are as members and parts of Christ. Yea, the church is called Christ. Little did Satan think, that his telling that lie to our first parents, "Ye shall be as gods," would be the occasion of their being members of Christ the Son of God.

Again, Satan is made a means of his own confusion in this: — It was Satan's design, in tempting man to sin, to make man his captive and slave for ever; to have plagued, and triumphed over him. And this very thing is a means to bring it about, that man instead of being his vassal should be his judge. The elect, instead of being his captives, to be forever tormented and triumphed over by him, shall sit as judges to sentence him to everlasting torment. It has been the means, that one in man's nature, should be his supreme Judge. It was man's nature that Satan so envied and sought to make a prey of. But Jesus Christ at the last day shall come in man's nature; and the devils shall be all brought to stand trembling at his bar: and he shall judge, and condemn them, and execute the wrath of God upon them. And not only shall Christ in the human nature judge the devils, but

all the saints shall judge them with Christ as assessors with him in Judgment.

“know ye not that we shall judge angels!” (<sup>416B</sup>1 Corinthians 6:3.)

Secondly, In another instance Satan is made a means of his own confusion; that is, in his procuring the death of Christ. Satan set himself to oppose Christ as soon as he appeared. — He sought, by all means, to procure his ruin. He set the Jews against him. He filled the minds of the scribes and Pharisees with the most bitter persecuting malice against Christ. He sought by all means to procure his death, and that he might be put to the most ignominious death. We read “that Satan entered into Judas, and tempted him to betray him.” <sup>421B</sup>Luke 22:3. And Christ speaks of his sufferings as being the effects of the power of darkness, <sup>425</sup>Luke 22:53. “When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me: but this is your hour and the power of darkness.” — But Satan hereby overthrows his own kingdom. Christ came into the world to destroy the works of the devil. And this was the very thing that did it, viz. the blood and death of Christ. The cross was the devil’s own weapon; and with this weapon he was overthrown: as David cut off Goliath’s head with his own sword.

Christ thus making Satan a means of his own confusion was typified of old by Samson’s getting honey out of the carcass of the lion. There is more implied in Samson’s riddle, “Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness,” than ever the Philistines explained. It was verified by Christ in a far more glorious manner. God’s enemies and ours are taken in the pit which they themselves have digged: and their own soul is taken in the net which they have laid. Thus we have shown, in some measure, the wisdom of this way of salvation by Jesus Christ.

## SECTION 8

### *The superiority of this wisdom to that of the angels.*

THE wisdom of this contrivance appears to have been above the wisdom of the angels by the following things.

**1.** It appears that the angels did not fully comprehend the contrivance, till they saw it accomplished. They knew that man was to be redeemed, long

before Christ came into the world: but yet they did not fully comprehend it until they saw it. This is evident by the expression in the text. That now might he known unto the principalities — the manifold wisdom of God. *i.e.* Now the work is actually accomplished by Jesus Christ. Which implies that it was now new to them. — If they understood no more of it now, than they had all alone, the apostle would never have expressed himself so; for he is speaking of it as a mystery, in a measure kept hid until now.

Now it is to be considered, that the angels had four thousand years to contemplate this affair; and they did not want inclination and desire to understand and look into it, as the Scripture teaches us. They had also a great deal to put them upon an attentive contemplation of it. For when it was made known that God had such a design, it must appear a new and wonderful thing to them. They had seen their fellow-angels destroyed without mercy; and this redeeming of the fallen sinful creature, was quite a new thing. It must needs be astonishing to them, when God had revealed this design of mercy to them presently after the fall; and had given an intimation of it, in saying, “The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent’s head.” They knew that God had such a design; for they were, from the beginning, ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to those that were the heirs of salvation. — They were present at the institution of the typical dispensation, that was so full of shadows of gospel-truth. ~~1957~~ Psalm 69:17.

The angels contemplating the contrivance of our redemption was typified by the posture of the cherubim’s over the mercy-seat, which was the lid of the ark. These emblems were made bending down towards the ark and mercy-seat. — This is what the apostle Peter is thought to have some reference to, ~~4012~~ 1 Peter 1:12. Yet the angels, though for four thousand years they had been studying this contrivance, did not fully comprehend it till they saw it accomplished. This shows that the wisdom of it was far above theirs, for if they could not fully comprehend it after it had been revealed that there was such a design — and after much of it had already been made known in the Old Testament — how much less could they have found it out of themselves.

Consider for what end this wisdom of God was made known unto the angels, viz. that they might admire and prize it. It was made known to

them, that they might see how manifold, how great and glorious, it is: that they might see the unspeakable “ depths of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God,” as the apostle expresses it, <sup>613</sup>Romans 11:33. — It divas manifested to them that they might see the glory of God in it, and how great and wonderful the mystery was.

“Great is the mystery of godliness, God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels.” (<sup>516</sup>1 Timothy 3:16.)

Now if the wisdom of it were not far above their own understandings, this would not be shown them for the express purposes that they might admire and praise God for It.

**3.** It appears to be above the wisdom of the angels because they are still contemplating it; and endeavouring to see more and more of it. Indeed there is room for their faculties to employ themselves to all eternity. It is evident from <sup>612</sup>1 Peter 1:12. that they are still employing themselves in endeavouring to see more and more of God’s wisdom appearing in the work of redemption, “Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand of the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven: which things the angels desire to look into.” They still desire to look into it, after they have seen it accomplished. They do not so perfectly comprehend all the wisdom that is to be seen in it; but they are contemplating, looking into it, that they may see more and more; but there will still be room enough in this work to employ the angelical understandings.

## SECTION 9

*The subject improved.*

**1.** HENCE we may learn the blindness of the world, that the wisdom appearing in the work of redemption is no more admired in it. God has revealed this his glorious design and contrivance to the world; sends forth his gospel, and causes it to be preached abroad, in order to declare to the world that his infinite wisdom has been engaged for man’s salvation. But

how little is it regarded! There are some who have their eyes opened to behold the wondrous things of the gospel, who see the glory of God in, and admire the wisdom of it. But the greater part are wholly blind to it. They see nothing in all this that is any way glorious and wonderful. Though the angels account it worthy of their most engaged and deep contemplation; yet the greater part of men take little notice of it. It is all a dolt story and dead letter to many of them. They cannot see any thing in it above the wisdom of men. Yea, the gospel to many seems foolishness.

Though the light that shines in the world be so exceeding glorious, yet how few are there that do see it. The glory of God's wisdom in this work is surpassing the brightness of the sun: but so blind is the world that it sees nothing. It does not know that the Sun of righteousness shines. Thus it has been in all ages, and wherever the gospel has been preached, ministers of the word of God in all ages have had occasion to say, who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? Thus the prophets were sent to many with that errand, <sup><266></sup>Isaiah 6:9, 10. "Go and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed."

When Christ that glorious prophet came, and more fully revealed the counsels of God concerning our redemption, how many were then blind! how much did Christ complain of them! How blind were the scribes and Pharisees, the most noted sect of men among the Jews for wisdom; they beheld no glory in that gospel which Christ preached unto them; which gave him occasion to call them fools and blind, <sup><427></sup>Matthew 23:17. — So it was again in the apostles' times. In all places where they preached, some believed, and some believed not, <sup><424></sup>Acts 28:24. "As many as were ordained to eternal life believed," chapter 13:48. "The election obtained, but the rest were blinded," <sup><610></sup>Romans 11:7. And so it is still in those places where the gospel is preached. There are a few who see the glory of the gospel. God has a small number whose eyes he opens, who are called out of darkness into marvellous light, and who have an understanding to see the wisdom and fitness of the way of life. But how many are there who sit under the preaching of the gospel all their days, yet never see any divine wisdom or victory in it! To their dying day they are unaffected

with it. When they hear it, they see nothing to attract their attention, much less excite any admiration. To preach the gospel to them will serve very well to lull them asleep: but produces very little other effect upon them. This shows the exceeding wickedness of the heart of man. How affecting the thought, that infinite wisdom should be set on work, so as to surprise the angels, and to entertain them from age to age; — and that to men, though so plainly set before them, it should appear foolishness!

“The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness.”

(~~1~~<sup>1</sup> Corinthians 1:18.)

**II.** This is a great confirmation of the truth of the gospel. The gospel stands in no need of external evidences of its truth and divinity. It carries its own light and evidence with it. — There is that in its nature that sufficiently distinguishes it, to those who are spiritually enlightened, from appearances of the divine perfections, the stamp of divine glory, of which this of the divine wisdom is not the least part.

There is as much in the gospel to show that it is no work of men, as there is in the sun in the firmament. As persons of mature reason who look upon the sun, and consider the nature of it, its wonderful height, its course, its brightness and heat, may know that it is no work of man so, if the gospel be duly considered, if the true nature of it be seen, It may be known that it is no work of man, and that it must be from God. And if the wisdom appearing in the gospel be duly considered, it will be seen as much to excel all human wisdom, as the sun’s light excels the light of fires of our own kindling. — The contrivance of our salvation is of such a nature that no one can rationally conclude that man had any hand in it. The nature of the contrivance is such, so out of the way of all human thoughts, so different from all human inventions, so much more sublime, excellent, and worthy, that it does not savour at all of the craft or subtlety of man: it savours of God only.

If any are ready to think man might have found out such a way of salvation for sinners — so honourable to God, to his holiness and authority — they do not well consider the scantiness of human understanding. Mankind were of a poor capacity for any such undertaking, for, till the gospel enlightened the world, they had but miserable notions of what was honourable to God. They could have but poor notions of what

way would be suitable to the divine perfections; for they were woefully in the dark about these divine perfections themselves, till the gospel came abroad in the world. They had strange notions about a Deity. Most of them thought there were many gods.

“They changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image like to corruptible man, and to birds and four-footed beasts and creeping things,” (<sup>812</sup>Romans 1:23.)

They attributed vices to God. Even the philosophers, their wisest men, entertained but imperfect notions of the Supreme Being. How then should men find out a way so glorious and honourable to God, and agreeable to his perfections, who had not wisdom enough to get any tolerable notions of God, till the gospel was revealed to them. They groped in the dark. Their notions showed the infinite insufficiency of man’s blind understanding for any such undertaking, as the contriving of a way of salvation every way honourable to God, and suitable to the needs of a fallen creature.

But since the gospel has told what God’s counsels are, and how he has contrived a way for our salvation, men are ready to despise it, and foolishly to exalt their own understanding; and to imagine they could have found out as good a way themselves. When, alas! men, of themselves, had no notion of what was honourable to God, and suitable for a Divine Being. — They did not so much as think of the necessity of God’s law being answered, and justice satisfied. And if they had, how dreadfully would they have been puzzled to have found out the way how! Who would have thought of a trinity of persons in the Godhead; and that one should sustain the rights of the Godhead, and another should be the Mediator, and another should make application of redemption? Who would have thought of such a thing as three distinct persons, and yet but one God? all the same Being, and yet three persons! Who would have thought of this, in order to have found out a way for satisfying justice? Who would have thought of a way for answering the law that threatened eternal death, without the sinner’s suffering eternal death? And who would have thought of any such thing as a divine person suffering the wrath of God? And if they had, who would have contrived a way how he should suffer, since the divine nature cannot suffer?

Who would have thought of any such thing as God becoming man; two natures and but one person? These things are exceedingly out of the way of human thought and contrivance. It is most unreasonable to think that the world, who, till the gospel enlightened them, were so blind about the nature of God and divine things, should contrive such a way that should prove thus to answer all ends; every way to suit what the case required; most glorious to God, and answerable to all man's necessities. Every thing is so fully provided for, and no absurdity to be found in the whole affair, but all speaking forth the most perfect wisdom. That there should be no infringement upon holiness or justice; nothing dishonourable to the majesty of God; no encouragement to sin, all possible motives to holiness; all manner of happiness provided; and Satan so confounded and entirely overthrown; how truly wonderful!

And if we suppose that all this notwithstanding was the invention of men, whose invention should it be? Who should be pitched upon as the most likely to invent it? It was not the invention of the Jews; for they were the most bitter enemies to it. The wise men among them, when they first heard of it, conceived malice against it, and persecuted all that held this doctrine. It was not the invention of the heathen, for they knew nothing about it, till the apostles preached it to them; and it appeared a very foolish doctrine to the wise men among them. The doctrine of Christ crucified was not only to the Jews a stumbling-block, but also to the Greeks foolishness, [1 Corinthians 1:23](#). Besides, it was contrary to all their notions about a Deity, and they knew nothing about the fall of man, and the like, till the gospel revealed it to them. It was not the invention of the apostles, for the apostles, of themselves, were no way capable of any such earned contrivance. They were poor fishermen and publicans, an obscure and illiterate sort of men, till they were extraordinarily taught. They were all surprised when they first heard of it. When they heard that Christ must die for sinners, they were offended at it; and it was a long while before they were brought fully to receive it.

There is but one way left; and that is, to suppose, that Christ was a mere man, a very subtle crafty man, and that he invented it all: but this is as unreasonable as the rest; for it would have been all against himself, to invent a way of salvation by his own crucifixion, a most tormenting and ignominious death.

**III.** How great a sin they are guilty of who despise and reject this way of salvation! When God has manifested such unsearchable riches of wisdom; when all the persons of the Trinity have as it were held a consultation from all eternity in providing a way of salvation for us sinful miserable worms, — a way that should be sufficient and every way suitable for us, — a way that should be in all things complete, whereby we might have not only full pardon of all our sins, and deliverance from hell, but also full blessedness in heaven for ever: — how must God needs be provoked, when, after all, men reject this way of salvation!

When salvation comes to be preached, and is offered to them in this way, when they are invited to accept of its benefits, and yet they despise and refuse it; they thus practically deny it to be a wise way and call this wisdom of God foolishness. — How provoking it must be, when such a poor creature as man shall rise up, and find fault with that wisdom which is so far above the wisdom of angels! This is one thing wherein consists the heinousness of the sin of unbelief, that it implies a rejecting and despising of divine wisdom in the way of salvation by Jesus Christ. — Unbelief finds fault with the wisdom of God in the choice of the person, for performing this work. It dislikes the person of Christ. It sees no form nor comeliness in him, nor beauty wherefore it should desire him.

That person whom the wisdom of God looked upon as the fittest person of any, the only fit person, is despised and rejected by unbelief. — Men, through unbelief, find fault with the salvation itself that Christ has purchased, they do not like to be saved as Christ would save. They do not like to be made holy, and to have such a happiness as is to be had in God for a portion.

It may not be amiss here to mention two or three ways whereby persons are guilty of a provoking contempt of the wisdom of God in the way of salvation.

**1.** They are guilty of a provoking contempt, who live in a careless neglect of their salvation; they who are secure in their sins, and are not much concerned about either salvation or damnation. This is practically charging God with folly. — Its language is, that all is in vain and to no purpose, that God hath contrived and consulted for our salvation, when there was no need of it. They are well enough as they are. They do not see any great

necessity of a Saviour. They like that state they are in, and do not much desire to be defined out of it. — They do not thank him for all his consultation and contrivance, and think he might have spared his cost. God has greatly minded that, which they do not think worth minding; and has contrived abundantly for that which they do not trouble their heads about.

**2.** They are guilty of a provoking contempt of the wisdom of this way of salvation, who go about to contrive ways of their own. They who are not content with salvation by the righteousness of Christ, which God has provided are for contriving some way of being saved by their own righteousness. — These find fault with the wisdom of God's way, and set up their own wisdom in opposition to it. How greatly must God be provoked by such conduct!

**3.** Those that entertain discouraged and despairing apprehensions about their salvation cast contempt on the wisdom of God. They think that because they have been such great sinners, God will not be willing to pardon them, Christ will not be willing to accept of them. They fear that Christ, in the invitations of the gospel, does not mean such wicked creatures, as they are; that because they have committed so much sin, they have sinned beyond the reach of mercy. They think it is in vain for them to seek for salvation. — These cast contempt on the wisdom of God in the way of salvation, as though it were not all-sufficient: — as though the wisdom of God had not found out a way that was sufficient for the salvation of great sinners.

## SECTION 10

### *The misery of unbelievers.*

UNBELIEVERS have no portion in this matter. There is a most glorious way of salvation, but you, who are unbelievers, have no interest in it. The wisdom of God hath been gloriously employed for the deliverance of men from a miserable, doleful state, but you are never the better for it, because you reject it. If you continue in that state, this wisdom will do you no good.

Christ is a glorious person; every way fit to be a Saviour of sinners, a person who is power sufficient, wisdom sufficient, merit sufficient, and

love sufficient for perfecting this work. And he is the only fit person; but you have no right in him, you can lay claim to no benefit by his power, wisdom, love, or merits. — This wisdom of God hath found out a way whereby this Saviour might satisfy justice, and fulfil the law for us; a way whereby he might be capable of suffering for us: but you have no lot in the incarnation, death, and sufferings of Jesus Christ.

The wisdom of God hath contrived a way of salvation that there should be procured for us perfect and everlasting happiness. Here is that happiness procured which is most suitable to our nature, and answerable to the salvation of our souls. Here is a most glorious portion, viz. The Divine Being himself, with his glorious perfections. Here it is purchased, that we should see God face to face; — that we should converse and dwell with God in his own glorious habitation, — that we should be the children of God, and be conformed to him. — Here are the highest honours, the most abundant riches, the most substantial satisfying pleasures for evermore. — Here we have prepared all needed good both for the souls and bodies of sinners: all needed earthly good things, while here; and glory, for both body and soul hereafter, for ever. But you are never the better for all this. You have no lot nor portion in any of it. Notwithstanding all this rich provision, you remain in the same miserable state and condition, in which you came into the world. Though the provision of the gospel be so full, yet your poor soul remains in a famishing, perishing state. You remain dead in trespasses and sins; under the dominion of Satan; in a condemned state, having the wrath of God abiding on you, and being daily exposed to the dreadful effects of it in hell. Notwithstanding all this provision, you remain wretched and miserable, poor and blind and naked. O that you might turn to God through Jesus Christ, be numbered among his disciples and faithful followers, and so be entitled to their privileges! They have an interest in this glorious Saviour, and are entitled to all the ineffable blessedness of his kingdom, so far as their capacities will admit: but you remain without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers to the covenant of promise, having well-grounded hope, and without God in the world. — Further consider a few things.

*First*, It argues the great misery of sinners, that the wisdom of God should be exercised to such a degree in order to find out a way to deliver them from it. Their case surely was most deplorable, since it required infinite

wisdom to find out a way for their deliverance. The wisdom of angels was not sufficient: nothing but divine wisdom could reach and remedy their case. And all the persons of the Trinity did enter into a consultation about it. If man's misery were not very great, divine wisdom would not have been exercised for his deliverance from it. God would not contrive and do things so wonderful in a trivial affair. If the salvation of a sinner were not a great salvation, from an exceeding great misery, it is not to be supposed, that God's wisdom should be more signalized in this affair than in any other whatever.

But so it is; this contrivance seems to be spoken of in Scripture as the master-piece of divine wisdom. This work of redemption is represented as most wonderful, and spoken of in Scripture in the most exalted manner of any work of God. — Doubtless therefore salvation is a great thing, and consequently the misery that sinners are saved from, is a great and unspeakable misery. Now this is the misery that you are all in, who remain in a natural condition. This is the condemnation you lie under. This is the wrath of God that abides upon you. The wisdom of God knew it to be a very doleful thing for a person to be in a natural state, and therefore did so exercise itself to deliver miserable sinners out of it. But this is the state that many among us do yet remain in.


*Secondly.* Consider, that if you continue in the state you are in, you will be so far from being the better for this contrivance, that you will be much from miserable for it. The justice and wisdom of the way of salvation will be your condemnation. “This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light.” ~~4189~~ John 3:19. If you continue in the state that you are now in, it would have been better for you, if Christ had never died for sinners, if God had left all mankind to perish, as he did the fallen angels. Your punishment then would have been light in comparison of what it will be now. You will have greater sins by far to answer for; and all your sins will be abundantly the more aggravated.

Since I have been upon this subject, I have observed that the work of redemption is an occasion of the elect being brought to greater happiness than man could have had, if he had not fallen. And it is also true as to reprobates, that it will be an occasion of their having greater misery than they would have had, if there had been no redemption. ~~4195~~ 2 Corinthians

2:15. “For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish. To the one we are a Saviour of death unto death; and to the other we are a savour of life unto life.” If you perish at last, you will be the more miserable for the benefits of the gospel being so glorious, and that because your crime in rejecting and despising them will be the more heinous.

“How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation.”

( Hebrews 2:3.)

*Thirdly*, Whilst you continue an unbeliever, the more you hear of this way of salvation, your condition will become the more miserable. The longer you sit under the preaching of the gospel, the more doleful does your case grow. Your guilt continually increases. For your refusals of the gospel, and your rejections of this way of salvation, are so much the oftener repeated. Every time you hear the gospel preached, you are guilty of a renewed rejection of it, the guilt of which therefore you will have lying upon you. And the more you hear of the suitableness and glory of this way, the greater is your guilt who still continue to reject it. Every new illustration of the wisdom and grace of God in redemption adds to your guilt,  
 Matthew 23:37. “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem — how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, but ye would not! — What adds to your misery is, that as long as it continues, it is a growing evil.

*Fourthly*, Consider the danger there is, that you will never have any lot or portion in this matter; seeing there are but few that have. Christ has told us that strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. There have been but few in all ages of the world. Many seek; and many hope that they shall obtain. There are but few that intend to be damned; while many hope that they shall some way or other find means to escape eternal misery. But after all, there are but few saved; or obtain the benefits of redemption.

## SECTION 11

*Exhortation to come to Christ.*

I CONCLUDE with a use of exhortation to come to Christ, and accept of salvation in this way. You are invited to come to Christ, heartily to close with him, and trust in him for salvation: and if you do so, you shall have the benefit of this glorious contrivance. You shall have the benefit of all; as much as if the whole had been contrived for you alone. God has already contrived every thing that is needful for your salvation; and there is nothing wanting but your consent. Since God has taken this matter of the redemption of sinners into his own hand, he has made thorough work of it, he has not left it for you to finish. Satisfaction is already made, righteousness is already wrought out: death and hell are already conquered. The Redeemer has already taken possession of glory, and keeps it in his hands to bestow on them who come to him. There were many difficulties in the way, but they are all removed. The Saviour has already triumphed over all and is at the right hand of God, to give eternal life to his people.

Salvation is ready brought to your door, and the Saviour stands, knocks, and calls that you would open to him, that he might bring it in to you. There remains nothing but your consent. All the difficulty now remaining is with your own heart. If you perish now, it must be wholly at your door. It must be because you would not come to Christ that you might have life, and because you virtually choose death rather than life, ~~2085~~ Proverbs 8:36. “He that sinneth against me, wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death.” — All that is now required of you is, that your heart should close with Christ as a Saviour. Here consider,

**1.** That the wisdom of God hath so contrived that he hath forestalled all your objections. If you make objections against Christ and the way of salvation, they must be all unreasonable. You cannot reasonably object that your sins are of such a nature, that God’s honour will not allow of your pardon. It is true God insists upon his own honour. He is a God that will be honoured, and his majesty shall be vindicated: and when sinners cast contempt upon him, his honour requires vengeance. But God has so contrived this way, that his honour may be repaired by the punishment of sin without the sinner’s suffering, how great soever the sin be. Herein the wisdom of this way appears that there is a sufficiency for the greatest and most heinous transgressors.

You cannot object that God the Father will not be willing to accept you, for the Mediator's sake; for he hath chosen his own Son to be a mediator, to cut off any such objections. So you may be sure that God will receive you If you go to him through Christ. — You cannot object that God the Father has not given sufficient assurance of salvation to believers, for the principal things, those which would have been most difficult to believe, are already fulfilled: God hath already given his Son to die for us This, before it was accomplished, was much more strange and difficult to believe, than that he should give eternal life to sinners after Christ died for them.

“He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all,  
how shall he not with him freely give us all things.”

(~~ROM~~ Romans 8:32.)

There is no room to doubt but that if we accent of Christ, God will give eternal life; for he hath given it already into the hands of our Saviour for us. He hath intrusted him with the whole affair. He hath given all things into his hands, that he might give eternal life to as many as should come to him. The Father hath appointed him who died for believers, to be their judge, to have the whole determination of the matter, and the disposal of the reward, in his own hand. And you cannot doubt but that Christ will be willing to bestow eternal life on them for whom he purchased it. For if he is not willing to bestow it, surely he never would have died to purchase it. Who can think that Christ be so desirous of sinners being saved, as to undergo so much for it; and not be willing to let them have it, when he had obtained it for them. — Consider.

**2.** The wisdom of God hath contrived that there should be in the person of the Saviour all manner of attractive to draw us to him. He has in him all possible excellency. He is possessed of all the beauty and glory of the God-head. — So that there can be no manner of excellency, nor degree of excellency that we can devise, but what is in the person of the Saviour. — But yet so redundant has the wisdom of God been, in providing attractive in order that we should come to Christ, it hath so ordered that there should also be all human excellencies in him. If there be any thing attractive in this consideration, that Christ is one in; our own nature, one of us; this is true of Christ. He is not only in the divine, but in the human nature. He is truly a man, and has all possible human excellencies. He was of a most excellent

spirit; wise and holy, condescending and meek, and of a lowly, benign, and benevolent disposition.

Again: The wisdom of God hath chosen a person of great love to sinners, and who should show that love in the most endearing manner possible. what more condescending love can there be, than the love of a divine person to such worms of the dust? What freer love can there be than love to enemies? What greater love can there be, than dying love? And what more endearing expression of love, than dying for the beloved? And the wisdom of God hath so contrived, that Christ shall sustain that office which should most tend to endear him to us, and draw us to him: the office of a redeemer, a redeemer from eternal misery, and the purchaser of all happiness.

And if all this be not enough to draw us, the wisdom of God hath ordered more; it hath provided us a Saviour that should offer himself to us in the most endearing relation. He offers to receive us as friends. To receive us to an union to himself, to become our spiritual husband and portion for ever. — And the wisdom of God has provided us a Saviour that woos in a manner that has the greatest tendency to win our hearts. His word is most attractive. He stands at our door and knocks. He does not merely command us to receive him: but he condescends to apply himself to us in a more endearing manner. He entreats and beseeches us in his word and by his messengers.

**3.** The wisdom of God hath contrived that there should be all manner of attractive in the benefits that Christ offers you. There are not only the excellencies of the person of Christ to draw you to him, but the desirable benefits he offers. Here is what is most suitable to the cravings of the human nature. Men when distressed and burdened, long for ease and rest: here it is offered to us in Christ “Come unto me,” says he, “all ye that labour end are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” — Men when in fear of danger, long for safety: here it is provided for us in Christ. God promises that he will become a shield and buckler, a strong rock and high tower to those that trust in him. — Those that mourn need comfort: Christ tells us that “he came to comfort those that mourn,” <sup><2300></sup>Isaiah 61:2. The blind need to have their eyes opened. The light is sweet to men: Christ offers to anoint our eyes with eye salve that we may see glorious

light. He will be our sun, and the light of God's countenance. — what is more dear to men than life? Christ hath purchased for men, that they should live forever, ~~Psalm~~ Psalm 21:4. "He asked life of thee and thou gayest it him, even length of days forever and ever." — How greatly is a crown prized and admired by the children of men! And Christ offers this; — not a corruptible crown, but an incorruptible and far more glorious crown than any worn by earthly kings: a crown of glory, the lustre of which shall never fade, nor decay; with an everlasting kingdom. — Do men love pleasures? Here are pleasures for evermore. What could there be more to draw our hearts to Jesus Christ, and to make us willing to accept of him for our Saviour, with all his unspeakable benefits?

# CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE:

OR

## THE IMPORTANCE AND ADVANTAGE OF A THOROUGH KNOWLEDGE OF DIVINE TRUTH.

“For when, for the time, ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.” (~~HEB~~ Hebrews 5:12)

THESE words are a complaint, which the apostle makes of a certain defect in the Christian Hebrews, to whom he wrote. Wherein we may observe,

**1.** What the defect complained of is, viz., a want of such a proficiency in the knowledge of the doctrines and mysteries of religion, as might have been expected of them. The apostle complains of them, that they had not made that progress in their acquaintance with the things of divinity or things taught in the oracles of God, which they ought to have made. And he means to reprove them, not merely for their deficiency in spiritual and experimental knowledge of divine things, but for their deficiency in a doctrinal acquaintance with the principles of religion, and the truths of Christian divinity; as is evident by several things. It appears by the manner in which the apostle introduces this complaint or reproof. The occasion of his introducing it, is this: in the next verse but one preceding he mentions Christ's being a high priest after the order of Melchizedek: “Called of God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek.” This Melchizedek being in the Old Testament, which was the oracles of God, held forth as an eminent type of Christ, and the account we there have of Melchizedek containing many gospel mysteries, these the apostle was willing to point out to the Christian Hebrews. But he apprehended that through their weakness in knowledge, and little acquaintance in mysteries of that nature, they would not understand him; and therefore breaks off for the present from saying anything about Melchizedek. Thus, in verse 11,

“Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered; seeing ye are dull of hearing;” i.e., there are many things concerning Melchizedek, which contain wonderful gospel mysteries, and which I would take notice of to you, were it not that I am afraid, that through your dullness and backwardness in understanding these things, you would only be puzzled and confounded by my discourse, and so receive no benefit; and that it would be too hard for you, as meat that is too strong.

Then come in the words of the text: “For when, for the time, ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.” As much as to say, Indeed it might have been expected of you, that you should have known enough of divinity, and the holy Scriptures, to be able to understand and digest such mysteries: but it is not so with you.

Again, The apostle speaks of their proficiency in such knowledge as is conveyed and received by human teaching; as appears by that expression, “When for the time ye ought to be teachers;” which includes not only a practical and experimental, but also a doctrinal knowledge of the truths and mysteries of religion.

Again, The apostle speaks of such a knowledge, whereby Christians are enabled to digest strong meat; *i.e.*, to understand those things in divinity which are more abstruse and difficult to be understood, and which require great skill in things of this nature. This is more fully expressed in the two next verses: for everyone that useth milk, is unskillful in the word of righteousness; for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who, by reason of use, have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.” Again, It is such a knowledge, that proficiency in it shall carry persons beyond the first principles of religion. As here: “Ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God.” Therefore the apostle, in the beginning of the next chapter, advises them, “to leave the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, and go on unto perfection.”

**2.** We may observe wherein the fault of this defect appears, viz., in that they had not made proficiency according to their time. For the time, they ought to have been teachers. As they were Christians, their business was

to learn and gain Christian knowledge. They were scholars in the school of Christ; and if they had improved their time in learning, as they ought to have done, they might, by the time when the apostle wrote, have been fit to be teachers in this school. To whatever business any one is devoted, it may be expected that his perfection in it shall be answerable to the time he has had to learn and perfect himself - Christians should not always remain babes, but should grow in Christian knowledge; and, leaving the food of babes, which is milk, should learn to digest strong meat.

### **DOCTRINE: EVERY CHRISTIAN SHOULD MAKE A BUSINESS OF ENDEAVORING TO GROW IN KNOWLEDGE IN DIVINITY.**

This is indeed esteemed the business of divines and ministers: it is commonly thought to be their work, by the study of the Scriptures, and other instructive books, to gain knowledge; and most seem to think that it may be left to them, as what belongeth not to others. But if the apostle had entertained this notion, he would never have blamed the Christian Hebrews for not having acquired knowledge enough to be teachers: or if he had thought, that this concerned Christians in general, only as a thing by the by, and that their time should not, in a considerable measure, be taken up with this business; he never would have so much blamed them, that their proficiency in knowledge had not been answerable to the time which they had had to learn.

In handling this subject, I shall show,

1. What divinity is.
2. What kind of knowledge in divinity is intended.
3. Why knowledge in divinity is necessary.
4. Why all Christians should make a business of endeavoring to grow in this knowledge.

**First**, I shall very briefly show what divinity is.

Various definitions have been given of it by those who have treated on the subject. I shall not now stand to inquire which, according to the rules of art, is the most accurate definition; but shall so define or describe it, as I think has the greatest tendency to convey a notion of it to this auditory.

By divinity is meant, that science or doctrine which comprehends all those truths and rules which concern the great business of religion. There are various kinds of arts and sciences taught and learned in the schools, which are conversant about various objects; about the works of nature in general; as philosophy; or the visible heavens, as astronomy; or the sea, as navigation; or the earth, as geography; or the body of man, as physic and anatomy; or the soul of man, with regard to its natural powers and qualities, as logic and pneumatology; or about human government, as politics and jurisprudence. But there is one science, or one certain kind of knowledge and doctrine, which is above all the rest, as it is concerning God and the great business of religion: this is divinity; which is not learned, as other sciences, merely by the improvement of man's natural reason, but is taught by God himself in a certain book that he hath given for that end, full of instruction. This is the rule which God hath given to the world to be their guide in searching after this kind of knowledge, and is a summary of all things of this nature needful for us to know. Upon this account divinity is rather called a doctrine, than an art or science.

Indeed there is what is called natural religion or divinity. There are many truths concerning God, and our duty to him, which are evident by the light of nature. But Christian divinity, properly so called, is not evident by the light of nature; it depends on revelation. Such are our circumstances now in our fallen state, that nothing which it is needful for us to know concerning God, is manifest by the light of nature in the manner in which it is necessary for us to know it. For the knowledge of no truth in divinity is of any significance to us, any otherwise than, as it some way or other belongs to the gospel scheme, or as it relates to a Mediator. But the light of nature teaches us no truth of divinity in this matter. Therefore it cannot be said, that we come to the knowledge of any part of Christian divinity by the light of nature. The light of nature teaches no truth as it is in Jesus. It is only the word of God, contained in the Old and New Testament, which teaches us Christian divinity.

Divinity comprehends all that is taught in the Scriptures, and so all that we need know, or is to be known, concerning God and Jesus Christ, concerning our duty to God, and our happiness in God. Divinity is commonly defined, the doctrine of living to God and by some who seem to be more accurate, the doctrine of living to God by Christ. It comprehends

all Christian doctrines as they are in Jesus, and all Christian rules directing us in living to God by Christ. There is nothing in divinity, no one doctrine, no promise, no rule, but what some way or other relates to the Christian and divine life, or our living to God by Christ. They all relate to this, in two respects, viz., as they tend to promote our living to God here in this world, in a life of faith and holiness, and also as they tend to bring us to a life of perfect holiness and happiness, in the full enjoyment of God hereafter - But I hasten to the Second thing proposed, viz., To show what kind of knowledge in divinity is intended in the doctrine.

Here I would observe:

**1.** That there are two kinds of knowledge of the things of divinity, viz., speculative and practical, or in other terms, natural and spiritual. The former remains only in the head. No other faculty but the understanding is concerned in it. It consists in having a natural or rational knowledge of the things of religion, or such a knowledge as is to be obtained by the natural exercise of our own faculties, without any special illumination of the Spirit of God. The latter rests not entirely in the head, or in the speculative ideas of things; but the heart is concerned in it: it principally consists in the sense of the heart. The mere intellect, without the heart, the will or the inclination, is not the seat of it. And it may not only be called seeing, but feeling or tasting. Thus there is a difference between having a right speculative notion of the doctrines contained in the word of God, and having a due sense of them in the heart. In the former consists speculative or natural knowledge of the things of divinity; in the latter consists the spiritual or practical knowledge of them.

**2.** Neither of these is intended in the doctrine exclusively of the other: but it is intended that we should seek the former in order to the latter. The latter, even a spiritual and practical knowledge of divinity, is of the greatest importance; for a speculative knowledge of it, without a spiritual knowledge, is in vain and to no purpose, but to make our condemnation the greater. Yet a speculative knowledge is also of infinite importance in this respect, that without it we can have no spiritual or practical knowledge; as may be shown by and by.

I have already shown, that the apostle speaks not only of a spiritual knowledge, but of such knowledge as can be acquired, and communicated

from one to another. Yet it is not to be thought, that he means this exclusively of the other, . But he would have the Christian Hebrews seek the one, in order to the other. Therefore the former is first and most directly intended; it is intended that Christians should, by reading and other proper means, seek a good rational knowledge of the things of divinity. The latter is more indirectly intended, since it is to be sought by the other, as its end.

But I proceed to the third thing proposed, viz., to show the usefulness and necessity of knowledge in divinity.

**1.** There is no other way by which any means of grace whatsoever can be of any benefit, but by knowledge. All teaching is in vain, without learning. Therefore, the preaching of the gospel would be wholly to no purpose, if it conveyed no knowledge to the mind. There is an order of men whom Christ has appointed on purpose to be teachers in his church. They are to teach the things of divinity. But they teach in vain, if no knowledge in these things is gained by their teaching. It is impossible that their teaching and preaching should be a means of grace, or of any good in the hearts of their hearers, any otherwise than by knowledge imparted to the understanding. Otherwise it would be of as much benefit to the auditory, if the minister should preach in some unknown tongue. All the difference is, that preaching in a known tongue conveys something to the understanding, which preaching in an unknown tongue doth not. On this account, such preaching must be unprofitable. Men in such things receive nothing, when they understand nothing; and are not at all edified, unless some knowledge be conveyed; agreeably to the apostle's arguing in <sup><642></sup>1 Corinthians 14:2-6. No speech can be any means of grace, but by conveying knowledge. Otherwise the speech is as much lost as if there had been no man there, and he that spoke, had spoken only into the air; as it follows in the passage just quoted, verses 6-10. He that doth not understand, can receive no faith, nor any other grace; for God deals with man as with a rational creature; and when faith is in exercise, it is not about something he knows not what. Therefore hearing is absolutely necessary to faith; because hearing is necessary to understanding:

“How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?”

(<sup><644></sup>Romans 10:14)

So there can be no love without knowledge. It is not according to the nature of the human soul, to love an object which is entirely unknown. The heart cannot be set upon an object of which there is no idea in the understanding. The reasons which induce the soul to love, must first be understood, before they can have a reasonable influence on the heart.

God hath given us the Bible, which is a book of instructions. But this book can be of no manner of profit to us, any otherwise than as it conveys some knowledge to the mind: it can profit us no more than if it were written in the Chinese or Tartarian language, of which we know not one word.

So the sacraments of the gospel can have a proper effect no other way, than by conveying some knowledge. They represent certain things by visible signs. and what is the end of signs, but to convey some knowledge of the things signified? Such is the nature of man, that nothing can come at the heart, but through the door of the understanding: and there can be no spiritual knowledge of that of which there is not first a rational knowledge. It is impossible that any one should see the truth or excellency of any doctrine of the gospel, who knows not what that doctrine is. A man cannot see the wonderful excellency and love of Christ in doing such and such things for sinners, unless his understanding be first informed how those things were done. He cannot have a taste of the sweetness and divine excellency of such and such things contained in divinity, unless he first have a notion that there are such and such things.

**2.** Without knowledge in divinity, none would differ from the most ignorant and barbarous heathens. The heathens remain in gross heathenish darkness, because they are not instructed, and have not obtained the knowledge of the truths of divinity. So if we live under the preaching of the gospel, this will make us to differ from them, only by conveying to us more knowledge of the things of divinity.

**3.** If a man have no knowledge of these things, the faculty of reason in him will be wholly in vain. The faculty of reason and understanding was given for actual understanding and knowledge. If a man have no actual knowledge, the faculty or capacity of knowing is of no use to him. And if he have actual knowledge, yet if he be destitute of the knowledge of those things which are the last end of his being, and for the sake of the knowledge of which he had more understanding given him than the beasts;

then still his faculty of reason is in vain; he might as well have been a beast, as a man with this knowledge. But the things of divinity are the things to know which we had the faculty of reason given us. They are the things which appertain to the end of our being, and to the great business for which we are made. Therefore a man cannot have his faculty of understanding to any purpose, any further than he hath knowledge of the things of divinity.

So that this kind of knowledge is absolutely necessary. Other kinds of knowledge may be very useful. Some other sciences, such as astronomy, and natural philosophy, and geography, may be very excellent in their kind. But the knowledge of this divine science is infinitely more useful and important than of all other sciences whatever.

I come now to the fourth, and principal thing proposed under the doctrine, viz., to give the reasons why all Christians should make a business of endeavoring to grow in the knowledge of divinity. This implies two things.

- 1.** That Christians ought not to content themselves with such degrees of knowledge in divinity as they have already obtained. It should not satisfy them that they know as much as is absolutely necessary to salvation, but should seek to make progress.
- 2.** That this endeavoring to make progress in such knowledge ought not to be attended to as a thing by the by, but all Christians should make a business of it: they should look upon it as a part of their daily business, and no small part of it neither. It should be attended to as a considerable part of the work of their high calling. The reason of both these may appear in the following things.


**(1.)** Our business should doubtless much consist in employing those faculties, by which we are distinguished from the beasts, about those things which are the main end of those faculties. The reason why we have faculties superior to those of the brutes given us, is, that we are indeed designed for a superior employment. That which the Creator intended should be our main employment, is something above what he intended the beasts for, and therefore hath given us superior powers. Therefore, without doubt, it should be a considerable part of our business to improve those superior faculties. But the faculty by which

we are chiefly distinguished from the brutes, is the faculty of understanding. It follows then, that we should make it our chief business to improve this faculty, and should by no means prosecute it as a business by the by. For us to make the improvement of this faculty a business by the by, is in effect for us to make the faculty of understanding itself a by faculty, if I may so speak, a faculty of less importance than others; whereas indeed it is the highest faculty we have.

But we cannot make a business of the improvement of our intellectual faculty, any otherwise than by making a business of improving ourselves in actual understanding and knowledge. So that those who make not this very much their business, but, instead of improving their understanding to acquire knowledge, are chiefly devoted to their inferior powers, to provide wherewithal to please their senses, and gratify their animal appetites, and so rather make their understanding a servant to their inferior powers, than their inferior powers servants to their understanding; not only behave themselves in a manner not becoming Christians, but also act as if they had forgotten that they are men, and that God hath set them above the brutes, by giving them understanding.

God hath given to man some things in common with the brutes, as his outward senses, his bodily appetites, a capacity of bodily pleasure and pain, and other animal faculties: and some things he hath given him superior to the brutes, the chief of which is a faculty of understanding and reason. Now God never gave man those faculties whereby he is above the brutes, to be subject to those which he hath in common with the brutes. This would be great confusion, and equivalent to making man to be a servant to the beasts. On the contrary, he has given those inferior powers to be employed in subserviency to man's understanding; and therefore it must be a great part of man's principal business, to improve his understanding by acquiring knowledge. If so, then it will follow, that it should be a main part of his business to improve his understanding in acquiring divine knowledge, or the knowledge of the things of divinity; for the knowledge of these things is the principal end of this faculty. God gave man the faculty of understanding, chiefly, that he might understand divine things.

The wiser heathens were sensible that the main business of man was the improvement and exercise of his understanding. But they were in the dark, as they knew not the object about which the understanding should chiefly be employed. That science which many of them thought should chiefly employ the understanding, was philosophy; and accordingly they made it their chief business to study it. But we who enjoy the light of the gospel are more happy, we are not left, as to this particular, in the dark. God hath told us about what things we should chiefly employ our understandings, having given us a book full of divine instructions, holding forth many glorious objects about which all rational creatures should chiefly employ their understandings. These instructions are accommodated to persons of all capacities and conditions, and proper to be studied, not only by men of learning, but by persons of every character, learned and unlearned, young and old, men and women. Therefore the acquisition of knowledge in these things should be a main business of all those who have the advantage of enjoying the Holy Scriptures.

**(2.)** The things of divinity are things of superlative excellency, and are worthy that all should make a business of endeavoring to grow in the knowledge of them. There are no things so worthy to be known as these things. They are as much above those things which are treated of in other sciences, as heaven is above the earth. God himself, the eternal Three in one, is the chief object of this science: in the next place, Jesus Christ, as Godman and Mediator, and the glorious work of redemption, the most glorious work that ever was wrought: then the great things of the heavenly world, the glorious and eternal inheritance purchased by Christ, and promised in the gospel; the work of the Holy Spirit of God on the hearts of men; our duty to God, and the way in which we ourselves may become like angels, and like God himself in our measure: all these are objects of this science. Such things as these have been the main subject of the study of the holy patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, and the most excellent men that ever were in the world, and are also the subject of the study of the angels in heaven;  1 Peter 1:10, 11, 12.

These things are so excellent and worthy to be known, that the knowledge of them will richly pay for all the pains and labor of an earnest seeking of it. If there were a great treasure of gold and pearls hid in the earth, but

should accidentally be found, and should be opened among us with such circumstances that all might have as much as they could gather of it; would not every one think it worth his while to make a business of gathering it while it should last? But that treasure of divine knowledge, which is contained in the Scriptures, and is provided for every one to gather to himself as much of it as he can, is a far more rich treasure than any one of gold and pearls. How busy are all sorts of men, all over the world, in getting riches! But this knowledge is a far better kind of riches, than that after which they so diligently and laboriously pursue.

**3.** The things of divinity not only concern ministers, but are of infinite importance to all Christians. It is not with the doctrines of divinity as it is with the doctrines of philosophy and other sciences. These last are generally speculative points, which are of little concern in human life; and it very little alters the case as to our temporal or spiritual interests, whether we know them or not. Philosophers differ about them, some being of one opinion, and others of another. And while they are engaged in warm disputes about them, others may well leave them to dispute among themselves, without troubling their heads much about them; it being of little concern to them, whether the one or the other be in the right.

But it is not thus in matters of divinity. The doctrines: this nearly concern every one. They are about those things which relate to every man's eternal salvation and happiness. The common people cannot say, Let us leave these matters to ministers and divines; let them dispute them out among themselves as they can; they concern not us: for they are of infinite importance to every man. Those doctrines of divinity which relate to the essence, attributes, and subsistencies of God, concern all; as it is of infinite importance to common people, as well as to ministers, to know what kind of being God is. For he is the Being who hath made us all, "in whom we live, and move, and have our being;" who is the Lord of all; the Being to whom we are all accountable; is the last end of our being, and the only fountain of our happiness.

The doctrines also which relate to Jesus Christ and his mediation, his incarnation, his life and death, his resurrection and ascension, his sitting at the right hand of the Father, his satisfaction and intercession, infinitely concern common people as well as divines. They stand in as much need of

this Savior, and of an interest in his person and offices, and the things which he hath done and suffered, as ministers and divines.

The same may be said of the doctrines which relate to the manner of a sinner's justification, or the way in which he becomes interested in the mediation of Christ. They equally concern all; for all stand in equal necessity of justification before God. That eternal condemnation, to which we are all naturally exposed, is equally dreadful. So with respect to those doctrines of divinity, which relate to the work of the Spirit of God on the heart, in the application of redemption in our effectual calling and sanctification, all are equally concerned in them. There is no doctrine of divinity whatever, which doth not some way or other concern the eternal interest of every Christian. None of the things which God hath taught us in his word are needless speculations, or trivial matters; all of them are indeed important points.

**4.** We may argue from the great things which God hath done in order to give us instruction in these things. As to other sciences, he hath left us to ourselves, to the light of our own reason. But the things of divinity being of infinitely greater importance to us, he hath not left us to an uncertain guide; but hath himself given us a revelation of the truth in these matters, and hath done very great things to convey and confirm to us this revelation; raising up many prophets in different ages, immediately inspiring them with his Holy Spirit, and confirming their doctrine with innumerable miracles or wonderful works out of the established course of nature. Yea, he raised up a succession of prophets, which was upheld for several ages.

It was very much for this end that God separated the people of Israel, in so wonderful a manner, from all other people, and kept them separate; that to them he might commit the oracles of God, and that from them they might be communicated to the world. He hath also often sent angels to bring divine instructions to men; and hath often himself appeared to men in miraculous symbols or representations of his presence; and now in these last days hath sent his own Son into the world, to be his great prophet, to teach us divinity; Hebrews 1 at the beginning. By means of all, God hath given a book of divine instructions, which contains the sum of divinity. Now, these things hath God done not only for the instruction of

ministers and men of learning; but for the instruction of all men, of all sorts, learned and unlearned, men, women, and children. And certainly if God doth such great things to teach us, we ought not to do little to learn. God hath not made giving instructions to men in things of divinity a business by the by; but a business which he hath undertaken and prosecuted in a course of great and wonderful dispensations, as an affair in which his heart hath been greatly engaged; which is sometimes in Scripture signified by the expression of God's rising early to teach us, and to send prophets and teachers to us.

“Since that day that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt, unto this day, I have even sent unto you all my servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending them”

(~~24125~~ Jeremiah 7:25)

And so, verse 13, “I spake unto you, rising up early, and speaking.” This is a figurative speech, signifying, that God hath not done this as a by business, but as a business of great importance, in which he took great care, and had his heart much engaged; because persons are wont to rise early to prosecute such business as they are earnestly engaged in. - If God hath been so engaged in teaching, certainly we should not be negligent in learning; nor should we make growing in knowledge a by business, but a great part of the business of our lives.

**5.** It may be argued from the abundance of the instructions which God hath given us, from the largeness of that book which God hath given to teach us divinity, and from the great variety that is therein contained. Much was taught by Moses of old, which we have transmitted down to us; after that, other books were from time to time added; much is taught us by David and Solomon; and many and excellent are the instructions communicated by the prophets: yet God did not think all this enough, but after this sent Christ and his apostles, by whom there is added a great and excellent treasure to that holy book, which is to be our rule in the study of divinity.

This book was written for the use of all; all are directed to search the Scriptures. ~~4359~~ John 5:39, “Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they that testify of me;” and ~~23415~~ Isaiah 34:16,

“Seek ye out of the book of the Lord, and read.” They that read and understand are pronounced blessed.

“Blessed is he that readeth, and they that understand the words of this prophecy.” (📖 Revelation 1:3)

If this be true of that particular book of the Revelation, much more is it true of the Bible in general. Nor is it to be believed that God would have given instructions in such abundance, if he had intended that receiving instruction should be only a by concernment with us.

It is to be considered, that all those abundant instructions which are contained in the Scriptures were written for that end, that they might be understood; otherwise they are not instructions. That which is not given that the learner may understand it, is not given for the learner's instruction; and unless we endeavor to grow in the knowledge of divinity, a very great part of those instructions will to us be in vain; for we can receive benefit by no more of the Scriptures than we understand, no more than if they were locked up in an unknown tongue. We have reason to bless God that he hath given us such various and plentiful instruction in his word; but we shall be hypocritical in so doing, if we, after all, content ourselves with but little of this instruction.

When God hath opened a very large treasure before us, for the supply of our wants, and we thank him that he hath given us so much; if at the same time we be willing to remain destitute of the greatest part of it, because we are too lazy to gather it, this will not show the sincerity of our thankfulness. We are now under much greater advantages to acquire knowledge in divinity, than the people of God were of old, because since that time, the canon of Scripture is much increased. But if we be negligent of our advantages, we may be never the better for them, and may remain with as little knowledge as they.

**6.** However diligently we apply ourselves, there is room enough to increase our knowledge in divinity, without coming to an end. None have this excuse to make for not diligently applying themselves to gain knowledge in divinity, that they know all already; nor can they make this excuse, that they have no need diligently to apply themselves, in order to know all that is to be known. None can excuse themselves for want of

business in which to employ themselves. Here is room enough to employ ourselves forever in this divine science, with the utmost application. Those who have applied themselves most closely, have studied the longest, and have made the greatest attainments in this knowledge, know but little of what is to be known. The subject is inexhaustible. That divine Being, who is the main subject of this science, is infinite, and there is no end to the glory of his perfections. His works at the same time are wonderful, and cannot be found out to perfection; especially the work of redemption, which is that work of God about which the science of divinity is chiefly conversant, is full of unsearchable wonders.

The word of God, which is given for our instruction in divinity, contains enough in it to employ us to the end of our lives, and then we shall leave enough uninvestigated to employ the heads of the ablest divines to the end of the world. The Psalmist found an end to the things that are human; but he could never find an end to what is contained in the word of God;

~~1117~~ Psalm 119:96, “I have seen an end to all perfection; but thy commandment is exceeding broad.” There is enough in this divine science to employ the understandings of saints and angels to all eternity.

**7.** It doubtless concerns every one to endeavor to excel in the knowledge of things which pertain to his profession or principal calling. If it concerns men to excel in any thing or in any wisdom or knowledge at all, it certainly concerns them to excel in the affairs of their main profession and work. But the calling and work of every Christian is to live to God. This is said to be his high calling, ~~1118~~ Philippians 3:14. This is the business, and, if I may so speak, the trade of a Christian, his main work, and indeed should be his only work. No business should be done by a Christian, but as it is some way or other a part of this. Therefore certainly the Christian should endeavor to be well acquainted with those things which belong to this work, that he may fulfill it, and be thoroughly furnished to it.

It becomes one who is called to be a soldier, and to go a warfare, to endeavor to excel in the art of war. It becomes one who is called to be a mariner, and to spend his life in sailing the ocean, to endeavor to excel in the art of navigation. It becomes one who professes to be a physician, and devotes himself to that work, to endeavor to excel in the knowledge of those things which pertain to the art of physic. So it becomes all such as

profess to be Christians, and to devote themselves to the practice of Christianity, to endeavor to excel in the knowledge of divinity.

**8.** It may be argued from this, that God hath appointed an order of men for this end, to assist persons in gaining knowledge in these things. He hath appointed them to be teachers. ~~¶~~1 Corinthians 12:28, “And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers.” ~~¶~~Ephesians 4:11, 12, “He gave some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.”

If God hath set them to be teachers, making that their business, then he hath made it their business to impart knowledge. But what kind of knowledge? Not the knowledge of philosophy, or of human laws, or of mechanical arts, but of divinity.

If God hath made it the business of some to be teachers, it will follow, that he hath made it the business of others to be learners; for teachers and learners are correlates, one of which was never intended to be without the other. God hath never made it the duty of some to take pains to teach those who are not obliged to take pains to learn. He hath not commanded ministers to spend themselves, in order to impart knowledge to those who are not obliged to apply themselves to receive it.

The name by which Christians are commonly called in the New Testament is disciples, the signification of which word is scholars or learners. All Christians are put into the school of Christ, where their business is to learn, or receive knowledge from Christ, their common master and teacher, and from those inferior teachers appointed by him to instruct in his name. God hath in the Scriptures plainly revealed it to be his will, that all Christians should diligently endeavor to excel in the knowledge of divine things. It is the revealed will of God, that Christians should not only have some knowledge of things of this nature, but that they should be enriched with all knowledge: ~~¶~~1 Corinthians 1:4-5, “I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God that is given you by Jesus Christ, that in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge.”

So the apostle earnestly prayed, that the Christian Philippians might abound more and more, not only in love, but in Christian knowledge:

~~1000~~ Philippians 1:9, “And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge, and in all judgment.” So the Apostle Peter advises to “give all diligence, to add to faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge,” ~~6000~~ 2 Peter 1:5. And the Apostle Paul, in the next chapter to that wherein is the text, counsels the Christian Hebrews, leaving the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, to go on to perfection. He would by no means have them always to rest only in those fundamental doctrines of repentance, and faith, and the resurrection from the dead, and the eternal judgment, in which they were indoctrinated when they were first baptized, and had the apostle’s hands laid on them, at their first initiation in Christianity. See Hebrews 6, at the beginning.

### APPLICATION

The use that I would make of this doctrine is, to exhort all diligently to endeavor to gain this kind of knowledge.

Consider yourselves as scholars or disciples, put into the school of Christ, and therefore be diligent to make proficiency in Christian knowledge. Content not yourselves with this, that you have been taught your catechism in your childhood, and that you know as much of the principles of religion as is necessary to salvation. So you will be guilty of what the apostle warns against, viz., going no further than laying the foundation of repentance from dead works, etc.

You are all called to be Christians, and this is your profession. Endeavor, therefore, to acquire knowledge in things which pertain to your profession.

- Let not your teachers have cause to complain, that while they spend and are spent, to impart knowledge to you, you take little pains to learn. It is a great encouragement to an instructor, to have such to teach as make a business of learning, bending their minds to it. This makes teaching a pleasure, when otherwise it will be a very heavy and burdensome task.

You all have by you a large treasure of divine knowledge, in that you have the Bible in your hands; therefore be not contented in possessing but little of this treasure. God hath spoken much to you in the Scripture; labor to understand as much of what he saith as you can. God hath made you all reasonable creatures; therefore let not the noble faculty of reason or understanding lie neglected. Content not yourselves with having so much

knowledge as is thrown in your way, and as you receive in some sense unavoidably by the frequent inculcation of divine truth in the preaching of the word, of which you are obliged to be hearers, or as you accidentally gain in conversation; but let it be very much your business to search for it, and that with the same diligence and labor with which men are wont to dig in mines of silver and gold.

Especially I would advise those that are young to employ themselves in this way. Men are never too old to learn; but the time of youth is especially the time for learning; it is especially proper for gaining and storing up knowledge. Further, to stir up all, both old and young, to this duty, let me entreat you to consider,

**1.** If you apply yourselves diligently to this work, you will not want employment, when you are at leisure from your common secular business. In this way, you may find something in which you may profitably employ yourselves these long winter evenings. You will find something else to do, besides going about from house to house, spending one hour after another in unprofitable conversation, or, at best, to no other purpose but to amuse yourselves, to fill up and wear away your time. And it is to be feared that very much of the time that is spent in our winter evening visits, is spent to a much worse purpose than that which I have now mentioned. Solomon tells us,

“That in the multitude of words, there wanteth not sin.”  
(~~2006~~ Proverbs 10:19)

And is not this verified in those who find nothing else to do for so great a part of the winter, but to go to one another's houses, and spend the time in such talk as comes next, or such as any one's present disposition happens to suggest? Some diversion is doubtless lawful; but for Christians to spend so much of their time, so many long evenings, in no other conversation than that which tends to divert and amuse, if nothing worse, is a sinful way of spending time, and tends to poverty of soul at least, if not to outward poverty:

“In all labor there is profit; but the talk of the lips tendeth only to penury!” (~~2102~~ Proverbs 14:23)

Besides, when persons for so much of their time have nothing else to do but to sit, and talk, and chat in one another's chimney corners, there is great danger of falling into foolish and sinful conversation, venting their corrupt dispositions, in talking against others, expressing their jealousies and evil surmises concerning their neighbors; not considering what Christ hath said,

“Of every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account in the day of judgment.” (☞<sup>4023</sup> Matthew 12:36)

If you would comply with what you have heard from this doctrine, you would find something else to spend your winters in, one winter after another, besides contention, or talking about those public affairs which tend to contention. Young people might find something else to do, besides spending their time in vain company; something that would be much more profitable to themselves, as it would really turn to some good account; something, in doing which they would both be more out of the devil's way, the way of temptation, and be more in the way of duty, and of a divine blessing. And even aged people would have something to employ themselves in after they are become incapable of bodily labor. Their time, as is now often the case, would not lie heavy upon their hands, as they would, with both profit and pleasure, be engaged in searching the Scriptures, and in comparing and meditating upon the various truths which they should find there.

**2.** This would be a noble way of spending your time. The Holy Spirit gives the Bereans this epithet, because they diligently employed themselves in this business: ☞<sup>4471</sup> Acts 17:11, “These were more noble than those of Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things ere so.”

This is very much the employment of heaven. The inhabitants of that world spend much of their time in searching into the great things of divinity, and endeavoring to acquire knowledge in them, as we are told of the angels, ☞<sup>4112</sup> 1 Peter 1:12, “Which things the angels desire to look into.” This will be very agreeable to what you hope will be your business to all eternity, as you doubtless hope to join in the same employment with the angels of light. Solomon says, ☞<sup>4059</sup> Proverbs 25:2, “It is the honor of kings to search out a matter;” and certainly, above all others, to search out divine

matters. Now if this be the honor even of kings, is it not equally, if not much more, your honor?

**3.** This is a pleasant way of improving time. Knowledge is pleasant and delightful to intelligent creatures, and above all the knowledge of divine things; for in them are the most excellent truths, and the most beautiful and amiable objects held forth to view. However tedious the labor necessarily attending this business may be, yet the knowledge once obtained will richly requite the pains taken to obtain it.

“When wisdom entereth the heart, knowledge is pleasant to the soul,” (~~200~~ Proverbs 2:10.)

**4.** This knowledge is exceeding useful in Christian practice. Such as have much knowledge in divinity have great means and advantages for spiritual and saving knowledge; for no means of grace, as was said before, have their effect on the heart, otherwise than by the knowledge they impart. The more you have of a rational knowledge of the things of the gospel, the more opportunity will there be, when the Spirit shall be breathed into your heart, to see the excellency of these things, and to taste the sweetness of them. The Heathens, who have no rational knowledge of the things of the gospel, have no opportunity to see the excellency of them; and therefore the more rational knowledge of these things you have, the more opportunity and advantage you have to see the divine excellency and glory of them.

Again, The more knowledge you have of divine things, the better will you know your duty; your knowledge will be of great use to direct you as to your duty in particular cases. You will also be the better furnished against the temptations of the devil. For the devil often takes the advantage of persons' ignorance to ply them with temptations which otherwise would have no hold of them. By having much knowledge, you will be under greater advantages to conduct yourselves with prudence and discretion in your Christian course, and so to live much more to the honor of God and religion. Many who mean well, and are full of a good spirit, yet, for want of prudence, conduct themselves so as to wound religion. Many have a zeal of God, which doth more hurt than good, because it is not according to knowledge, ~~200~~ Romans 10:2. The reason why many good men behave no

better in many instances, is not so much that they want grace, as that they want knowledge.

Besides, an increase of knowledge would be a great help to profitable conversation. It would supply you with matter for conversation when you come together, or when you visit your neighbors: and so you would have less temptation to spend the time in such conversation as tends to your own and others' hurt.

**5.** Consider the advantages you are under to grow in the knowledge of divinity. We are under far greater advantages to gain much knowledge in divinity now, than God's people under the Old Testament, both because the canon of Scripture is so much enlarged since that time, and also because evangelical truths are now so much more plainly revealed. So that common men are now in some respects under advantages to know more of divinity, than the greatest prophets were then. Thus that saying of Christ is in a sense applicable to us, ~~<sup>10:23</sup>~~ Luke 10:23, 24, "Blessed are the eyes which see the things which ye see. For I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them."

We are in some respects under far greater advantages for gaining knowledge, now in these latter ages of the church, than Christians were formerly; especially by reason of the art of printing, of which God hath given us the benefit, whereby Bibles and other books of divinity are exceedingly multiplied, and persons may now be furnished with helps for the obtaining of Christian knowledge, at a much easier and cheaper rate than they formerly could.

**6.** We know not what opposition we may meet with in the principles which we hold in divinity. We know that there are many adversaries to the gospel and its truths. if therefore we embrace those truths, we must expect to be attacked by the said adversaries; and unless we be well informed concerning divine things, how shall we be able to defend ourselves? Besides, the Apostle Peter enjoins it upon us, always to be ready to give an answer to every man who asketh us a reason of the hope that is in us. But this we cannot expect to do without a considerable knowledge in divine things.

I shall now conclude my discourse with some directions for the acquisition of this knowledge.

**1.** Be assiduous in reading the holy Scriptures. This is the fountain whence all knowledge in divinity must be derived. Therefore let not this treasure lie by you neglected. Every man of common understanding who can read, may, if he please, become well acquainted with the Scriptures. And what an excellent attainment would this be!

**2.** Content not yourselves with only a cursory reading, without regarding the sense. This is an ill way of reading, to which, however, many accustom themselves all their days. When you read, observe what you read. Observe how things come in. Take notice of the drift of the discourse, and compare one Scripture with another. For the Scripture, by the harmony of the different parts of it, casts great light upon itself. We are expressly directed by Christ to search the Scriptures, which evidently intends something more than a mere cursory reading. And use means to find out the meaning of the Scripture. When you have it explained in the preaching of the word, take notice of it; and if at any time a Scripture that you did not understand be cleared up to your satisfaction, mark it, lay it up, and if possible remember it.

**3.** Procure, and diligently use other books which may help you to grow in this knowledge. There are many excellent books extant, which might greatly forward you in this knowledge, and afford you a very profitable and pleasant entertainment in your leisure hours. There is doubtless a great defect in many, that through a lothness to be at a little expense, they furnish themselves with no more helps of this nature. They have a few books indeed, which now and then on Sabbath days they read; but they have had them so long, and read them so often, that they are weary of them, and it is now become a dull story, a mere task to read them. **4.** Improve conversation with others to this end. How much might persons promote each other's knowledge in divine things, if they would improve conversation as they might; if men that are ignorant were not ashamed to show their ignorance, and were willing to learn of others; if those that have knowledge would communicate it, without pride and ostentation; and if all were more disposed to enter on such conversation as would be for their mutual edification and instruction.

**5.** Seek not to grow in knowledge chiefly for the sake of applause, and to enable you to dispute with others; but seek it for the benefit of your souls, and in order to practice. If applause be your end, you will not be so likely to be led to the knowledge of the truth, but may justly, as often is the case of those who are proud of their knowledge, be led into error to your own perdition. This being your end, if you should obtain much rational knowledge, it would not be likely to be of any benefit to you, but would puff you up with pride: <sup><4081></sup>1 Corinthians 8:1, “Knowledge puffeth up.” 6. Seek to God, that he would direct you, and bless you, in this pursuit after knowledge. This is the apostle’s direction, <sup><5005></sup>James 1:5:

“If any man lack wisdom, let him ask it of God, who giveth to all liberally, and upbraideth not.” God is the fountain of all divine knowledge.

<sup><4006></sup>Proverbs 2:6, “The Lord giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.”

Labor to be sensible of your own blindness and ignorance, and your need of the help of God, lest you be led into error, instead of true knowledge.

“If any man would be wise, let him become a fool,  
that he may be wise.” (<sup><4088></sup>1 Corinthians 3:18)

**8.** (sic) Practice according to what knowledge you have. This will be the way to know more. The Psalmist warmly recommends this way of seeking knowledge in divinity, from his own experience: <sup><19B9100></sup>Psalm 119:100, “I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts.” Christ also recommends the same: <sup><4007></sup>John 7:17,

“If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.”

# CHRISTIAN CHARITY

OR

## THE DUTY OF CHARITY TO THE POOR, EXPLAINED AND ENFORCED.

If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren within any of thy gates in thy land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother: but thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely find him sufficient for his need, in that which he wanteth. Beware that there be not a thought in thy wicked heart, saying, The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand, and thine eye be evil against thy poor brother, and thou givest him nought, and he cry unto the Lord against thee, and it be sin unto thee. Thou shalt surely give him, and thine heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him: because that for this thing the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto. For the poor shall never cease out of the land: therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land.

(<sup>Deut</sup> Deuteronomy 25:7-11)

### SECTION 1

*The words explained.*

THE duty here enjoined, is giving to the poor: “If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren, thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother: — Thou shalt surely give him.” Here by thy poor brother is to be understood the same as in other places is meant by neighbour. It is explained in <sup>Lev</sup> Leviticus 25:35. to mean not only those of their own nation, but even strangers and sojourners: “And if thy brother be waxen poor, and fallen in decay with thee, then thou shalt

relieve him: yea, though he be a stranger, or a sojourner.” The Pharisees indeed interpreted it to signify only one of their own nation; but Christ condemns this interpretation, ~~and~~ Luke 10:29, etc. and teaches, in contradiction to their opinion, that the rules of charity, in the law of Moses, are to be extended to the Samaritans, who were not of their nation, and between whom and the Jews there was the most bitter enmity, and who were a people very troublesome to the Jews.

God gives us direction how we are to give in such a case, viz. bountifully, and willingly. We should give bountifully and sufficiently for the supply of the poor’s need: verse 7, 8. “Thou shalt not shut up thine hand from thy poor brother; but thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and lend him sufficient for his need, in that which he wanteth.” And again, in verse 11. “Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land.” Again, we should give willingly and without grudging: verse 7. “Thou shalt not harden thine heart from thy poor brother;” and verse 10. “And thine heart shall not be grieved when thou givest him.”

We may also observe how peremptorily this duty is here enjoined, and how much it is insisted on. It is repeated over and over again, and enjoined in the strongest terms; ver 7. “Thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother;” verse 8. “But thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him;” verse 10. “Thou shalt surely give him;” verse 11. “I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy.”

Moreover, God strictly warns against objections, verse 9. “Beware that there be not a thought in thy wicked heart, saying, The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand and thine eye be evil against thy poor brother, and thou; givest him nought, and he cry unto the Lord against thee, and it be sin unto thee.” The matter concerning the seventh year, or year of release, was thus: God had given Israel a law, that every seventh year should be a year of release; that if any man had lent any thing to any of his poor neighbours, if the latter had not been able to repay it before that year, the former should release it, and should not exact it of his neighbour, but give it to him. Therefore God warns the children of Israel against making of this an objection to helping their poor neighbours, that the year of release

was near at hand; and it was not likely that they would be able to refund it again before that time, and then they should lose it wholly, because then they would be obliged to release it. God foresaw that the wickedness of their hearts would be very ready to make such an objection; but very strictly warns them against it, that they should not be the more backward to supply the wants of the needy for that, but should be willing to give him: “Thou shalt be willing to lend, expecting nothing again.”

Men are exceedingly apt to make objections against such duties, which God speaks of here as a manifestation of the wickedness of their hearts: “Beware that there be not a thought in thy wicked heart,” etc. The warning is very strict. God doth not only say, Beware that thou do not actually refuse to give him, but, Beware that thou have not one objecting thought against it, arising from a backwardness to liberality. God warns against the beginnings of uncharitableness in the heart, and against whatever tends to a forbearance to give: “And thou give him nought, and he cry unto the Lord against thee, and it he sin unto thee.” God warns them, from the guilt which they would be liable to bring upon themselves hereby.

We may observe here several enforcements of this duty. There is a reason of this duty implied in God’s calling him that is needy, our brother: “Thou shalt not shut thine hand from thy poor brother,” and verse 9. “Beware that thine eye be not evil against thy poor brother,” and verse 11. “Thou shalt open thine hand wide to thy brother.” We are to look upon ourselves as related to all mankind but especially to those who are of the visible people of God. We are to look upon them as brethren, and to treat them accordingly. We shall be base indeed, if we be not willing to help a brother in want. — Another enforcement of this duty is the promise of God, that for this thing he will bless us in all our works, and in all that we put our hands unto, a promise that we shall not lose, but gain by it, (verse 10.) — Another is, that we shall never want proper objects of our charity and bounty: verse 11. “For the poor shall never cease out of thy land.” This God saith to the Jewish church, and the like Christ saith to the Christian church,

“The poor ye have always with you.” (~~4181~~ Matthew 26:11.)

This is to cut off an excuse that uncharitable persons would be ready to make for not giving, that they could find nobody to give to, that they saw

none who needed. God cuts off such an excuse, by telling us, that he would so order it in his providence, that his people every where, and in all ages, shall have occasion for the exercise of that virtue.

From this account the doctrine is obvious that it is the absolute and indispensable duty of the people of God, to give bountifully and willingly for supplying the wants of the needy. — But more particularly,

**1.** It is the duty of the people of God, to give bountifully for the aforesaid purpose. It is commanded once and again in the text, “Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy poor brother.” Merely to give something is not sufficient it answers not the rule, nor comes up to the holy command of God, but we must open our hand wide. What we give considering our neighbour’s wants, and our ability, should be such as may be called a liberal gift. What is meant in the text by opening the hand wide, with respect to those that are able, is explained in verse 8. “Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his want, in that which he needeth.” By lending here, as is evident by the two following verses: and as we have just now shown, is not only meant lending to receive again, the word lend in Scripture is sometimes used for giving; as in ~~and~~ Luke 6:35. “Do good and lend, hoping for nothing begin.”

We are commanded, therefore, to give our poor neighbour what is sufficient for his need. There ought to be none suffered to live in pinching want, among a visible people of God, who are able: unless in case of idleness or prodigality, or some such case which the word of God excepts. — It is said that the children of Israel should lend to the poor, and in the year of release should release what they had lent, save when there should be no poor among them. It is rendered in the margin, to the end there be no poor among you, *i.e.* you should so supply the wants of the needy, that there may be none among you in pinching want. This translation seems the more likely to be the true one, because God says, verse 11. that there shall be no such time when there shall be no poor, who shall be proper objects of charity. — When persons give very sparingly, It is no manifestation of charity, but of a contrary spirit:

“Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren, that they would go before unto you, and make up beforehand your bounty, whereof ye had notice before that the same might be ready, as a

matter of bounty, and not as of covetousness.” (2 Corinthians 9:5.)

The apostle here calls a very sparing contribution, matter of covetousness.

**2.** It is the duty of the visible people of God, to give for the supply of the needy, freely, and without grudging it doth not at all answer the rule in the sight of God, if it be done with an inward grudging, or if the heart be grieved, and it inwardly hurt the man to give what he gives: “Thou shalt surely give,” says God, “and thine heart shall not be grieved.” God looks at the heart, and the hand is not accepted without it: 2 Corinthians 9:7. “Every man according as he hath purposed in his heart, so let him give, not grudgingly, or of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful giverse”

**3.** This is a duty to which God’s people are under very strict obligations. It is not merely a commendable thing for a man to be kind and bountiful to the poor, but our bounded duty, as much a duty as it is to pray, or to attend public worship, or any thing else whatever; and the neglect of it brings great guilt upon any person.

## SECTION 2

*Of the obligation of Christians to perform the duty of charity to the poor.*

THIS duty is absolutely commanded, and much insisted on, in the word of God. Where have we any command in the Bible laid down in stronger terms, and in a more peremptory urgent manner, than the command of giving to the poor? We have the same law in a positive manner laid down in Leviticus 25:35, etc. “And if thy brother be waxen poor, and fallen in decay with thee, then thou shalt relieve him; Yea, though he be a stranger or a sojourner, that he may live with thee.” And at the conclusion of verse 38 God enforces it with saying, I am the Lord thy God.

It is mentioned in Scripture, not only as a duty, but a great duty, indeed it is generally acknowledged to be a duty, to be kind to the needy, but by many it seems not to be looked upon as a duty of great importance. However, it is mentioned in Scripture as one of the greater and more essential duties of religion: Micah 6:8. “He hath showed thee, O man, what is good, and what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?” Here to love

mercy is mentioned as one of the three great things that are the sum of all religion. So it is mentioned by the apostle James, as one of the two things wherein pure and undefiled religion consists: <sup><3027></sup>James 1:27. “Pure religion, and undefiled, before God and the Father, is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.”

So Christ tells us, it is one of the weightier matters of the law: <sup><1223></sup>Matthew 22:23. “Ye have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith.” The Scriptures again and again teach us, that it is a more weighty and essential thing than the attendance on the outward ordinances of worship: <sup><3009></sup>Hosea 6:6. “I desired mercy, and not sacrifice,” <sup><1093></sup>Matthew 9:13. and 12:7. I know of scarce any duty which is so much insisted on, so pressed and urged upon us, both in the Old Testament and New, as this duty of charity to the poor.

The reason of the thing strongly obliges to it. It is not only very positively and frequently insisted on by God, but it is most reasonable in itself and so, on this account, there is reason why God should much insist upon it.


**1.** It is most reasonable considering the general state and nature of mankind. This is such as renders it most reasonable that we should love our neighbour as ourselves, for men are made in the image of our God, and on this account are worthy of our love. Besides, we are all nearly allied one to another by nature. We have all the same nature, like faculties, like dispositions, like desires of good, like needs, like aversion to misery, and are made of one blood; and we are made to subsist by society and union one with another. God hath made us with such a nature, that we cannot subsist without the help of one another. Mankind in this respect are as the members of the natural body one cannot subsist alone, without an union with and the help of the rest.

Now, this state of mankind shows how reasonable and suitable it is, that men should love their neighbours, and that we should not look every one at his own things, but every man also at the things of others,

<sup><1000></sup>Philippians 2:4. A selfish spirit is very unsuitable to the nature and state of mankind. He who is all for himself, and none for his neighbours, deserves to be cut off from the benefit of human society, and to be turned out among wild beasts, to subsist by himself as well as he can. A private

niggardly spirit is more suitable for wolves, and other beasts of prey, than for human beings.

To love our neighbour as ourselves, is the sum of the moral law respecting our fellow-creatures; and to help them, and to contribute to their relief, is the most natural expression of this love. It is vain to pretend to a spirit of love to our neighbours, when it is grievous to us to part with any thing for their help, when under calamity. They who love only in word, and in tongue, and not in deed, have no love in truth. Any profession without it is a vain pretense. To refuse to give to the needy, is unreasonable, because we therein do to others contrary to what we would have others to do to us in like circumstances. We are very sensible of our own calamities, and when we suffer, are ready enough to think, that our state requires the compassion and help of others, and are ready enough to think it hard, if others will not deny themselves in order to help us when in straits.

**2.** It is especially reasonable, considering our circumstances, under such a dispensation of grace as that of the gospel. Consider how much God hath done for us, how greatly he hath loved us, what he hath given us, when we were so unworthy, and when he could have no addition to his happiness by us. Consider that silver, and gold, and earthly crowns, were in his esteem but mean things to give us, and he hath therefore given us his own Son. Christ loved and pitied us, when we were poor, and he laid out himself to help, and even did shed his own blood for us without grudging. He did not think much to deny himself, and to be at great cost for us vile wretches, in order to make us rich, and to clothe us with kingly robes, when we were naked; to feast us at his own table with dainties infinitely costly, when we were starving; to advance us from the dunghill, and set us among princes, and make us to inherit the throne of his glory, and so to give us the enjoyment of the greatest wealth and plenty to all eternity; agreeably to  2 Corinthians 8:9.

“For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.”

Considering all these things, what a poor business will it be, that those who hope to share these benefits, yet cannot give something for the relief of a poor neighbour without grudging that it should grieve them to part

with a small matter, to help a fellow-servant in calamity, when Christ did not grudge to shed his own blood for them!

How unsuitable is it for us, who live only by kindness to be unkind! What would have become of us, if Christ had been so saying of his blood, and doth to bestow it, as many men are of their money or goods? or if he had been as ready to excuse himself from dying for us, as men commonly are to excuse themselves from charity to their neighbour? If Christ would have made objections of such things, as men commonly object to performing deeds of charity to their neighbour, he would have found enough of them.

Besides, Christ, by his redemption, has brought us into a more near relation one to another, hath made us children of God, children in the same family. We are all brethren having God for our common Father, which is much more than to be brethren in any other family. He hath made us all one body; therefore we ought to be united, and subserve one another's good, and bear one another's burdens, as is the case with the members of the same natural body. If one of the members suffer, all the other members bear the burden with it, <sup><R126></sup>1 Corinthians 12:26. If one member be diseased or wounded' the other members of the body will minister to it, and help it. So surely it should be in the body of Christ:

**“Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”**

(<sup><R127></sup>Galatians 6:2.)

Apply these things to yourselves; and inquire, whether you do not lie under guilt on account of the neglect of this duty, in withholding that charity which God requires of you towards the needy? You have often been put upon examining yourselves, whether you do not live in some way displeasing to God. Perhaps at such times it never came into your minds, whether you do not lie under guilt on this account. — But this neglect certainly brings guilt upon the soul in the sight of God, as is evident by the text: “Beware that thine eye be not evil against thy poor brother, and thou givest him nought, and he cry unto the Lord against thee, and it be sin unto thee,” verse 9. This is often mentioned as one of the sins of Judah and Jerusalem, for which God was about to bring such terrible judgments upon them; and it was one of the sins of Sodom, for which that city was destroyed, that she did not give to supply the poor and needy, <sup><R128></sup>Ezekiel 16:49. “This was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fullness of bread,

and abundance of idleness in her, and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy.”

And have we not reason to fear, that much guilt lies upon this land on this very account? We have a high conceit of ourselves for religion: but do not many other countries shame us? Do not the papists shame us in this respect? So far as I can understand the tenor of the Christian religion, and the rules of the word of God, the same are in no measure in this respect answered by the general practice of most people in this land. There are many who make a high profession of religion; but do not many of them need to be informed by the apostle James, what true religion is?

Let every one examine himself, whether he do not lie under guilt in this matter. Have you not forbore to give, when you have seen your brother in want? Have you not shut up the bowels of your compassion towards him, and forbore to deny yourselves a little for his relief? Or when you have given, have you not done it grudgingly? And has it not inwardly hurt and grieved you? You have looked upon what you have given, as lost: so that what you have given, has been, as the apostle expresses it, a matter of covetousness, rather than of bounty. Have not occasions of giving been unwelcome to you? Have you not been uneasy under them? Have you not felt a considerable backwardness to give? Have you not from a grudging, backward spirit, been apt to raise objections against giving, and to excuse yourselves? Such things as these bring guilt upon the soul, and often bring down the curse of God upon the persons in whom these things are found, as we may show more fully hereafter.

### SECTION 3

*An exhortation to the duty of charity to the poor.*

WE are professors of Christianity, we pretend to be the followers of Jesus, and to make the gospel our rule. We have the Bible in our houses. Let us not behave ourselves in this particular, as if we had never seen the Bible, as if we were ignorant of Christianity, and knew not what kind of religion it is. What will it signify to pretend to be Christians, and at the same time to live in the neglect of those rules of Christianity which are mainly insisted on in it? But there are several things which I would here propose to your consideration.

**I.** Consider that what you have is not your own; *i.e.* you have only a subordinate right. Your goods are only lent to you of God, to be improved by you in such ways as he directs. You yourselves are not your own;

“Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price; your body and your spirit are God’s.” (~~1~~ 1 Corinthians 6:20.)

And if you yourselves are not your own, so then neither are your possessions your own. Many of you have by covenant given up yourselves and all you have to God. You have disowned and renounced any right in yourselves or in any thing that you have, and have given to God all the absolute right; and if you be true Christians, you have done it from the heart.

Your money and your goods are not your own; they are only committed to you as stewards, to be used for him who committed them to you; ~~1~~ 1 Peter 4:9, 10. “Use hospitality one to another without grudging. As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.” A steward has no business with his master’s goods, to use them any otherwise than for the benefit of his master and his family, or according to his master’s direction. He hath no business to use them, as if he were the proprietor of them; he hath nothing to do with them, only as he is to use them for his master. He is to give every one of his master’s family their portion of meat in due season. But if instead of that, he hoards up his master’s goods for himself, and withholds them from those of the household, so that some of the family are pinched for want of food and clothing, he is therein guilty of robbing his master and embezzling his substance. And would any householder endure such a steward? If he discovered him in such a practice, would he not take his goods out of his hands, and commit them to the care of some other steward, who should give every one of his family his portion of meat in due season? Remember that all of us must give account of our stewardship, and how we have disposed of those goods, which our Master has put into our hands. And if when our Master comes to reckon with us, it be found that we have denied some of his family their proper provision, while we have hoarded up for ourselves, as if we had been the proprietors of our Master’s goods, what account shall we give of this?

**II.** God tells us, that he shall look upon what is done in charity to our neighbours in want, as done unto him and what is denied unto them, as denied unto him.

“He that hath pity on the poor lendeth to the Lord.”

(~~187~~ Proverbs 19:17.)

God hath been pleased to make our needy neighbours his receivers. He in his infinite mercy hath so interested himself in their case, that he looks upon what is given in charity to them, as given to himself and when we deny them what their circumstances requite of us, he looks upon it that we therein rob him of his right.

Christ teaches us, that we are to look upon our fellow-Christians in this case as himself, and that our giving or withholding from them, shall be taken, as if we so behaved ourselves towards him; see ~~180~~ Matthew 25:40. There Christ says to the righteous on his right hand, who had supplied the wants of the needy, “In that ye have done it to one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.” In like manner he says to the wicked who had not shown mercy to the poor, verse 45. “Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.” — Now what stronger enforcement of this duty can be conceived, or is possible, than this, that Jesus Christ looks upon our kind and bountiful, or unkind and uncharitable, treatment of our needy neighbours, as such a treatment of himself?

If Christ himself were upon earth, and dwelt among us in a frail body, as he once did, and were in calamitous and needy circumstances, should we not be willing to supply him? Should we be apt to excuse ourselves from helping him! Should we not be willing to supply him so, that he might live free from distressing poverty? And if we did otherwise, should we not bring great guilt upon ourselves? And might not our conduct justly be very highly resented by God? Christ was once here in a frail body, stood in need of the charity, and was maintained by it; ~~181~~ Luke 8:2, 3. “And certain women which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalen, out of whom went seven devils, and Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod’s steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him of their substance. So he still, in many of his members, needs the charity of others.

**III.** Consider that there is an absolute necessity of our complying with the difficult duties of religion. To give to the poor in the manner and measure that the gospel prescribes, is a difficult duty, *i.e.* it is very contrary to corrupt nature, to that covetousness and selfishness of which there is so much in the wicked heart of man. Man is naturally governed only by a principle of self-love, and it is a difficult thing to corrupt nature, for men to deny themselves of their present interest, trusting in God to make it up to them hereafter. — But how often hath Christ told us the necessity of doing difficult duties of religion, if we will be his disciples, that we must sell all, take up our cross daily, deny ourselves, renounce our worldly profits and interests, etc. And if this duty seem hard and difficult to you, let not that be an objection with you against doing it, for you have taken up quite a wrong notion of things, if you expect to go to heaven without performing difficult duties, if you expect any other than to find the way to life a narrow way.

**IV.** The Scripture teaches us, that this very particular duty is necessary. Particularly,

**1.** The Scripture teaches, that God will deal with us as we deal with our fellow-creatures in this particular, and that with what measure we mete to others in this respect, God will measure to us again. This the Scripture asserts both ways; it asserts that if we be of a merciful spirit, God will be merciful to us: <sup><187></sup>Matthew 5:7. “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.” <sup><582></sup>Psalms 18:25. “With the merciful thou wilt show thyself merciful.” On the other hand it tells us, that if we be not merciful, God will not be merciful to us; and that all our presence’s to faith and a work of conversion will not avail us, to obtain mercy, unless we be merciful to them that are in want. <sup><493></sup>James 2:13-16. “For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath showed no mercy. — What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food; and one of You say unto them, Depart in peace, be you warmed, and filled, notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body, what doth it profit?”

**2.** This very thing is often mentioned in Scripture, as an essential part of the character of a godly man, <sup><1821></sup>Psalms 37:21. “The righteous showeth

mercy, and giveth,” and again, verse 26. “He is ever merciful, and lendeth.” Psalm cxii. 5. “A good man showeth favour, and lendeth.” and verse 9. “He hath dispersed, and given to the poor.” So <sup><146></sup>Proverbs 14:31. “He that honoureth God, hath mercy on the poor.” Again, <sup><103></sup>Proverbs 21:26. and Isaiah Ivii. 1. A righteous man and a merciful man are used as synonymous terms: “The righteous perisheth, and merciful men are taken away,” etc.

It is mentioned in the New Testament as a thing so essential, that the contrary cannot consist with a sincere love to God. <sup><387></sup>1 John 3:17 — 19. “But whoso hath this world’s goods, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him! My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.” So the apostle Paul, when he writes to the Corinthians, and proposes their contributing for the supply of the poor saints, tells them what he doth it for, viz. a trial of their sincerity: see <sup><108></sup>2 Corinthians 8:8. “I speak to prove the sincerity of your love.”

**3.** Christ teaches, that judgment will be past at the great day according to men’s works in this respect. This is taught us by Christ in the most particular account of the proceedings of that day, that we have in the whole Bible, see <sup><125></sup>Matthew 25:34, etc. It is evident that Christ thus represented the proceedings and determinations of this great day, as turning upon this one point, on purpose, and on design to lead us into this notion, and to fix it in us, that a charitable spirit and practice towards our brethren is necessary to salvation.

**V.** Consider what abundant encouragement the word of God gives, that you shall be no losers by your charity and bounty to them who are in want. As there is scarce any duty prescribed in the word of God, which is so much insisted on as this; so there is scarce any to which there are so many promises of reward made. This virtue especially hath the promises of this life and that which is to come. If we believe the Scriptures, when a man charitably gives to his neighbour in want, the giver has the greatest advantage by it, even greater than the receiver:

“I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus,

how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.”

(~~408~~ Acts 20:35.)

He that gives bountifully is a happier man than he that receives bountifully; ~~410~~ Proverbs 14:21. “He that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he.”

Many persons are ready to look upon what is bestowed for charitable uses as lost. But we ought not to look upon it as lost, because it benefits those whom we ought to love as ourselves. And not only so, but it is not lost to us, if we give any credit to the Scriptures. See the advice that Solomon gives in ~~411~~ Ecclesiastes 11:1.

“Cast thy bread upon the waters,  
for thou shalt find it after many days.”

By casting our bread upon the waters, Solomon meant giving it to the poor, as appears by the next words, “Give a portion to seven, and also to eight.” Waters are sometimes put for people and multitudes.

What strange advice would this seem to many, to cast their bread upon the waters, which would seem to them like throwing it away! What more direct method to lose our bread, than to go and throw it into the sea? But the wise man tells us, no, it is not lost; you shall find it again after many days. It is not sunk, but you commit it to Providence; you commit it to the moods and waves: however it will come about to you, and you shall find it again after many days. Though it should be many days first, yet you shall find it at last, at a time when you most, need it. He that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord: and God is not one of those who will not pay again what is lent to him. If you lend any thing to God, you commit it into faithful hands.

“He that hath pity on the poor lendeth to the Lord, and that which he hath given will he pay him ague.” (~~412~~ Proverbs 19:17.)

God will not only pay you again, but he will pay you with great increase, ~~413~~ Luke 6:38. “Give, and it shall be given you,” that is, in “good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running overse”

Men do not account that lost, that is let out to use: but what is bestowed in charity is lent to the Lord, and he repays with great increase. ~~414~~ Isaiah

32:8. “The liberal deviseth liberal things, and by liberal things shall he stand.” Here I would particularly observe,

**1.** That if you give with a spirit of true charity, You shall be rewarded in what is infinitely more valuable than what you give, even eternal riches in heaven. <sup><10></sup>Matthew 10:42. “Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones, a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple; verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.”

Giving to our needy brethren, is in Scripture called laying up treasure in heaven, in bags that wax not old; <sup><12></sup>Luke 12:33. “Sell what ye have and give alms, provide for yourselves bags that wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, nor doth corrupteth.” Men, when they have laid up their money in their chests, do not suppose that they have thrown it away; but, on the contrary, that it is laid up safe. Much less is treasure thrown away, when it is laid up in heaven. What is laid up there is much safer than what is laid up in chests or cabinets.

You cannot lay up treasure on earth, but that it is liable to be stolen or otherwise to fail. But there no thief approacheth nor moth corrupteth. It is committed to God’s care, and he will keep it safely for you; and when you die, you shall receive it with infinite increase. Instead of a part of your earthly substance thus bestowed, you shall receive heavenly riches, on which you may live in the greatest fullness, honour, and happiness, to all eternity, and shall never be in want of any thing. After feeding with some of your bread those who cannot recompense you, you shall be rewarded at the resurrection, and eat bread in the kingdom of God. <sup><14></sup>Luke 14:13-16. “When thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind: and thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just. And when one of them that sat at meat with him, heard these things, he said unto him, Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.”

**2.** If you give to the needy though but in the exercise of moral virtue, you will be in the way greatly to gain by it in your temporal interest. They who give in the exercise of a gracious charity, are in the way to be gainers both here and hereafter; and those that give in the exercise of a moral bounty and liberality, have many temporal promises made to them. We learn by the word of God, that they are in the way to be prospered in their

outward affairs. Ordinarily such do not lose by it, but such a blessing attends their concerns, that they are paid doubly for it: <sup>1141a</sup>Proverbs 11:24, 25. “There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty. The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth, shall be watered also himself.” And <sup>1141b</sup>Proverbs 28:27.

“He that giveth to the poor, shall not lack.”

When men give to the needy, they do as it were sow seed for a crop. When men sow their seed, they seem to throw it away; yet they do not look upon it as thrown away; because, though they expect not the same again, yet they expect much more as the fruit of it: and if it be not certain that they shall have a crop, yet they are willing to run the venture of it; for that is the ordinary way wherein men obtain increase. So it is when persons give to the poor, though the promises of gaining thereby, in our outward circumstances, perhaps are not absolute; yet it is as much the ordinary consequence of it, as increase is of sowing seed. Giving to the poor, is in this respect compared to sowing seed, in <sup>1141c</sup>Ecclesiastes 11:6.

“In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good.”

By withholding the hand, the wise man means, not giving to the poor. (See verse 1, 2.) It intimates that giving to the poor is as likely a way to obtain prosperity and increase, as sowing seed in a field.

The husbandman doth not look upon his seed as lost, but is glad that he has opportunity to sow it. It grieves him not that he has land to be sown, but he rejoices in it. For the like reason we should not be grieved that we find needy people to bestow our charity upon; for this is as much an opportunity to obtain increase as the other.

Some may think this is strange doctrine; and it is to be feared, that not many will so far believe it as to give to the poor with as much cheerfulness as they sow their ground. However, it is the very doctrine of the word of God, <sup>1141d</sup>2 Corinthians 9:6, 7, 8. “But this I say, He which soweth sparingly, shall reap also sparingly: and he which soweth bountifully, shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so

let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful givense And God is able to make all grace abound towards you; that ye always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.”

It is easy with God to make up to men what they give in charity. Many but little consider how their prosperity or ill success in their outward affairs depends upon Providence. There are a thousand turns of Providence, to which their affairs are liable, whereby God may either add to their outward substance, or diminish from it, a great deal more than they are ordinarily called to give to their neighbours. How easy is it with God to diminish what they possess by sickness in their families, by drought, or frost, or mildew, or vermin, by unfortunate accidents, by entanglements in their affairs, or disappointments in their business! And how easy is it with God to increase their substance, by suitable seasons, or by health and strength; by giving them fair opportunities for promoting their interest in their dealings with men; by conducting them in his providence, so that they attain their designs; and by innumerable other ways which might be mentioned! How often is it, that only one act of providence in a man's affairs either adds to his estate, or diminishes from it, more than he would need to give to the poor in a whole year.

God hath told us, that this is the way to have his blessing attending our affairs. Thus, in the text, verse 10. “Thou shalt surely give him, and thine heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him; because that for this thing the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto;” and ~~and~~ Proverbs 22:9. “He that hath a bountiful eye, shall be blessed.” It is a remarkable evidence how little many men realize the things of religion, whatever they pretend; how little they realize that the Scripture is the word of God, or if it be, that he speaks true; that notwithstanding all the promises made in the Scripture to bounty to the poor, yet they are so backward to this duty, and are so afraid to trust God with a little of their estates. Observation may confirm the same thing which the word of God teaches on this head. God, in his providence, generally smiles upon and prospers those men who are of a liberal, charitable, bountiful spirit.

**6.** God hath threatened to follow with his curse those who are uncharitable to the poor; as ~~187~~ Proverbs 28:27.

“He that giveth to the poor shall not lack; but he that hideth his eyes, shall have many a curse.”

It is said, he that hideth his eyes, because this is the way of uncharitable men: they hide their eyes from seeing the wants of their neighbour. A charitable person, whose heart disposes him to bounty and liberality, will be quick-sighted to discern the needs of others. They will not be at any difficult to find out who is in want, they will see objects enough of their charity, let them go whither they will.

But, on the contrary, he that is of a niggardly spirit, so that it goes against the grain to give any thing, he will be always at a loss for objects of his charity. Such men excuse themselves with this, that they find not any one to give to. They hide their eyes, and will not see their neighbour's wants if a particular object is presented, they will not very readily see his circumstances; they are a long while in being convinced that he is an object of charity. They hide their eyes; and it is not an easy thing to make them sensible of the necessities and distresses of their neighbour, or at least to convince them that his necessities are such that they ought to give him any great matter.

Other men, who are of a bountiful spirit, can very easily see the objects of charity, but the uncharitable are very unapt both to see the proper objects of charity, and to see their obligations to this duty. The reason is, that they are of that sort spoken of here by the wise man, they hide their eyes. Men will readily see, where they are willing to see; but where they hate to see, they will hide their eyes.

God says, such as hides his eyes in this case shall have many a curse. Such a one is in the way to be cursed in soul and body, in both his spiritual and temporal affairs. We have shown already, how those that are charitable to the poor are in the way of being blessed. There are so many promises of the divine blessing, that we may look upon it as much the way to be blessed in our outward concerns, as sowing seed in a field is the way to have increase. And to be close and uncharitable, is as much the way to be followed with a curse, as to be charitable is the way to be followed with a

blessing. To withhold more than is meet, tends as much to poverty, as scattering tends to increase, <sup><112></sup>Proverbs 11:24. Therefore, if you withhold more than is meet, you will cross your own disposition, and will frustrate your own end. What you seek by withholding from your neighbour, is your own temporal interest and outward estate; but if you believe the Scriptures to be the word of God, you must believe that you cannot take a more direct course to lose, to be crossed and cursed in your temporal interest, than this of withholding from your indigent neighbour.

**7.** Consider, that you know not what calamitous and necessitous circumstances you yourselves or your children may be in. Perhaps you are ready to bless yourselves in your hearts, as though there were no danger of your being brought into calamitous and distressing circumstances. There is at present no prospect of it, and you hope you shall be able to provide well for your children. But you little consider what a shifting, changing, uncertain world you live in, and how often it hath so happened, that men have been reduced from the greatest prosperity to the greatest adversity, and how often the children of the rich have been reduced to pinching want.

Agreeable to this is the advice that the wise man gives us, <sup><113></sup>Ecclesiastes 11:1, 2. “Cast thy bread upon the waters, for thou shalt find it after many days. Give a portion to seven, and also to eight; for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon earth.” Thou knowest not what calamitous circumstances thou mayest be in thyself, in this changeable uncertain world. You know not what circumstances you or your children may be brought into by captivity, or other unthought-of providences. Providence governs all things. Perhaps you may trust to your own wisdom to continue your prosperity, but you cannot alter what God determines and orders in providence, as in the words immediately following the forementioned text in Ecclesiastes, “If the clouds be full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth, and if the tree fall toward the south, or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be;” *i.e.* you cannot alter the determinations of Providence. You may trust to your own wisdom for future prosperity; but if God have ordained adversity, it shall come: as the clouds when full of rain, empty themselves upon the earth, so what is in the womb of Providence shall surely come to pass. And as Providence casts the tree, whether towards the south, or towards the north, whether for prosperity or adversity, there it shall be, for all that

you can do to alter it, agreeably to what the wise man observes in chapter 7:13. “Consider the work of God, for who can make that straight which he hath made crooked?”

This consideration, that you know not what calamity and necessity you may be in yourselves or your children, tends very powerfully to enforce this duty several ways.

**1.** This may put you upon considering how your hearts would be effected, if it should so be. If it should happen, that you or some of your children should be brought into such circumstances, as those of your neighbours, how grievous would it be to you! Now perhaps you say of this and the other poor neighbour, that they can do well enough; if they be pinched a little, they can live. Thus you can make light of their difficulties. But if Providence should so order it, that you or your children should be brought into the same circumstances, would you make light of them then? Would you not use another sort of language about it? Would you not think that your case was such as needed the kindness of your neighbours? Would you not think that they ought to be ready to help you? And would you not take it hardly, if you saw a contrary spirit in them, and saw that they made light of your difficulties?

If one of your children should be brought to poverty by captivity, or otherwise, how would your hearts be affected in such a case? If you should hear that some persons had taken pity on your child, and had been very bountiful to it, would you not think that they did well? Would you be at all apt to accuse them of folly or profuseness, that they should give so much to it?

**2.** If ever there should be such a time, your kindness to others now will be but a lying up against such a time. If you yourselves should be brought into calamity and necessity, then would you find what you have given in charity to others, lying ready in store for you. Cast thy bread upon the waters, and thou shalt find it after many days, says the wise man. But when shall we find it? He tells us in the next verse, “Give a portion to seven, and also to eight, for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth.” Then is the time when you shall find it, when the day of evil cometh. You shall again find your bread which you have cast upon the waters, when you shall want it most, and stand in greatest necessity of it.

God will keep it for you against such a time. When other bread shall fail, then God will bring to you the bread which you formerly eat upon the waters; so that you shall not famish. He that giveth to the poor shall not lack.

Giving to the needy is like lying up against winter, or against a time of calamity. It is the best way of laying up for yourselves and for your children. Children in a time of need very often find their fathers' bread, that bread which their fathers had laid up against the waters.

*"I have been young and now am old, yet have I not Seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." (~~1852~~ Psalm 37:25.)*

Why? what is the reason of it? It follows in the next verse, "He is ever merciful and lendeth, and his seed is blessed."

Whether the time will ever come or not, that we or our children shall be in distressing want of bread; yet doubtless evil will be on the earth. We shall have our times of calamity, wherein we shall stand in great need of God's pity and help, if not of that of our fellow-creatures. And God hath promised that at such a time, he that hath been of a charitable spirit and practice, shall find help, ~~1851~~ Psalm 12:1-4. "Blessed is he that considereth the poor; the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble. The Lord will preserve him, and keep him alive, and he shall be blessed upon the earth, and thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies. The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness." Such as have been merciful and liberal to others in their distress, God will not forget it, but will so order it, that they shall have help when they are in distress. Yea, their children shall reap the fruit of it in the day of trouble.

**3.** God hath threatened uncharitable persons, that if ever they come to be in calamity and distress they shall be left helpless, ~~1851~~ Proverbs 21:3. "Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he shall cry himself and not be heard."

## SECTION 4

*Objections which are sometimes made to the exercise of charity, answered.*

I PROCEED now to answer some OBJECTIONS, which are sometimes made against this duty.

### Object. 1.

I am in a natural condition, and if I should give to the poor, I should not do it with a right spirit, and so should get nothing be it. — To this I answer,

**1.** We have shown already that a temporal blessing is promised to a moral bounty and liberality. This is the way to be prospered; this is the way to increase. We find in Scripture many promises of temporal blessings to moral virtues, as to diligence in our business, to justice in our dealings, to faithfulness, to temperance. So there are many blessings promised to bounty and liberality.

**1.** You may as well make the same objection against any other duty of religion. You may as well object against keeping the Sabbath, against prayer, or public worship, or against doing any thing at all its religion; for while in a natural condition, you do not any of these duties with a right spirit. If you say, you do these duties because God hath commanded or required them of you, and you shall sin greatly if you neglect them; you shall increase your guilt; and so expose yourselves to the greater damnation and punishment. The same may be said of the neglect of this duty, the neglect of it is as provoking to God.

If you say that you read, and pray, and attend public worship, because that is the appointed way for you to seek salvation, so is bounty to the poor, as much as those. — The appointed way for us to seek the &your of God and eternal life, is the way of the performance of all known duties, of which giving to the poor is one as much known, and as necessary, as rending the Scriptures, praying, or any other. Showing mercy to the poor does as much belong to the appointed way of seeking salvation, as any other duty whatever. Therefore this is the way in which Daniel directed Nebuchadnezzar to seek mercy, in ~~2027~~ Daniel 4:27.

“Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable to thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by showing mercy to the poor.”

### Object. 2.

If I be liberal and bountiful, I shall only make a righteousness of it, and so it will do me more hurt than good. To this I say,

**1.** The same answer may be made to this, as to the former objection, viz. That you may as well make the same objection against doing any religious or moral duty at all. If this be a sufficient objection against deeds of charity, then it is a sufficient objection to prayer; for nothing is more common than for persons to make a righteousness of their prayers. So it is a good objection against your keeping the Sabbath, or attending any public worship, or ever reading in the Bible, for of all these things you are in danger of making a righteousness. — Yea, if the objection be good against deeds of charity, then it is as good against acts of justice; and you may neglect to speak the truth, may neglect to pay your debts, may neglect acts of common humanity, for of all those things you are in danger of making a righteousness. So that if your objection be good, you may throw up all religion, and live like heathens or atheists, and may be thieves, robbers, fornicators, adulterers, murderers, and commit all the sins that you can think of, lest if you should do otherwise, you should make a righteousness of your conduct.

**2.** Your objection carries it thus, that it is not best for you to do as God commands and counsels you to do. We find many commands in Scripture to be charitable to the poor; the Bible is full of them, and you are not excepted from those commands. God makes no exception oft any particular kinds of persons that are especially in danger of making a righteousness of what they do; and God often directs and counsels persons to this duty. Now will you presume to say that God has not directed you to the best way? He has advised you to do thus, but you think it not best for you, but that it would do you more hurt than good, if you should do it. You think there is other counsel better than God's, and that it is the best way for you to go contrary to God's commands.

### **Object. 3**

I have in times past given to the poor, but never found myself the better for it. I have heard ministers preach, that giving to the poor was the way to prosper: but I perceive not that I am more prosperous than I was before. — Yea, I have met with many misfortunes, crosses and disappointments in my affairs since. And it may be that some will say,

That very year, or soon after the very time, I had been giving to the poor, hoping to be blessed for it, I met with great losses, and things went hardly with me, and therefore I do not find what I hear preached about giving to the poor, as being the way to be blessed and prosperous, agreeable to my experience.

To this objection I shall answer several things:

**1.** Perhaps you looked out for the fulfilment of the promise too soon, before you had fulfilled the condition; as particularly, perhaps you have been so sparing and grudging in your kindness to the poor, that what you have done has been rather a discovery of a covetous, niggardly spirit, than of any bounty or liberality. The promises are not made to every man who gives any thing at all to the poor let it be ever so little, and after what manner soever given. You mistook the promises, if you understood them so. A man may give something to the poor, and yet be entitled to no promise, either temporal or spiritual. The promises are made to mercy and liberality. But a man may give something, and yet be so niggardly and grudging in it, that what he gives may be, as the apostle calls it a matter of covetousness. What he does may be more a manifestation of his covetousness and closeness, than any thing else. But there are no promises made to men's expressing their covetousness.

Perhaps what you gave was not freely given, but as it were of necessity. It was grudgingly; your hearts were grieved when you gave. And if you gave once or twice what was considerable, yet that doth not answer the rule. It may be, for all that, that in the general course of your lives you have been far from being kind and liberal to your neighbours. Perhaps you thought that because you once or twice gave a few shillings to the poor, that then you stood entitled to the promises of being blessed in all your concerns, and of increasing and being established by liberal things; though in the general you have lived in a faulty neglect of the duty of charity. You raise objections from experience, before you have made trial. To give once, or twice, or thrice, is not to make trial, though you give considerably. You cannot make any trial, unless you become a liberal person, or unless you become such that you may be truly said to be of a liberal and bountiful practice. Let one who is truly such, and has been such in the general course of his life, tell what he hath found by experience.

**2.** If you have been liberal to the poor; and have met with calamities since, yet how can you tell how much greater calamities and losses you might have met with, if you had been otherwise? You say you have met with crosses, and disappointments, and frowns. If you expected to meet with no trouble in the world, because you gave to the poor, you mistook the matter. Though there be many and great promises made to the liberal, yet God hath no where promised, that they shall not find this world a world of trouble. It will be so to all. Man is born to sorrow, and must expect no other than to meet with sorrow here. But how can you tell how much greater sorrow you would have met with, if you had been close and unmerciful to the poor? how can you tell how much greater losses you would have met with? how much more vexation and trouble would have followed you? Have none ever met with greater frowns in their outward affairs, than you have?

**3.** How can you tell what blessings God hath yet in reserve for you, if you do but continue in well-doing? Although God hath promised great blessings to liberality to the poor, yet he hath not limited himself as to the time of the bestowment. If you have not yet seen any evident fruit of your kindness to the poor, yet the time may come when you shall see it remarkably, that at a time when you most stand in need of it. You cast your bread upon the waters, and looked for it, and expected to find it again presently. And sometimes it is so; but this is not promised: it is promised, “Thou shalt find it again after many days.” God knows how to choose a time for you better than you yourselves. You should therefore wait his time. If you go on in well-doing, God may bring it to you when you stand most in need.

It may be that there is some winter a-coming, some day of trouble, and God keeps your bread for you against that time, and then God will give you good measure, and pressed down, and shaken together, and running over. We must trust in God’s word for the bestowment of the promised reward, whether we can see in what manner it is done or no. Pertinent to the present purpose are those words of the wise man in <sup>2000</sup> Ecclesiastes 11:4.

“He that observeth the winds shall not sow, and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap.”

In this context the wise man is speaking of charity to the poor, and comparing it to sowing seed, and advises us to trust Providence for success in that, as we do in sowing seed. He that regardeth the winds and clouds, to prognosticate thence prosperity to seed, and will not trust Providence with it, is not like to sow, nor to have bread-corn. So he that will not trust Providence for the reward of his charity to the poor, is like to go without the blessing. After the words now quoted follows his advice, verse 6. “In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand, for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good.” — Therefore,

“Let us not be weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap,  
if we faint not.” (~~ROM~~ Galatians 6:9.)

You think you have not reaped yet. Whether you have or not, go on still in giving and doing good; and if you do so. You shall reap in due time. God only knows the due time, the best time, for you to reap.

#### Object. 4

Some may object against charity to such or such particular persons, that they are not obliged to give them any thing; for though they be needy, set they are not in extremity. It is true they meet with difficulty, yet not so but that they can live, though they suffer some hardships. — But,

It doth not answer the rules of Christian charity, to relieve those only who are reduced to extremity, as might be abundantly shown. I shall at this time mention but two things as evidences of it.

**1.** We are commanded to love and treat one another as brethren ~~ROM~~ 1 Peter 3:8. “Have compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful.” Now, is it the part of brethren to refuse to help one another, and to do any thing for each other’s comfort, and for the relief of each other’s difficulties, only when they are in extremity? Doth it not become brothers and sisters to have a more friendly disposition one towards another, than this comes to? and to be ready to compassionate one another under difficulties, though they be not extreme?

The rule of the gospel is, that when we see our brother under any difficulty or burden, we should be ready to bear the burden with him:

~~RND~~ Galatians 6:2. “Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.” So we are commanded, “by love to serve one another,”

~~RND~~ Galatians 5:13. The Christian spirit will make us apt to sympathize with our neighbour, when we see him under any difficulty: ~~RND~~ Romans 12:15. “Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.” When our neighbour is in difficulty, he is afflicted, and we ought to have such a spirit of love to him, as to be afflicted with him in his affliction. And if we ought to be afflicted with him, then it will follow, that we ought to be ready to relieve him, because if we are afflicted with him, in relieving him we relieve ourselves. His relief is so far our own relief as his affliction is our affliction. Christianity teaches us to be afflicted in our neighbour’s affliction, and nature teaches us to relieve ourselves when afflicted.

We should behave ourselves one towards another as brethren that are fellow-travellers, for we are pilgrims and strangers here on earth and are on a journey. Now, if brethren be on a journey together, and one meet with difficulty in the way, doth it not become the rest to help him, not only in the extremity of broken bones, or the like, but as to provision for the journey if his own fall short? It becomes his fellow travelers to afford him a supply out of their stores, and not to be over nice, exact, and fearful lest they give him too much for it is but provision for a journey; and all are supplied when they get to their journey’s end.

**2.** That we should relieve our neighbour only when in extremity is not agreeable to the rule of loving our neighbour as ourselves. That rule implies that our love towards our neighbour should work in the same manner, and express itself in the same ways, as our love towards ourselves. We are very sensible of our own difficulties; we should also be readily sensible of theirs. From love to ourselves, when we are under difficulties, and suffer hardships, we are concerned for our relief, are wont to seek relief, and lay ourselves out for it. — And as we would love our neighbour as ourselves, we ought in like manner to be concerned when our neighbour is under difficulty, and to seek his relief. We are wont to be much concerned about our own difficulties, though we be not reduced to extremity, and are willing in those cases to lay ourselves out for our own relief. So, as we would love our neighbour as ourselves, we should in like manner lay out ourselves to obtain relief for him, though his difficulties be not extreme.

## Object. 5

Some may object against charity to a particular object, because he is an ill sort of person; he deserves not that people should be kind to him; he is of a very ill temper, of an ungrateful spirit, and particularly because he hath not deserved well of them, but has treated them ill, has been injurious to them, and even now entertains an ill spirit against them.

But we are obliged to relieve persons in want, notwithstanding these things, both by the general and particular rules of God's word.

**1.** We are obliged to do so by the general rules of Scripture. I shall mention two.

**(1.)** That of loving our neighbour as ourselves. A man may be our neighbour, though he be an ill sort of man, and even our enemy, as Christ himself teaches us by his discourse with the lawyer, <sup><OT></sup>Luke 10:25, etc. A certain lawyer came to Christ, and asked him, what he should do to inherit eternal life? Christ asked him, how it was written in the law? He answers, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself." Christ tells him, that if he shall do thus, he shall live. But then the lawyer asks him, who is his neighbour? because it was a received doctrine among the Pharisees, that no man was their neighbour, but their friends, and those of the same people and religion. — Christ answers him by a parable, or story of a certain man, who went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed from him, leaving him half dead. Soon after there came a priest that way, who saw the poor man that had been thus cruelly treated by the thieves; but passed by without affording him any relief. The same was done by a Levite. — But a certain Samaritan coming that way, as soon as he saw the half-dead man, had compassion on him, took him up, bound up his wounds, set him on his own beast, carried him to the inn, and took care of him, paying the innkeeper money for his past and future expense; and promising him still more, if he should find it necessary to be at more expense on behalf of the man.

Then Christ asks the lawyer, which of these three, the priest, the Levite, or the Samaritan, was neighbour to the man that fell among the thieves. Christ proposed this in such a manner, that the lawyer could not help owning, that the Samaritan did well in relieving the Jew, that he did the duty of a neighbour to him. Now, there was an inveterate enmity between the Jews and the Samaritans. They hated one another more than any other nation in the world, and the Samaritans were a people exceedingly troublesome to the Jews; yet we see that Christ teaches, that the Jews ought to do the part of neighbours to the Samaritans; *i.e.* to love them as themselves; for it was that of which Christ was speaking.

And the consequence was plain. If the Samaritan was neighbour to the distressed Jew, then the Jews, by a parity of reason, were neighbours to the Samaritans. If the Samaritan did well, in relieving a Jew that was his enemy, then the Jews would do well in relieving the Samaritans, their enemies. — What I particularly observe is, that Christ here plainly teaches, that our enemies, those that abuse and injure us, are our neighbors, and therefore come under the rule of loving our neighbour as ourselves.

(2.) Another general rule that obliges us to the same thing, is that wherein are commanded to love one another, as Christ hath loved us. We have it <sup><634></sup>John 13:34. “A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.” Christ calls it a new commandment, with respect to that old commandment of loving our neighbour as ourselves. This command of loving our neighbour as Christ hath loved us, opens our duty to us be a new manner, and in a further degree than that did. We must not only love our neighbour as ourselves but as Christ hath loved us. We have the same again,

“This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you.” (<sup><652></sup>John 15:12.)

Now, the meaning of this is, not that we should love one another to the same degree that Christ loved us, though there ought to be a proportion, considering our nature and capacity; but that we should exercise our love one to another in like manner. As, for instance, Christ hath loved us so as to be willing to deny himself, and to suffer greatly in order to help us, so should we be willing to deny ourselves, in order to help one another.

Christ loved us, and showed us great kindness though we were far below him, so should we show kindness to those of our fellow-men who are far below us. Christ denied himself to help us, though we are not able to recompense him; so should we be willing to lay out ourselves to help our neighbour freely expecting nothing again. Christ loved us, was kind to us, and was willing to relieve us, though we were very evil and hateful, of an evil disposition, not deserving any good, but deserving only to be hated, and treated with indignation, so we should be willing to be kind to those who are of an ill disposition, and are very undeserving. Christ loved us, and laid himself out to relieve us, though we were his enemies, and had treated him ill; so we, as we would love one another as Christ hath loved us, should relieve those who are our enemies, hate us, love an ill spirit toward us, and have treated us ill.

**2.** We are obliged to this duty by many particular rules We are particularly required to be kind to the unthankful and to the evil, and therein to follow the example of our heavenly Father, who causes his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. We are obliged, not only to be kind to them that are so to us, but to them that hate, and that despitefully use us. I need not mention the particular places which speak to this effect.

Not but that when persons are virtuous and pious, and of a grateful disposition, and are friendly disposed towards us, they are more the objects of our charity for it, and our obligation to kindness to them is the greater. Yet if things be otherwise, that doth not render them not fit objects of our charity, nor set us free from obligation to kindness towards them.

### **Object. 6**


Some may object from their own circumstances, that they have nothing to spare; they have not more than enough for themselves. — I answer,

**1.** It must doubtless be allowed that in some cases persons, by reason of their own circumstances, are not obliged to give to others. — For instance, if there be a contribution for the poor, they are not obliged to join in the contribution, who are in as much need as those are for whom the contribution is made. It savours of ridiculous vanity in them to contribute

with others for such as are not more needy than they. It savours of a proud desire to conceal their own circumstances, and an affectation of having them accounted above what they in truth are.


**2.** There are scarcely any who may not make this objection, as they interpret it. There is no person who may not say, he has not more than enough for himself, as he may mean by enough. He may intend, that he has not more than he desires, or more than he can dispose of to his own advantage; or not so much, but that, if he had any thing less, he should look upon himself in worse circumstances than he is in now. He will own, that he could live if he had less; but then he will say he could not live so well. Rich men may say, they have not more than enough for themselves, as they may mean by it. They need it all, they may say, to support their honour and dignity, as is proper for the place and degree in which they stand. Those who are poor, to be sure, will say, they have not too much for themselves; those who are of the middle sort will say, they have not too much for themselves; and the rich will say, they have not too much for themselves. Thus there will be none found to give to the poor.

**3.** In many cases, we may, by the rules of the gospel, be obliged to give to others, when we cannot do it without suffering ourselves; as if our neighbour's difficulties and necessities be much greater than our own, and we see that he is not like to be otherwise relieved, we should be willing to suffer with him, and to take part of his burden on ourselves; else how is that rule of bearing one another's burdens fulfilled? If we be never obliged to relieve others burdens, but when we can do it without burdening ourselves, then how do we bear our neighbour's burdens, when we bear no burden at all? Though we may not have a superfluity, yet we may be obliged to afford relief to others who are in much greater necessity, as appears by that rule,

“He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none, and he that hath meat, let him do likewise.” ( Luke 3:11.)

Yea, they who are very poor may be obliged to give for the relief of others in much greater distress than they. If there be no other way of relief, those who have the lightest burden are obliged still to take some part of their neighbour's burden, to make it the more supportable. A brother may be obliged to help a brother in extremity, though they are both very much in

want. The apostle commends the Macedonian Christians, that they were liberal to their brethren, though they themselves were in deep poverty:

 2 Corinthians 8:1, 2. “Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia: how in a great trial of affliction, the abundance of their joy, and their deep poverty, abounded unto the riches of their liberality.”

**4.** Those who have not too much for themselves are willing to spare seed to sow, that they may have fruit hereafter. Perhaps they need that which they scatter in the field, and seem to throw away. They may need it for bread for their families; yet they will spare seed to sow, that they may provide for the future, and may have increase. Put we have already shown, that giving to the poor is in Scripture compared to sowing seed, and is as much the way to increase as the sowing of seed is. It doth not tend to poverty, but the contrary; it is not the way to diminish our substance, but to increase it. All the difficulty in this matter is in trusting God with what we give, in trusting his promises. If men could but trust the faithfulness of God to his own promises, they would give freely.

### **Object. 7**

Some may object concerning a particular person, that they do not certainly know whether he be an object of charity or not. They are not perfectly acquainted with his circumstances; neither do they know what sort of man he is. They know not whether he be in want as he pretends. Or if they know this, they know not how he came to be in want; whether it were not by his own idleness, or prodigality. Thus they argue that they cannot be obliged, till they certainly know these things. — I reply,

**1.** This is Nabal’s objection, for which he is greatly condemned in Scripture; see 1 Samuel 25: David in his exiled state came and begged relief of Nabal. Nabal objected, verse 10, 11. “Who is David? And who is the son of Jesse? There be many servants now-a-days that break away every man from his master. Shall I then take my bread and my water, and my flesh that I have killed for my shearers, and give it unto men, whom I know not whence they be?” His objection was, that David was a stranger to him; he did not know who he was, nor what his circumstances were. He did not know but that he was a runaway: and he was not obliged to support and harbour a runaway. He objected, that he knew not that he

was a proper object of charity; that he knew not but that he was very much the contrary.

But Abigail no way countenanced his behaviour herein, but greatly condemned it. She calls him a man of Belial, and says that he was as his name was; Nabal was his name, and folly was with him. And her behaviour was very contrary to his; and she is greatly commended for it. The Holy Ghost tells us in that chapter, verse 3. that “she was a woman of a good understanding.” At the same time God exceedingly frowned on Nabal’s behaviour on this occasion, as we are informed that about ten days after God smote Nabal that he died; verse 38.

This story is doubtless told us partly for this end, to discountenance too great a scrupulosity as to the object on whom we bestow our charity, and the making of this merely an objection against charity to others, that we do not certainly know their circumstances. It is true, when we have opportunity to become certainly acquainted with their circumstances, it is well to embrace it: and to be influenced in a measure by probability in such cases, is not to be condemned. Yet it is better to give to several that are not objects of charity, than to send away empty one that is.

**2.** We are commanded to be kind to strangers whom we know not, nor their circumstances. This is commanded in many places, but I shall mention only one; ~~scrip~~ Hebrews 13:2. “Be not forgetful to entertain strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.” By strangers here the apostle means one whom we know not, and whose circumstances we know not; as is evident by these words, “for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.” Those who entertained angels unawares, did not know the persons whom they entertained, nor their circumstances: else how could it be unawares?

### **Object. 8**

Some may say they are not obliged to give to the poor, till they ask. If any man is in necessity, let him come and make known his straits to me, and then it will be time enough for me to give him. Or if he need a public contribution, let him come and ask. I do not know that the congregation or church is obliged to relieve till they ask relief. — I answer,

**1.** It surely is the most charitable, to relieve the needy in that way wherein we shall do them the greatest kindness. Now it is certain that we shall do them a greater kindness by inquiring into their circumstances, and relieving them, without putting them upon begging. There is none of us but who, if it were their case, would look upon it more kind in our neighbours, to inquire into our circumstances, and help us of their own accord. To nut our neighbours upon begging in order to relief, is painful. It is more charitable, more brotherly, more becoming Christians and the disciples of Jesus, to do it without. I think this is selfevident, and needs no proof.

**2.** This is not agreeable to the character of the liberal man given in Scripture; viz. that devises liberal things. ~~2311~~ Isaiah 32:8. It is not to devise liberal things, if we neglect all liberality till the poor come a begging to us. But to inquire who stand in need of our charity, and to contrive to relieve them in the way that shall do them the greatest kindness, that is to devise liberal things.

**3.** We should not commend a man for doing so to his own brother. If a man had an own brother or sister in great straits, and he were well able to supply them, under the presence, that if he or she want any thing, let them come and ask and I will give them, we should hardly think such an one behaved like a brother. Christians are commanded to love as brethren, to look upon one another as brethren in Christ, and to treat one another as such.

**4.** We should commend others for taking a method contrary to that which is proposed by the objector. If we should hear or read of a people who were so charitable who took such care of the poor, and were so concerned that none among them should suffer, who were proper objects of charity; that they were wont diligently to inquire into the circumstances of their neighbours, to find out who were needy, and liberally supplied them of their own accord: I say, if we should hear or read of such a people, would it not appear well to us? Should not we have the better thought of that people, on that account?

### Object.9

He has brought himself to want by his own fault. — In reply, it must be considered what you I mean by his fault.

1. If you mean a want of a natural faculty to manage affairs to advantage that is to be considered as his calamity. Such a faculty is a gift that God bestows on some, and not on others, and it is not owing to themselves. You ought to be thankful that God hath given you such a gift, which he hath denied to the person in question. And it will be a very suitable way for you to show your thankfulness, to help those to whom that gift is denied, and let them share the benefit of it with you. This is as reasonable as that he to whom Providence has imparted sight, should be willing to help him to whom sight is denied, and that he should have the benefit of the sight of others who has none of his own: or, as that he to whom God hath given wisdom, should be willing that the ignorant should have the benefit of his knowledge.
  
2. If they have been reduced to want by some oversight, and are to be blamed that they did not consider for themselves better, yet that doth not free us from all obligation to charity towards them. If we should for ever refuse to help men because of that, it would be for us to make their inconsiderateness and imprudent act, an unpardonable crime, quite contrary to the rules of the gospel, which insist so much upon forgiveness. — We should not be disposed so highly to resent such an oversight in any for whom we have a dear affection, as our children, or our friends. We should not refuse to help them in that necessity and distress, which they brought upon themselves by their own inconsiderateness. But we ought to have a dear affection and concern for the welfare of all our fellow-Christians, whom we should love as brethren, and as Christ hath loved us.
  
3. If they are come to want by a vicious idleness and prodigality; yet we are not thereby excused from all obligation to relieve them, unless they continue in those vices. If they continue not in those vices, the rules of the gospel direct us to forgive them, and if their fault be forgiven, then it will not remain to be a bar in the way of our charitably relieving them. If we do otherwise, we shall act in a manner very contrary to the rule of loving, one another as Christ hath loved us. Now Christ hath loved us, pitied us, and greatly laid out himself to relieve us from that want and misery which we brought on ourselves by our own folly and wickedness. We foolishly and perversely threw away those riches with which we were provided; upon which we might have lived and been happy to all eternity.

**4.** If they continue in the same courses still, yet that doth not excuse us from charity to their families that are innocent. If we cannot relieve those of their families without their having something of it, yet that ought not to be a bar in the way of our charity and that because it is supposed that those of their families are proper objects of charity, and those that are so, we are bound to relieve the command is positive and absolute. If we look upon that which the heads of the families have of what we give, to be entirely lost, yet we had better lose something of our estate, than suffer those who are really proper objects of charity to remain without relief.

### **Object. 10**

Some may object and say, Others do not their duty. If others did their duty, the poor would be sufficiently supplied. If others did as much as we in proportion to their ability and obligation, the poor would have enough to help them out of their straits. Or some may say, it belongs to others more than it does to us. They have relations that ought to help them, or there are others to whom it more properly belongs than to us.

**ANS.** We ought to relieve those who are in want though brought to it through others fault. If our neighbour be poor, though others be to blame that it is so, yet that excuses us not from helping him. If it belong to others more than to us, yet if those others will neglect their duty, and our neighbour therefore remains in want, we may be obliged to relieve him. If a man be brought into straits through the injustice of others, suppose by thieves or robbers, as the poor Jew whom the Samaritan relieved, yet we may be obliged to relieve him, though it be not through our fault that he is in want, but through that of other men. And whether that fault be a commission or a neglect alters not the case.

As to the poor Jew that fell among thieves between Jerusalem and Jericho, it more properly belonged to those thieves who brought him into that distress, to relieve him, than to any other person. Yet seeing they would not do it, others were not excused; and the Samaritan did no more than his duty, relieving him as he did, though it properly belonged to others. — Thus if a man have children or other relations, to whom it most properly belongs to relieve him; yet if they will not do it, the obligation to relieve him falls upon others. So for the same reason we should do the more for the relief of the poor, because others neglect to do their proportion, or

what belongs to them and that because by the neglect of others to do their proportion they need the more, their necessity is the greater.

### **Object. 11**

The law makes provision for the poor, and obliges the respective towns in which they live to provide for them; therefore some argue, that there is no occasion for particular persons to exercise any charity this way. They say, the case is not the same with us now, as it was in the primitive church; for then Christians were under a heathen government; and however the charity of Christians in those times be much to be commended, yet now, by reason of our different circumstances, there is no occasion for private charity; because, in the state in which Christians now are, provision is made for the poor otherwise. This objection is built upon these two suppositions, both which I suppose are false.

**1.** That the towns are obliged by law to relieve every one who otherwise would be an object of charity. This I suppose to be false, unless it be supposed that none are proper objects of charity, but those that have no estate left to live upon, which is very unreasonable, and what I have already shown to be false, in answer to the fourth objection, in showing that it doth not answer the rules of Christian charity, to relieve only those who are reduced to extremity. Nor do I suppose it was ever the design of the law, requiring the various towns to support their own poor, to cut off all occasion for Christian charity: nor is it fit there should be such a law. It is fit that the law should make provision for those that have no estates of their own, it is not fit that persons who are reduced to that extremity should be left to so precarious a source of supply as a voluntary charity. They are in extreme necessity of relief, and therefore it is fit that there should be something sure for them to depend on. But a voluntary charity in this corrupt world is an uncertain thing. Therefore the wisdom of the legislature did not think fit so leave those who are so reduced, upon such a precarious foundation for subsistence. But I suppose not that it was ever the design of the law to make such provision for all that are in want, as to leave no room for Christian charity.

**2.** This objection is built upon another supposition, which is equally false, viz. That there are in fact none who are proper objects of charity, but those that are relieved by the town. Let the design of the law be what it

will, yet if there are in fact persons who are so in want, as to stand in need of our charity, then that law doth not free us from obligation to relieve them by our charity. For as we have just now shown, in answer to the last objection, if it more properly belong to others to relieve them than us, yet if they do it not, we are not free. So that if it be true, that it belongs to the town to relieve all who are proper objects of charity; yet if the town in fact do it not, we are not excused.

If one of our neighbours suffers through the fault of a particular person, of a thief or robber, or of a town, it alters not the case: but if he suffers and be without relief, it is an act of Christian charity in us to relieve him. Now it is too obvious to be denied, that there are in fact persons so in want, that it would be a charitable act in us to help them, notwithstanding all that is done by the town. A man must hide his mental eyes, to think otherwise.

# CHRISTIAN CAUTIONS

OR

## THE NECESSITY OF SELF-EXAMINATION.

Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. (~~HIDE~~ Psalm 139:23, 24)

### INTRODUCTION.

THIS psalm is a meditation on the omniscience of God, or upon his perfect view and knowledge of every thing which the psalmist represents by that perfect knowledge which God had of all his actions, his down-sitting and his uprising; and of his thoughts, so that he knew his thoughts afar on; and of his words, “There is not a word in my tongue,” says the psalmist, “but thou knowest it altogether.” Then he represents it by the impossibility of fleeing from the divine presence, or of hiding from him so that if he should go into heaven, or hide himself in hell, or fly to the uttermost parts of the sea, yet he would not be hid from God; or if he should endeavour to hide himself in darkness, yet that would not cover him, but the darkness and light are both alike to him. Then he represents it by the knowledge which God had of him while in his mother’s womb, verse 15,16. “My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in thy book all my members were written.”

After this the psalmist observes what must be inferred as a necessary consequence of this omniscience of God, viz. that he will slay the wicked, since he seeth all their wickedness, and nothing of it is hid from him. And last of all, the psalmist improves this meditation upon God’s all seeing eye, in begging of God that he would search and try him, to see if there were any wicked way in him, and lead him in the way everlasting.

Three things may be noted in the words.

**1.** The act of mercy which the psalmist implores of God towards himself, viz. that God would search him. “Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts.”

**2.** In what respect he desires to be searched, viz. “to see if there were any wicked way in him.” We are not to understand by it, that the psalmist means that God should search him for his own information. What he had said before, of God’s knowing all things, implies that he hath no need of that. The psalmist had said, in the second verse, that God understood his thought afar off, *i.e.* it was all plain before him, he saw it without difficulty, or without being forced to come nigh, and diligently to observe. That, which is plain to be seen, may be seen at a distance.

Therefore, when the psalmist prays that God would search him, to see if there were any wicked way in him, he cannot mean, that he should search that he himself might see or be informed, but that the psalmist might see and be informed. He prays that God would search him by his discovering light, that he would lead him thoroughly to discern himself, and see whether there were any wicked way in him. Such figurative expressions are often used in Scripture. The word of God is said to be a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Not that the word itself discerns, but it searches and opens our hearts to view, so that it enables us to discern the temper and desires of our hearts. So God is often said to try men. He doth not try them for his own information, but for the discovery and manifestation of them to themselves or others.

**3.** Observe to what end he thus desires God to search him, viz. “That he might be led in the way everlasting;” *i.e.* not only in a way which may have a specious show, and appear right to him for a while, and in which he may have peace and quietness for the present, but in the way which will hold, which will stand the test, which he may confidently abide by for ever, and always approve of as good and right, and in which he may always have peace and joy. It is said, that “the way of the ungodly shall perish,” ~~Psalm~~ Psalm 1:6. In opposition to this, the way of the righteous is in the text said to last forever.

## SECTION 1

*All men should be much concerned to know whether  
they do not live in some way of sin.*

DAVID was much concerned to know this concerning himself: he searched himself, he examined his own heart and ways, but he did not trust to that, he was still afraid lest there might be some wicked way in him, which had escaped his notice: therefore he cries to God to search him. And his earnestness appears in the frequent repetition of the same request in different words: "Search me, O God, and know my heart, try me, and know my thoughts." He was very earnest to know whether there were not some evil way or other in him, in which he went on, and did not take notice of.

**1.** We ought to be much concerned to know whether we do not live in a state of sin. All unregenerate men live in sin. We are born under the power and dominion of sin, are sold under sin, every unconverted sinner is a devoted servant to sin and Satan. We should look upon it as of the greatest importance to us, to know in what state we are, whether we ever had any change made in our hearts from sin to holiness, or whether we be not still in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity, whether ever sin were truly mortified in us, whether we do not live in the sin of unbelief, and in the rejection of the Saviour. This is what the apostle insists upon with the Corinthians,

"Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith, prove your own selves, know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" (~~1~~<sup>2</sup> Corinthians 13:5.)

Those who entertain the opinion and hope of themselves, that they are godly, should take great care to see that their foundation be right. Those that are in doubt should not give themselves rest till the matter be resolved.

Every unconverted person lives in a sinful way. He not only lives in a particular evil practice, but the whole course of his life is sinful. The imagination of the thoughts of his heart is only evil continually. He not only doth evil, but he doth no good,

“They are altogether become filthy: there is none that  
doeth good, no not one.” (<sup>144B</sup> Psalm 14:3.)

Sin is an unconverted man's trade it is the work and business of his life, for he is the servant of sin. And ordinarily hypocrites, or those who are wicked men, and yet think themselves godly, and make a profession accordingly, are especially odious and abominable to God.

**2.** We ought to be much concerned to know whether we do not live in some particular way which is offensive and displeasing to God: this is what I principally intend.

We ought to be much concerned to know whether we do not live in the gratification of some lust, either in practice or in our thoughts: whether we do not live in the omission of some duty, some thing which God expects we should do, whether we do not go into some practice or manner of behaviour, which is not warrantable. We should inquire whether we do not live in some practice which is against our light, and whether we do not allow ourselves in known sins.

We should be strict to inquire whether or no we have not hitherto allowed ourselves in some or other sinful way, through wrong principles and mistaken notions of our duty: whether we have not lived in the practice of some things offensive to God, through want of care and watch fullness, and observation of ourselves. We should be concerned to know whether we live not in some way which doth not become the profession we make; and whether our practice in some things be not unbecoming Christians, contrary to Christian rules, not suitable for the disciples and followers of the holy Jesus, the Lamb of God. We ought to be concerned to know this, because,

**(1.)** God requires of us, that we exercise the utmost watchfulness and diligence in his service. Reason teaches, that it is our duty to exercise the utmost care, that we may know the mind and will of God, and our duty in all the branches of it, and to use our utmost diligence in every thing to do it, because the service of God is the great business of our lives, it is that work which is the end of our beings, and God is worthy, that we should serve him to the utmost of our power in all things. This is what God often expressly requires of us;

<sup><1019></sup>Deuteronomy 4:9. "Take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things that thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life." And 5:15, 16. "Take ye therefore good heed to yourselves, lest ye corrupt yourselves." And <sup><1017></sup>Deuteronomy 6:17. "You shall diligently keep the commandments of the Lord your God, and his testimonies, and his statutes which he hath commanded thee." And <sup><1013></sup>Proverbs 4:23. "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life." So we are commanded by Christ to "watch and pray;" <sup><1014></sup>Matthew 26:41. and <sup><1013></sup>Luke 21:34, 36. "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with suffering and drunkenness, and the cares of this life." <sup><1015></sup>Ephesians 5:15. "See that ye walk circumspectly." So that if we be found in any evil way whatsoever, it will not excuse us, that it was through inadvertence, or that we were not aware of it; as long as it is through want of that care and watchfulness in us, which we ought to have maintained.

**(2.)** If we live in any way of sin, we live in a way whereby God is dishonoured; but the honour of God ought to be supremely regarded by all. If every one would make it his great care in all things to obey God, to live justly and holily, to walk in every thing according to Christian rules; and would maintain a strict, watchful, and scrutinous eye over himself, to see if there were no wicked way in him; would give diligence to amend whatsoever is amiss; would avoid every unholy, unchristian, and sinful way; and if the practice of all were universally as becometh Christians; how greatly would this be to the glory of God, and of Jesus Christ! How greatly would it be to the credit and honour of religion! How would it tend to excite a high esteem of religion in spectators, and to recommend a holy life! How would it stop the mouths of objectors and opposers! How beautiful and amiable would religion then appear, when exemplified in the lives of Christians, not maimed and mutilated, but whole and entire, as it were in its true shape, having all its parts and its proper beauty! Religion would then appear to be an amiable thing indeed.

If those who call themselves Christians, thus walked in all the paths of virtue and holiness, it would tend more to the advancement of the kingdom of Christ in the world, the conviction of sinners, and the propagation of

religion among unbelievers, than all the sermons in the world, so long as the lives of those who are called Christians continue as they are now. For want of this concern and watchfulness in the degree in which it ought to take place, many truly godly persons adorn not their profession as they ought to do, and, on the contrary, in some things dishonour it. For want of being so much concerned as they ought to be, to know whether they do not walk in some way that is unbecoming a Christian, and offensive to God; their behaviour in some things is very unlovely, and such as is an offense and stumbling-block to others, and gives occasion to the enemy to blaspheme.

**(3.)** We should be much concerned to know whether we do not live in some way of sin, as we would regard our own interest. If we live in any way of sin, it will be exceedingly to our hurt. Sin, as it is the most hateful evil, is that which is most prejudicial to our interest, and tends most to our hurt of any thing in the world. If we live in any way that is displeasing to God, it may be the ruin of our souls. Though men reform all other wicked practices, yet if they live in but one sinful way, which they do not forsake, it may prove their everlasting undoing.

If we live in any way of sin, we shall thereby provoke God to anger, and being guilt upon our own souls. Neither will it excuse us, that we were not sensible how evil that way was in which we walked, that we did not consider it; that we were blind as to any evil in it. We contract guilt not only by living in those ways which we know, but in those which we might know to be sinful, if we were but sufficiently concerned to know what is sinful and what not, and to examine ourselves, and search our own hearts and ways. If we walk in some evil way, and know it not for want of watchfulness and consideration, that will not excuse us; for we ought to have watched and considered, and made the most diligent inquiry.

If we walk in some evil way, it will be a great prejudice to us in this world. We shall thereby be deprived of that comfort which we otherwise might enjoy, and shall expose ourselves to a great deal of soul trouble, and sorrow, and darkness, which otherwise we might have been free from. A wicked way is the original way of pain or grief. In it we shall expose ourselves to the judgments of God, even in this world; and we shall be

great losers by it, in respect to our eternal interest; and that though we may not live in a way of sin willfully, and with a deliberate resolution, but carelessly, and through the deceitfulness of our corruption's. However, we shall offend God, and prevent the flourishing of grace in our hearts, if not the very being of it.

Many are very careful that they do not proceed in mistakes, where their temporal interest is concerned. They will be strictly careful that they be not led on blindfold in the bargains which they make; in their traffic one with another, they are careful to have their eyes about them, and to see that they go safely in these cases; and why not, where the interest of their souls is concerned?

(4.) We should be much concerned to know whether we do not live in some way of sin, because we are exceedingly prone to walk in some such way. — The heart of man is naturally prone to sin, the weight of the soul is naturally that way, as the stone by its weight tendeth downwards. And there is very much of a remaining proneness to sin in the saints. Though sin be mortified in them, yet there is a body of sin and death remaining; there are all manner of lusts and corrupt inclinations. We are exceeding apt to get into some ill path or other. Man is so prone to sinful ways, that without maintaining a constant strict watch over himself, no other can he expected than that he will walk in some way of sin.

Our hearts are so full of sin, that they are ready to betray us. That to which men are prone, they are apt to get into before they are aware. Sin is apt to steal in upon us unawares. Besides this, we live in a world where we continually meet with temptations, we walk in the midst of snares; and the devil, a subtle adversary, is continually watching over us, endeavouring, by all manner of wiles and devices, to lead us astray into try-paths, <sup>4711</sup>2 Corinthians 11:2, 3. "I am jealous over you. I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." <sup>4712</sup>1 Peter 5:3. "Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." — These things should make us the more jealous of yourselves.

(5.) We ought to be concerned to know whether we do not live in some way of sin; because there are many who live in such ways, and do not consider it, or are not sensible of it. It is a thing of great importance that we should know it, and yet the knowledge is not to be acquired without difficulty. Many live in ways which are offensive to God, who are not sensible of it. They are strangely blinded in this case.

~~Psalm~~ Psalm 19:12. “Who can understand his errors? Cleanse thou me from secret faults.” By secret faults, the psalmist means those which are secret to himself, those sins which were in him, or which he was guilty of, and yet was not aware of.

## SECTION 2

*Why many live in sin, and yet not know it.*

THAT the knowing whether we do not live in some way of sin is attended with difficult, is not because the rules of judging in such a case are not plain or plentiful. God hath abundantly taught us what we ought, and what we ought not, to do; and the rules by which we are to walk are often set before us in the preaching of the word. So that the difficulty of knowing whether there be any wicked way in us, is not for want of external light, or for want of God’s having told us plainly and abundantly what are wicked ways. But that many persons live in ways which are displeasing to God, and yet are not sensible of it, may arise from the following things.

**1.** From the blinding deceitful nature of sin. The heart of man is full of sin and corruption, and that corruption is of an exceedingly darkening, blinding nature. Sin always carries a degree of darkness with it; and the more it prevails, the more it darkens and deludes the mind. — It is from hence that the knowing whether there be any wicked way in us is a difficult thing. The difficulty is not at all for want of light without us, not at all because the word of God is not plain, or the rules not clear; but it is because of the darkness within us. The light shines clear enough around us, but the fault is in our eyes; they are darkened and blinded by a pernicious distemper.

Sin is of a deceitful nature, because, so far as it prevails, so far it gains the inclination and will, and that sways and biases the judgment. So far as any lust prevails, so far it biases the mind to approve of it. So far as any sin

sways the inclination or will, so far that sin seems pleasing and good to the man; and that which is pleasing, the mind is prejudiced to think is right. — Hence when any lust hath so gained upon a man, as to get him into a sinful way or practice; it having gained his will, also prejudices his understanding. And the more irregular a man walks, the more will his mind probably be darkened and blinded, because by so much the more doth sin prevail.

Hence many men who live in ways which are not agreeable to the rules of God's word, yet are not sensible of it; and it is a difficult thing to make them so; because the same lust that leads them into that evil way, blinds them in it. — Thus, if a man live a way of malice, or envy, the more malice or envy prevails, the more will it blind his understanding to approve of it. The more a man hates his neighbour, the more will he be disposed to think that he has just cause to hate him, and that his neighbour is hateful, and deserves to be hated, and that it is not his duty to love him. So if a man live in any way of lasciviousness, the more his impure lust prevails, the more sweet and pleasant will it make the sin appear, and so the more will he be disposed and prejudiced to think there is no evil in it.

So the more a man lives in a way of covetousness, or the more inordinately he desires the profits of the world the more will he think himself excusable in so doing, and the more will he think that he has a necessity of those things, and cannot do without them. And if they be necessary, then he is excusable for eagerly desiring them. The same might be shown of all the lusts which are in men's hearts. By how much the more they prevail, by so much the more do they blind the mind, and dispose the judgment to approve of them. All lusts are deceitful lusts.

“That ye put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man  
which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts.”

( Ephesians 4:22.)

And even godly men may for a time be blinded and deluded by a lust, so far as to live in a way which is displeasing to God.

The lusts of men's hearts — prejudicing them in favour of sinful practices, to which those lusts tend, and in which they delight — stir up carnal reason, and put men, with all the subtlety of which they are capable, to

invent pleas and argument to justify such practices. When men are very strongly inclined and tempted to any wicked practice, and conscience troubles them about it, they will rack their brains to find out arguments to stop the mouth of conscience, and to make themselves believe that they may lawfully proceed in that practice.

When men have entered upon an ill practice, and proceeded in it, then their self-love prejudices them to approve of it. Men do not love to condemn themselves; they are prejudiced in their own favour, and in favour of whatever is found in themselves. Hence they will find out good names, by which to call their evil dispositions and practices; they will make them virtuous, or at least will make them innocent. Their covetousness they will call prudence and diligence in business. If they rejoice at another's calamity, they pretend it is because they hope it will do him good, and will humble him. If they indulge in excessive drinking, it is because their constitutions require it. If they talk against and backbite their neighbour they call it zeal against sin; it is because they would bear a testimony against such wickedness. If they set up their wills to oppose others in public affairs, then they call their willfulness conscience, or respect to the public good. — Thus they find good names for all their evil ways.

Men are very apt to bring their principles to their practices, and not their practices to their principles, as they ought to do. They, in their practice, comply not with their consciences; but all their strife is to bring their consciences to comply with their practice.

On the account of this deceitfulness of sin, and because we have so much sin dwelling in our hearts, it is a difficult thing to pass a true judgment on our own ways and practices. On this account we should make diligent search, and be much concerned to know whether there be not some wicked way in us. <sup>SCRIPT</sup> Hebrews 3:12, 13. “Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.”

Men can more easily see faults in others than they can in themselves. When they see others out of the way, they will presently condemn them, when perhaps they do, or have done, the same, or the like, themselves, and

in themselves justify it. Men can discern much in others eyes, better than they can beams in their own.

“Every way of man is light in his own eyes.” (~~21:1~~ Proverbs 21:2.)

The heart in this matter is exceedingly deceitful. ~~21:1~~ Jeremiah 17:9. “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” We ought not therefore to trust in our own hearts in this matter, but to keep a jealous eye on ourselves, to pry into our own hearts and ways, and to cry to God that he would search us.

“He that trusteth his own heart is a fool.” (~~28:26~~ Proverbs 28:26.)

**2.** Satan also sets in with our deceitful lusts, and labours to blind us in this matter. He is continually endeavouring to lead us into sinful ways, and sets in with carnal reason to flatter us in such ways, and to blind the conscience. He is the prince of darkness; he labours to blind and deceive; it hath been his work ever since he began it with our first parents.

**3.** Sometimes men are not sensible, because they are stupefied through custom. Custom in an evil practice stupid as the mind, so that it makes any way of sin, which at first was offensive to conscience, after a while, to seem harmless.

**4.** Sometimes persons live in ways of sin, and are not sensible of it, because they are blinded by common custom, and the examples of others. There are so many who go into the practice, and it is so common a custom, that it is esteemed little or no discredit to a man; it is little testified against. This causes some shines to appear innocent which are very displeasing to God, and abominable in his sight. Perhaps we see them practiced by those of whom we have a high esteem, by our superiors, and those who are accounted wise men. This greatly prepossesses the mind in favour of them, and takes off the sense of their evil. Or if they be observed to be commonly practiced by those who are accounted godly men, men of experience in religion, this tends greatly to harden the heart, and blind the mind with respect to any evil practice.

**5.** Persons are in great danger of living in ways of sin and not being sensible of it, for want of duly regarding and considering their duty in the full extent of it. There are some who hear of the necessity of reforming

from all sins, and attending all duties, and will set themselves to perform some particular duties, at the same time neglecting others. Perhaps their thoughts will be wholly taken up about religious duties, such as prayer in secret, reading the Scriptures and other good books, going to public worship and giving diligent attention, keeping the sabbath, and serious meditation. They seem to regard these things, as though they comprised their duty in its full extent, and as if this were their whole work; and moral duties towards their neighbours, their duties in the relations in which they stand, their duties as husbands or wives, as brethren or sisters, or their duties as neighbours, seem not to be considered by them.

They consider not the necessity of those things: and when they hear of earnestly seeking salvation in a way of diligent attendance on all duties, they seem to leave those out of their thoughts, as if they were not meant, nor any other duties, except reading, and praying, and keeping the sabbath, and the like. Or, if they do regard some parts of their moral duty, it may be other branches of it are not considered. Thus if they be just in their dealings, yet perhaps they neglect deeds of charity. They know they must not defraud their neighbour; they must not lie, they must not commit uncleanness; but seem not to consider what an evil it is to talk against others lightly, or to take up a reproach against them, or to contend and quarrel with them, or to live contrary to the rules of the gospel in their family-relations, or not to instruct their children or servants.

Many men seem to be very conscientious in some things, in some branches of their duty on which they keep their eye, when other important branches are entirely neglected, and seem not to be noticed by them. They regard not their duty in the full extent of it.

### SECTION 3

*What method we ought to take, in order to find out whether we do not live in some way of sin.*

THIS, as hath been observed, is a difficult thing to be known; but it is not a matter of so much difficulty, but that if persons were sufficiently concerned about it, and strict and thorough in inquiring and searching, it might, for the most part, be discovered; men might know whether they live in any way of sin, or not. Persons who are deeply concerned to please and

obey God, need not, under the light we enjoy, go on in the ways of sin through ignorance.

It is true, that our hearts are exceedingly deceitful; but God, in his holy word, hath given that light with respect to our duty, which is accommodated to the state of darkness in which we are. So that by thorough care and inquiry, we may know our duty, and know whether or no we live in any sinful way. And every one, who hath any true love to God and his duty, will be glad of assistance in this inquiry. It is with such persons a concern which lies with much weight upon their spirits, in all things to walk, as God would have them, and so as to please and honour him. If they live in any way which is offensive to God, they will be glad to know it, and do by no means choose to have it concealed from them.

All those also, who in good earnest make the inquiry, what shall I do to be saved? will be glad to know whether they do not live in some sinful way of behaviour. For if they live in any such way, it is a great disadvantage to them with respect to that great concern. It behoves every one who is seeking salvation, to know and avoid every sinful way in which he lives. The means by which we must come to the knowledge of this, are two; viz. the knowledge of the rule, and the knowledge of ourselves.

*1st*, If we would know whether we do not live in some way of sin, we should take a great deal of pains to be thoroughly acquainted with the rule. — God hath given us a true and perfect rule, by which we ought to walk. And that we might be able, notwithstanding our darkness, and the disadvantages which attend us, to know our duty, he hath laid the rule before us abundantly. What a full and abundant revelation of the mind of God have we in the Scriptures! And how plain is it in what relates to practice! How often are rules repeated! In how many various forms are they revealed, that we might the more fully understand them!

But to what purpose will all this care of God to inform us be, if we reelect the revelation which God hath made of his mind, and take no care to become acquainted with it? It is impossible that we should know whether we do not live in a way of sin, unless we know the rule by which we are to walk. The sinfulness of any way consists in its disagreement from the rule, and we cannot know whether it agree with the rule or not, unless we be acquainted with the rule.

“By the law is the knowledge of sin.” (~~ROM~~ Romans 3:20.)

Therefore, lest we go in ways displeasing to God, we ought with the greatest diligence to study the rules which God hath given us. We ought to read and search the Holy Scriptures much, and do it with the design to know the whole of our duty, and in order that the word of God may be “a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our paths.” ~~PSALM~~ Psalm 119:105. Every one ought to strive to get knowledge in divine things, and to grow in such knowledge, to the end that he may know his duty, and know what God would have him to do.

These things being so, are not the greater part of men very much to blame in that they take no more pains or care to acquire the knowledge of divine things in that they no more study the Holy Scriptures, and other books which might inform them? as if it were the work of ministers only, to take pains to acquire this knowledge. But why is it so much a ministers work to strive after knowledge, unless it be, that others may acquire knowledge by him? — Will not many be found inexcusable in the small ways in which they live through ignorance and mistake, because their ignorance is a willful, allowed ignorance? They are ignorant of their duty, but it is their own fault they are so; they have advantages enough to know, and may know it if they will but they take pains to acquire knowledge, and to be well skilled in their outward affairs, upon which their temporal interest depends; but will not take pains to know their duty.

We ought to take great pains to be well informed, especially in those things which immediately concern us, or which relate to our particular cases.

*2ndly*, The other mean is the knowledge of ourselves, as subject to the rule. — If we would know whether we do not live in some way of sin, we should take the utmost care to be well acquainted with ourselves, as well as with the rule, that we may be able to compare ourselves with the rule. When we have found what the rule is, then we should be strict in examining ourselves, whether or no we be conformed to the rule. This is the direct way in which our characters are to be discovered. It is one thing wherein man differs from brute creatures, that he is capable of self-reflection, or of reflecting upon his own actions, and what passes in his own mind, and considering the nature and quality of them. And doubtless

it was partly for this end that God gave us this power, which is denied to other creatures, that we might know ourselves, and consider our own ways.

We should examine our hearts and ways, until we have satisfactorily discovered either their agreement or disagreement with the rules of Scripture. This is a matter that requires the utmost diligence, lest we overlook our own irregularities, lest some evil way in us should lie hid under disguise, and pass unobserved. One would think we are under greater advantages to be acquainted with ourselves, than with any thing else; for we are always present with ourselves, and have an immediate consciousness of our own actions: all that passeth in us, or is done by us, is immediately under our eye. Yet really respects the knowledge of nothing is so difficult to be obtained, as the knowledge of ourselves. We should therefore use great diligence in prying into the secrets of our hearts, and in examining all our ways and practices. That you may the more successfully use those means to know whether you do not live in some way of sin; be advised,

**1.** Evermore to join self-reflection with reading and hearing the word of God. When you read or hear, reflect on yourselves as you go along, comparing yourselves and your own ways with what you read or hear. Reflect and consider what agreement or disagreement there is between the word and your ways. The Scriptures testify against all manner of sin, and contain directions for every duty; as the apostle saith,

“And is profitable for doctrine for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.” (2 Timothy 3:16.)

Therefore when you there read the rules given us by Christ and his apostles, reflect and consider, each one of you with himself, Do I live according to this rule? Or do I live in any respect contrary to it?

When you read in the historical parts of Scripture an account of the sins of which others have been guilty, reflect on yourselves as you go along, and inquire whether you do not in some degree live in the same or like practices. When you there read accounts how God reprov'd the sins of others, and executed judgments upon them for their sins, examine whether you be not guilty of things of the same nature. When you read the

examples of Christ, and of the saints recorded in Scripture, inquire whether you do not live in ways contrary to those examples. When you read there how God commended and rewarded any persons for their virtues and good deeds, inquire whether you perform those duties for which they were commended and rewarded, or whether you do not live in the contrary sins or vices. Let me further direct you, particularly to read the Scriptures to these ends, that you may compare and examine yourselves in the manner now mentioned.

So if you would know whether you do not live in some way of sin. Whenever you hear any sin testified against, or any duty urged, in the preaching of the word, be careful to look back upon yourselves, to compare yourselves and your own ways with what you hear, and strictly examine yourselves, whether you live in this or the other sinful way which you hear testified against; and whether you do this duty which you hear urged. Make use of the word as a glass, wherein you may behold yourselves.

How few are there who do this as they ought to do! who, while the minister is testifying against sin, are busy with themselves in examining their own hearts and ways! The generality rather think of others, how this or that person lives in a manner contrary to what is preached; so that there may be hundreds of things delivered in the preaching of the word, which properly belong to them, and are well suited to their eases; yet it never so much as comes into their minds, that what is delivered any way concerns them. Their minds readily fix upon others, and they can charge them, but never think whether or no they themselves be the persons.

**2.** If you live in any ways which are generally condemned by the better, and more sober, sort of men, be especially careful to inquire concerning these, whether they be not ways of sin. Perhaps you have argued with yourselves, that such or such a practice is lawful; you cannot see any evil in it. However, if it be generally condemned by godly ministers, and the better and more pious sort of people, it certainly looks suspicious, whether or no there be not some evil in it; so that you may well be put upon inquiring with the utmost strictness, whether it be not sinful. The practice being so generally disapproved of by those who in such eases are most likely to be in the right, may reasonably put you upon more than

ordinarily nice and diligent inquiry concerning the lawfulness or unlawfulness of it.

**3.** Examine yourselves, whether all the ways in which you live, are likely to be pleasant to think of upon a death bed. Persons often in health allow and plead for those things, which they would not dare to do, if they looked upon themselves as shortly about to go out of the world. They in a great measure still their consciences as to ways in which they walk, and keep them pretty easy, while death is thought of as at a distance: yet reflections same ways are very uncomfortable when they are going out of the world. Conscience is not so easily blinded and muffled then as at other times.

Consider therefore, and inquire diligently, whether or no you do not live in some practice or other, as to the lawfulness of which, when it shall come into your minds upon your deathbed, you will choose to have some further satisfaction, and some better argument than you now have, to prove that it is not sinful, in order to your being easy about it. Think over your particular ways, and try yourselves with the awful expectation of soon going out of the world into eternity, and earnestly endeavour impartially to judge what ways you will on a death-bed approve of and rejoice in, and what you will disapprove of, and wish you had let alone.

**4.** Be advised to consider what others say of you, and improve it to this end, to know whether you do not live in some way of sin. Although men are blind to their own faults, yet they easily discover the faults of others, and are apt enough to speak of them. Sometimes persons live in ways which do not at all become them, yet are blind to it themselves, not seeing the deformity of their own ways while it is most plain and evident to others. They themselves cannot see it, yet others cannot shut their eyes against it, cannot avoid seeing it.

For instance. Some persons are of a very proud behaviour, and are not sensible of it, but it appears notorious to others. Some are of a very worldly spirit, they are set after the world, so as to be noted for it, so as to have a name for it; yet they seem not to be sensible of it themselves. Some are of a very malicious and envious spirit; and others see it, and to them it appears very hateful; yet they themselves do not reflect upon it. Therefore since there is no trusting to our own hearts and our own eyes in

such cases, we should make our improvement of what others say of us, observe what they charge us with, and what fault they find with us, and strictly examine whether there be not foundation for it.

If others charge us with being proud, or worldly, close, and niggardly; or spiteful and malicious; or with any other ill temper or practice, we should improve it in self-reflection, to inquire whether it be not so. And though the imputation may seem to us to be very groundless, and we think that they, in charging us so and so, are influenced by no good spirit; yet if we act prudently, we shall take so much notice of it as to make it an occasion of examining ourselves.

Thus we should improve what our friends say to us and of us, when they from friendship tell us of any thing which they observe amiss in us. It is most imprudent, as well as most unchristian, to take it amiss, and resent it, when we are thus told of our faults: we should rather rejoice in it, that we are shown our spots. Thus also we should improve what our enemies say of us if they from an ill spirit reproach and revile to our faces, we should consider it, so far as to reflect inward upon ourselves, and inquire whether it be not so, as they charge us. For though what is said, be said in a reproachful, reviling manner, yet there may be too much truth in it. When men revile others even from an ill spirit towards them, yet they are likely to fix upon real faults, they are likely to fall upon us where we are weakest and most defective, and where we have given them most occasion. An enemy will soonest attack us where we can least defend ourselves: and a man that reviles us, though he do it from an unchristian spirit, and in an unchristian manner, yet will be most likely to speak of that, for which we are really most to blame, and are most blamed by others.

So when we hear of others talking against us behind our backs, though they do very ill in so doing, yet the right improvement of it will be, to reflect upon ourselves, and consider whether we indeed have not those faults which they lay to our charge. This will be a more Christian and a more wise improvement of it, than to be in a rage, to revile again, and to entertain an ill will towards them for their evil-speaking. This is the most wise and prudent improvement of such things. Hereby we may get good out of evil, and this is the surest way to defeat the designs of our enemies

in reviling and back-biting us. They do it from ill will, and to do us on injury; but in this way we may turn it to our own good.

**9.** Be advised, when you see others faults, to examine whether there be not the fame in yourselves. This is not done by many, as is evident from this, that they are so ready to speak of others' faults, and aggravate them, when they have the very same themselves. Thus, nothing is more common thin for proud men to accuse others of pride, and to declaim against them upon that account. So it is common for dishonest men to complain of being wronged by others. When a person seeth ill dispositions and practices in others, he is not under the same disadvantage in seeing their odiousness and deformity, as when he looks upon any ill disposition or practice in himself. He can see how odious these and those things are in others; he can easily see what a hateful thing pride is in another; and so of malice, and other evil dispositions or practices. In others he can easily see their deformity; for he doth not look through such a deceitful glass, as when he sees the same things in himself.

Therefore, when you see others faults; when you take notice, how such an one acts amiss, what an ill spirit he shows, and how unsuitable his behaviour is; when you hear others speak of it, and when you yourselves find fault with others in their dealings with you, or in things wherein you are any way concerned with them; then reflect, and consider, whether there be nothing of the same nature in yourselves. Consider that these things are just as deformed and hateful in you as they are in others. Pride, a haughty spirit and carriage, are as odious in you, as they are in your neighbour. Your malicious and revengeful spirit towards your neighbour, is just as hateful as a malicious and revengeful spirit in him towards you. It is as unreasonable for you to wrong, and to be dishonest with your neighbour, as it is for him to wrong, and be dishonest with you. It is as injurious and unchristian for you to talk against others behind their backs, as it is for others to do the same with respect to you.

**6.** Consider the ways in which others are blinded as to sins in which they live, and strictly inquire whether you be not blinded in the same ways. You are sensible that others are blinded by their lusts; consider whether the prevalence of some camel appetite or lust of the mind have not blinded you. You see how others are blinded by their temporal interest, inquire

whether your temporal interests do not blind you also in some things, so as to make you allow yourselves in things, which are not right. You are as liable to be blinded through inclination and interest, and have the same deceitful and wicked hearts as other men,

“As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man.”  
(~~1070~~ Proverbs 27:12.)

## SECTION 4

*Particular subjects of self-examination. The Lord's day God's house.*

I DESIRE all those would strictly examine themselves in the following particulars, who are concerned not to live in any way of sin, as I hope there are a considerable number of such now present; and this certainly will be the case with all who are godly, and all who are duly concerned for their own salvation.

**1.** Examine yourselves with respect to the, sabbath day, whether you do not live in some way of breaking or profaning God's holy sabbath. Do you strictly in all things keep this day, as sacred to God, in governing your thoughts, words, and actions, as the word of God requires on this holy day? Inquire whether you do not only fail in particulars, but whether you do not live in some way whereby this day is profaned; and particularly inquire concerning three things.

**(1.)** Whether it be not a frequent thing with you to encroach upon the sabbath at its beginning, and after the sabbath is begun to be out at your work, or following that worldly business which is proper to be done only in our own time. If this be a thing in which you allow yourselves, you live in a way of sin; for it is a thing which can by no means be justified. You have no more warrant to be out with your team, or to be cutting wood, or doing any other worldly business, immediately after the sabbath is begun, than you have to do it in the middle of the day. The time is as holy near the beginning of the sabbath as it is in the middle, it is the whole that we are to rest, and to keep holy, and devote to God; we have no license to take any part of it to ourselves.

When men often thus encroach upon the sabbath, it cannot be from any necessity which can justify them: it can only be for want of due care, and due regard to holy time. They can with due care get their work finished, so that they can leave it by a certain hour. This is evident, for when they are under a natural necessity of finishing their work by a certain time, then they do take that care as to have done before that time comes: as, for instance, when they are aware that at such a time it will be dark, and they will not be able to follow their work any longer, but will be under a natural necessity of leaving off, why, then, they will and do take care ordinarily to have finished their work before that time, and this although the darkness sometimes begins sooner, and sometimes later.

This shows, that with due care men can ordinarily have done their work by a limited time. If proper care will finish their work by a limited time when they are under a natural necessity of it, the same care would as well finish it by a certain time when we are only under a moral necessity. If men know that as soon as ever the sabbath should begin, it would be perfectly dark, so that they would be under a natural necessity of leaving off their work abroad by that time, then we should see that they would generally have their work done before the time. This shows that it is only for want of care, and of regard to the holy command of God, that men so frequently have some of their work abroad to do after the sabbath is begun.

Nehemiah took great care that no burden should be borne after the beginning of the sabbath, ~~13:19~~ Nehemiah 13:19. “And it came to pass, that when the gates of Jerusalem began to be dark before the sabbaths,” *i.e.* began to be darkened by the shade of the mountains before sunset “I commanded that the gates should be shut, and charged that they should not be opened till after the sabbath, and some of my servants set I at the gates. that there should be no burden brought in on the sabbath day.”

**(2.)** Examine whether it be not your manner to talk on the sabbath of things unsuitable for holy time. If you do not move such talk yourselves, yet when you fall into company that set you the example, are you not wont to join in diverting talk, or in talk of worldly affairs, quite wide from any relation to the business of the day? There is as much reason that you should keep the sabbath holy with your

tongues, as with your hands. If it be unsuitable for you to employ your hands about common and worldly things, why is it not as unsuitable for you to employ your tongues about them?

**(3.)** Inquire whether it be not your manner to loiter away the time of the sabbath, and to spend it in a great measure in idleness, in doing nothing. Do you not spend more time on sabbath-day, than on other days, on your beds, or otherwise idling away the time, not improving it as a precious opportunity of seeking God, and your own salvation?

**2.** Examine yourselves, whether you do not live in some way of sin with respect to the institutions of God's house. Here I shall mention several instances.

**(1.)** Do you not wholly neglect some of those institutions, as particularly the sacrament of the Lord's supper? Perhaps you pretend scruples of conscience, that you are not fit to come to that ordinance, and question whether you be commanded to come. But are your scruples the result of a serious and careful inquiry? Are they not rather a cloak for your own negligence, indolence, and thoughtlessness concerning your duty! Are you satisfied have you thoroughly inquired and looked into this matter? If not, do you not live in sin, in that you do not more thoroughly inquire? Are you excusable in neglecting a positive institution, when you are scrupulous about your duty, and yet do not thoroughly inquire what it is!

But be it so, that you are unprepared; is not this your own sin, your own fault? and can sin excuse you from attending on a positive institution of Christ? When persons are like to have children be baptized, they can be convinced that it is their duty to come. If it be only conscience that detained them, as well now as heretofore? or if they now be more thorough in their inquiries concerning their duty, ought they not to have been thorough in their inquiries before as well as now?

**(2.)** Do you not live in sin, in living in the neglect of singing God's praises? If singing praise to God be an ordinance of God's public worship, as doubtless it is, then it ought to be performed by the whole worshipping assembly. If it be a command that we should worship God in this way, then all ought to obey this command, not only by

joining with others in singing, but in singing themselves. For if we suppose it answers the command of God for us only to join in our hearts with others, it will run us into this absurdity, that all may do so; and then there would be none to sing, none for others to join with.

If it be an appointment of God, that Christian congregations should sing praises to him, then doubtless it is the duty of all, if there be no exception in the rule, then all ought to comply with it, unless they be incapable of it, or unless it would be a hindrance to the other work of God's house, as the case may be with ministers, who sometimes may be in great need of that respite and intermission after public prayers, to recover their breath and strength, so that they may be fit to speak the word. But if persons be now not capable, because they know not how to sing, that doth not excuse them, unless they have been incapable of learning. As it is the command of God, that all should sing, so all should make conscience of learning to sing, as it is a thing which cannot be decently performed at all without learning. Those, therefore, who neglect to learn to sing, live in sin, as they neglect what is necessary in order to their attending one of the ordinances of God's worship. Not only should persons make conscience of learning to sing themselves, but parents should conscientiously see to it, that their children are taught this among other things, as their education and instruction belongs to them.

**(3.)** Are you not guilty of allowing yourselves in sin, in neglecting to do your part towards the removal of scandals from among us? All persons that are in the church, and the children of the church, are under the watch of the church; and it is one of those duties to which we are bound by the covenant which we either actually or virtually make, in uniting ourselves to a particular church, that we will watch over our brethren, and do our part to uphold the ordinances of God in their purity. This is the end of the institution of particular churches, viz. the maintaining of the ordinances of divine worship there, in the manner which God hath appointed.

Examine whether you have not allowed yourselves in sin with respect to this matter, through fear of offending your neighbours. Have you not allowably neglected the proper steps for removing scandals, when you have seen them; the steps of reproofing them privately where the case

would allow of it, and of telling them to the church, where the case required it? Instead of watching over your brother, have you not rather hid yourselves, that ye might not be witnesses against him? and when you have seen scandal in him, have you not avoided the taking of proper steps according to the case?

**(4.)** Art not thou one whose manner it is, to come late to the public worship of God, and especially in winter, when the weather is cold? and dost thou not live in sin in so doing? Consider whether it be a way which can be justified, whether it be a practice which doth honour to God and religion; whether it have not the appearance of setting light by the public worship and ordinances of God's house. Doth it not show that thou dost not prize such opportunities and that thou art willing to have as little of them as thou canst? Is it not a disorderly practice? and if all should do as thou dost, what confusion would it occasion!

**(5.)** Art thou not one whose manner it commonly is to sleep in the time of public service? and is not this to live in a way of sin? Consider the matter rationally; is it a thing to be justified, for thee to lay thyself down to sleep, while thou art present in the time of divine service, and pretendest to be one of the worshipping assembly, and to be hearing a message from God? Would it not be looked upon as a high affront, an odious behaviour, if thou shouldst do so in the presence of a king, while a message was delivering to thee, in his name, by one of his servants? Canst thou put a greater contempt on the message which the King of kings sendeth to thee, concerning things of the greatest importance, than from time to time to lay thyself down, and compose thyself to sleep, while the messenger is delivering his message to thee?

**(6.)** Art thou not one who is not careful to keep his mind intent upon what is said and done in public worship? Dost thou not, in the midst of the most solemn acts of worship, suffer thy thoughts to rove after worldly objects, worldly cares and concerns, or perhaps the objects of thy wicked lusts and desires? and dost thou not herein live in a way of sin?

## SECTION 5

*Self-examination concerning secret sins.*

I SHALL now propose to you to examine yourselves, Whether you do not live in some secret sin, whether you do not live in the neglect of some secret duty, or secretly live in some practice which is offensive to the pure and all-seeing eye of God. Here you should examine yourselves concerning all secret duties, as reading, meditation, secret prayer; whether you attend those at all, or if you do, whether you do not attend them in an unsteady and careless manner. You should also examine yourselves concerning all secret sins. Strictly inquire what your behaviour is, when you are hid from the eye of the world, when you are under no other restraints than those of conscience, when you are not afraid of the eye of man, and have nothing to fear but the all-seeing eye of God. — Here, among many other things which might be mentioned, I shall particularly mention two.

**(1.)** Inquire whether you do not live in the neglect of the duty of reading the Holy Scriptures. The Holy Scriptures were surely written to be read, and unless we be popish in our principles, we shall maintain, that they were not only given to be read by ministers, but by the people too. It doth not answer the design for which they were given, that we have once read them, and that we once in a great while read something in them. They were given to be always with us, to be continually conversed with, as a rule of life. As the artificer must always have his rule with him in his work, and the blind man that walks must always have his guide by him; and he that walks in darkness must have his light with him; so the Scriptures were given to be a lamp to our feet, and a light to our path.

That we may continually use the Scriptures as our rule of life, we should make them our daily companion, and keep them with us continually; ~~ROM~~ Joshua 1:8. “This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night.” See also ~~ROM~~ Deuteronomy 6:6-9. So Christ commands us to search the Scriptures, ~~ROM~~ John 5:39. These are the mines wherein we are to dig for wisdom as for hidden treasures. Inquire, therefore, whether you do not live in the neglect of this duty, or neglect it so far that you may be said to live in a way of sin:

**(2.)** Inquire whether you do not live in some way of secretly gratifying some sensual lust. There are many ways and degrees, wherein a carnal lust may be indulged but every way is provoking to a holy God.

Consider whether, although you restrain yourselves from more gross indulgences, you do not, in some way or other, and in some degree or other, secretly from time to time gratify your lusts, and allow yourselves to taste the sweets of unlawful delight.

Persons may greatly provoke God, by only allowably gratifying their lusts in their thoughts and imaginations. They may also greatly provoke God by excess and intemperance in gratifying their animal appetites in those things which are in themselves lawful. Inquire, therefore, whether you do not live in some sinful way or other, in secretly gratifying a sinful appetite.

## SECTION 6

*Self-examination concerning our temper of mind towards our neighbors — and our dealings with them.*

I WOULD propose to you to examine yourselves, whether you do not live in some way of sin, — 1. In the spirit and temper of mind which you allow towards your neighbour.

**(1.)** Do you not allow and indulge a passionate, furious disposition? If your natural temper be hasty and passionate, do you truly strive against such a temper, and labour to govern your spirit? Do you lament it, and watch over yourselves to prevent it? or do you allow yourselves in a fiery temper? Such a disposition doth not become a Christian, or a man. It doth not become a man, because it unmans him; it turns a man from a rational creature, to be like a wild beast. When men are under the prevalency of a furious passion, they have not much of the exercise of reason. We are warned to avoid such men, as being dangerous creatures, <sup>4122</sup>Proverbs 22:24, 25. “Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go, lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul.”

**(2.)** Do not you live in hatred towards some or other of your neighbors? Do you not hate him for real or your because he is not friendly towards you and because you judge that he hath an ill spirit against you, and hates you, and because he opposes you, and doth not show you that respect which you think belongs to you, or doth not show himself forward to promote your interest or honour? Do you not

hate him, because You think he despises you, has mean thoughts of you, and takes occasion to show it? Do you not hate him, because he is of the opposite-party to that which is in your interest, and because he has considerable influence in that party.

Doubtless you will be loth to call it by so harsh a name as hatred; but inquire seriously and impartially, whether it be any thing better. Do you not feel ill towards him? Do you not feel a prevailing disposition within you to be pleased when you hear him talked against and run down, and to be 'clad when you hear of any dishonour put upon him, or of any disappointments which happen to him! Would you not be glad of an opportunity to be even with him for the injuries which he hath done you? And wherein doth hatred work but in such ways as these?

**(3.)** Inquire whether you do not live in envy towards some one at least of your neighbours. Tis not his prosperity his riches, or his advancement in honour, uncomfortable to you? Have you not, therefore, an ill will, or at least less good will to him, because you look upon him as standing in your way, you look upon yourself as depressed by his advancement? And would it not be pleasing to you now, if he should be deprived of his riches, or of his honours, not from pure respect to the public good, but because you reckon he stands in your way? Is it not merely from a selfish spirit that you are so uneasy at his prosperity?

**2.** I shall propose to your consideration, whether you do not live in some way of sin, and wrong in your dealings with your neighbours.

**(1.)** Inquire whether you do not from time to time injure and defraud those with whom you deal. Are your ways with your neighbour altogether just, such as will bear a trial by the strict rules of the word of God, or such as you can justify before God? Are you a faithful person? may your neighbours depend on your word? Are you strictly and firmly true to your trust; or anything with which you are betruſted, and which you undertake! Or do you not by your conduct plainly show, that you are not conscientious in such things!

Do you not live in a careless sinful neglect of paying your debts? Do you not, to the detriment of your neighbour, sinfully withhold that which is

not your own, but his? Are you not wont to oppress your neighbour? When you see another in necessity, do you not thence take advantage to screw upon him! When you see a person ignorant, and perceive that you have an opportunity to make your gains of it, are you not wont to take such an opportunity? Will you not deceive in buying and selling, and labour to blind the eyes of him of whom you buy, or to whom you sell, with deceitful words, hiding the faults of what you sell, and denying the good qualities of what you buy, and not strictly keeping to the truth, when you see that falsehood will be an advantage to you in your bargain?

(2.) Do you not live in some wrong which you have formerly done your neighbour without repairing it? Are you not conscious that you have formerly, at some time or other, wronged your neighbour, and yet you live in it, have never repaired the injury which you have done him? If so, you live in a way of sin.

## SECTION 7

*Self-examination respecting charity towards our neighbours, and conversation with them.*

I DESIRE you would examine yourselves, 1. Whether you do not live in the neglect of the duties of charity towards your neighbour. You may live in sin towards your neighbour, though you cannot charge yourselves with living in any injustice in your dealings. Here also I would mention two things.

(1.) Whether you are guilty of sinfully withholding from your neighbour who is in want. Giving to the poor, and giving liberally and bountifully, is a duty absolutely required of us. It is not a thing left to personal choice to do as they please; nor is it merely a thing commendable in persons to be liberal to others in want, but it is aridity as strictly and absolutely required and commanded as any other duty whatsoever, a duty from which God will not acquit us; as you may see in <sup>16910</sup>Deuteronomy 15:7, 8, etc. and the neglect of this duty is very provoking to God,

“Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also himself shall cry, and not be heard.” (<sup>16913</sup>Proverbs 21:13.)

Inquire, therefore, whether you have not lived in a way of sin in this regard. Do you not see your neighbour suffer, and pinched with want, and you, although sensible of it, harden your hearts against him' and are careless about it? Do you not in such a case, neglect to inquire into his necessities, and to do something for his relief? Is it not your manner to hide your eyes in such cases, and to be so far from devising liberal things, and endeavouring to find out the proper objects and occasions of charity, that you rather contrive to avoid the knowledge of them? Are you not apt to make objections to such duties, and to excuse yourselves? And are you not sorry for such occasions, on which you are forced to give something, or expose your reputation? — Are not such things grievous to you? If these things be so, surely you live in sin, and in great sin, and have need to inquire, whether your spot be not such as is not the spot of God's children.

**(2.)** Do you not live in the neglect of reproving your neighbour, when you see him going on in a way of sin? This is required of us by the command of God, as a duty of love and charity, which we owe our neighbour: ~~CRUI~~ Leviticus 19:17. "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart; thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him." When we see our neighbour going on in sin, we ought to go, and in a Christian way deal with him about it. Nor will it excuse us, that we fear it will have no good effect, we cannot certainly tell what effect it will have. This is past doubt, that if Christians generally performed this duty as they ought to do, it would prevent abundance of sin and wickedness, and would deliver many a soul from the ways of death.

If a man going on in the ways of sin, saw that it was generally disliked and discountenanced, and testified against by others, it would have a strong tendency to reform him. His regard for his own reputation would strongly persuade him to reform; for hereby he would see that the way in which he lives makes him odious in the eyes of others. When persons go on in sin, and no one saith any thing to them in testimony against it, they know not but that their ways are approved, and are not sensible that it is much to their dishonour to do as they do. The approbation of others tends to blind men's eyes, and harden their hearts in sin; whereas, if they saw that others

utterly disapprove of their ways, it would tend to open their eyes and convince them.

If others neglect their duty in this respect, and our reproof atone will not be so likely to be effectual; yet that doth not excuse us: for if one singly may be excused, then every one may be excused, and so we shall make it no duty at all.

Persons often need the reproofs and admonitions of others, to make them sensible that the ways in which they live are sinful; for, as hath been already observed, men are often blinded as to their own sins.

**2.** Examine yourselves, whether you do not live in some way of sin in your conversation with your neighbours. Men commit abundance of sin, not only in the business and dealings, which they have with their neighbours, but in their talk and converse with them.

**(1.)** Inquire whether you do not keep company with persons at a lewd and immoral behaviour, with persons who do not make conscience of their ways, are not of sober lives, but on the contrary, are profane and extravagant, and unclean in their communication. This is what the word of God forbids, and testifies against: <sup><140></sup>Proverbs 14:7. “Go from the presence of a foolish man, when thou perceivest” not in him the lips of knowledge.” <sup><141></sup>Proverbs 13:20. “A companion of fools shall be destroyed.” The psalmist professes himself clear of this sin, <sup><142></sup>Psalms 26:4, 5. “I have not sat with vain persons, neither will I go with dissemblers: I have hated the congregation of evil doers, and will not sit with the wicked.”

Do you not live in this sin? Do you not keep company with such persons? and have you not found them a snare to your souls? If you have any serious thoughts about the great concerns of your souls, have you not found this a great hindrance to you? Have you not found that it hath been a great temptation to you? Have you not been from time to time led into sin thereby? Perhaps it may seem difficult wholly to forsake your old wicked companions. You are afraid they will deride you, and make game of you, therefore you have not courage enough to do it. But whether it be difficult or not, yet know this, that if you continue in such connexions, you live in a way of sin, and, as the Scripture saith, you shall be

destroyed. You must either cut off your right hands, and pluck out your right eyes, or else even go with them into the fire that never shall be quenched.

(2.) Consider whether, in your conversation with others, you do not accustom yourselves to evil speaking. How common is it for persons, when they meet together, to sit and spend their time in talking against others, judging this or that of them, spreading ill and uncertain reports which they have heard of them, running down one and another, and ridiculing their infirmities! How much is such sort of talk as this the entertainment of companies when they meet together! and what talk is there which seems to be more entertaining, to which persons will more listen, and in which they will seem to be more engaged, than such talk! You cannot but know how common this is.

Therefore examine whether you be not guilty of this. — And can you justify it? Do you not know it to be a way of sin, a way which is condemned by many rules in the word of God? Are you not guilty of eagerly taking up any ill report, which you hear of your neighbour, seeming to be glad that you have some news to talk of, with which you think others will be entertained? Do you not often spread ill reports which you hear of others, before you know what ground there is for them? Do you not take a pleasure in being the reporter of such news? Are you not wont to pass a judgment concerning others, or their behaviour, without talking to them, and hearing what they have to say for themselves? Doth not that folly and shame belong to you, which is spoken of in <sup>PROV</sup> Proverbs 18:13.

“He that answereth a matter before he heareth it,  
it is folly and shame unto him.”

This is utterly an inquiry, a very unchristian practice, which commonly prevails, that men, when they hear or know of any ill of others, will not do a Christian part, in going to talk with them about it, to reprove them for it, but will get behind their backs before they open their mouths, and there are very forward to speak, and to judge, to the hurt be not guilty of this. Consider also how apt you are to be displeased when you hear that others have been talking against you how forward are you to apply the rules, and to think and tell how they ought first to have come and talked with you

about it and not to have gone and spread an ill report of you? before they knew what you had to say in your vindication! How ready are persons to resent it, when others meddle with their private affairs, and busy themselves, and judge, and find fault, and declaim against them! How ready are they to say, it is no business of theirs! Yet are you not guilty of the same?

**(3.)** Is it not your manner to seem to countenance and fall in with the talk of the company in which you are, in that which is evil? When the company is vain in its talk, and falls into lewd discourse, or vain jesting, is it not your manner, in such a case, to comply and fall in with the company, to seem pleased with its talk, if not to join with it, and help to carry on such discourse, out of compliance with your company, though indeed you disapprove of it in your hearts? So inquire, whether it be not your manner to fall in with your companions, when they are talking against others. Do you not help forward the discourse, or at least seem to fall in with their censures, the aspersions they cast on others, and the reflections they make upon their neighbours' characters?

There are some persons, who, in case of difference between persons or parties, are double-tongued, will seem to fall in with both parties. When they are with those on one side, they will seem to be on their side, and to fall in with them in their talk against their antagonists. At another time, when they are with those of the other side, they will seem to comply with them, and will condemn the other party; which is a very vile and deceitful practice. Seeing to be friendly to both before their faces, they are enemies to both behind their backs; and that upon so mean a motive as the pleasing of the party with which they are in company. They injure both parties, and do what in them lies to establish the difference between them. Inquire whether or no this be your manner.

**(4.)** Is it not your manner, not to confine yourselves to strict truth in your conversation with your neighbours? Lying is accounted ignominious and reproachful among men; and they take it in high disdain to be called liars; yet how many are there that do not so govern their tongues, as strictly to confine them to the truth! There are various degrees of transgressing in this kind. Some, who may be

cautious of transgressing in one degree, may allow themselves in another. Some, who commonly avoid speaking directly and wholly contrary to truth, in a plain matter of fact; yet perhaps are not strictly true in speaking of their own thoughts, desires, affections, and designs, and are not exact to the truth, in the relations which they give of things in conversation; scruple not to vary in circumstances, to add some things, to make their story the more entertaining; will magnify and enlarge things, to make their relation the more wonderful; and in things wherein their interest or credit is concerned, will make false representations of things: will be guilty of an unwarrantable equivocation, and a guileful way of speaking, wherein they are Chargeable with a great abuse of language. In order to save their veracity, words and sentences must be wrested to a meaning quite beside their natural and established signification. Whatever interpretation such men put on their own words, they do not save themselves from the guilt of lying in the sight of God. Inquire whether you be not guilty of living in sin in this particular.

## SECTION 8

*Self-examination respecting the families to which we belong.*

EXAMINE yourselves, whether you do not live in some way of sin in the families to which you belong. There are many persons who appear well among their neighbours, and seem to be of an honest, civil behaviour in their dealings and conversation abroad; yet if you follow them to their own houses, and to the families to which they belong there you will find them very perverse in their ways there they live in ways which are very displeasing to the pure all-searching eyes of God. You have already been directed to examine your conversation abroad, you have been directed to search the house of God, and to see if you have brought no defilement into it; you have been directed to search your closets, to see if there be no pollution or provocation there; be advised now to search your houses, examine your behaviour in the families to which you belong, and see what your ways and manners are there.

The houses to which we belong are the places where the generality of us spend the greater part of our time. If we respect the world as a man's

sphere of action, a man's own house is the greater part of the world to him, *i.e.* the greater part of his actions and behaviour in the world is limited within this sphere. We should therefore be very critical in examining our behaviour, not only abroad, but at home. A great proportion of the wickedness of which men are guilty, and that will be brought out at the day of judgment, will be the sin which they shall have committed in the families to which they belong.

Therefore inquire how you behave yourselves in the family relations in which you stand. As those relative duties which we owe towards the members of the same family belong to the second table of the law, so love is the general duty which comprises them all. Therefore,

**(1.)** Examine yourselves, whether you do not live in some way which is contrary to that love which is due to those who belong to the same family. Love, implying a hearty good will, and a behaviour agreeable to it, is a duty which we owe to all mankind. We owe it to our neighbours, to whom we are no otherwise related than as they are our neighbours; yea, we owe it to those who stand in no relation to us, except that they are of mankind, are reasonable creatures, the sons and daughter of Adam. It is a duty that we owe to our enemies, how much more then do we owe it to those who stand in so near a relation to us as a husband or wife, parents or children, brethren or sisters!

There are the same obligations on us to love such relatives as to love the rest of mankind. We are to love them as men; we are to love them as our neighbours, we are to love them as belonging to the same Christian church, and not only so, but here is an additional obligation, arising from that near relation in which they stand to us. This is over and above the other. The nearer the relation, the greater is the obligation to love. To live in hatred, or in a way that is contrary to love, towards any man, is very displeasing to God; but how much more towards one of the same family! Love is the uniting band of all societies,

“and above all these things, put on charity which  
is the bond of perfectness.” (Colossians 3:14.)

The union in love in our own family should be so much the stronger, as that society is more peculiarly our own, and is more appropriated to

ourselves, or is a society in which we are more especially interested. Christ saith,

“I say unto you, whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council; and whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hellfire.”  
(<sup>4172</sup>Matthew 7:22.)

If this be true concerning those who are our brethren only as men, or professing Christians, how much more concerning those who are of the same family! If contention be so evil a thing in a town among neighbours, how much more hateful is it between members of the same family! If hatred, envy, or revenge, be so displeasing to God, towards those who are only our fellow-creatures, how much more provoking must it be between those that are our natural brothers and sisters, and are one bone and flesh! If only being angry with a neighbour without a cause be so evil, how much sin must needs be committed in those broils and quarrels between the nearest relations on earth!

Let every one inquire how it is with himself. Do you not in this respect allow yourselves in some way of sin? Are you not often jarring and contending with those who dwell under the same roof? Is not your spirit often ruffled with anger towards some of the same family? Do you not often go so far as to wish evil to them in your hearts, wish that some calamity would befall them? Are you not guilty of reproachful language towards them, if not of revengeful acts? Do you not neglect and refuse those offices of kindness and mutual helpfulness which become those who are of one family? Yea, are there not some who really go so far, as in some degree to entertain a settled hatred or malice against some of their nearest relation? — But here I would particularly apply myself,

**[1.]** To husbands and wives. Inquire whether you do not live in some way of sin in this relation. Do you make conscience of performing all those duties which God in his word requires of persons in this relation? or do you allow yourselves in some ways which are directly opposite thereto? Do you not live in ways that are contrary to the obligation into which you entered in your marriage-covenant? The promises which you then made are not only binding as promises which

are ordinarily made between man and man, but they have the nature of vows or promissory oaths; they are made in the presence of God, because they respect him as a witness to them; and therefore the marriage-covenant is called the covenant of God; ~~and~~ Proverbs 2:17.; “which forsaketh the guide of her youth, and forgetteth the covenant of her God.” When you have vowed that you will behave towards those to whom you are thus united, as the word of God directs in such a relation, are you careless about it, no more thinking what you have promised and vowed, regardless how you perform those vows?

Particularly, are you not commonly guilty of bitterness of spirit towards one another, and of unkindness in your language and behaviour? If wrath, and contention, and unkind and reproachful language, be provoking to God, when only between neighbours, what is it then between those whom God hath joined together to be one flesh, and between whom he hath commanded so great and dear a friendship to be maintained? ~~and~~ Ephesians 5:28, 29. “So ought men to love their wives, as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife, loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church.” ~~and~~ Ephesians 5:25. “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.”

It is no excuse at all for either party to indulge bitterness and contention in this relation, that the other party is to blame, for when was there ever one of fallen mankind to be found who had no faults? When God commanded such an entire friendship between man and wife, he knew that the greater part of mankind would have faults; yet he made no exception. And if you think your yoke fellows have faults, you should consider whether you yourselves have not some too. There never will be any such thing as persons living in peace one with another, in this relation, if this be esteemed a sufficient and justifiable cause of the Contrary. It becomes good friends to cover one another’s faults: Love covers a multitude of faults:

“Hatred stirreth up strife; but love covereth all sins.”  
(~~and~~ Proverbs 10:1.)

But are not you rather quick to spy faults, and ready to make the most of them. Are not very little things often the occasion of contention between

you? Will not a little thing often ruffle your spirits towards your companions? and when any misunderstanding is begun, are you not guilty of exasperating one another's spirits by unkind language, until you blow up a spark into a flame?

Do you endeavour to accommodate yourselves to each other's tempers? Do you study to suit each other? or do you set up your own wills, to have your own ways, in opposition to each other, in the management of your family concerns? Do you make it your study to render each others lives comfortable? or is there not, on the contrary, very often subsisting between you a spirit of ill will, a disposition to vex and cross one another?

Husbands do sometimes greatly sin against God, in being of an unkind imperious behaviour towards their wives, treating them as if they were servants; and (to mention one instance of such treatment in particular) laying them under unjust and unreasonable restraints in the use and disposal of their common property; forbidding them so much as to dispose of any thing in charity, as of their own judgment and prudence. This is directly contrary to the word of God, where it is said of the virtuous wife, <sup><B>PROV</sup> Proverbs 31:20. that "she stretcheth out her hand to the poor, yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy." If God hath made this her duty, then he hath given her this right and power because the duty supposes the right. It cannot be the duty of her who hath no right to dispose of any thing, to stretch forth her hand to the poor, and to reach forth her hands to the needy.

On the other hand, are not the commands of God, the rules of his word, and the solemn vows of the marriage covenant, with respect to the subordination which there ought to be in this relation, made light of by many? <sup><B>EPH</sup> Ephesians 5:22. "Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands, as unto the Lord:" so <sup><B>COL</sup> Colossians 3:18. What is commanded by God, and what hath been solemnly vowed and sworn in his presence, certainly ought not to be made a jest of; and the person who lightly violates these obligations, will doubtless be treated as one who slights the authority of God, and takes his name in vain.

**[2.]** I shall apply myself to parents and heads of families. Inquire whether you do not live in some way of sin with respect to your children, or others committed to your care: and particularly inquire,

**1.** Whether you do not live in sin, by living in the neglect of instructing them. Do you not wholly neglect the duty of instructing your children and servants! or if you do not wholly neglect it, yet do you not afford them so little instruction, and are you not so unsteady, and do you not take so little pains in it, that you live in a sinful neglect? Do you take pains in any measure proportionate to the importance of the matter? You cannot but own that it is a matter of vast importance, that your children be fitted for death, and saved from hell; and that all possible care be taken that it be done speedily; for you know not how soon your children may die. Are you as careful about the welfare of their souls as you are of their bodies? Do you labour as much that they may have eternal life, as you do to provide estates for them to live on in this world?

Let every parent inquire, whether he do not live in a way of sin in this respect: and let masters inquire, whether they do not live in a way of sin, in neglecting the poor souls of their servants; whether their only care be not to make their servants subservient to their worldly interest, without any concern what becomes of them to all eternity.

**2.** Do you not live in a sinful neglect of the government of your families? Do you not live in the sin of Eli? who indeed counseled and reproved his children, but did not exercise government over them. He reproved them very solemnly, as <sup>(H23)</sup>1 Samuel 2:23, 24, 25. but he did not restrain them, by which he greatly provoked God, and brought an everlasting curse upon his house:

“In that day I will perform against Eli all things which I have spoken concerning his house. When I begin, I will also make an end. I will judge his house for ever; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.” (<sup>(H2)</sup>1 Samuel 3:12.)

If you say you cannot restrain your children, this is no excuse, for it is a sign that you have brought up your children without government, that your children regard not your authority. When parents lose their government over their children, their reproofs and counsel signify but little. How many parents are there who are exceedingly faulty on this account! How few are there who are thorough in maintaining order and government in their families! How is family-government in a great measure vanished! and how many are as likely to bring a curse upon their families,

as Eli! This is one principal ground of the corruption's which Prevail in the land. This is the foundation of so much debauchery, and of such corrupt practices among young people: family-government is in a great measure extinct. By neglect in this particular, parents bring the guilt of their children's sins upon their own souls, and the blood of their children will be required at their hands.

Parents sometimes weaken one another's hands in this work; one parent disapproving what the other doth; one smiling upon a child, while the other frowns, one protecting, while the other corrects. When things in a family are thus, children are like to be undone. Therefore let every one examine whether he do not live in some way of sin with respect to this matter.

**[3.]** I shall now apply myself to children. Let them examine themselves, whether they do not live in some way of sin towards their parents. Are you not guilty of some undutifulness towards them, in which you allow yourselves? Are you not guilty of despising your parents for infirmities which you see in them? Undutiful children are ready to condemn their parents for their infirmities. Are not you sons of Ham, who saw and made derision of his father's nakedness, whereby he entailed a curse on himself and his posterity to this day, and not the sons of Shem and Japheth, who covered the nakedness of their father? Are you not guilty of dishonouring and despising your parents for natural infirmities, or those of old age? <sup><162></sup>Proverbs 23:22. "Despise not thy mother when she is old." Doth not that curse belong to you, in <sup><167></sup>Deuteronomy 27:16.

**"Cursed be he that setteth light by his father or his mother?"**

Are you not wont to despise the counsels and reproofs of our parents? When they warn you against any sin, and reprove you for any misconduct, are you not wont to set light by it, and to be impatient under it? Do you honour your parents for it? on the contrary, do you not receive it with resentment proudly rejecting it? Doth it not stir up corruption, and a stubborn and perverse spirit in you, and rather make you to have an ill-will to your parents, than to love and honour them? Are you not to be reckoned among the fools mentioned <sup><185></sup>Proverbs 15:5. "A fool despiseth his father's instruction?" and doth not that curse belong to you,

~~HB~~ Proverbs 30:17. “The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it?”

Do you not allow a fretful disposition towards your parents, when they cross you in any thing? Are you not apt to find fault with your parents, and to be out of temper with them?

Consider, that if you live in such ways as these, you not only live in sin, but in that sin, than which there is scarcely any one oftener threatened with a curse in the word of God.

## SECTION 9

### *Awakening consideration for self-examination.*

WE come now to mention some things, in order to convince those who, upon examination, find that they do live in some way of sin, of the importance of their knowing and amending their manner of life. You have had directions laid before you, how to find out whether you do live in any way of sin or not; and you have heard many particulars mentioned as proper subjects for your examination of yourselves. How then do you find things? Do you find yourselves clear of living in any way of sin? I mean not whether you find yourself clear of sin; that is not expected of any of you; for there is not a man upon earth that doeth good, and sinneth not, I Kings 8:46. But is there not some way of sin in which you live, which is your stated way or practice? There are doubtless some who are clear in this matter, some “who are undefiled in the way, and do no iniquity,”

~~HB~~ Psalm 119:1, 2, 3.

Let your own consciences answer how you find with respect to yourselves, by those things which have been proposed to you. Do you not find that you are guilty? that you live in a way of sin, and have allowed yourselves in it? — If this be the case, then consider the following things.

If you have been long seeking salvation, and have not yet succeeded, It may be this hath been the cause. You have perhaps wondered what hath been the matter, that you have been so long a time under concern about your salvation, that you have taken so much pains, and all seems to be to

no purpose. You have many a time cried earnestly to God, yet he doth not regard you. Others obtain comfort, but you are left in darkness. But is it any wonder at all, if you have fired in some way of sin all this while? If you have lived in any sinful way, this is a sufficient reason why all your prayers and all your pains have been blasted.

If all this while you have lived in some sinful way, so far you have failed of seeking salvation in the right way. The right way of seeking salvation is, to seek it in the diligent performance of all duties, and in the denial of all ungodliness. If there be any one member that is corrupt, and you cut it not off, there is danger that it will carry you to hell, (~~412~~ Matthew 5:29, 30.)

**2.** If grace have not been flourishing, but, on the contrary, in languishing circumstances in your souls, perhaps this is the cause. The way to grow in grace is to walk in the way of obedience to all the commands of God, to be very thorough in the practice of religion. Grace will flourish in the hearts of those who live in this manner, but if you live in some way of sin, that will be like some secret disease at your vitals, which will keep you poor, weak, and languishing.

One way of sin lived in will wonderfully keep you down in your spiritual prosperity, and in the growth and strength of grace in your hearts. It will grieve the Holy Spirit of God, and will in a great measure banish him from you this will prevent the good influence of the word and ordinances of God to the causing of grace to flourish in you. It will be a great obstacle to their good effect. It will be like an ulcer within a man, which, while it remains, will keep him weak and lean, though you feed him with ever so wholesome food, or feast him ever so daintily.

**3.** If you have been left to fall into great sin, perhaps this was the occasion of it. If you have been left greatly to wound your own souls, perhaps this was what made way for it, that you allowed yourselves in some way of sin. A man who doth not avoid every sin, and is not universally obedient, cannot be well guarded against great sins. The sin in which he lives will be always an inlet, an open door, by which Satan from time to time will find entrance. It is like a breach in your fortress, through which the enemy may get in, and find his way to you greatly to hurt and wound you.

If there be any way of sin which is retained as an outlet to corruption, it will be like a breach in a dam, which, if it be let alone, and be not stopped, will grow bigger and wider, and will endanger the whole. If any way of sin be lived in, it will be like Gideon's ephod, which was a snare to him and his house.

**4.** If you live very much in spiritual darkness, and without the comfortable presence of God, it may be this is the cause. If you complain that you have but little sweet communion with God, that you seem to be left and deserted of God, that God seems to hide his face from you, and but seldom gives you the sweet views of his glory and grace, that you seem to be left very much to grope in darkness, and to wander in a wilderness, perhaps you have wondered what is the matter you have cried to God often, that you might have the light of his countenance, but he heareth you not, and you have sorrowful days and nights upon this account. But if you have found, by what hath been said, that you live in some way of sin, it is very probable that is the cause, that is the root of your mischief, that is the Achan, the troubler that offends God, and causes him to withdraw, and brings so many clouds of darkness upon your souls. You grieve the Holy Spirit by the way in which you live, and that is the reason that you have no more comfort from him.

Christ hath promised, that he will manifest himself to his disciples; but it is upon the condition, that they keep his commands:

“He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them he it is that loveth me and he that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father, and; will love him, and will manifest myself to him.” (John 14:21.)

But if you habitually live in disobedience to any of the commandments of Christ, then it is no wonder that he doth not give you the comfortable manifestations of himself. The way to receive the special favours of God, and to enjoy comfortable communion with him, is to walk closely with him.

**5.** If you have been long doubting about your condition, perhaps this is the cause. If persons be converted, the most likely way to have the evidences of it clear, and to have the Spirit of God witnessing with our spirits, that we are the children of God, is to walk closely with God. This, as we have

observed already, is the way to have grace in a flourishing state in the soul; it is the way to have the habits of grace strengthened, and the exercises of it lively. And the more lively the exercises of grace are, the more likely will they be to be seen. Besides, this is the way to have God manifesting himself to us, as our father and our friend, to have the manifestations and inward testimonies of his love and favour.

But if you live in some way of sin, it is no wonder if that greatly darkens your evidences, as it keeps down the exercises of grace, and hides the light of God's countenance. And it may be that you never will come to a comfortable resolution of that point, whether you be converted or not, until you shall have wholly forsaken the way of sin in which you live.

**6.** If you have met with the frowns of Providence, perhaps this has been the cause. When you have met with very sore rebukes and chastisements, that way of sin hath probably been your troubler. Sometimes God is exceedingly awful in his dealings with his own people in this world, for their sins. Moses and Aaron were not suffered to enter into Canaan, because they believed not God, and spake unadvisedly with their lips, at the waters of Meribah. And how terrible was God in his dealings with David! what affliction in his family did he send upon him! one of his sons ravishing his sister, another murdering his brother, and having expelled his father out of his kingdom, openly in the sight of all Israel, and in the sight of the sun, defiling his father's concubines on the top of the house, and at last coming to a miserable end Immediately after this followed the rebellion of Sheba and he had this uncomfortable circumstance attending the end of his life, that he saw another of his sons usurping the crown.

How awfully did God deal with Eli, for living in the sin of not restraining his children from wickedness! He killed his two sons in one day; brought a violent death upon Eli himself; took the ark' from him, and sent it into captivity; cursed his house for ever, and swore that the iniquity of his house should not be purged with sacrifice and offering for ever; that the priesthood should be taken from him, and given to another family and that there should never be an old man in his family.

Is not some way of sin in which you live the occasion of the and rebukes of Providence which you have met with? True, it is not the proper business of your neighbours to judge you with respect to events of

Providence; but you yourselves ought to inquire, wherefore God is contending with you, ~~<390>~~ Job 9:10.

**7.** If death be terrible to you, perhaps this is the foundation of it. When you think of dying, you find you shrink back at the thought. When you have any illness, or when there is any thing which seems any way to threaten life, you find you are affrighted by it, the thoughts of dying, and going into eternity, are awful to you, and that although you entertain a hope that you are converted. If you live in some way of sin, probably this is very much the foundation of it. This keeps your minds sensual and worldly, and hinders a lively sense of heaven and heavenly enjoyments. This keeps grace low, and prevents that relish of heavenly enjoyments which otherwise you would have. This prevents your having the comfortable sense of the divine favour and presence; and without that no wonder you cannot look death in the face without terror.


The way to have the prospect of death comfortable, and to have undisturbed peace and quiet when we encounter death, is, to walk closely with God, and to be undefiled in the way of obedience to the commands of God; and that it is otherwise sometimes with truly godly persons, is doubtless frequently owing to their living in ways displeasing to God.

**8.** If you find by these things which have been proposed to you, that you have lived in a way of sin, consider that if you henceforward live in the same way, you will live in known sin. Whether in time past it have been known sin or not, though you may have hitherto lived in it through ignorance or inadvertence; yet if now you be sensible of it, henceforward, if you continue in it still, it will not be a sin of ignorance, but you will be proved to be of that class of men who live in ways of known sin.

# A WARNING TO PROFESSORS:

OR

## THE GREAT GUILT OF THOSE WHO ATTEND ON THE ORDINANCES OF DIVINE WORSHIP, AND YET ALLOW THEMSELVES IN ANY KNOWN WICKEDNESS.

That they have committed adultery, and blood is in their hands, and with their idols have they committed adultery, and have also caused their sons, whom they hare unto me, to pass for them through the fire to devour them. Moreover this they have done unto me: they have defiled my sanctuary in the same day, and hate profaned my sabbaths. For when they had slain their children to their idols, then they came the same day into my sanctuary to profane it; And, lo, thus have thy done in the midst of mine house.  
( Ezekiel 23:37, 38, 39.

### INTRODUCTION.

SAMARIA and Jerusalem, or Israel and Judah, are here represented by two women, Aholah and Aholibah; and their idolatry and treachery towards their covenant God is represented by the adultery of these women. They forsook God, who was their husband and the guide of their youth, and prostituted themselves to others. The baseness of Aholah and Aholibah towards God, their husband, is here pointed out by two things, viz. adultery and bloodshed: They have committed adultery, and blood is in their hands.

- 1.** They committed adultery with other lovers, viz. with their idols: With their idols hare they committed adultery.
- 2.** They not only committed adultery, but they took their children that they bore to God, and killed them for their lovers. Their hearts were quite

alienated from God, their husband, and they were so bewitched with lust after those other lovers, that they took their own children, whom they had by their husband, and put them to cruel deaths, to make a feast with them for their lovers; as it is said in verse 37. “And have also caused my sons whom they bare unto me, to pass for them through the fire to devour them.”

But here is a twofold wickedness of those actions of theirs held forth to us in the words.

**(1.)** The wickedness of them considered in themselves, for who can express the horrid baseness of this their treatment of God, their husband?

**(2.)** An additional wickedness, resulting from the joining of these actions with sacred things.

Beside the monstrous wickedness of these actions in themselves considered, there was this which exceedingly increased the guilt, that on the same day they came into God’s sanctuary, or that they lived in such wickedness at the same time that they came and attended the holy ordinances of God’s house, pretending to worship and adore him, whom they all the while treated in such a horrid manner; and so herein defiled and profaned holy things; as in verse 38, and 39. “Moreover, this have they done unto me; they have defiled my sanctuary in the same day, and have profaned my sabbaths. For when they had slain their children to their idols, then they came the same day into my sanctuary, to profane it; and, lo, thus have they done in the midst of mine house.”

**Doctrine:** — When they that attend ordinances of divine worship allow themselves in known wickedness, they are guilty of dreadfully profaning and polluting those ordinances.

By a divine ordinance, when the expression is used in its greatest latitude, is meant any thing of divine institution or appointment. Thus we call marriage a divine ordinance, because it was appointed by God. So civil government is called an ordinance of God: ~~see~~ Romans 13:1, 2. “Let every soul be subject to the higher powers; for there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever, therefore, resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God.”

But the word is more commonly used only for an instituted or appointed way or mean of worship. So the sacraments ate ordinances; so public prayer, singing of praise, the preaching of the word, and the hearing of the word preached, are divine ordinances. The setting apart of certain officers in the church, the appointed way of discipline, public confession of scandals, admonition, and excommunication, are ordinances. These are called the ordinances of God's house, or of public worship; and these are intended in the doctrine: it is the profanation of these ordinances that is spoken of in the text: "They came into my sanctuary to profane it; and, lo! thus have they done in the midst of mine house," saith God. This doctrine seems to contain two propositions.

## SECTION 1

*The ordinances of God are holy.*

DIVINE ordinances are holy in the following respects:

**1.** They are conversant wholly and immediately about God, and things divine. When we are in the attendance on the ordinances of divine worship, we are in the special presence of God. When persons come and attend on the ordinances of God, they are said to come before God, and to come into his presence: ~~2070~~ Jeremiah 7:10. "Come and stand before me, in this house which is called by my name." ~~2080~~ Psalm 100:2. "Come into his presence with singing."

In divine ordinances, persons have immediate intercourse with God, either in applying to him, as in prayer and singing praises, or in receiving from him, waiting solemnly and immediately on him for spiritual good, as in hearing the word, or in both applying to God and receiving from him, as in the sacraments. They were appointed on purpose that in them men might converse and hold communion with God. We are poor, ignorant, blind worms of the dust, and God did not see it meet that our way of intercourse with God should be left to ourselves but God hath given us his ordinances, as ways and means of conversing with him.

In these ordinances, holy and divine things are exhibited and represented. In the preaching of the word, holy doctrines and the divine will are exhibited, in the sacraments, Christ Jesus and his benefits are represented;

in prayer and praise, and in the attendance on the word and sacraments, are represented our faith, love, and obedience.

**2.** The end of God's ordinances is holy. The immediate end is to glorify God. They are instituted to direct us in the holy exercises of faith and love, divine fear and reverence, submission, thankfulness, holy joy and sorrow, holy desires, resolutions, and hopes. True worship consists in these holy and spiritual exercises, and as these divine ordinances are the ordinances of worship, they are to help us, and to direct us in such a worship as this.

**3.** They have the sanction of divine authority. They are not only conversant about a divine and holy object, and designed to direct and help us in divine and holy exercises, but they have a divine and holy author. The infinitely great and holy God hath appointed them, the eternal Three in One. Each person in the Trinity hath been concerned in their institution. God the Father hath appointed them and that by his own Son. They are of Christ's own appointment; and he appointed, as he had received of the Father:

“I have not spoken of myself, but the Father which sent me, he gave me commandment what I should say, and what I should speak.” (John 12:49.)

And the Father and Son more fully revealed and ratified them by the Spirit; and they are committed to writing by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

They are holy, in that God hath hallowed them, or consecrated them. They are conversant about holy things; and God ordained them, that in them we might be conversant about holy things. They are for a holy use; and it is God who by his own immediate authority, ordained them for that holy use, which renders them much more sacred than otherwise they would have been.

**4.** They are attended in the name of God. Thus we are commanded to do all that we do, in word or deed, in the name of Christ, Colossians 3:17. which is to be understood especially of our attendance on ordinances. Ordinances are administered in the name of God. When the word is preached by authorized ministers, they speak in God's name, as Christ's

ambassadors, as co-workers together with Christ: ~~2~~2 Corinthians 5:20. “Now we are ambassadors for Christ,” chapter 6:1. “We are workers together with him.”

When a true minister preaches, he speaks as the oracles of God, ~~1~~1 Peter 4:11. and he is to be heard as one representing Christ.

So in administering the sacraments, the minister represents the person of Christ, he baptizes in his name, and in the Lord’s supper stands in his stead. In administering church-censures, he still acts, as the apostle expresses it, in the person of Christ, ~~2~~2 Corinthians 2:10. On the other hand, the congregation, in their addresses to God in ordinances, as prayer and praise, act in the name of Christ, the Mediator, as having him to represent them, and as coming to God by him.

## SECTION 2

*God’s ordinances are dreadfully profaned by those who attend on them, and yet, allow themselves in ways of wickedness.*

PERSONS who come to the house of God, into the holy presence of God, attending the duties and ordinances of his public worship, pretending with others, according to divine institution, to call on the name of God, to praise him, to hear his word, and commemorate Christ’s death, and who yet, at the same time, are wittingly and allowably going on in wicked courses, or in any practice contrary to the plain rules of the word of God, therein greatly profane the holy worship of God, defile the temple of God and those sacred ordinances on which they attend. The truth of this proposition appears by the following considerations.

**1.** By attending ordinances, and yet living in allowed wickedness, they show great irreverence and contempt of those holy ordinances. When persons who have been committing known wickedness, and yet live in it, and have no other design than to go on still in the same, when they come from their wickedness, as it were the same day, as it is expressed in, the text, and attend the sacred solemn worship and ordinances of God, and then go from the house of God directly to the like allowed wickedness — they hereby express a most irreverent spirit with respect to holy things,

and in a horrid manner cast contempt upon God's sacred institutions, and on those holy things which we are concerned with in them.

They show that they have no reverence of that God who hath hallowed these ordinances. They show a contempt of that divine authority which instituted them. They show a horribly irreverent spirit towards that God into whose presence they come, and with whom they immediately have to do in ordinances, and in whose name these ordinances are performed and attended. They show a contempt of that adoration of God, of that faith and love, and that humiliation, submission, and praise, which ordinances were instituted to express. What an irreverent spirit doth it show, that they are so careless after what manner they come before God! that they take no care to cleanse and purify themselves, in order that they may be fit to come before God! yea, that they take no care to avoid making themselves more and more unclean and filthy!

They have been taught many a time, that God is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity, and how exceedingly he is offended with sin; yet they care not how unclean and abominable they come into his presence. It shows horrid irreverence and contempt, that they are so bold, that they are not afraid to come into the presence of God in such a manner, and that they will presume to go out of the presence of God, and from an attendance upon holy things again to their sinful practices. If they had any reverence of God and holy things, and approach into his presence, and an attendance on those holy things, would leave that awe upon their minds, that they would not dare to go immediately from them to their ways of known wickedness.

It would show a great irreverence in any person towards a king, if he should not care how he came into his presence, and if he should come in a sordid habit, and in a very indecent manner. How much more horrid irreverence doth it show, for Persons willingly and allowably to defile themselves with that filth which God infinitely hates, and so frequently to come into the presence of God!

**2.** By making a show of respect to God in ordinances, and then acting the contrary in their lives, they do but mock God. In attending ordinances, they make a show of respect to God. By joining in prayer, in public adoration's, confessions, petitions, and thanksgivings, they make a show

of high thoughts of God, and of humbling themselves before him, of sorrow for their sins, of thankfulness for mercies, and of a desire of grace and assistance to obey and serve God. By attending upon the hearing of the word, they make a show of a teachable spirit, and of a readiness to practice according to the instructions given. By attending on the sacraments, they make a show of faith in Christ, of choosing him for their portion, and spiritually feeding upon him.

But by their actions they all the while declare the contrary. They declare, that they have no high esteem of God, but that they despise him in their hearts. They declare, that they are so far from repenting of, that they intend to continue in, their sins. They declare, that they have no desire of that grace and assistance to live in a holy manner for which they prayed, and that they had rather live wickedly, this is what they choose, and for the present are resolved upon. They declare by their actions, that there is no truth in what they pretend in hearing the word preached, that they had a desire to know what the will of God is, that they might be directed in their duty, for they declare by their actions, that they desire not to do the will of God, and that they do not intend any such thing: but intend, all the contrary, to disobey him and that they prefer their carnal interests before his authority and glory. They declare by their actions, that there is no troth in what they pretend in their attendance on the sacraments, that they desire to be fed with spiritual nourishment, and to be conformed and assimilated to Christ, and to have communion with him. They show by their practices, that they have no regard to Christ, and that they had rather have their lusts gratified, than to be fed with his spiritual food: they show, that they desire not any assimilation to Christ but to be different from him, and of an opposite character to him. they show, that instead of desiring communion with Christ, they are his resolved and allowed enemies, willfully acting the part of enemies to Christ, dishonouring him, and promoting the interest of Satan against him.

Now, what can this be else but mockery, to make a show of great respect, reverence, love, and obedience, and at the same time willfully to declare the rever. in actions if a rebel or traitor should send addresses to his king. making a show of great loyalty and fidelity, and should all the while openly, and in the king's sight, carry on designs of dethroning him, how could his addresses be considered as any other than mockery? If a man

should bow and kneel before his superior, and use many respectful terms to him, but at the same time should strike him, or spit in his face, would his bowing and his respectful terms be looked upon in any light than as done in mockery? When the Jews kneeled before Christ, and said, Hail, King of the Jews, but at the same time spit in his face, and smote him upon the head with a reed; could their kneeling and substations be considered as any other than mockery?

Men who attend ordinances, and yet willingly live in wicked practices, treat Christ in the same manner that these Jews did. They come to public worship, and pretend to pray to him, to sing his praises, to sit and hear his word; they come to the sacrament, pretending to commemorate his death. Thus they kneel before him, and say, Hail, King of the Jews, yet at the same time they live in ways of wickedness, which they know Christ hath forbidden, of which he hath declared the greatest hatred, and which are exceedingly to his dishonour. Thus they buffet him, and spit in his face. They do as Judas did, who came to Christ saying, Hail, Master, and kissed him, at the same time betraying him into the hands of those who sought his life.

How can it be interpreted in any other light, when men come to public worship, and attend ordinances, and yet will be drunkards and profane swearers, will live in lasciviousness, injustice, or some other known wickedness? If a man should pray to God to keep him from drunkenness, and at the same time should put the bottle to his own mouth, and drink himself drunk, the absurdity and morbid wickedness of his conduct would be manifest to every man. But the very same thing, though not so visible to us, is done by those who make profession of great respect to God, and pray God from time to time to keep them from sin, yet at the same time have no design to forsake their known sins, but intend the contrary.

God sees men's designs and resolutions more plainly than we can see their outward actions, therefore for a man to pray to God to be kept from sin, and at the same time to intend to sin, is mockery as visible to God as if he prayed to be kept from some particular sin, which he was at the same time willingly and allowably committing.

These persons are guilty of a horrid profanation of God's ordinances, for they make them occasions of a greater affront to God, the occasions of

showing their impudence and presumption, for he who lives in willful wickedness and doth not enjoy the ordinances of God, is not guilty of so great presumption, as he who attends these ordinances, and yet allows himself in wickedness. This latter acts as though he came into the presence of God on purpose to affront him. He comes from time to time to hear the will of God, and all the while designs disobedience, and goes away and acts directly contrary to it.

A servant would affront his master by willfully disobeying his commands in any wise. But he would affront him much more, if he should on every occasion come to him to inquire his will, as though he were ready to do whatever his master would have him do, and then should immediately go away and do the contrary.

**3.** They put the ordinances of God to a profane use. The ordinances of God are holy, as they are set apart of God to a holy use and purpose. They are the worship of God, instituted for the ends of giving honour and glory to him, and to be means of grace and spiritual good to us. But those persons who attend these ordinances, and yet live in allowed wickedness, aim at neither of these ends: they, in their attendance on ordinances, neither aim to give honour to God, or to express any love, or esteem, or thankfulness; nor do they sincerely seek the good of their own souls. It is not truly the aim of any such persons to obtain grace, or to be made holy; their actions plainly show that this is not their desire; they choose to be wicked, and intend it.

It is not therefore to these purposes that they improve the holy ordinances of God; but they put them to another and profane use. They attend ordinances to avoid that discredit which a voluntarily and habitual absence from them would cause among those with whom they live, to avoid the punishment of human laws, or for their worldly advantage; to make up for other wickedness, or for some other carnal purposes. Thus they profane the ordinances of God, by perverting them to profane purposes.

**4.** When persons thus treat God's holy ordinances, it tends to beget contempt of them in others. When others see sacred things commonly used so irreverently, and attended with such carelessness and contempt, and treated without any sacred regard, when they see persons are bold

with them, treat them without any solemnity of spirit; when they see them thus commonly profaned, it tends to diminish their sense of their sacredness, and to make them seem very awful things. In short, it tends to embolden them to do the like.

The holy vessels and utensils of the temple and tabernacle were never to be put to a common use, nor to be handled without the greatest care and reverence: for if it had been commonly otherwise, the reverence of them could not have been maintained; they would have seemed no more sacred than any thing else. So it is in the ordinances of Christian worship.

### SECTION 3

#### *A call to self-examination.*

LET this doctrine put all upon examining themselves, whether they do not allow themselves in known wickedness. You are such as do enjoy the ordinances of divine worship. You come into the holy presence of God, attending on those ordinances, which God, by sacred authority, hath hallowed and set apart, that in them we might have immediate intercourse with himself, that we might worship and adore him, and express to him a humble, holy, supreme respect; and that in them we might receive immediate communications from him.

Here you come and speak to God, pretending to express your sense how glorious he is, and how worthy that you should fear and love him, humble yourselves before him, devote yourselves to him, obey him, and have a greater respect to his commands and to his honour, than to any temporal interest, ease, or pleasure of your own. Here you pretend before God, that you are sensible how unworthy you have done by sins committed in times past, and that you have a great desire not to do the like in time to come. You pretend to confess your sins, and to humble yourselves for them. Here you pray that God would give you his Spirit to assist you against sin, to keep you from the commission of it, enable you to overcome temptations, and help you to walk holily in all your conversation, as though you really had a great desire to avoid such sins as you have been guilty of in time past. And the like pretences you have made in your attendance upon the other ordinances, as in hearing the word in singing praise, etc.

But consider whether you do not horribly defile and profane the public prayers and other ordinances. Notwithstanding all your presence's, and what you seem to hold forth by your attendance on them, do you not all the while live in known wickedness against God? For all your pretences of respect to God, of humiliation for sin, and desires to avoid it, have you not come directly from the allowed practice of known sin to God's ordinances, and did not at all repent of what you had done, nor at all sorry for it at the very time when you stood before God, making these presence's; and even had no design of reformation, but intended to return to the same practice again after your departure from the presence of God? — I say, Hath not this, on many occasions, been your manner of coming, and attending on the ordinances of divine worship? Not only so, but is it not still your manner, your common way of attending upon these ordinances, even to this very day? Do you not lie to God with your tongues, when you pretend; that he is a great God, and that you are poor, guilty, unworthy creatures, deserving his wrath by the sins of which you have been guilty? and when you pretend, that you earnestly desire he would keep you from the like for time to come? Are you not guilty of horrid mockery of God in it, when at the same time you design no such thing, but the contrary?

Do you not even the same day that you come into God's house, and to his ordinances, allow yourselves in known sins? Do you not with consent and approbation think of the sinful practices, in which allow yourselves, and in which you have been exercising yourselves in the weekpast? Do you not the very day in which you attend ordinances, allowably please and gratify a wicked imagination? And are you not then perpetrating wickedness in your thoughts, and contriving the further fulfillment of your wickedness! Yea, are you not build of these things sometimes even in the very time of your attendance on ordinances, when you are in the immediate presence of God? and while others have immediate intercourse with God, and you likewise pretend to the same? Do you not, even in these circumstances, allow yourselves in wicked thoughts and imaginations, voluntarily wallowing in known wickedness?

Are not some of you guilty of allowably breaking God's holy sabbath, in maintaining no government of your thoughts, thinking indifferently about any thing that comes next to mind; and not only thinking, but talking too about common, worldly affairs? And sometimes talking in such a manner,

as is not suitable even on other days, talking profanely, or in an unclean manner, sporting and diverting yourselves in such conversation on God's holy day! Yea, it is well if some have not been thus guilty in the very time of attendance on the ordinances of worship.

Examine yourselves, how it hath been with you. You all attend many of the ordinances of divine worship. You come to the house of God, attend public prayers, singing, and preaching of the word, and many of you come to the Lord's supper, that holy ordinance, instituted for the special commemoration of the greatest and most wonderful of all divine acts towards mankind, for the special and visible representation of the most glorious and wonderful things of our religion; for the most solemn profession and renewal of your engagement to God, and for special communion with Jesus Christ. Let such examine themselves whether they do not allow themselves in known sin, to the horrid profanation and pollution of this most sacred ordinance.

Examine and see whether you do not allow yourselves in some way of dealing with your fellow-men, which you have sufficient light to know to be evil, or whether you do not allow yourselves in a known evil behaviour towards some person or persons of the families to which you respectively belong, as towards your husbands, your wives, your children, or servants, or your neighbours, in your spirit and behaviour towards them, or in your talk of them.

Examine whether you do not some way willingly indulge an unclean appetite, in less or grosser acts of uncleanness, or in your discourse, or in your imagination. Or do you not give way to a lust after strong drink, or indulge yourselves in some vicious excess in gratifying some sensual appetite in meat or drink, or otherwise? Are you not willingly guilty of vanity, and extravagance in your conversation?

Do you not, for all your attendance on ordinances, continue in the allowed neglect of your precious souls, neglecting secret prayer or some known duty of private religion? Or do you not allow yourselves in sabbath-breaking? — In all these ways are the ordinances of God's sacred worship polluted and profaned.

Men are apt to act very treacherously and perversely in the matter of self-examination. When they are put upon examining themselves, they very often decline it, and will not enter into any serious examination of themselves at all. They hear uses of examination insisted on, but put them off to others, and never seriously apply them to themselves. — And if they do examine themselves, when they are put upon it, they are exceedingly partial to themselves, they spare themselves; they do not search, and look, and pass a judgment according to truth; but so as unreasonably to! favour and justify themselves — If they can be brought to examine themselves at all, whether they do not allow themselves in known wickedness, although they attend on divine ordinances, they will not do it impartially. Their endeavour will not be indeed to know the truth of their I case, and to give a true answer to their consciences, but to blind themselves, to persuade and Hatter themselves that they do not allow themselves in known sin, whether it be true or not. There are two things especially wherein persons often act very perversely and falsely in this matter.

**1.** Persons very often deal very perversely in pretending, that the sins in which they live are not known sins. Nothing is more common surely, than for persons to matter themselves with this concerning the wickedness in which they live. Let that wickedness be almost what it may, they will plead to their consciences, and endeavour to still them, that there is no evil in it, or that they do not know that there is any evil in it. Men's own consciences can best tell how they are wont to do in this matter. — There is hardly any kind of wickedness that men commit, but they will plead thus in excuse for it. They will plead thus about their cheating and injustice, about their hatred of their neighbours, about their evil speaking, about their revengeful spirit, about their excessive drinking, about their lying, their neglect of secret prayer, their lasciviousness, their unclean dalliances; yea, they will plead excuses for very gross acts of uncleanness, as fornication, adultery, and what not. They have their vain excuses and carnal reasonings in favour of all their evil actions. They will say, What harm, what evil is there in such and such an action? And if there be a plain rule against it, yet they will plead that their circumstances are peculiar, and that they are excepted from the general rule, that their temptation is so great, that they are excusable; or some thing will they find to plead.

If it be some thing upon which their lusts are much set and about which they feel remorse of conscience, they will never leave studying and contriving with all the art and subtlety of which they are masters, till they shall have found out some reason, some excuse, with which they shall be able in some measure to quiet their consciences. And whether after all they shall have made it out to blind conscience or not, yet they will plead that their argument is good, and it is no sin, or if it be a sin, it is only a sin of ignorance. — So men will plead for the wickedness which they do in the dark. So without doubt some very cross sinners plead to their consciences, as would appear, if we could but look into their hearts, when indeed the strongest argument they have, that in such a thing there is no evil, is the strongest lust they have to it, the inordinate desire they have to commit it.

It was the saying of one, *Licetis perimus omnes*, that is, We all perish by lawful things; which is as much as to say, men commonly live wickedly and go to hell, in those ways which they flatter themselves to be lawful. Or at least they flatter themselves, that they are sins of ignorance, they do not know them to be unlawful. — Thus, I make no doubt some will be apt to do, in applying to themselves this use of examination, if they can be persuaded to apply it to themselves at all. Whether these things be true of you, let your own consciences speak, you that neglect secret prayer; you that live in secret, unclean, lascivious actions; you that indulge an inordinate appetite for strong drink; you that defraud or oppress others; you that indulge a spirit of revenge and hatred towards your neighbour. — Here I desire you to consider two or three things.

**(1.)** Not all sins, which one knows not with a certain knowledge to be sinful, are justly called sins of ignorance. Men often will excuse themselves for venturing upon a sinful action or practice, with this, that they know not that it is sinful; which is at most true no otherwise, than as they do not know it to be sinful with a certain knowledge, or with the evidence of absolute demonstration, although at the same time it is a sin against their light, and against great light. They have been so taught, that they have had light enough to make them sensible that it is displeasing to God, and not warranted or allowed by him. And they do in their consciences think it to be sinful, they are secretly convinced of it, however they may pretend the contrary, and labour to deceive

themselves, and to persuade themselves that they do not think there is any evil in it.

Those sins which are contrary to sufficient information and instruction, and contrary to the real dictates of their own consciences, or to the judgment of their own minds, whether there be certain or demonstrative knowledge or no; these are what I would be understood to mean, when I speak of known sins. Such light as this, whether there be absolutely certain knowledge or no, is sufficient to render the action utterly inexcusable, and to render it, when allowed, a horrible profanation and pollution of the holy ordinances of God.

**(2.)** It is in vain for persons to pretend that those are sins of ignorance, which they have often and clearly heard testified against from the word of God. It will be found to be so at last; it will be found to be a vain thing for persons who have lived under the light of the gospel, and where all manner of iniquity is testified against, if they live in immoral and vicious practices, to pretend that they are sins of ignorance; unless the case be very peculiar and extraordinary.

**(3.)** It is in vain for you to pretend that those are sins of ignorance, of which you would not dare to proceed in the practice, if you knew that your soul was to be required of you this night. Persons do many things, for which they plead, and pretend they think there is no evil in them, who yet would as soon eat fire, as do the same, if they knew that they were to stand before the judgment-seat of Christ within four and twenty hours. This shows that persons do but prevaricate, when they pretend that their sins are sins of ignorance.

**2.** Another way wherein men deal falsely and perversely in this matter, is, in pretending that they do not allow themselves in those sins which they practice. They either pretend that they know them not to be sins, or if they cannot but own that, then they will say, they do not allow themselves in them; and so they hope God is not very much provoked by them. They pretend this, though they make a trade of them. They to on repeating one act after another, without ever seriously repenting of past, or resolving against future acts. But take heed that you do not deceive yourselves in this matter, for such presence's, however they do something


towards stilling your consciences now, will do nothing when you come to stand before your righteous and holy Judge.

## SECTION 4

*Address to such as attend ordinances,  
and yet allow themselves in known sin.*

CONSIDER how holy and sacred the ordinances of God are; what mockery you are guilty of in making such a show, and such presence's in attending ordinances, and yet voluntarily acting the rever. of what you pretend. Consider that there is no sort of sinners with whom God is so provoked, and who stand so guilty before him, as the profaners of his ordinances. The fire of God's wrath is kindled by none so much as by the polluters of holy things. They are represented as those who are especially guilty before God, in the third commandment: "The Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain." Why is this annexed to this command, rather than to any other of the ten, but because the breach of it especially renders a man guilty in the sight of God?

The taking of God's name in vain includes the profanation and pollution of ordinances and holy things. They do in a very dreadful manner take God's name in vain, who attend on his ordinances, and yet live in known sin; for, as we have shown, they manifest the greatest irreverence for him, and contempt of divine things. They manifest a contempt of his authority, a contempt of the business and design of his ordinances, and a most careless and irreverent spirit in things wherein they have immediate converse with God. Ordinances, as we have shown, are attended in the name of God; and therefore, by such an attendance on them, the name of God is greatly profaned. You that attend ordinances in such a manner, take the name of God so much in vain, that you use it only in mockery, and so as to expose it to contempt. Such a way of attending ordinances is a trampling of all that is sacred under foot.

We have in Scripture scarce any such awful instances of the immediate and miraculous vengeance of God, as on the profaners of holy things. How did God consume Nadab and Abihu, for offering strange fire before him! How did he break forth upon Ozza, for handling the ark with too much irreverence!  2 Samuel 6:6, 7. And how did he break forth on the children

of Israel at Bethshemesh, for profaning the ark! “He smote of the people fifty thousand threescore and ten men,” as in <sup><969></sup>1 Samuel 6:19. find God hath threatened in the New Testament, that if any man “defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy,” <sup><187></sup>1 Corinthians 3:17. There is an emphasis in the expression. God will destroy all sinners, let It be what sin it will which they commit, and in which they continue, and yet it is said, “If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy,” as if it had been said, there is something peculiar in the case, and God is especially provoked to destroy such, and consume them in the fire of his wrath; and he will indeed destroy them with a destruction especially dreadful.

So God hath declared, <sup><887></sup>Galatians 6:7. “That he will not be mocked;” *i.e.* if any presume to mock him, they will find him, by experience, to be no contemptible being. God will vindicate his holy majesty from the contempt of those who dare to mock him, and he will do it effectually: they shall fully find how dreadful a being he is, whose name they have daringly profaned and polluted. Defilers and profaners of ordinances, by known and allowed wickedness, provoke God more than the heathen, who have no ordinances. Thus the wickedness of Judah and Jerusalem is said to be far worse than that of Sodom, though the inhabitants of Sodom were, as we have reason to think, some of the worst of the heathens. See <sup><860></sup>Ezekiel 16:46, 47, fire. The sin of Sodom is here spoken of as a light thing in comparison with the sins of Judah. And what should be the reason, but that Judah enjoyed holy things which they profaned and polluted, which Sodom had no opportunity to do? for it is not to be supposed, that Judah otherwise arrived to the same pass that Sodom had.

Consider therefore, ye who allow yourselves in known wickedness, and live in it, who yet come to the house of God, and to his ordinances from time to time, without any serious design of forsaking your sins, but, on the contrary, with an intention of continuing in them, and who frequently go from the house of God to your wicked practices; consider how guilty you have made yourselves in the sight of God, and how dreadfully God is provoked by you. It is a wonder of God’s patience, that he doth not break forth upon you, and strike you dead in a moment; for you profane holy things in a more dreadful manner than Uzza did, when God struck him

dead for his error. And whereas he was struck dead for only one offense; you are guilty of the same sin from week to week, and from day to day.

It is a wonder that God suffers you to live upon earth, that he hath not, with a thunderbolt of his wrath, struck you down to the bottomless pit long ago. You that are allowably and voluntarily living in sin, who have gone on hitherto in sin, are still going on, and do not design any other than to go on yet; it is a wonder that the Almighty's thunder lies still, and suffers you to sit in his house, or to live upon earth. It is a wonder that the earth will bear you, and that hell doth not swallow you up. It is a wonder that fire doth not come down from heaven, or come up from hell, and devour you; that hell-flames do not enlarge themselves to reach you and that the bottomless pit hath not swallowed you up.

However, that you are as yet borne with, is no argument that your damnation slumbers. The anger of God is not like the passions of men, that it should be in haste. There is a day of vengeance and recompense appointed for the vessels of wrath; and when the day shall have come, and the iniquity shall be full, none shall deliver out of God's hand. Then will he recompense, even recompense into your bosoms.

# THE FINAL JUDMENT:

OR

## THE WORLD JUDGED RIGHTEOUSLY BY JESUS CHRIST.

Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained.

(~~4078~~ Acts 17:31.)

### INTRODUCTION.

THESE words are a part of the speech which Paul made in Mars hill, a place of concourse of the judges and learned men of Athens. Athens was the principal city of that part of Greece which was formerly a commonwealth by itself, and was the most noted place in the whole world for learning, philosophy, and human wisdom; and it continued so for many ages, till at length the Romans having conquered Greece, its renown from that time began to diminish, and Rome having borrowed learning of it, began to rival it in science, and in the polite and civil arts. However, it was still very famous in the days of Christ and the apostles, and was a place of concourse for wise and learned men.

Therefore, when Paul came thither, and began to preach concerning Jesus Christ, a man who had lately been crucified at Jerusalem, (as in the 18th verse,) the philosophers thronged about him, to hear what he had to say. The strangeness of his doctrine excited their curiosity; for they spent their time in endeavouring to find out new things, and valued themselves greatly upon their being the authors of new discoveries, as we are informed in verse 21. They despised his doctrine in their hearts, and esteemed it very ridiculous, calling the apostle a babblers; for the preaching of Christ crucified was to the Greeks foolishness, ~~4073~~ 1 Corinthians 1:23. yet the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers, two different sects, had a mind to hear what the babblers had to say.

Upon this Paul rises up in the midst of them, and makes a speech; and as he speaks to philosophers and men of learning, he speaks quite differently from his common mode of address. There is evidently, in his discourse, a greater depth of thought, more philosophical reasoning, and a more elevated style, than are to be found in his ordinary discourses to common men. His speech is such as was likely to draw the attention and gain the assent of philosophers. He shows himself to be no babbler, but a man who could offer such reason, as they, however they valued themselves upon their wisdom, were not able to gainsay. His practice here is agreeable to what he saith of himself,

“that he became all things to all men, that he might by all means  
save some.” (~~4022~~ 1 Corinthians 9:22.)

He not only to the weak became as weak, that he might gain the weak, but to the wise he became as wise, that he might gain the wise.

In the first place, he reasons with them concerning their worship of idols. He declares to them the true God, and points out how unreasonable it is to suppose, that he delights in such superstitious worship. He begins with this, because they were most likely to hearken to it, as being so evidently agreeable to the natural light of human reason, and also agreeable to what some of their own poets and philosophers had said, (verse 28.) He begins not immediately to tell them about Jesus Christ, his dying for sinners, and his resurrection from the dead, but first draws their attention with that to which they were more likely to hearken; and then, having thus introduced himself, he proceeds to speak concerning Jesus Christ.

He tells them, the times of this ignorance concerning the true God, in which they had hitherto been, God winked at, he suffered the world to lie in heathenish darkness; but now the appointed time was come, when he expected men should every where repent; “because he had appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordains.” As an enforcement to the duty of turning to God from their ignorance, superstition, and idolatry, the apostle brings in this, that God had appointed such a day of judgment. And as a proof of this, he brings the resurrection of Christ from the dead.

Concerning the words of the text, we may observe,

That in them the apostle speaks of the general judgment: He will judge the world. — The time when this shall be, on the appointed day: He hath appointed a day. — How the world is to be judged: In righteousness. — The man by whom it is to be judged: Christ Jesus whom God raised from the dead.

**Doctrine.** There is a day coming, in which there will be a general righteous judgment of the whole world, by Jesus Christ.

In speaking upon this subject, I shall show, That God in the Supreme Judge of the world. That there is a time coming, when God will, in the most public and solemn manner, judge the whole world. That the person by whom he will Judge it is Jesus Christ. That the transactions of that day will be greatly interesting and truly awful. That all shall be done in righteousness. And finally, I shall take notice of those things which shall be immediately consequent upon the judgment.

## SECTION 1

*God is the supreme judge of the world.*

**1.** GOD is so by right. He is by right the supreme and absolute ruler and disposer of all things, both in the natural and moral world. The rational understanding part of the creation is indeed subject to a different sort of government from that to which irrational creatures are subject. God governs the sun, moon, and stars; he governs even the motes of dust which fly in the air. Not a hair of our heads falleth to the ground without our heavenly Father. God also governs the brute creatures, by his providence, he orders, according to his own decrees, all events concerning those creatures. And rational creatures are subject to the same sort of government; all their actions, and all events relating to them, being ordered by superior providence, according to absolute decrees; so that no event that relates to them ever happens without the disposal of God, according to his own decrees. The rule of this government is God's wise decree, and nothing else.

But rational creatures, because they are intelligent and voluntary agents, are the subjects of another kind of government. They are so only with respect to those of their actions, in which they are causes by counsel, or

with respect to their voluntary actions. The government of which I now speak is called moral government, and consists in two things, in giving laws, and in judging.

God is, with respect to this sort of government, by right the sovereign ruler of the world. He is possessed of this right by reason of his infinite greatness and excellency, by which he merits, and is perfectly and solely fit for, the office of supreme ruler. He that is so excellent as to be infinitely worthy of the highest respect of the creature, hath thereby a right to that respect; he deserves it by a merit of condignity; so that it is injustice to deny it to him. And he that is perfectly wise and true, and is it to him. And he that is perfectly wise and true, and is only so regarded, hath a right in every thing to be regarded, and to have his determinations attended to and obeyed.

God hath also a right to the character of supreme ruler, by reason of the absolute dependence of every creature on him. All creatures, and rational creatures no less than others, are wholly derived from him, and every moment are wholly dependent upon him for being, and for all good: so that they are properly his possession. And as, by virtue of this, he hath a right to give his creatures whatever rules of conduct he pleases, or whatever rules are agreeable to his own wisdom, so the mind and will of the creature ought to be entirely conformed to the nature and will of the Creator, and to the rules he gives, that are expressive of it.

For the same reason, he hath a right to judge actions and conduct, and to fulfil the sanction of his law. He who hath an absolute and independent right to give laws, hath evermore the same right to Judge those to whom the laws are given. It is absolutely necessary that there should be a Judge of reasonable creatures, and sanctions, or rewards and punishments, annexed to rules of conduct, are necessary to the being of laws. A person may instruct another without sanctions, but not give laws. However, these sanctions themselves are vain, are as good as none, without a judge to determine the execution of them. As God hath a right to be judge, so hath he a right to be the supreme judge, and none hath a right to rever. his judgments, to receive appeals from him, or to say to him, Why judgest thou thus?

**2.** God is, in fact, the supreme judge of the world. He hath power sufficient to vindicate his own right. As he hath a right which cannot be disputed, so he hath power which cannot be controlled. He is possessed of omnipotence, wherewith to maintain his dominion over the world, and he doth maintain his dominion in the moral as well as the natural world. Men may refuse subjection to God as a lawgiver, they may shake off the yoke of his laws by rebellion; yet they cannot withdraw themselves from his judgment. Although they will not have God for their lawgiver, yet they shall have him for their judge. The strongest of creatures can do nothing to control God, or to avoid him while acting in his judicial capacity. He is able to bring them to his judgment-seat, and is also able to execute the sentence which he shall pronounce.

There was once a notable attempt made by opposition of power entirely to shake off the yoke of the moral government of God, both as lawgiver, and as judge. This attempt was made by the angels, the most mighty of creatures; but they miserably failed in it: God notwithstanding acted as their judge in casting those proud spirits out of heaven, and binding them in chains of darkness unto a further judgment, and a further execution.

**“God is wise in heart and mighty in strength, who hath hardened himself against him, and hath prospered!”** (~~Job~~ Job 9:4.)

Wherein the enemies of God deal proudly, he is above them. He ever hath acted as judge in bestowing what rewards, and inflicting what punishments, he pleased on the children of men. And so he doth still, he is daily fulfilling the promises and threatenings of the law in disposing of the souls of the children of men, and so he evermore will act.

God acteth as judge towards the children of men more especially,

**(1.)** In man’s particular judgment at death. Then the sentence is executed, and the reward bestowed in part, which is not done without a judgment. The soul, when it departs from the body, appears before God to be disposed of by him, according to his law. But by this appearing before God, to be judged at death, we need understand no more than this, that the soul is made immediately sensible of the presence of God, God manifesting himself immediately to the soul, with the glory and majesty of a judge; that the sins of the wicked, and

the righteousness of the saints, are brought by God to the view of their consciences, so that they know the reason of the sentence given, and their consciences are made to testify to the justice of it; and that thus the will of God for the fulfillment of the law, in their reward or punishment, is made known to them and executed. This is undoubtedly done at every man's death.

(2.) In the great and general judgment, when all men shall together appear before the judgment-seat to be judged: and which judgment will be much more solemn, and the sanctions of the law will to a further degree be fulfilled. — But this brings me to another branch of the subject.

## SECTION 2

*That there is a time coming when God will, in the most public and solemn manner; judge the whole world of mankind.*

THE doctrine of a general judgment is not sufficiently discoverable by the light of nature. Indeed some of the heathens had some obscure notions concerning a future judgment. But the light of nature, or mere unassisted reason, was not sufficient to instruct the world of fallen men in this doctrine. It is one of the peculiar doctrines of revelation, a doctrine of the gospel of Jesus Christ. There were indeed some hints of it in the Old Testament, as in ~~1963~~ Psalm 96:13.

*“The Lord cometh to judge the world with righteousness, and his people with his truth.”*

And Ecclesiastes 12:14. “For God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.” And in some other such like passages. But this doctrine is with abundantly the greatest clearness revealed in the New Testament: there we have it frequently and particularly declared and described with its circumstances.


However, although it be a doctrine of revelation, and be brought to light by the gospel, the brightest and most glorious revelation that God hath given to the world; yet it is a doctrine which is entirely agreeable to reason, and of which reason gives great confirmation. That there will be a time before the dissolution of the world, when the inhabitants of it shall stand before

God, and give an account of their conduct, and that God will in a public manner, by a general and just judgment, set all things to rights respecting their moral behaviour, is a doctrine entirely agreeable to reason, which I shall now endeavour to make appear. But I would premise, that what we would inquire into, is not whether all mankind shall be judged by God, for that is a thing that the light of nature clearly teaches, and we have already spoken something of it: but whether it be rational to think that there will be a public judgment of all mankind together. This I think will appear very rational from the following considerations.

**1.** Such a judgment will be a more glorious display of God's majesty and dominion, it will be more glorious, because it will be more open, public, and solemn. — Although God now actually exercises the most sovereign dominion over the earth, although he reigns and doth all things according to his own will, ordering all events as seemeth to himself good, and although he is actually judge in the earth, continually disposing of men's souls according to their works, yet he rules after a more hidden and secret manner, insomuch that it is common among the proud sons of men to refuse acknowledging his dominion. Wicked men question the very existence of a God, who taketh care of the world, who ordereth the affairs of it, and judgeth in it and therefore they cast off the fear of him. Many of the kings and great men of the earth do not suitably acknowledge the God who is above them, but seem to look upon themselves as supreme, and therefore tyrannize over mankind, as if they were in no wise accountable for their conduct. There have been, and now are, many unethical persons, who acknowledge not God's moral dominion over mankind, and therefore they throw off the yoke of his laws and government. And how great a part of the world is there now, and has there always been, that has not acknowledged that the government of the world belongs to the God of Israel, or to the God of Christians; but has paid homage to other imaginary deities, as though they were their sovereign lords and supreme judges. Over how great a part of the world hath Satan usurped the dominion, and set up himself for God, in opposition to the true God!

Now, how agreeable to reason is it, that God, in the winding up of things, when the present state of mankind shall come to a conclusion, should in the most open and public manner, manifest his dominion over the inhabitants of the earth, by bringing them all, high and low, rich and poor,

kings and subjects, together before him to be judged with respect to all that they ever did in the world, that he should thus openly discover his dominion in this world, where his authority hath been so much questioned, denied, and proudly opposed! That those very persons, who have thus denied and opposed the authority of God, should be themselves, with the rest of the world, brought before the tribunal of God! That however God be not now visibly present upon earth, disposing and judging in that visible manner that earthly kings do; yet at the conclusion of the world he should make his dominion visible to all, and with respect to all mankind, so that every eye shall see him and even they who have denied him shall find, that God is supreme Lord of them, and of the whole world!

**2.** The end of judgment will be more fully answered by a public and general, than only by a particular and private, judgment. The end for which there is any judgment at all is to display and glorify the righteousness of God, which end is more fully accomplished by calling men to an account, bringing their actions to the trial, and determining their state according to them, the whole world, both angels and men, being present to behold, than if the same things should be done in a more private way. At the day of judgment there will be the most glorious display of the justice of God that ever was made. Then God will appear to be entirely righteous towards every one; the justice of all his moral government will on that day be at once discovered. Then all objections will be removed; the conscience of every man shall be satisfied; the blasphemies of the ungodly will be forever put to silence, and argument will be given for the saints and angels to praise God for ever:  Revelation 19:1, 2. “And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia, salvation’s, and glory, and honour, and power be to the Lord our God: for true and righteous are his judgments.”

**3.** It is very agreeable to reason, that the irregularities which are so open and manifest in the world, should, when the world comes to an end, be publicly rectified by the supreme governor. The infinitely wise God, who made this world to be a habitation for men, and placed mankind to dwell here, and hath appointed man his end and work, must take care of the order and good government of the world, which he hath thus made. He is not regardless how things proceed here on earth: it would be a reproach to his wisdom, and to the perfect rectitude of his nature, to suppose so. This

world is a world of confusion; it hath been filled with irregularity and confusion ever since the fall; and the irregularities of it are not only private, relating to the actions of particular persons, but states, kingdoms, nations, churches, cities, and all societies of men in all ages, have been full of public irregularities. The affairs of the world, so far as they are in the hands of men, are carried on in the most irregular and confused manner.

Though justice sometimes takes place, yet how often do injustice, cruelty, and oppression prevail! How often are the righteous condemned, and the wicked acquitted and rewarded! How common is it for the virtuous and pious to be depressed, and the wicked to be advanced! How many thousands of the best men have suffered intolerable cruelties, merely for their virtue and piety, and in this world have had no help, no refuge to fly to! The world is very much ruled by the pride, covetousness, and passions of men. Solomon takes much notice of such like irregularities in the present state, (in his book of Ecclesiastes,) whereby he shows the vanity of the world.

Now how reasonable is it to suppose that God, when he shall come and put an end to the present state of mankind, will in an open, public manner, the whole world being present, rectify all these disorders I and that he will bring all things to a trial by a general judgment, in order that those who have been oppressed may be delivered, that the righteous cause may be pleaded and vindicated, and wickedness, which has been approved, honoured, and rewarded, may receive its due disgrace and punishment; that the proceedings of kings and earthly judges may be inquired into by him, whose eyes are as a flame of fire; and that the public actions of men may be publicly examined and recompensed according to their desert! How agreeable is it to divine wisdom thus to order things, and how worthy of the supreme governor of the world!

**4.** By a public and general judgment, God more fully accomplishes the reward he designs for the godly, and the punishment he designs for the wicked. One part of the reward which God intends for his saints, is the honour which he intends to bestow upon them. He will honour them in the most public and open manner, before the angels, before all mankind, and before them that hated them. And it is most suitable that it should be so: It is suitable that those holy, humble souls, that have been hated by wicked

men, have been cruelly treated and put to shame by them, and who have been haughtily domineered over, should be openly acquitted, commended, and crowned, before all the world.

So one part of the punishment of the ungodly will be the open shame and disgrace which they shall suffer. Although many of them have proudly lifted up their heads in this world, have had a very high thought of themselves, and have obtained outward honour among men; yet God will put them to open shame, by showing all their wickedness and moral filthiness before the whole assembly of angels and men, by manifesting his abhorrence of them, in placing them upon his left hand, among devils and foul spirits; and by turning them away into the most loathsome, as well as most dreadful, pit of hell, to dwell there for ever. — Which ends may be much more fully accomplished in a general, than in a particular judgment.

### SECTION 3

*The world will be judged by Jesus Christ.*

THE person by whom God will judge the world is Jesus Christ, God-man. The second person in the Trinity, that same person of whom we read in our Bibles, who was born of the Virgin Mary, lived in Galilee and Judea, and was at last crucified without the gates of Jerusalem, will come to judge the world both in his divine and human nature, in the same human body that was crucified, and rose again, and ascended up into heaven:

“This same Jesus that is taken up from you into heaven, shall come in like manner, as ye have seen him go into heaven.”

(~~4011~~ Acts 1:11.)

It will be his human nature which will then be seen by the bodily eyes of men. However, his divine nature, which is united to the human, will then also be present: and it will be by the wisdom of that divine nature that Christ will see and judge.

Here naturally arises an inquiry, Why is Christ appointed to judge the world rather than the Father or the Holy Ghost? We cannot pretend to know all the reasons of the divine dispensations. God is not obliged to give us an account of them. But so much may we learn by divine revelation, as

to discover marvelous wisdom in what he determines and orders with respect to this matter. We learn,

**1.** That God seeth fit, that he who is in the human nature, should be the judge of those who are of the human nature: <sup><REV></sup> John 5:27. “And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.” Seeing there is one of the persons of the Trinity united to the human nature, God chooses, in all his transactions with mankind, to transact by him. He did so of old, in his discoveries of himself to the patriarchs, in giving the law, in leading the children of Israel through the wilderness, and in the manifestations he made of himself in the tabernacle and temple: when, although Christ was not actually incarnate, yet he was so in design, it was ordained and agreed in the covenant of redemption, that he should become incarnate. And since the incarnation of Christ, God governs both the church and the world by Christ. So he will also at the end judge the world by him. All men shall be judged by God, and yet at the same time by one invested with their own nature:

God seeth fit, that those who have bodies, its all mankind will have at the day of judgment, should see their judge with their bodily eyes, and hear him with their bodily ears. If one of the other persons of the Trinity had been appointed to be judge, there must have been some extraordinary outward appearance made on purpose to be a token of the divine presence, as it was of old, before Christ was incarnate. But now there is no necessity of that: now one of the persons of the Trinity is actually incarnate, so that God by him may appear to bodily eyes without any miraculous visionary appearance.

**2.** Christ hath this honour of being the judge of the world given him, as a suitable reward for his sufferings. This is a part of Christ’s exaltation. The exaltation of Christ is given him in reward for his humiliation and sufferings. This was stipulated in the covenant of redemption, and we are expressly told, it was given him in reward for his sufferings, <sup><PHI></sup> Philippians 2:8 — 12. “And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every

tongue should confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

God seeth meet, that he who appeared in such a low estate amongst mankind, without form or comeliness, having his divine glory veiled, should appear amongst men a second time, in his own proper majesty and glory, without a veil, to the end that those who saw him here at the first, as a poor, frail man, not having where to lay his head, subject to much hardship and affliction, may see him the second time in power and great glory, invested with the glory and dignity of the absolute Lord of heaven and earth, and that he who once tabernacled with men, and was despised and rejected of them, may have the honour of arraigning all men before his throne, and judging them with respect to their eternal state! <sup>486</sup>John 5:21-24.

God seeth meet that he who was once arraigned before the judgment-seat of men, and was there most vilely treated, being mocked, spitted upon, and condemned, and who was at last crucified, should be rewarded, by having those very persons brought to his tribunal, that they may see him in glory, and be confounded; and that he may have the disposal of them for all eternity; as Christ said to the high priest while arraigned before him,

“Hereafter ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.” (<sup>486</sup>Matthew 26:64.)

**3.** It is needful that Christ should be the judge of the world, in order that he may finish the work of redemption. It is the will of God, that he who is the redeemer of the world should be a complete redeemer; and that therefore he should have the whole work of redemption left in his hands. Now, the redemption of fallen man consists not merely in the importation of redemption, by obeying the divine law and mankind atonement for sinners, or in preparing the way for their salvation, but it consists in a great measure, and is actually fulfilled, in converting sinners to the knowledge and love of the truth, in carrying them on in the way of grace and true holiness through life and in finally raising their bodies to life, in glorifying them, in pronouncing the blessed sentence upon them, in crowning them with honour and glory in the sight of men and angels, and in completing and perfecting their reward. Now, it is necessary that Christ should do this, in order to his finishing the work which he hath begun.

Raising this saints from the dead, judging' them, and fulfilling the sentence, is part of their salvation's; and, therefore it was necessary that Christ should be appointed judge of the world, in order that he might finish his work (◀119▶ John 6:39, 40. chapter 5:25-31.) The redemption of the bodies of the saints is part of the work of redemption, the resurrection to life is called a redemption of their bodies, (◀119▶ Romans 8:23).

It is the will of God, that Christ himself should have the fulfilling of that for which he died, and for which he suffered so much. Now, the end for which he suffered and died was the complete salvation of his people; and this shall he obtain d at the last judgment, and not before. Therefore it was necessary that Christ be appointed judge, in order that he himself might fully accomplish the end for which he had both suffered and died. When Christ had finished his appointed sufferings, God did, as it were, put the purchased inheritance into his hands, to be kept for believers, and be bestowed upon them at the day of judgment.

**4.** It was proper that he who is appointed king of the church should rule till he should have put all his enemies under his feet; in order to which, he must be the judge of his enemies as well as of his people. One of the offices of Christ, as redeemer, is that of a king; he is appointed king of the church, and head over all things to the church; and in order that his kingdom be complete, and the design of his reign be accomplished, he must conquer all his enemies, and then he will deliver up the kingdom to the Father: ◀119▶ 1 Corinthians 15:24, 25. "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power. For he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet." Now, when Christ shall have brought his enemies, who had denied, opposed, and rebelled against him, to his judgment-seat and shall have passed and executed sentence upon them, this will be a final and complete victory over them, a victory which shall put an end to the war. And it is proper that he who at present reigns, and is carrying on the war against those who are of the opposite kingdom, should have the honour of obtaining the victory, and finishing The war.

**5.** It is for the abundant contort of the saints that Christ is appointed to be their judge. The covenant of grace, with all its circumstances, and all those events to which it hath relation, is every way so contrived of God as to

give strong consolation to believers: for God designed the gospel for a glorious manifestation of his grace to them; and therefore every thing in it is so ordered, as to manifest the most grace and mercy.

Now, it is for the abundant consolation of the saints, that their own Redeemer is appointed to be their judge; that the same person who spilled his blood for them hath the determination of their state left with him; so that they need not doubt but that they shall have what he was at so much cost to procure.

What matter of joy to them will it be at the last day to lift up their eyes, and behold the person in whom they have trusted for salvation, to whom they have fled for refuge, upon whom they have built as their foundation for eternity, and whose voice they have often heard, inviting them to himself for protection and safety, coming to judge them.

**6.** That Christ is appointed to be the judge of the world, will be for the more abundant conviction of the ungodly. It will be for their conviction, that they are judged and condemned by that very person whom they have rejected by whom they might have been saved, who shed his blood to give them ‘en opportunity to be saved, who was wont to offer his righteousness to them, when they were in their state of trial, and who many a time called and invited them to come to him, that they might be saved. How justly will they be condemned by him whose salvation they have rejected, whose blood they have despised, whose many calls they have refused, and whom they have pierced by their sins!

How much will it be for their conviction, when they shall hear the sentence of condemnation pronounced, to reflect with themselves, how often hath this same person who now passes sentence of condemnation upon me, called me, in his word, and by his messengers, to accept of him, and to give myself to him! How often hath he knocked at the door of my heart! and had it not been for my own folly and obstinacy, how might I have had him for my Saviour, who is now my incensed Judge!

## SECTION 4

*Christ's coming, the resurrection, the judgment prepared, the books opened, the sentence pronounced and executed.*

**1.** CHRIST JESUS will, in a most magnificent manner, descend from heaven with all the holy angels. The man Christ Jesus is now in the heaven of heavens, or, as the apostle expresses it, far above all heavens, <sup><4110></sup>Ephesians 4:10. And there he hath been ever since his ascension, being there enthroned in glory, in the midst of millions of angels and blessed spirits. But when the time appointed for the day of judgment shall have come, notice of it will be given in those happy regions, and Christ will descend to the earth, attended with all those heavenly hosts, in a most, solemn, awful, and glorious manner. Christ will come with divine majesty, he will come in the glory of the Father,

“For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father,  
with his angels.” (<sup><4162></sup>Matthew 16:27.)

We can now conceive but little of the holy and awful magnificence in which Christ will appear, as he shall come in the clouds of heaven, or of the glory of his retinue. How mean and despicable, in comparison with it, is the most splendid appearance that earthly princes can make! A glorious visible light will shine round about him, and the earth, with all nature, will tremble at his presence. How vast and innumerable will that host be which will appear with him! Heaven will be for the time deserted of its inhabitants.

We may argue the glory of Christ’s appearance, from his appearance at other times. When he appeared in transfiguration, his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. The apostle Peter long after spake of this appearance in magnificent terms, <sup><4116></sup>2 Peter 1:16, 17. “We were eye-witnesses of his majesty, for he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory.” And his appearance to St. Paul at his conversion, and to St. John, as related in <sup><4113></sup>Revelation 1:13, etc. were very grand and magnificent. But we may conclude, that his appearance at the day of judgment will be vastly more so than either of these, as the occasion will be so much greater. We have good reason to think, that our nature, in the present frail state, could not bear the appearance of the majesty in which he will then be seen.

We may argue the glory of his appearance, from the appearances of some of the angels to men, as of the angel that appeared at Christ's sepulchre, after his resurrection,

“His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment  
white as snow.” (~~CHR~~ Matthew 28:3.)

The angels will doubtless all of them make as glorious an appearance at the day of judgment, as ever any of them have made on former occasions. How glorious, then, will be the retinue of Christ, made up of so many thousands of such angels! and how much more glorious will Christ, the judge himself, appear, than those his attendants! Doubtless their God will appear immensely more glorious than they.

Christ will thus descend into our air, to such a distance from the surface of the earth, that every one, when all shall be gathered together, shall see him,

“Behold, he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him.”  
(~~CHR~~ Revelation 1:7.)

Christ will make this appearance suddenly, and to the great surprise of the inhabitants of the earth. It is therefore compared to a cry at midnight, by which men are wakened in a great surprise.


**2.** At The sound of the last trumpet, the dead shall rise, and the living shall be changed. As soon as Christ is descended, the last trumpet shall sound, as a notification to all mankind to appear; at which mighty sound shall the dead be immediately raised, and the living changed: ~~CHR~~ 1 Corinthians 15:52. “For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.” ~~CHR~~ Matthew 24:31. “And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet.” ~~CHR~~ 1 Thessalonians 4:16. “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God.” There will be some great and remarkable signal given for the rising of the dead, which it seems will be some mighty sound, caused by the angels of God, who shall attend on Christ.

Upon this all the dead shall rise from their graves, ale both small and great, who shall have lived upon earth since the foundation of the world, those who died before the flood, and those who were drowned in the flood, all

that have died since that time, and that shall die to the end of the world. There will be a great moving upon the face of the earth, and in the waters, in bringing bone to his bone, in opening graves, and bringing together all the scattered particles of dead bodies. The earth shall give up the dead that are in it, and the sea shall give up the dead that are in it.

However the parts of the bodies of many are divided and scattered, however many have been bums, and their bodies have been fumed to ashes and smoke, and driven to the four winds: however many have been eaten of wild beasts, of the fowls of heaven, and the fishes of the sea; however many have consumed away upon the face of the earth, and great part of their bodies have ascended in exhalations; yet the allwise and all-powerful God can immediately bring every part to his part again.

Of this vast multitude some shall rise to life, and others to condemnation.


 John 5:28, 29. “All that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth, they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.”

When the bodies are prepared, the departed souls shall again enter into their bodies, and be re-united to them, never more to be separated. The souls of the wicked shall be brought up out of hell, though not out of misery, and shall very unwillingly enter into their bodies, which will be but eternal prisons to them.

“And death and hell delivered up the dead that were in them.”

 Revelation 20:13.)

They shall lift their eyes full of the utmost amazement and horror to see their awful Judge. And perhaps the bodies with which they shall be raised will be most filthy and loathsome, thus properly corresponding to the inward, moral turpitude of their souls.

The souls of the righteous shall descend from heaven together with Christ and his angels:  1 Thessalonians 4:14. “Them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.” They also shall be re-united to their bodies, that they may be glorified with them. They shall receive. their bodies prepared by God to be mansions of pleasure to all eternity. They shall be every way fitted for the uses, the exercises, and delights of perfectly holy and glorified souls. They shall be clothed with a superlative beauty, similar to

that of Christ's glorious body: <sup><1002></sup>Philippians 3:21. "Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body." Their bodies shall rise incorruptible, no more liable to pain or disease, and with an extraordinary vigour and vivacity, like that of those spirits that are as a flame of fire. <sup><1056></sup>1 Corinthians 15:43, 44. "It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body." With what joy will the souls and bodies of the saints meet, and with what joy will they lift up their heads out of their graves to behold the glorious sight of the appearing of Christ! And it will be a glorious sight to see those saints arising out of their graves, putting off their corruption, and putting on incorruption and glory.

At the same time, those that shall then be alive upon the earth shall be changed. Their bodies shall pass through a great change, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, <sup><1051></sup>1 Corinthians 15:51, 52. "Behold, I show you a great mystery, We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump." The bodies of the wicked then living will be changed into such hideous things, as shall be answerable to the loathsome souls that dwell in them, and such as shall be prepared to receive and administer eternal torments without dissolution. But the bodies of the righteous shall be changed into the same glorious and immortal form in which those that shall be raised will appear.

**3.** They shall all be brought to appear before Christ, the godly being placed on the right hand, the wicked on the left: <sup><1051></sup>Matthew 25:31, 32, 33. The wicked, however unwilling, however full of fear and horror, shall be brought or driven before the judgment-seat. However they may try to hide themselves, and for this purpose creep into dens and caves of the mountains, and cry to the mountains to fall on them, and hide them from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, yet there shall not one escape; to the judge they must come, and stand on the left hand with devils. On the contrary, the righteous will be joyfully conducted to Jesus Christ, probably by the angels. Their joy will, as it were give them wings to carry them thither. They will; ecstasies and raptures of delight meet their friend and Saviour, come into his presence, and stand at his right hand.

Besides the one standing on the right hand and the other on the left, there seems to be this difference between them, that when the dead in Christ shall be raised, they will all be caught up into the air, where Christ shall be, and shall be there at his right hand during the judgment, never more to set their feet on this earth. Whereas the wicked shall be left standing on the earth, there to abide the judgment. <sup><small>1 Thess</small></sup> 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17. “The dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”

And what a vast congregation will there be of all the men, women, and children that shall have lived upon earth from the beginning to the end of the world!

“And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God.”  
(<sup><small>Revelation</small></sup> Revelation 20:12.)

**4.** The next thing will be, that the books shall be opened: <sup><small>Revelation</small></sup> Revelation 20:12. “I saw the dead, great and small, stand before God; and the books were opened.” Which books seem to be these two, the book of God’s remembrance, and the book of Scripture; the former as the evidence of their deeds which are to be judged, the latter as the rule of judgment. The works both of the righteous and of the wicked will be brought forth, that they may be judged according to them, and those works will be tried according to the appointed and written rule.

**(1.)** The works of both righteous and wicked will be rehearsed. The book of God’s remembrance will be first opened. The various works of the children of men are, as it were, written by God in a book of remembrance, <sup><small>Matthew</small></sup> Matthew 3:16. “A book of remembrance was written before him.” However ready ungodly men may be to make light of their own sins, and to forget them; yet God never forgetteth any of them: neither doth God forget any of the good works of the saints. If they give but a cup of cold water with a spirit of charity, God remembers it.

The evil works of the wicked shall then be brought forth to light. They must then hear of all their profaneness, their impenitence, their obstinate unbelief, their abuse of ordinances, and various other sins. The various

aggravations of their sins will also be brought to view, as how this man sinned after such and such warnings, that after the receipt of such and such mercies; one after being so and so favoured with outward light, another after having been the subject of inward conviction, excited by the immediate agency of God. Concerning these sins, they shall be called to account to see what answer they can make for themselves: <sup><12></sup>Matthew 12:36. “But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.” <sup><14></sup>Romans 14:12. “So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.”

The good works of the saints will also be brought forth as evidences of their sincerity, and of their interest in the righteousness of Christ. As to their evil works, they will not be brought forth against them on that day; for the guilt of them will not lie upon them, they being clothed with the righteousness of Jesus Christ. The Judge himself will have taken the guilt of their sins upon him; therefore their sins will not stand against them in the book of God’s remembrance. The account of them will appear to have been cancelled before that time. The account that will be found in God’s book will not be of debt, but of credit. God cancels their debts, and sets down their good works, and is pleased, as it were, to make himself a debtor for them, by his own gracious act.

Both good and bad will be judged according to their works: <sup><15></sup>Revelation 20:12. “And the dead were judged out of those things that were found written in the books, according to their works;” and verse 13. “And they were judged every man according to their works.” Though the righteous are justified by faith, and not by their works; yet they shall be judged according to, their works: then works shall be brought forth as the evidence of their faith. Their faith on that great day shall be tried by its fruits. If the works of any man shall have been bad, if his life shall appear to have been unchristian, that will condemn him, without any further inquiry. But if his works, when they shall surely be justified. They will be declared as a sure evidence of his having believed in Jesus Christ, and of his being clothed with his righteousness.

But by works we are to understand all voluntary exercises of the faculties of the soul, as for instance, the words and conversation of men as well as what is done with their hands: Matthew 12 “By thy words thou shalt be

justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.” Nor are we to understand only outward acts, or the thoughts outwardly expressed, but also the thoughts themselves, and all the inward workings of the heart. Man judgeth according to the outward appearance, but God judgeth the heart: <sup>4173</sup>Revelation 2:23. “I am he that searcheth the heart and the reins, and I will give unto every one of you according to his worlds.” Nor will only positive sins be brought into judgment, but also omissions of duty, as is manifest by <sup>4159</sup>Matthew 25:42, etc. “For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink,” etc.

On that day secret and hidden wickedness will be brought to light. All the uncleanness, injustice, and violence, of which men have been guilty in secret shall be manifest both to angels and men. Then it will be made to appear, how this and that man have indulged themselves in wicked imaginations, in lascivious, covetous, malicious, or impious desires and wishes; and how others have harboured in their hearts enmity against God and his law, also impenitency and unbelief, notwithstanding: all the means used with them, and motives set before them, to induce them to repent, return, and live.

The good works of the saints also, which were done in secret, shall then be made public, and even the pious and benevolent affections and designs of their hearts, so that the real and secret characters of both saints and sinners shall then be most clearly and publicly displayed.

**(2.)** The book of Scripture will be opened, and the works of men will be tried by that touchstone. Their works will be compared with the word of God. That which God gave men for the rule of their action while in this life shall then be made the rule of their judgment. God hath told us beforehand, what will be the rule of judgment. We are told in the Scriptures upon what terms we shall be justified, and upon what terms we shall be condemned. That which God hath given us to be our rule in our lives, he will make his own rule in judgment.

The rule of judgment will be twofold. The primary rule of judgment will be the law. The law ever hath stood, and ever will stand in force, as a rule of judgment, for those. to whom the law was given: <sup>4185</sup>Matthew 5:18. “For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one little shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.” The law will so far be made the rule of judgment, that not one person at that day shall by any

means be justified or condemned, in a way inconsistent with that which is established by the law. As to the wicked, the law will be so far the rule of judgment respecting them, that the sentence denounced against them will be the sentence of the law. The righteous will be so far judged by the law, that although their sentence will not be the sentence of the law, yet it will by no means be such a sentence as shall be inconsistent with the law, but such as it allows: for it will be by the righteousness of the law that they shall be justified.

It will be inquired concerning every one, both righteous and wicked, whether the law stands against him, or whether he hath a fulfillment of the law to show. As to the righteous, they will have fulfillment to show, they will have it to plead, that the judge himself hath fulfilled the law for diem, that he hath both satisfied for their sins and fulfilled the righteousness of the law for them:

“Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one  
that believeth.” (Romans 10:4.)

But as to the wicked, when it shall be found, by the book of God’s remembrance, that they have broken the law, and have no fulfillment of it to plead, the sentence of the law shall be pronounced upon them.

A secondary rule of judgment will be the gospel, or the covenant of grace, wherein it is said, “He that believeth shall he saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned:”

“In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus  
Christ according to my gospel.” (Romans 2:16.)

By the gospel, or covenant of grace, eternal blessedness will be adjudged to believers. When it shall be found that the law hinders not, and that the curse and condemnation of the law stands not against them, the reward of eternal life shall be given them according to the glorious gospel of Christ.

**5.** The sentence will be pronounced. Christ will say to the wicked on the left hand, “Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.”

How dreadfully will these words of the judge be to the poor, miserable, despairing wretches on the left hand! How amazing will every syllable of

them be! How will they pierce them to the soul! These words show the greatest wrath and abhorrence. Christ will bid them do part; he will send them away from his presence, will remove them for ever far out of his sight, into an everlasting separation from God, as being most loathsome, and unfit to dwell in his presence, and enjoy communion with him.

Christ will call them cursed; Depart, ye cursed, to whom everlasting wrath and ruin belong; who are by your own wickedness prepared for nothing else, but to be firebrands of hell; who are the fit objects and vessels of the vengeance and fury of the Almighty. Into fire: he will not send them away merely into a loathsome prison, the receptacle of the filth and rubbish of the universe; hut into a furnace of fire; that must be their dwelling-place, there they must be tormented with the most racking pain and anguish. It is everlasting fire; there is eternity in the sentence, which infinitely aggravates the doom, and will make every word of it immensely more dreadful, sinking, and amazing to the souls that receive it. Prepared for the devil and his angels: this sets forth the greatness and intenseness of the torments, as the preceding part of the sentence does the duration. It shows the dreadfulness of that fire to which they shall be condemned, that it is the same that is prepared for the devils, those foul spirits and great enemies of God. Their condition will be the same as that of the devils, in many respects; particularly as they must burn in the fire for ever.

This sentence will doubtless be pronounced in such an awful manner as shall be a terribly manifestation of the wrath of the judge. There will be divine, holy, and almighty wrath manifested in the countenance and voice of the judge; and we know not what other manifestations of anger will accompany the sentence. Perhaps it will be accompanied with thunders and lightnings, far more dreadful than were on mount Sinai at the giving of the law. Correspondent to these exhibitions of divine wrath, will be the appearances of terror and most horrible amazement in the condemned. How will all their faces look pale! how will death sit upon their countenances, when those words shall be heard! What dolorous cries, shrieks, and groans! What trembling, and wringing of hands, and gnashing of teeth, will there then be!

But with the most benign aspect, in the most endearing manner, and with the sweetest expressions of love, will Christ invite his saints on his right

hand to glory; saying, “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” He will not bid them to go from him, but to come with him; to go where he goes; to dwell where he dwells, to enjoy and, and to partake with him. He will call them blessed, blessed of his Father, blessed by him whose blessing is infinitely the most desirable, namely, GOD, inherit the kingdom: they are not only invited to go with Christ, and to dwell with him, but to inherit a kingdom with him, to sit down with him on his throne, and to receive the honour and happiness of a heavenly kingdom. “Prepared for you from the foundation of the world:” this denotes the sovereign and eternal love of God, as the source of their blessedness. He puts them in mind, that God was pleased to set his love upon them, long before they had a being, even from eternity; that therefore God made heaven on purpose for them, and fitted it for their delight and happiness.

**6.** Immediately after this, the sentence will be executed, as we are informed, <sup>4156</sup>Matthew 25:46. “These shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal.” When the words of the sentence shall have once proceeded out of the mouth of the judge, then that vast and innumerable throng of ungodly men shall go away, shall be driven away shall be necessitated to go away with devils, and shalt with dismal cries and shrieks be cast into the great furnace of fire prepared for the punishment of devils, the perpetual thunders and lightnings of the wrath of God following them. Into this furnace they must in both soul and body enter, never more to come out. Here they must spend eternal ages in wrestling with the most excruciating torments, and in crying out in the midst of the most dreadful flames, and under the most insupportable wrath.

On the other hand; the righteous shall ascend to heaven with their glorified bodies, in company with Christ, his angels, and all that host which descended with him, they shall ascend in the most joyful and triumphant manner, and shall enter with Christ into that glorious and blessed world, which had for the time been empty of its creature inhabitants. Christ having given his church that perfect beauty, and crowned it with that glory, honour, and happiness, which were stipulated in the covenant of redemption before the world was, and which he died to procure for them; and having made it a truly glorious church, every way complete, will

present it before the Father, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. Thus shall the saints be instated in everlasting glory to dwell there with Christ, who shall feed them, and lead them to living fountains of water, to the full enjoyment of God, and to an eternity of the most holy, glorious, and joyful employment's.

## SECTION 5

*All will be done in righteousness.*

CHRIST will give to every man his due, according to a most righteous rule. Those who shall be condemned will be most justly condemned, will be condemned to that punishment which they shall most justly deserve, and the justice of God in condemning them will be made most evident. Now the justice of God in punishing wicked men, and especially in the degree of their punishment, is often blasphemously called in question. But it will be made clear and apparent to all, their own consciences will tell them that the sentence is just, and all cavils will be put to silence.

So those that shall be justified, shall be most justly adjudged to eternal life. Although they also were great sinners, and deserved eternal death, yet it will not be against justice or the law, to justify them, they will be in Christ. But the acquitting of them; will he but giving the reward merited by Christ's righteousness,

“That God may be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.” (Romans 3:26.)

Christ will judge the world in righteousness, particularly as he will give to every one a due proportion either of reward or punishment, according to the various characters of those who shall be judged. The punishments shall be duly proportioned to the number and aggravations of the sins of the wicked; and the rewards of the righteous shall be duly proportioned to the number of their holy acts and affections, and also to the degree of virtue implied in them. — I would observe further,

**1.** That Christ cannot fail of being just in judging through mistake. He cannot take some to be sincere and godly, who are not so, nor others to be hypocrites, who are really sincere. His eyes are as a flame of fire, and he searcheth the hearts and trieth the reins of the children of men. He can

never err in determining what is justice in particular cases, as human judges often do. Nor can he be blinded by prejudices, as human judges are very liable to be.

“He regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward.”

(<sup>1517</sup>Deuteronomy 10:17.)

It is impossible he should be deceived by the excuse, and false colours, and pleas of the wicked, as human judges very commonly are. It is equally impossible that he should err, in assigning to every one his proper proportion of reward or punishment, according to his wickedness or good works. His knowledge being infinite, will effectually guard him against all these, and other such errors.

**2.** He cannot fail of judging righteously through an unrighteous disposition; for he is infinitely just and holy in his nature. (<sup>1518</sup>Deuteronomy 32:4. “He is the rock, his work is perfect; for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth, and without iniquity, just and right is he.” It is not possible that an infinitely powerful, self-sufficient being should be under any temptation to injustice. Nor is it possible that an infinitely wise being, who knoweth all things, should not choose justice. For he who perfectly knows all things, perfectly knows how much more amiable justice is than injustice; and therefore must choose it.

## SECTION 6

*Those things which will immediately follow the day of judgment.*

**1.** AFTER the sentence shall have been pronounced, and the saints shall have ascended with Christ into glory, this world will be dissolved by fire: the conflagration will immediately succeed the judgment. When an end shall have been put to the present state of mankind, this world, which was the place of their habitation during that state, will be destroyed, there being no further use for it. This earth which had been the stage upon which so many scenes had been acted, upon which there had been so man, great and famous kingdoms and large cities; where there had been so many wars, so much trade and business carried on for so many ages; shall then be destroyed. These continents, these islands, these seas and rivers these mountains and valleys, shall be seen no more at all: all shall be destroyed

by devouring flames. This we are plainly taught in the word of God. <sup>2</sup> Peter 3:7. “But the heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men.” verse 10. “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burnt up.” verse 12. “Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat.”

**2.** Both the misery of the wicked and the happiness of the saints will be increased, beyond what shall be before the judgment. The misery of the wicked will be increased, as they will be tormented not only in their souls, but also in their bodies, which will be prepared both to receive and administer torment to their souls. There will doubtless then be the like connexion between soul and body, as there is now; and therefore the pains and torments of the one will affect the other. And why may we not suppose that their torments will be increased as well as those of the devils? Concerning them we are informed, (<sup>209</sup> James 2:19.) that they believe there is one God, and tremble in the belief; expecting no doubt that he will inflict upon them, in due time, more severe torments than even those which they now suffer. We are also informed that they are bound “in chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; and unto the judgment of the great day;” (<sup>210</sup> 1 Peter 2:4. and Jude 6.) which implies that their full punishment is not yet executed upon them, but that they are now reserved as prisoners in hell, to receive their just recompense on the day of judgment. fleece it was that they thought Christ was come to torment them before the time. <sup>211</sup> Matthew 8:29. Thus the punishment neither of wicked men nor devils will be complete before the final judgment.

No more will the happiness of the saints be complete before that time. Therefore we are in the New Testament so often encouraged with promises of the resurrection of the dead, and of the day when Christ shall come the second time. These things are spoken of as the great objects of the expectation and hope of Christians. A state of separation of soul and body is to men an unnatural state. Therefore when the bodies of the saints shall, be raised from the dead, and their souls shall be again united to them, as their state will be more natural, so doubtless it will be more happy.

Their bodies will be glorious bodies, and prepared to administer as much to their happiness, as the bodies of the wicked will be to administer to their misery.

We may with good reason suppose the accession of happiness to the souls of the saints will be great, since the occasion is represented as the marriage of the church, and the Lamb,

“The marriage of the Lamb is come,  
and his wife hath made herself ready.” (~~Rev~~ Revelation 19:7.)

Their joy will then be increased, because they will have new arguments of joy. The body of Christ will then be perfect, the church will be complete; all the parts of it will have come into existence, which will not be the case before the end of the world, no parts of it will be under sin or affliction: all the members of it will be in a perfect state; and they shall all be together by themselves, none being mixed with ungodly men. Then the church will be as a bride adorned for her husband, and therefore she will exceedingly rejoice.

Then also the Mediator will have fully accomplished his work. He will then have destroyed and will triumph over, all his enemies. Then Christ will have fully obtained his reward, and fully accomplished the design which was in his heart from all eternity. For these reasons Christ himself will greatly rejoice, and his members must needs proportionately rejoice with him. Then God will have obtained the end of all the great works which he hath been doing from the beginning of the world. All the designs of God will be unfolded in their events; then his marvelous contrivance in his hidden, intricate, and inexplicable works will appear, the ends being obtained. Then the works of God being perfected, the divine glory will more abundantly appear. These things will cause a great accession of happiness to the saints, who shall behold them. Then God will have fully glorified himself, his Son, and his elect, then he will see that all is very good, and will entirely rejoice in his own works. At the same time the saints also, viewing the works of God brought thus to perfection, will rejoice in the view, and receive from it a large accession of happiness.

Then God will make more abundant manifestations of his glory and of the glory of his Son, then he will more plentifully pour out his Spirit, and

make answerable additions to the glory of the saints, and by means of all these will so increase the happiness of the saints, as shall be suitable to the commencement of the ultimate and most perfect state of things, and to such a joyful occasion, the completion of all things. In this glory and happiness will the saints remain for ever and ever.

## SECTION 7

*The uses to which this doctrine is applicable.*

**1.** THE first use proper to be made of this doctrine is of instruction. Hence many of the mysteries of Divine Providence may be unfolded. There are many things in the dealings of God towards the children of men, which appear very mysterious, if we view them without having an eye to this last judgment, which yet, if we consider this judgment, have no difficulty in them. As,

**1.** That God suffers the wicked to live and prosper in the world. The infinitely holy and wise Creator and Governor of the world must necessarily hate wickedness; yet we see many wicked men spreading themselves as a green bay-tree; they live with impunity; things seem to go well with them, and the world smiles upon them. Many who have not been fit to live, who have held God and religion in the greatest contempt, who have been open enemies to all that is good, who by their wickedness have been the pests of mankind, many cruel tyrants, whose barbarities have been such as would even fill one with horror to hear or read of them, yet have lived in great wealth and outward glory, have reigned over great and mighty kingdoms and empires, and have been honoured as a sort of earthly gods.

Now, it is very mysterious, that the holy and righteous Governor of the world, whose eye beholds all the children of men, should suffer it so to be, unless we look forward to the day of judgment, and then the mystery is unraveled. For although God for the present keeps silence and seems to let them alone, yet then he will give suitable manifestations of his displeasure against their wickedness; they shall then receive condign punishment. The saints under the Old Testament were much stumbled at these dispensations of Providence, as you may see in Job, chapter 21 and Psalm 73 and Jeremiah chapter 12: The difficulty to them was so great, because

then a future state and a day of judgment were not revealed with that clearness with which they are now.


**2.** God sometimes suffers some of the best of men to be in great affliction, poverty, and persecution. The wicked rule, while they are subject; the wicked are the head, and they are the tail, the nicked domineer, while they serve, and are oppressed, yea are trampled under their feet, as the mire of the streets. These things are very common, yet they seem to imply great confusion. When the wicked are exalted to power and authority, and the godly are oppressed by them, things are quite out of joint: ~~and~~ Proverbs 20:26. “A righteous man falling down before the wicked, is as a troubled fountain, and a corrupt spring.” Sometimes one wicked man makes many hundreds, yea thousands, of precious saints a sacrifice to his last and cruelty, or to his enmity against virtue and the truth, and puts them to death for no other reason but that for which they are especially to be esteemed and commended.

Now, if we look no further than the present state, these things appear strange and unaccountable. But we ought not to confine our views within such narrow limits. When God shall have put an end to the present state, these things shall all be brought to rights. Though God suffers things to be so for the present, yet they shall not proceed in this course always comparatively speaking, the present state of things is but for a moment. When all shall be settled and fixed by a divine judgment, the righteous shall be exalted, honoured, and rewarded, and the wicked shall be depressed and put under their feet. However the wicked now prevail against the righteous, yet the righteous shall at last have the ascendant, shall come off conquerors, and shall see the just vengeance of God executed upon those who now hate and persecute them.

**3.** It is another mystery of providence, that God suffers so much public injustice to take place in the world. There are not only private wrongs, which in this state pass unsettled, but many public wrongs, wrongs done by men acting in a public character, and wrongs which affect nations, kingdoms, and other public bodies of men. Many suffer by men in public offices, from whom there is no refuge, from whose decisions there is no appeal. Now it seems a mystery that these things are tolerated, when he that is rightfully the Supreme Judge and Governor of the world is

perfectly just; but at the final judgment all these wrongs shall be adjusted, as well as those of a more private nature.

**II.** Our second use of this subject shall be to apply it to the awakening of sinners. You that have not the fear of God before your eyes, that are not afraid to sin against him, consider seriously what you have heard concerning the day of judgment. Although these things be now future and unseen, yet they are real and certain. If you now be left to yourselves, If God keep silence, and judgment be not speedily executed, it is not because God is regardless how you live, and how you behave yourselves. Now indeed God is invisible to you, and his wrath is invisible, but at the day of judgment, you yourselves shall see him with your bodily eyes: you shall not then be able to keep out of his sight, or to avoid seeing him:

 Revelation 1:7. “Behold he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him.” You shall see him coming in the clouds of heaven; your ears shall hear the last trumpet, that dreadful sound, the voice of the archangel; your eyes shall see your judge sitting on the throne, they shall see those manifestations of wrath which there will be in his countenance; your ears shall hear him pronounce the sentence.

Seriously consider, if you live in the ways of sin, and appear at that day with the guilt of it upon you, how you will be able to endure the sight or the hearing of these things, and whether horror and amazement will not be likely to seize you, when you shall see the judge descending, and hear the trump of God. What account will you be able to give, when it shall be inquired of you why you led such a sinful, wicked life? What will you be able to say for yourselves, when it shall be asked, why you neglected such and such particular duties, as the duty of secret prayer, for instance? or why you have habitually practiced such and such particular sins or lusts? Although you be so careless of your conduct and manner of life, make so light of sin, and proceed in it so freely, with little or no dread or remorse; yet you must give an account of every sin that you commit, of every idle word that you speak, and of every sinful thought of your hearts. Every time you deviate from the rules of justice, of temperance, or of charity; every time you indulge any lust, whether secretly or openly, you must give an account of it: it will never be forgotten, it stands written in that book which will be opened on that day.

Consider the rule you will be judged by. It is the perfect rule of the divine law, which is exceeding strict, and exceeding broad. And how will you ever be able to answer the demands of this law? — Consider also,

**1.** That the judge will be your supreme judge. You will have no opportunity to appeal from his decision. This is often the case in this world; when we are dissatisfied with the decisions of a judge, we often may appeal to a higher, a more knowing, or a more just judicatory. But no such appeal can be made from our Divine Judge: no such indulgence will be allowed: or if it were allowed, there is no superior judge to whom the appeal should be made. By his decision, therefore, you must,

**2.** The judge will be omnipotent. Were he a mere man, like yourselves, however he might judge and determine, you might resist, and by the help of others, if not by your own strength, prevent or elude the execution of the judgment. But the judge being omnipotent, this is utterly impossible. In vain is all resistance, either by yourselves, or by whatever help you can obtain: “Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished,” <sup><4112></sup>Proverbs 11:21. As well might you “set the briers and thorns in battle against God,” <sup><2370></sup>Isaiah 27:4.

**3.** The judge will be inexorable. Human judges may be prevailed upon to reverse their sentence, or at least to remit something of its severity. But in vain will be all your entreaties, all your cries and tears to this effect, with the great Judge of the world. Now indeed he inclines his ear, and is ready to hear the prayers, cries, and entreaties of all mankind; but then the day of grace will be past, and the door of mercy be shut: then although ye spread forth your hands, yet the judge will hide his eyes from you; yea, though ye make many prayers, he will not hear: Isaiah 15. Then the judge will be in fury: his eye shall not spare, neither will he have pity: and though ye cry in his ears with a loud voice, yet will he not hear you: <sup><4188></sup>Ezekiel 8:18. And you will find no place of repentance in God, though you seek it carefully with tears.

**4.** The judge at that day will not mix mercy with justice. The time for mercy to be shown to sinners will then be past. Christ will then appear in another character than that of the merciful Saviour. Having laid aside the inviting attributes of grace and mercy, he will clothe himself with justice and vengeance. He will not only, in general, exact of sinners the demands

of the law, but he will exact the whole, without any abatement; he will exact the very uttermost farthing, <sup><412></sup>Matthew 5:26. Then Christ will come to fulfil that in <sup><644></sup>Revelation 14:10. “The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture, into the cup of his indignation.” The punishment threatened to ungodly men is without any pity: See <sup><415></sup>Ezekiel 5:11. “Neither shall mine eye spare, neither will I have any pity.” Here all judgments have a mixture of mercy, but the wrath of God will be poured out upon the wicked without mixture, and vengeance will have its full weight.

**III.** I shall apply myself, thirdly, to several different characters of men.

**1.** To those who live in secret wickedness. Let such consider, that for all these things God will bring them into judgment. Secrecy is your temptation. Promising yourselves this, you practice many things, you indulge many lusts, under the covert of darkness, and in secret corners, which you would be ashamed to do in the light of the sun, and before the world. But this is entirely groundless. All your secret abominations are even now perfectly known to God, and will also hereafter be made known both to angels and men: <sup><212></sup>Luke 12:2, 3. “For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed, neither hid, that shall not be known. Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness, shall be heard in the light: and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets, shall be proclaimed upon the house-tops.”

Before human judges are brought only those things which are known; but before this Judge shall be brought the most

“hidden things of darkness, and even the counsels of the heart,”

(<sup><405></sup>1 Corinthians 4:5.)

All your secret uncleanness, all your secret fraud and injustice, all your lascivious desires, wishes, and designs, all your inward covetousness, which is idolatry, all your malicious, envious, and revengeful thoughts and purposes, whether brought forth into practice or not, shall then be made manifest, and you shall be judged according to them. Of these things, however secret, there will be need of no other evidence than the testimony of God and of your own consciences.

**2.** To such as are not just and upright in their dealings with their fellowmen. Consider, that all your dealings with men must be tried, must be brought forth into judgment, and there compared with the rules of the word of God. All your actions must be judged according, to those things which are found written in the book of the word of God. If your ways of dealing with men shall not agree with those rules of righteousness, they will be condemned. Now, the word of God directs us to practice entire justice: “That which is altogether just shalt thou follow,” <sup><B16></sup>Deuteronomy 16:20. and to do to others as we would they should do to us. But how many are there, whose dealings with their fellow-men, if strictly tried by these rules, would not stand the test!

God hath, in his word, forbidden all deceit and fraud in our dealings one with another, <sup><B113></sup>Leviticus 11:13. He hath forbidden us to oppress one another, <sup><B254></sup>Leviticus 25:14. But how frequent are practices contrary to those rules, and which will not bear to be tried by them! How common are fraud and trickishness in trade! How will men endeavour to lead on those with whom they trade in the dark, that so they may make their advantage! Yea, lying in trading is too common a thing among us. How common are such things as that mentioned,

“It is nought, it is nought, saith the buyer; but when he is gone his way, then he boasteth.” <sup><B144></sup>Proverbs 20:14.)

Many men will take the advantage of another’s ignorance to advance their own gain, to his wrong; yea, they seem not to scruple such practices. Beside downright lying, men have many ways of blinding and deceiving one another in trade, which are by no means right in the sight of God, and will appear to be very unjust, when they shall be tried by the rule of God’s word at the day of judgment. And how common a thing is oppression or extortion, in taking any advantage that men can by any means obtain, to get the utmost possible of their neighbour for what they have to dispose of, and their neighbour needs!

Let such consider, that there is a God in heaven, who beholds them, and sees how they conduct themselves in their daily traffic with one another, and that he will try their works another day. Justice shall assuredly take place at last. The righteous Governor of the world will not suffer injustice

without control, he will control and rectify it, by returning the injury upon the head of the injurer:

“With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.”  
(<sup><400></sup>Matthew 7:2.)

**3.** To those who plead for the lawfulness of practices generally condemned by God’s people, you who do this, consider that your practices must be tried at the day of Judgment. Consider, whether or no they are likely to be approved by the most holy Judge at that day:

“The ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord and he pondereth all his goings.” (<sup><400></sup>Proverbs 5:21.)

However, by your carnal reasonings, you may deceive your own hearts, yet you will not be able to deceive the judge, he will not hearken to your excuses, but will try your ways by the rule, he will know whether they be straight or crooked.

When you plead for these and those liberties which you take, let it be considered, whether they be likely to be allowed of by the judge at the last great day. Will they bear to be tried by his eyes, which are purer than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity!

**4.** To those who are wont to excuse their wickedness. Will the excuses which you make for yourselves be accepted at the day of judgment? If you excuse yourselves to your own consciences, by saying, that you were under such and such temptations which you could not withstand; that corrupt nature prevailed, and you could not overcome it; that it would have been so and so to your damage, if you had done otherwise, that if you had done such a duty, you would have brought yourselves into difficulty, would have incurred the displeasure of such and such friends, or would have been despised and laughed at; or if you say, you did no more than it was the common custom to do, no more than many godly men have done, no more than certain persons of good reputation now practice; that if you had done otherwise, You would have been singular; if these be your excuses for the sins which you commit, or for the duties which you neglect let me ask you, will they appear sufficient when they shall be examined at the day of Judgment?

**5.** To those who live in impenitence and unbelief There are some persons who live in no open vice, and perhaps conscientiously avoid secret immorality, who yet live in impenitence and unbelief: They are indeed called upon to repent and believe the gospel, to forsake their evil ways and thoughts, and to return to God, that he may have mercy on them, to come unto Christ, labouring, and heavy-laden with sin, that they may obtain rest of him and are assured, that if they believe, they shall be saved and that if they believe not, they shall be damned, and all the most powerful motives are set before them, to induce them to comply with these exhortations, especially those drawn from the eternal world; yet they persist in sin, they remain impenitent and unhumbled, they will not come unto Christ, that they may have life.

Now such men shall be brought into judgment for their conduct, as well as more gross sinners. Nor will they be any more able to stand in the judgment than the other They resist the most powerful means of grace, go on in sin against the clear light of the gospel, refuse to hearken to the kindest calls and invitations, reject the most amiable Saviour the judge himself, and despise the free offers of eternal life, glory, and felicity. And how will they be able to answer for these things at the tribunal of Christ?

**IV.** If there be a day of judgment appointed, then let all be very strict in trying their own sincerity. God on that day will discover the secrets of all hearts. The judgment of that day will be like the fire, which burns up whatsoever is not true gold wood, hay, stubble, and dross, shall be all consumed by the scorching fire of that day. The judge will be like a refiner's fire, and fuller's soap, which will cleanse away all filthiness, however it may be coloured overse ~~and~~ Matthew 3:2. "Who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth; for he is like a refiner's fire and like fuller's soap:" and chapter 4:1 "For behold the day cometh that shall burn as an oven and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble, and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts."

There are multitudes of men that wear the guise of saints, appear like saints and their state, both in their own eyes and in the eyes of their neighbours, is good. They have sheep's clothing. But no disguise can hide them from the eyes of the judge of the world. His eyes are as a flame of

fire: they search the hearts and try the reins of the children of men. He will see whether they be sound at heart, he will see from what principles they have acted. A fair show will in no decree deceive him, as it doth men in the present state. It will signify nothing to say, “Lord we have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and in thy name have we cast out devils, and in thy name have done many wonderful works.” It will signify nothing to pretend to a great deal of comfort and joy, and to the experience of great religious affections, and to your having done many things in religion and morality, unless you have some greater evidences of sincerity.

Wherefore let every one take heed that he be not deceived concerning himself, and that he depend not on that which will not bear examination at the day of judgment. Be not contented with this, that you have the judgment of men, the judgment of godly men, or that of ministers, in your favour. Consider that they are not to be your judges at last. Take occasion frequently to compare your hearts with the word of God; that is the rule by which you are to be finally tried and judged. And try yourselves by your works by which also you must be tried at last. Inquire whether you lead holy Christian lives, whether you perform universal and unconditional obedience to all God’s commands, and whether you do it from a truly gracious respect to God.

Also frequently beg of God, the judge, that he would search you, try you now, and discover you to yourselves, that you may see if you be insincere in religion; and that he would lead you in the way everlasting. Beg of God, that if you be not upon a good foundation, he would unsettle you, and fix you upon the sure foundation. The example of the psalmist in this is worthy of imitation: <sup>PS</sup>Psalm 26:1, 2. “Judge me, O Lord, examine me, and prove me, try my reins and mine heart;” and <sup>PS</sup>Psalm 139:23, 24. “Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts. And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” God will search us hereafter, and discover what we are, both to ourselves and to all the world; let us pray that he would search us, and discover our hearts to us now. We have need of divine help in this matter; for the heart is deceitful above all things.

**V.** If God hath appointed a day to judge the world, let us judge and condemn ourselves for our sins. This we must do, if we would not be

judged and condemned for them on that day. If we would escape condemnation, we must see that we justly may be condemned; we must be so sensible of our vileness and guilt, as to see that we deserve all that condemnation and punishment which are threatened, and that we are in the hands of God, who is the sovereign disposer of us, and will do with us as seemeth to himself good. Let us therefore often reflect on our sins, confess them before God, condemn and abhor ourselves, be truly humbled, and repent in dust and ashes.

**VI.** If these things be so, let us by no means be forward to judge others. Some are forward to judge others, to judge their hearts both in general and upon particular occasions, to determine as to the principles, motives, and ends of their actions. But this is to assume the province of God, and to set up ourselves as lords and judges.

“Who art thou, that thou judgest another man’s servant?”  
(~~540~~ Romans 14:4.)

“Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law.” (~~594~~ James 4:11.)

To he thus disposed to judge and act censoriously towards others, is the way to be judged and condemned ourselves. ~~400~~ Matthew 7:1, 2. “Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, It shall be measured to you again.”


**VII.** This doctrine affords matter of great consolation to the godly. This day of judgment, which is so terrible to ungodly men, affords no ground of terror to you, but abundant ground of joy and satisfaction. For though you now meet with more affliction and trouble than most wicked men, yet on that day you shall be delivered from all afflictions, and from all trouble. If you be unjustly treated by wicked men, and abused by them, what a comfort is it to the injured, that they may appeal to God, who judgeth righteously. The psalmist used often to comfort himself with this.

Upon these accounts the saints have reason to love the appearing, of Jesus Christ. ~~500~~ 2 Timothy 4:8. “Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that

day: and not to me only, but to all those that love his appearing.” This is to the saints a blessed hope. <sup><6121></sup>Titus 2:13. “Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.” This day may well be the object of their eager desire, and when they hear of Christ’s coming to judgment, they may well say, “Even so come, Lord Jesus,” <sup><6121></sup>Revelation 22:20. It will be the most glorious day that ever the saints saw, it will be so both to those who shall die, and whose souls shall go to heaven, and to those who shall then be found alive on earth it will be the wedding-day of the church. Surely then in the consideration of the approach of this day, there is ground of great consolation to the saints.

# SINNERS IN ZION TENDERLY WARNED.

## THE FEARFULNESS WHICH WILL HEREAFTER SURPRISE SINNERS IN ZION REPRESENTED AND IMPROVED.

The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?  
( Isaiah 33:14)

### SECTION 1

*Showing who are sinners in Zion.*

THERE are two kinds of persons among God's professing people; the one, those who are truly godly, spoken of in the verse following the text; "He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly," etc. The other kind consists of sinners in Zion, or hypocrites. It is to be observed, that the prophet in this chapter speaks interchangeably, first to the one, and then to the other of these characters of men; awfully threatening and denouncing the wrath of God against the one, and comforting the other with gracious promises. Thus you may observe, in the 5th and 6th verses, there are comfortable promises to the godly; then in the eight following verses, awful judgments are threatened against the sinners in Zion. Again, in the two next verses are blessed promises to the sincerely godly, and in the former part of verse 17. And then in the latter part of verse 17. and in verse 18, and 19. are terrible threatenings to sinners in Zion: then in the verses that follow are gracious promises to the godly.

Our text is part of what is said in this chapter to sinners in Zion. In verse 10. it is said, "Now will I rise, saith the Lord; now will I be exalted; now will I lift up myself," *i.e.* Now will I arise to execute wrath upon the ungodly; I will not let them alone any longer. They shall see that I am not

asleep, and that I am not regardless of mine own honour. “Now will I be exalted.” Though they have cast contempt upon me, yet I will vindicate the honour of my own majesty: I will exalt myself, and show my greatness, and my awful majesty in their destruction. “Now will I lift up myself;” now I will no longer have mine honour trampled in the dust by them: but my glory shall be manifested in their misery.

In verse 11. the prophet proceeds, “Ye shall conceive chaff; ye shall bring forth stubble:” *i.e.* Ye shall pursue happiness in ways of wickedness, but you shall not obtain it, you are as around which brings forth no fruit, as if only chaff were sowed in it, it brings forth nothing but stubble, which is fit for nothing but to be burned.

It seems to have been the manner in that land where the corn grew very rank, when they had reaped the wheat, and gathered it off from the ground to set fire to the stubble, which is alluded to here; and therefore it is added, “Your breath, as fire, shall devour you:” *i.e.* Your own wicked speeches, your wickedness that you commit with your breath, or with your tongues, shall set fire to the stubble and devour it.

Then it follows in verse 12. “And the people shall be as the burnings of lime.” As they are wont to burn lime in a great and exceeding fierce fire, till stones, and bones, and other things are burnt to lime, so shall the wicked be burnt in the fire of God’s wrath. “As thorns cut up shall they be burnt in the fire:” as briars and thorns are the encumbrance and curse of the ground where they grow, and are wont to be burnt; so shall it be with the wicked that are among God’s people, and grow in God’s field. ~~Scripture~~ Hebrews 6:7, 8. “For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: but that which beareth thorns and briars, is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned.”

Then it follows in verse 13. “Hear ye that are far off, what I have done; and ye that are near, acknowledge my might.” This implies that God will by the destruction of ungodly men, manifest his glory very publicly, even in the sight of the whole world, both in the sight of those that are near, and of those that are far off. “Acknowledge my might.” Which implies that God will execute wrath upon ungodly men, in such a manner as extraordinarily to show forth his great and mighty power. The destruction

and misery of the wicked will be so dreadful, that it will be a manifestation of the omnipotent power of God, that he can execute such misery, agreeably to

“What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction.” (Romans 9:22.)

Next follow these words: “The sinners in Zion are afraid, fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings!” The sense is, That the time will come, when fearfulness will surprise the sinners in Zion; because they will know that they are about to be cast into a devouring fire, which they must suffer for ever and ever, and which none can endure.

It may be inquired, who are the sinners in Zion? — I answer, That they are those who are in a natural condition among the visible people of God. Zion, or the city of David of old, was a type of the church, and the church of God in Scripture is perhaps more frequently called by the name of Zion than by any other name. And commonly by Zion is meant the true church of Christ, or the invisible church of true saints. But sometimes by this name is meant the visible church, consisting of those who are outwardly, by profession and external privileges, the people of God. This is intended by Zion in this text.

The greater part of the world are sinners: Christ’s flock is, and ever hath been, but a little flock. And the sinners of the worlds are of two sorts: those who are visibly of Satan’s kingdom, who are without the pale of the visible church, and those who do not profess the true religion, nor attend the external ordinances of it. Beside these there are the sinners in Zion. Both are the objects of the displeasure and wrath of God, but his wrath is more especially manifested in Scripture against the latter. Sinners in Zion will have by far the lowest place in hell. They are exalted nearest to heaven in this world, and they will be lowest in hell in another. The same is meant by hypocrites. Sinners in Zion are all hypocrites; for they make a profession of the true religion; they attend God’s ordinances, and make a show of being the worshippers of God; but all is hypocrisy.

## SECTION 2

*How fearfulness will hereafter surprise sinners in Zion.*

**1.** THEY will hereafter be afraid. Now many of them seem to have little or no fear. They are quiet and secure. Nothing will awaken them: the most awful threatenings and the loudest warnings do not much move them. They are not so much moved with them, but they can eat, and drink, and sleep and go about their worldly concerns without much disturbance. But the time will come, when the hardest and most stupid wretches will be awakened. Though now preaching will not awaken them, and the death of others will not make them afraid, though seeing others awakened and converted will not much affect them though they can stand all that is to be heard and seen in a time of general outpouring of the Spirit of God, without being much moved yet the time will come, when they will be awakened, and fear will take hold of them. They will be afraid of the wrath of God: however senseless they be now, they will hereafter be sensible of the awful greatness of God, and that it is a fearful thing to fall into his hands.

**2.** They will be surprised with fear. This seems to imply two things; viz. the greatness of their fear, and the suddenness of it.

**(1.)** The greatness of their fear. Surprise argues a high degree of fear. Their fears will be to the degree of astonishment. Some of the sinners in Zion are somewhat afraid now: they now and then have some degree of fear. They are not indeed convinced that there is such a place as hell but they are afraid there is. They are not thoroughly awakened; neither are they quite easy. They have at certain times inward molestation's from their consciences but they have no such degrees of fear, as to put them upon any thorough endeavours to escape future wrath.

However, hereafter they will have fear enough, as much and a great deal more, than they will be able to stand under. Their fear will be to the degree of horror; they will be horribly afraid, and terrors will take hold on them. Thus we read of their fear coming as a desolation, and of distress and anguish coming upon them; <sup>2027</sup>Proverbs 1:27. It is also very emphatically said of the wicked, that trouble and anguish shall prevail against him, as a king ready to the battle. <sup>2028</sup>Job 15:24.

The stoutest heart of them all will then melt with fear. The hearts of those who are of a sturdy spirit, and perhaps scorn to own themselves afraid of any man, and are even ashamed to own themselves afraid of the wrath of God will then become as weak as water, as weak as the heart of a little child. And the most reserved of them will not be able to hide his fears. Their faces will turn pale, they will appear with amazement in their countenances; every joint in them will tremble; all their bones will shake; and their knees will smite one against another: nor will they be able to refrain from crying out with fear, and from rending the air with the most dismal shrieks.

**(2.)** They will be suddenly seized with fear. The sinners in Zion often remain secure, till they are surprised, as with a cry at midnight. They will be, as it were, awakened out of their secure sleep in a dismal fright. They will see an unexpected calamity coming upon them, far more dreadful than they were aware of, and coming at an unexpected season.

With respect to the TIME when the wicked shall be thus surprised with fear;

**1.** It is often so on a death-bed. Many things pass in their lifetime, which one would think might well strike terror into their souls; as when they see others die, who are as young as they, and of like condition and circumstances with themselves, whereby they may see how uncertain their lives are, and how unsafe their souls. It may well surprise many sinners, to consider how old they are grown, and are yet in a Christless state, how much of their opportunity to get an interest in Christ is irrecoverably gone, and how little remains, also how much greater their disadvantages now are, than they have been. But these things do not terrify them: as age increases, so do the hardness and stupidity of their hearts grow upon them.

But when death comes, then the sinner is often filled with astonishment. It may be, when he is first taken sick, he has great hope that he shall recover; as men are ready to flatter themselves with hopes, that things will be as they would have them. But when the distemper comes to prevail much upon him, and he sees that he is going into eternity, when he sees that all the medicines of physicians are in vain, that all the care and endeavours of

friends are to no purpose, that nothing seems to help him, that his strength is gone, that his friends weep over him, and look upon his case as desperate, when he sees, by the countenance and behaviour of the physician, that he looks upon his case as past hope, and perhaps overhears a whispering in the room, wherein his friends signify one to another, that they look upon it that he is struck with death, or wherein they tell one another, that his extreme parts grow cold, that his countenance and manner of breathing, and his pulse, show death, and that he begins to be in a cold death-sweat; and when perhaps, by and by, some one thinks himself bound in duty and faithfulness to let him know the worst, and therefore comes and asks him whether or no he be sensible that he is a dying: — then how doth fearfulness surprise the sinner in Zion!

How doth his heart melt with fear! This is the thing which he feared ever since he was taken sick; but till now he had hope that he should recover. The physician did not speak, or if he despaired, he spoke of such and such medicines as being very proper; and he hoped that they would be effectual; and when these failed, he changed his medicines, and applied something new: then the sinner hoped that would be effectual. Thus, although he constantly grew worse and worse, still he hoped to recover.

At the same time he cried to God to spare him, and made promises how he would live, if God would spare him; and he hoped that God would hear him. He observed also, that his friends, and perhaps the minister, seemed to pray earnestly for him; and he could not but hope that those prayers would be answered, and he should be restored. But now how doth his heart sink and die within him! how doth he look about with a frightened countenance! how quick is the motion of his eye, through inward fear! and how quick and sudden are all his motions! what a frightful hurry doth he seem to be in! How doth every thing look to him when he sees pale grim death staring him in the face, and a vast eternity within a few hours or minutes of him!

It may be, he still struggles for a little hope; he is loth to believe what is told him; he tells his informers, that he hopes they are more affrighted than they need be; he hopes that those symptoms arise from some other cause; and, like a poor drowning man, he catches at slender and brittle twigs, and clinches his hands about whatever he sees within his reach.

But as death creeps more and more on him, he sees his twigs break, all his hopes of life fail, and he sees he must die. O! there is nothing but death before him! He hath been hoping; but his hopes are all dashed; he sees this world, and all that belongs to it, are gone. Now come the thoughts of hell into his mind with amazement. O! how shall he go out of the world? He knows he hath no interest in Christ; his sins stare him in the face. O the dreadful gulf of eternity! He had been crying to God, perhaps since he was sick, to save him, and he had some hope, if it were his last sickness, that yet God would pity him, and give him pardoning grace before he should die. He begged and pleaded, and he hoped that God would have pity on his poor soul. At the same time he asked others to pray for him, and he had been looking day after day for some light to shine into his soul. But, alas! now he is a dying. and his friends ask him, how death appears to him? whether any light appear? whether God have not given him some token of his favour? and he answers, No, with a poor, faltering, trembling voice, if able to speak at all: or if his friends ask a signal of hope, he can give none.

How death comes on him more and more, and he is just on the brink of eternity. Who can express the fear, the misgivings, the hangings back, and the horrible fright and amazement, of his soul? Some who in such circumstances, have been able to speak, have been known to cry out, O eternity! eternity! and some, O! a thousand worlds for an inch of time! O! if they might but live a little while longer! But it must not be; go they must.

They feel the frame of nature dissolving, and perceive the soul is just a going; for sometimes the exercise of reason seems to hold to the last.

What, in such a case, is felt in the soul, in those last moments, when it is just breaking its bands with the body, about to fetch its leap, on the edge of eternity, and the very brink of hell, without any Saviour, or the least testimony of divine mercy: I say, what is sometimes felt by Christless souls in these moments, none can tell; nor is it within the compass of our conception.

**2.** The misery of the departed soul of a sinner, besides what it now feels, consists in a great part in amazing fears of what is yet to come. When the soul and body is actually broken, and the body has fetched its last gasp, the soul forsakes its old habitation, and then falls Into the hands of devils,

who fly upon it, and seize it more violently than ever hungry lions flew upon their prey. And with what horror will it fall into those cruel hands!

If we imagine to ourselves the dreadful fear with which a lamb or kid falls into the paws of a wolf, which lays hold of it with open mouth, or if we imagine to ourselves the feeling of a little child, that hath been pursued by a lion, when it is taken hold of, and sees the terrible creature open his devouring jaws to tear it in pieces; or the feeling of those two and forty children, who had mocked Elisha, when they fell into the paws of the bears that tare them in pieces: I say if we could have a perfect idea of that terror and astonishment which a little child has in such a case, yet we should have but a taint idea of what is felt in the departing soul of a sinner, when it falls into the hands of those cruel devils, those roaring lions, which then seize of it!

And when the soul is carried to hell. and there is tormented, suffers the wrath of the Almighty, and is overwhelmed and crushed with it, it will also be amazed with the apprehensions of what shall yet remain. To think of an eternity of this torment remaining. O how will it fill and overbear, and sink down the wretched soul! How will the thought of the duration of this torment without end cause the heart to melt like wax! How will the thought of it sink the soul into the bottomless pit of darkness and gloominess! Even those proud and sturdy spirits, the devils, tremble at the thoughts of that greater torment which they are to suffer at the day of judgment. So will the poor damned souls of men. They have already more than they will be able to bear: how then will they tremble at the thought of having their misery so vastly augmented!

Persons sometimes in this world are afraid of the day of judgment. If there be an earthquake, or if there be more than common thunder and lightning, or if there be some unusual sight in the heavens, their hearts are ready to tremble for fear that the day of judgment is at hand. O how then do the poor souls in hell fear it, who know so much more about it, who know by what they feel already, and know certainly, that whenever it comes they shall stand on the left hand of the judge, to receive the dreadful sentence, and that then, in soul and body, they must enter into those everlasting burnings which are prepared for the devil and his angels, and who

probably know that their misery is to be an hundred-fold greater than it is now.

**3.** Fearfulness will surprise them at the last judgment. When Christ shall appear in the clouds of heaven, and the last trumpet shall sound, then will the hearts of wicked men be surprised with fearfulness. The poor damned soul, in expectation of it, trembles every day and every hour from the time of its departure from the body. It knows not, indeed, when it is to be, but it knows it is to be. But when the alarm is given in hell that the day is come, it will be a dreadful alarm indeed. It will, as it were, fill the caverns of hell with shrieks; and when the souls of the damned shall enter into their bodies, it will be with amazing horror of what is coming, lend when they shall lift up their heads out of their graves, and shall see the judge, it will be a most terrible sight. Gladly would they return into their graves again, and hide themselves there, if that might be; and gladly would they return into hell, their former state of misery, to hide themselves from this awful sight, if that would excuse them.

So those sinners in Zion, who shall then be found alive on the earth, when they shall see this sight, will be surprised with fearfulness. The fear and horror which many poor sinners feel when they are dying, is great, and beyond all that of which we can have any idea; but that is nothing to the horror that will seize them when they shall come to see this sight.

There will not be a wicked man upon earth who will be able to bear it, let him be who he will; let him be rich or poor, old or young, male or female, servant or master, king or subject, learned or unlearned; let him be ever so proud, ever so courageous, and ever so sturdy. There is not one who will be able at all to support himself; when he shall see this sight, it will immediately sink his spirit; it will loose the joints of his loins; it will make his countenance more ghastly than death. The rich captains, and valiant generals and princes, who now scorn to show any fear at the face of an enemy, who scorn to tremble at the roaring of cannon, will tremble and shriek when they shall hear the last trumpet, and see the majesty of their Judge: it will make their teeth to chatter, and make them fly to hide themselves in the caves and rocks of mountains, crying to the rocks and mountains to fall on them, and cover them from the wrath of the judge.

Fearfulness will surprise them when they shall be dragged before the judgment-seat. The wicked hang back when they are about to meet death; but in no measure as they will hang back when they come to meet their great judge. And when they come to stand before the judge, and are put on his left hand, fearfulness and amazement will surprise them. The majesty of the judge will be intolerable to them. His pure and holy eye, which will behold and search them, and pierce them through, will be more terrible to their souls a thousand times than flashes of lightning piercing their hearts. There will they stand in a trembling expectation, that by and by they shall hear the words of that dreadful sentence proceed out of the mouth of Christ: they will have a horrible expectation of that sentence and what shall they do, whither shall they fly, so as to-be out of its hearing? They cannot shut their ears, so as not to hear it.

Fearfulness will surprise them when the sentence shall come to be pronounced. At the close of the judgment that dreadful doom will be uttered by the judge, and it will be the most terrible voice that ever was heard. The sound of the last trumpet, that shall call men to judgment will be a more terrible sound to wicked men than ever they shall have heard till that time, but the sound of the last sentence will be much more terrible than that. There will not be one of all those millions at the left hand whether high or low, king or subject, who will be able to support himself at all under the sound of that sentence: but they will all sink under it.

Lastly, Fearfulness will surprise them, when they shall come to see the fire kindle upon the world, in which they are to be tormented forever. When the sentence shall have been pronounced, Christ, with his blessed saints and glorious angels, will leave this lower world, and ascend into heaven. Then will the flames begin to kindle, and fire will probably be seen coming down from heaven; and soon will the fire lay hold of that accursed multitude. Then will their hearts be surprised with fearfulness; that fire will appear a dreadful fire indeed. O what chattering of teeth, what shaking of loins, what distortions of body, will there be at that time, when they shall see, and begin to feel, the fierceness of the flames! What shall they do, whither shall they go, to avoid those flames? Where shall they hide themselves? If they creep into holes, or creep into caves of the earth, yea if they could creep down to the centre of the earth, it will be in vain; for it

will set on fire the bottoms of the mountains, and burn to the lowest hell. They will see no place to fly to, no place to hide themselves.

Then their hearts will be filled with fearfulness, and will utterly sink in despair. Thus it shall hereafter be with every one that shall then be found to be a sinner, and especially with sinners in Zion.

### SECTION 3

*Why sinners in general will hereafter be surprised with fear.*

**1.** Fearfulness will surprise them, because they will know that they are to be cast into devouring fire. There is nothing which seems to give one a more terrible idea of torment and misery, than to think of being cast alive into a great fire; especially if we conceive of the senses remaining quick, and not benumbed by the fire. The wicked will hereafter have that to make them afraid, that they are not only to be cast into a fire, but into devouring fire which implies, that it will be a fire of extraordinary fierceness of heat, and before which nothing can stand.

The fire into which men are to be cast is called a furnace of fire. Furnaces are contrived for an extreme degree of heat, this being necessary for the purposes for which they are designed, as the running and refining of metals and the melting of materials into glass. The fire of such earthly furnaces may be called devouring fire, as the heat of some of them is such, that in them even stones will presently be dissolved. Now, if a person should be brought to the mouth of such a furnace, and there should see how the fire glows, so as presently to make every thing cast into it all over white and bright with fire, and at the same time should know that he was immediately to be cast into this furnace, would not fearfulness surprise him?

In some heathen countries, the manner of disposing of dead bodies is to dig a great pit, to put in it a great quantity of fuel, to put the dead bodies on the pile, and to set it on fire. This is some image of the burning of dead souls in the pit of hell. Now, if a person were brought to the edge of such a pit, all filled with glowing flames, to be immediately cast into it, would it not surprise the heart with fearfulness?

The flames of a very great fire, as when a house is all on fire, give one some idea of the fierceness of the wrath of God: such is the rage of the flames. And we see that the greater a fire is, the fiercer is its heat in every part and the reason is, because one part heats another. The heat in a particular place, besides the heat which proceeds out of the fuel in that place, is increased by the additional heat of the fire all around it. Hence we may conceive something of what fierceness that fire will be, when this visible world shall be turned into one great furnace. That will be devouring fire indeed. Such will be the heat of it, that, As the apostle says, “the elements shall melt with fervent heat,” ~~and~~ 2 Peter 3:10.

Men can artificially raise such a degree of heat with burning glasses, as will quickly melt the very stones and sand. And it is probable that the heat of that great fire which will burn the world, will be such as to melt the rocks, and the very ground, and turn them into a kind of liquid fire: so that the whole world will probably be converted into a great lake, or liquid globe of fire, a vast ocean of fire, in which the wicked shall be overwhelmed. It will be an ocean of fire, which will always be in a tempest, in which the wicked shall be tossed to and fro, having no rest day nor night, vast waves or billows of fire continually rolling over their heads.

But all this will be only an image of that dreadful fire of the wrath of God, which the wicked shall at the same time suffer in their souls. We read in ~~and~~ Revelation 19:15. of “the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.” This is an extraordinary expression, carrying a terrible idea of the future misery of the wicked. If it had been only said of the wrath of God, that would have expressed what is dreadful. If the wrath of a king be as the roaring of a lion, what is the wrath of God? But it is not only said the wrath of God, but the fierceness and wrath of God, or the rage of his wrath; and not only so, but the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. O what is that! the fierceness and rage or fury of Omnipotence! of a being of infinite strength!

What an idea doth that give of the state of those worms that suffer the fierceness and wrath of such an Almighty Being! And is it any wonder that fearfulness surprises their hearts, when they see this about to be executed upon them?

**2.** Another reason given in the text, why fearfulness will hereafter surprise sinners, is, that they will be sensible this devouring fire will be everlasting.

If a man were brought to the mouth of a great furnace to be cast into the midst of it, if at the same time he knew he should suffer torment but for one minute, yet that minute would be so terrible to him, that fearfulness would surprise and astonish him. How much more, if he were to be cast into a fire much fiercer, the fire in which wicked men are hereafter to be tormented! And if the thought of suffering this devouring fire for one minute would be enough to fill one with such surprising fearfulness, what will seize them, when they shall know that they are to bear it, not for one minute, nor for one day, nor for one year, nor for one age, nor for a hundred ages, nor for a million of ages, one after another, but forever and ever; without any end, and never, never be delivered!

They shall know, that the fire itself will be everlasting fire, fire that never shall be quenched: <sup>4193</sup>Mark 9:43, 44.

“To go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.” And they shall know that their torment in that fire never will have an end, <sup>6340</sup>Revelation 14:10, 11. They shall know that they shall for ever be full of quick sense within and without, their heads, their eyes, their tongues their hands, their feet, their loins, and their vitals, shall for ever be full of glowing melting fire, fierce enough to melt the very rocks and elements; and also that they shall eternally be full of the most quick and lively sense to feel the torment.

They shall know that they shall never cease restlessly to plunge and roll in that mighty ocean of fire. They shall know that those billows of fire, which are greater than the greatest mountains, will never cease to roll over them, following one another for ever and ever.

At the same time they will have a more lively sense of eternity than we ever can have here. We can have but a little sense of what an eternal duration is, and indeed none can comprehend it; it swallows up all thought and imagination: if we set ourselves to think upon it, we are presently lost. But they will have another and far clearer sense of it than we have. O how vast will eternity appear to them, when they think of spending it in such burnings! This is another reason that fearfulness will surprise them.

The thoughts of eternity will always amaze them, and will sink and depress them to a bottomless depth of despair.

**3.** The third reason given in the text, why fearfulness will surprise them at the apprehension of this punishment, is, that they will know, they shall not be able to bear it. When they shall see themselves going into that devouring fire, they will know that they are not able to bear it. They will know that they are not able to grapple with the fierceness and rage of those flames; for they will see the fierceness of the wrath of God in them; they will see an awful manifestation of Omnipotence in the fury of that glowing furnace. And in those views their hearts will utterly fail them; their hands will not be strong, nor can their hearts endure. They will see that their strength is weakness, and that they can do nothing in such a conflict.

When they shall have come to the edge of the pit, and of the burning lake, and shall look into the furnace, then they will cry out with exclamations like these: O! what shall I do? how shall I bear the torments of this fire? how can I endure them? Who can endure? where is the man so stout-hearted, where is the giant of such strength and such courage, that he can bear this? O! what shall I do? Must I be cast in thither? I cannot bear it, I can never endure it. O that I could return to my first nothing! How can I endure it one moment? how much less can I endure it for ever and ever! And must I bear it forever? what! for ever and ever, without any end, and never find any refuge, never be suffered to return to my first nothing and be no nearer to the end of these sufferings after millions of ages? O what dismal contentions and shrieks, and shaking of loins, and gnashing of teeth, will there be then! No wonder that fearfulness will then surprise the wicked.

## SECTION 4

*Why it will be especially thus with sinner in Zion, who dwell among,  
God's visible people.*

THERE will hereafter be a very great difference between sinners in Zion and other sinners, a great difference between the most pointed hypocrite of them all, and the drunkards, the adulterers, the Sodomites, the thieves, and murderers among the heathen, who sin against only the light of nature. The fearfulness which will surprise them although it will be very dreadful, yet will be in no measure so amazing and horrible, as that which will seize


the sinners in Zion. That fierceness and wrath of Almighty God, which they will suffer, will be mild and moderate in comparison with that which the sinners in Zion will suffer.

The wrath of God is in his word manifested against the wicked heathens but it is ten times as much manifested against those sinners who make the profession and enjoy the privileges of the people of God; and yet remain enemies to God. Both the Old Testament and the New are full of terrible denunciations against such. Read the books of Moses read the prophets, and you will find them full of dreadful threatenings against such. Read over the history of Christ's life and the speeches which he made when upon earth, there you will see what woes and curses he frequently denounced against such. How often did he say, that it should be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for the cities in which most of his mighty works were done! need over the history of the Acts of the Apostles, and their epistles; there you will find the same. It is the sinners in Zion, or hypocrites, that are always in Scripture spoken of as the people of &oafr's wrath:

“I will send him against a hypocritical nation, against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil.”

( Isaiah 10:6.)

The reasons are chiefly these:

- 1.** That they sin against so much greater light. This is often spoken of in Scripture, as an aggravation to the sin and wickedness of sinners in Zion. He that knows not his Lord's will, and doeth it not, is declared not to be worthy of so many stripes, as he who, being informed of his Lord's will, is in like manner disobedient. If men be blind, they have comparatively no sin: but when they see, when they have light to know their duty, and to know their obligation, then their sin is great,  John 9:14. When the light that is in a man is darkness, how great is that darkness! and when men live in wickedness, in the midst of great light, that light is like to be the blackness of darkness indeed.
- 2.** That they sin against such professions and vows. The heathens never pretended to be the worshippers of the true God. They never pretended to be Christ's disciples; they never came under any covenant obligations to

be such. But this is not the case with sinners in Zion. Now, God highly resents falsehood and treachery. Judas, who betrayed Christ with a kiss, was a greater sinner, and much more the object of God's wrath, than Pilate, who condemned him to be crucified, and was his murderer.

**3.** That they sin against so much greater mercy. They have the infinite mercy of God, in giving his own Son, often set before them: they have the dying love of Christ represented to them: they have this mercy, this glorious Saviour, his blood and righteousness, often offered to them: they have a blessed opportunity to obtain salvation for their souls; a great price is put into their hands to this and they have that precious treasure, the Holy Scriptures, and enjoy sabbaths, and sacraments, and the various means of grace: but all these means and advantages, these opportunities, offers, mercies, and invitations, they abuse, despise, and reject.

But there is no wrath like that which arises from mercy abused and rejected. When mercy is in this way turned into wrath, this is the fiercest wrath. — Sinners in Zion, beside their fall by the first Adam, have a fall also by the second: he is a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense at which they stumble and fall; and there is no fall like this; the fall by the first Adam is light in comparison with it.

On these accounts, whenever we see the day of judgment, as every one of us shall see it, we shall easily distinguish between the sinners in Zion and other sinners, by their shriller cries, their louder, more bitter, and dolorous shrieks, the greater amazement of their countenances, and the more dismal shaking of their limbs, and contortions of their bodies.

## SECTION 5

*An earnest exhortation to sinners in Zion, now to fly from the devouring fire and everlasting burnings.*

You have often been exhorted to fly from the “wrath to come.” This devouring fire, these everlasting burnings, of which we have been speaking, are the wrath to come. You hear of this fire, of these burnings, and of that fearfulness which will seize and surprise sinners in Zion hereafter, and O what reason have you of thankfulness that you only hear of them, that you do not as yet feel them, and that they have not already taken hold of

you! They are, as it were, following you, and coming nearer and nearer every day. Those fierce flames are already kindled in the wrath of God, yea, the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God burn against you; it is ready for you: that pit is prepared for you, with fire and much wood, and the wrath of the Lord, as a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it.

Lot was with great urgency hastened out of Sodom, and commanded to make haste, and fly for his life, and escape to the mountains, lest he should be consumed in those flames which burned up Sodom and Gomorrah. But that burning was a mere spark to that devouring fire, and those everlasting burnings, of which you are in danger. Therefore improve the present opportunity.

Now, God is pleased again to pour out his Spirit upon us, and he is doing great things amongst us. God is indeed come again, the same great God who so wonderfully appeared among us some years ago, and who hath since, for our sins, departed from us, left us so long in so dull and dead a state, and hath let sinners alone in their sins so that there have been scarcely any signs to be seen of any such work as conversion. That same God is now come again, he is really come in like manner, and begins as he did before, gloriously to manifest his mighty power and the riches of his grace. He brings sinners out of darkness into marvelous light. He rescues poor captive souls out of the hands of Satan, he saves persons from the devouring fire, he plucks one and another as brands out of the burnings, he opens the prison-doors, and knocks off their chains and brings out poor prisoners; he is now working salvation among us from this very destruction of which you have now heard.

Now, now, then, is the time, now is the blessed opportunity to escape those everlasting burnings. Now God has again set open the same fountain among us, and gives one more happy opportunity for souls to escape. Now he hath set open a wide door, and he stands in the doorway, calling and begging with a loud voice to the sinners of Zion: Come, saith he, come, fly from the wrath to come; here is a refuge for you; fly hither for refuge; lay hold on the hope set before you.

A little while ago, it was uncertain whether we should ever see such an opportunity again. If it had always continued, as it hath been for some years past, almost all of you would surely have gone to hell; in a little time

fearfulness would have surprised you, and you would have been cast into that devouring fire, and those everlasting burnings. But in infinite mercy God gives another opportunity; and blessed are your eyes, that they see it, if you did but know your own opportunity.

You have had your life spared through these six years past, to this very time to another outpouring of the Spirit. What would you have done if you had died before it came? How doleful would your case have been! But you have reason to bless God that it was not so, and that you are yet alive, and now again see a blessed day of grace. And will you not improve it? have you not so much love to your poor souls, as to Improve such an opportunity as this?

Some, there is reason to think, have lately fled for refuge to Christ; and will you be willing to stay behind still, poor miserable captives, condemned to suffer for ever in the lake of fire? Hereafter you will see those of your neighbours and acquaintance, who are converted, mounting up as with wings, with songs of joy, to meet their Lord; and if you remain unconverted, you at the same time will be surprised with fear and horror will take hold of you, because of the devouring fire, and the everlasting burnings.

It is an awful thing to think of, that there are now some persons in this very congregation, here and there, who will be the subjects of that very misery of which we have now heard, although it be so dreadful; although it be so intolerable, and although it be eternal! There are probably some now reading or hearing this discourse, who shall be seen, at the day of judgment, among the devils, at the left hand of the judge, with frightened, ghastly countenances; wringing their hands, gnashing their teeth, shrieking and crying out.

Now we know not their names, nor where to look for them. But God knoweth their names, and now seeth and knoweth what they think, and how much they regard the warnings which are given them this day. We have not the least reason to suppose any other than that some of you will hereafter see others entering into glory with Christ, and saints, and angels, while you, with dreadful horror, shall see the fire begin to kindle about soul. It may be, that the persons are now blessing themselves in their own hearts, and each one saying with himself, Well, I do not intend it shall be I.

Every one hopes to go to heaven; none would by any means miss of it. If any thought they should miss of it, they would be greatly amazed. But all will not go thither; it will undoubtedly be the portion of some to toss and tumble forever among the fiery billows of God's wrath.

It is not to be supposed, but that there are some here who will not be in earnest; let them have ever so good an opportunity to obtain heaven, they will not thoroughly improve it. Tell them of hell as often as you will, and set it out in as lively colours as you will, they will be Slack and slothful; and they will never be likely to obtain heaven, while they are sleeping, and dreaming, and intending, and hoping. The wrath of God, which pursues them, will take them by the heels; hell, that follows after will overtake them; fearfulness will surprise them, and a tempest will steal them away.

Nor is it to be supposed, that all who are now seeking will hold out; some will backslide, they will be unsteady. If now they seem to be pretty much engaged, it will not hold. Times will probably alter by and by, and they having not obtained grace, there will be many temptations to backsliding, with which they will comply. The hearts of men are very unsteady; they are not to be trusted. Men are very short-winded; they cannot tell how to have patience to wait upon God; they are soon discouraged. Some that are now under convictions may lose them. Perhaps they will not leave off seeking salvation at once but they will come to it by degrees. After a while, they will begin to hearken to excuses, not to be quite so constant in duty; they will begin to think that they need not be quite so strict; they will say to themselves, they see no hurt in such and such things; they see not but they may practice them without any great guilt. Thus giving way to temptations, and hearkening to excuses, they will by degrees lose their convictions, and become secure in sin.

There were some who were guilty of backsliding, the last time of the revival of religion among us. While the talk upon religious subjects was generally kept alive, they continued to seek; but when this began to abate, and they saw others less zealous than they had been, and especially when they saw some miscarriages of professors, they began to grow more careless, to seek less earnestly, and to plead these things as an excuse. And they are left behind still; they are to this day in a miserable condemned state, in danger of the devouring fire, and of everlasting burnings; in twice

so dangerous a state as they were in before they were awakened, and God only knows what will become of them. And as it was then, so we dread it will be now.

Some who are now in a natural condition, are doubtless near death, they have not long to live in the world; and if they seek in a dull way, or if, after they have sought for awhile, they are guilty of backsliding, death will come upon them long enough before there will come such another opportunity. When they leave off seeking, it will not be without a design of seeking again some time or other; but death will be too quick for them. It is not the manner of death to wait upon men, while they take time to indulge their sloth, and gratify their lusts. When his appointed time comes, he will do his work. Will you put off in hope of seeing another such time seven years hence? Alas! how many of those who are now in a natural condition may be in hell before another seven years shall have elapsed!

Therefore now let every one look to himself. It is for your own souls salvation. If you be foolish, and will not hearken to counsel, will not improve the opportunity when it is given you, and will not enter into such an open door, you alone must bear it. If you shall miss this opportunity, and quench your convictions now, and there shall come another time of the outpouring of the Spirit, you will be far less likely to have any profit by it; as we see now God chiefly moves on the hearts of those who are very young, who are brought forward upon the stage of action since the last outpouring of the Spirit, who were not then come to years of so much understanding, and consequently not so much in the way of the influences of the Spirit. As to those who were grown up, and had convictions then, and quenched them, the most of these are abundantly more hardened, and seem to be more passed over. So it will probably be with you hereafter, if you miss this opportunity, and quench the convictions of the Spirit which you have now.

As to you who had awakenings the last time of the outpouring of the Spirit, and have quenched them, and remain to this day in a natural condition, let me call upon you also, now that God is giving you one more such opportunity. If passing in impenitence through one such opportunity hath so hardened you, and hath been such a great disadvantage to you, how sad will your case be, if you shall now miss another! Will you not

thoroughly awake out of sleep, bestir yourselves for your salvation, and resolve now to begin again, and never leave off more? Many fled for refuge from the devouring fire before, and you were left behind. Others have fled for refuge now, and still you are left behind, and will you always remain behind? Consider, can you dwell with devouring fire? can you dwell with everlasting burnings? Shall children, babes and sucklings, go into the kingdom of God before you?

How will you hereafter bear to see them coming and sitting down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God, when yourselves are thrust out, and are surprised with fearfulness at the sight of that devouring fire, and those everlasting burnings, into which you are about to be cast? Take heed lest a like threatening be fulfilled upon you with that which we have in ~~14:22~~ Numbers 14:22, 23. “Because all those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles which I did in Egypt, and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice; surely they shall not see the land which I swear unto their fathers; neither shall any of them that provoked me see it.” Together with verse 31. “But your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which, ye have despised.”

# THE END OF THE WICKED CONTEMPLATED BY THE RIGHTEOUS

Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets;  
for God hath avenged you on her. (Revelation 18:20)

## INTRODUCTION

In this chapter we have a very particular account of the fall of Babylon, or the antichristian church, and of the vengeance of God executed upon her. Here it is proclaimed that Babylon the great is fallen, and become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird; that her sins had reached unto heaven, and that God had remembered her iniquity; that God gave commandment to reward her, as she had rewarded others, to double unto her double according to her works; in the cup she had filled, to fill to her double, and how much she had glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow to give her. And it is declared, that these plagues are come upon her in one day, death, mourning, and famine; and that she should be utterly burnt with fire; because strong is the Lord who judgeth her.

These things have respect partly to the overthrow of the antichristian church in this world, and partly to the vengeance of God upon her in the world to come. There is no necessity to suppose, that such extreme torments as are here mentioned will ever be executed upon papists, or upon the antichristian church, in this world. There will indeed be a dreadful and visible overthrow of that idolatrous church in this world. But we are not to understand the plagues here mentioned as exclusive of the vengeance which God will execute on the wicked upholders and promoters of antichristianism, and on the cruel antichristian persecutors, in another world.

This is evident by verse 3. of the next chapter, where, with reference to the same destruction of antichrist which is spoken of in this chapter, it is

said, “Her smoke rose up for ever and ever;” in which words the eternal punishment of antichrist is evidently spoken of. Antichrist is here represented as being cast into hell, and there remaining for ever after; he hath no place any where else but in hell. This is evident by verse 20. of the next chapter, where, concerning the destruction of antichrist, it is said, “And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.”

Not but that the wicked antichristians have in all ages gone to hell as they died, and not merely at the fall of antichrist; but then the wrath of God against antichrist, of which damnation is the fruit, will be made eminently visible here on earth, by many remarkable tokens. Then antichrist will be confined to hell, and will have no more place here on earth; much after the same manner as the devil is said at the beginning of Christ’s thousand years’ reign on earth, to be cast into the bottomless pit, as you may see in the beginning of the twentieth chapter. Not but that he had his place in the bottomless pit before; he was cast down to hell when he fell at first:

“Cast them down to hell, and deliver them into chains of darkness.” (2 Peter 2:4.)

But now, when he shall be suffered to deceive the nations no more, his kingdom will be confined to hell.

In this text is contained part of what John heard uttered upon this occasion; and in these words we may observe,

- 1.** To whom this voice is directed, viz. to the holy prophets and apostles, and the rest of the inhabitants of the heavenly world. When God shall pour out his wrath upon the antichristian church, it will be seen, and taken notice of, by all the inhabitants of heaven, even by holy prophets and apostles. Neither will they see as unconcerned spectators.
- 2.** What they are called upon by the voice to do, viz. to rejoice over Babylon now destroyed, and lying under the wrath of God.

They are not directed to rejoice over her in prosperity, but in flames, and beholding the smoke of her burning ascending up for ever and ever.

**3.** A reason given: for God hath avenged YOU ON HER; i.e. God hath executed just vengeance upon her, for shedding your blood, and cruelly persecuting you. For thus the matter is represented, that antichrist had been guilty of shedding the blood of the holy prophets and apostles, as in chapter 16:6. “For they have shed the blood of saints and of prophets.” And in verse 24. of this context, “In her was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all them that were slain on the earth.” Not that antichrist had literally shed the blood of the prophets and apostles; but he had shed the blood of those who were their followers, who were of the same spirit, and of the same church, and same mystical body. The prophets and apostles in heaven are nearly related and united to the saints on earth; they live, as it were, in true Christians in all ages. So that by slaying these, persecutors show that they would slay the prophets and apostles, if they could; and they indeed do it as much as in them lies.

On the same account, Christ says of the Jews in his time, ⲁⲓⲛⲓ Luke 11:50 “That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation; from the blood of Abel, unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, it shall be required of this generation.” So Christ himself is said to have been crucified in the antichristian church, chapter 11:8. “And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.” So all the inhabitants of heaven, all the saints from the beginning of the world, and the angels also, are called upon to rejoice over Babylon, because of God’s vengeance upon her, wherein he avenges them: they all of them had in effect been injured and persecuted by antichrist. Indeed they are not called upon to rejoice in having their revenge glutted, but in seeing justice executed, and in seeing the love and tenderness of God towards them, manifested in his severity towards their enemies.

## SECTION 1

*When the saints in glory shall see the wrath of God executed on ungodly men, it will be no occasion of grief to them, but of rejoicing.*

It is not only the sight of God’s wrath executed on those wicked men who are of the antichristian church, which will be occasion of rejoicing to the

saints in glory; but also the sight of the destruction of all God's enemies: whether they have been the followers of antichrist or not, that alters not the case, if they have been the enemies of God, and of Jesus Christ. All wicked men will at last be destroyed together, as being united in the same cause and interest, as being all of Satan's army. They will all stand together at the day of judgment, as being all of the same company.

And if we understand the text to have respect only to a temporal execution of God's wrath on his enemies, that will not alter the case. The thing they are called upon to rejoice at, is the execution of God's wrath upon his and their enemies. And if it be matter of rejoicing to them to see justice executed in part upon them, or to see the beginning of the execution of it in this world, for the same reason will they rejoice with greater joy, in beholding it fully executed. For the thing here mentioned as the foundation of their joy, is the execution of just vengeance: Rejoice, for God hath avenged you on her.

**Prop. 1.** The glorified saints will see the wrath of God executed upon ungodly men. This the Scriptures plainly teach us, that the righteous and the wicked in the other world see each other's state. Thus the rich man in hell, and Lazarus and Abraham in heaven, are represented as seeing each other's opposite states, in the 16th chapter of Luke. The wicked in their misery will see the saints in the kingdom of heaven; ~~Gen~~ Luke 13:28, 29. "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out."

So the saints in glory will see the misery of the wicked under the wrath of God.

"And they shall go forth and look on the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched." (Isaiah 66: 24.)

And ~~Gen~~ Revelation 14:9, 10. "If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone, in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the

Lamb.” The saints are not here mentioned, being included in Christ, as his members. The church is the fulness of Christ, and is called Christ, <sup>422</sup>1 Corinthians 12:12. So in the 19th chapter, verse 2, 3. the smoke of Babylon’s torment is represented as rising up for ever and ever, in the sight of the heavenly inhabitants.

At the day of judgment, the saints in glory at Christ’s right hand will see the wicked at the left hand in their amazement and horror, will hear the judge pronounce sentence upon them, saying, “Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels;” and will see them go away into everlasting punishment. But the Scripture seems to hold forth to us, that the saints will not only see the misery of the wicked at the day of judgment, but the fore-mentioned texts imply, that the state of the damned in hell will be in the view of the heavenly inhabitants; that the two worlds of happiness and misery will be in view of each other. Though we know not by what means, nor after what manner, it will be; yet the Scriptures certainly lead us to think, that they will some way or other have a direct and immediate apprehension of each other’s state. The saints in glory will see how the damned are tormented; they will see God’s threatenings fulfilled, and his wrath executed upon them.

**Prop. 2.** When they shall see it, it will be no occasion of grief to them. The miseries of the damned in hell will be inconceivably great. When they shall come to bear the wrath of the Almighty poured out upon them without mixture, and executed upon them without pity or restraint, or any mitigation, it will doubtless cause anguish, and horror, and amazement vastly beyond all the sufferings and torments that ever any man endured in this world; yea, beyond all extent of our words or thoughts. For God in executing wrath upon ungodly men will act like an Almighty God. The Scripture calls this wrath, God’s fury, and the fierceness of his wrath; and we are told that this is to show God’s wrath, and to make his power known; or to make known how dreadful his wrath is, and how great his power.

The saints in glory will see this, and be far more sensible of it than now we can possibly be. They will be far more sensible how dreadful the wrath of God is, and will better understand how terrible the sufferings of the damned are; yet this will be no Occasion of grief to them. They will not be

sorry for the damned; it will cause no uneasiness or dissatisfaction to them; but on the contrary, when they have this sight, it will excite them to joyful praises. — These two things are evidences of it:

**1.** That the seeing of the wrath of God executed upon the damned should cause grief in the saints in glory is inconsistent with that state of perfect happiness in which they are. There can no such thing as grief enter, to be an allay to the happiness and joy of that world of blessedness. Grief is an utter stranger in that world. God hath promised that he will wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more sorrow. <sup><160></sup>Revelation 21:4. and chapter 7:17.

**2.** The saints in heaven possess all things as their own, and therefore all things contribute to their joy and happiness. The Scriptures teach that the saints in glory inherit all things. This God said in John's hearing, when he had the vision of the New Jerusalem; <sup><160></sup>Revelation 21:7. And the Scriptures teach us to understand this absolutely of all the works of creation and providence. <sup><160></sup>1 Corinthians 3:21, 22. "All things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours." Here the apostle teaches, that all things in the world to come, or in the future and eternal world, are the saints; not only life but death; men, and angels, and devils, heaven and hell, are theirs, to contribute to their joy and happiness. Therefore the damned and their misery, their sufferings and the wrath of God poured out upon them, will be an occasion of joy to them. If there were any thing whatsoever that did not contribute to their joy, but caused grief, then there would be something which would not be theirs.

That the torments of the damned are no matter of grief, but of joy, to the inhabitants of heaven, is very clearly expressed in several passages of this book of Revelation; particularly by chapter 16:5-7. and chapter 19 at the beginning.

## SECTION 2

*Why the sufferings of the wicked will not be cause of grief to the righteous, but the contrary.*

**1. NEGATIVELY;** it will not be because the saints in heaven are the subjects of any ill disposition; but on the contrary, this rejoicing of theirs will be the fruit of an amiable and excellent disposition: it will be the fruit of a perfect holiness and conformity to Christ, the holy Lamb of God. The devil delights in the misery of men from cruelty, and from envy and revenge, and because he delights in misery, for its own sake, from a malicious disposition.

But it will be from exceedingly different principles, and for quite other reasons, that the just damnation of the wicked will be an occasion of rejoicing to the saints in glory. It will not be because they delight in seeing the misery of others absolutely considered. The damned suffering divine vengeance will be no occasion of joy to the saints merely as it is the misery of others, or because it is pleasant to them to behold the misery of others merely for its own sake. The rejoicing of the saints on this occasion is no argument that they are not of a most amiable and excellent spirit, or that there is any defect on that account, that there is any thing wanting which would render them of a more amiable disposition. It is no argument that they have not a spirit of goodness and love reigning in them in absolute perfection, or that herein they do not excel the greatest instances of it on earth, as much as the stars are higher than the earth, or the sun brighter than a glow-worm.

And whereas the heavenly inhabitants are in the text called upon to rejoice over Babylon, because God had avenged them on her, it is not to be understood that they are to rejoice in having their revenge glutted, but to rejoice in seeing the justice of God executed, and in seeing his love to them in executing it on his enemies.

**2. Positively;** the sufferings of the damned will be no occasion of grief to the heavenly inhabitants, as they will have no love nor pity to the damned as such. It will be no argument of want of a spirit of love in them, that they do not love the damned; for the heavenly inhabitants will know that it is not fit that they should love them, because they will know then, that God has no love to them, nor pity for them; but that they are the objects of God's eternal hatred. And they will then be perfectly conformed to God in their wills and affections. They will love what God loves, and that only. However the saints in heaven may have loved the damned while

here, especially those of them who were near and dear to them in this world, they will have no love to them hereafter.

It will be an occasion of their rejoicing, as the glory of God will appear in it. The glory of God appears in all his works: and therefore there is no work of God which the saints in glory shall behold and contemplate, but what will be an occasion of rejoicing to them. God glorifies himself in the eternal damnation of the ungodly men. God glorifies himself in all that he doth; but he glorifies himself principally in his eternal disposal of his intelligent creatures, some are appointed to everlasting life, and others left to everlasting death.

The saints in heaven will be perfect in their love to God: their hearts will be all a flame of love to God, and therefore they will greatly value the glory of God, and will exceedingly delight in seeing him glorified. The saints highly value the glory of God here in this world, but how much more will they do so in the world to come. They will therefore greatly rejoice in all that contributes to that glory. The glory of God will in their esteem be of greater consequence than the welfare of thousands and millions of souls.  
— Particularly,

**(1.)** They will rejoice in seeing the justice of God glorified in the sufferings of the damned. The misery of the damned, dreadful as it is, is but what justice requires. They in heaven will see and know it much more clearly, than any of us do here. They will see how perfectly just and righteous their punishment is. and therefore how properly inflicted by the supreme Governor of the world. They will greatly rejoice to see justice take place, to see that all the sin and wickedness that have been committed in the world is remembered of God, and has its due punishment. The sight of this strict and immutable justice of God will render him amiable and adorable in their eyes. They will rejoice when they see him who is their Father and eternal portion so glorious in his justice.

Then there will be no remaining difficulties about the justice of God, about the absolute decrees of God, or any thing pertaining to the dispensations of God towards men. But divine justice in the destruction of the wicked will then appear as light without darkness, and will shine as the sun without clouds, and on this account will they sing joyful songs of praise to

God, as we see the saints and angels do, when God pours the vials of his wrath upon antichrist; ~~Revelation~~ Revelation 16:5-7. They sing joyfully to God on this account, that true and righteous are his judgments; ~~Revelation~~ Revelation 19:1-6. Their seeing God so strictly just will make them value his love the more. Mercy and grace are more valuable on this account. The more they shall see of the justice of God, the more will they prize and rejoice in his love.

**(2.)** They will rejoice in it, as it will be a glorious manifestation of the power and majesty of God. God will show his own greatness in executing vengeance on ungodly men. This is mentioned as one end of the destruction of the ungodly; “What if God, willing to show his wrath, and make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction?” God will hereby show how much he is above his enemies. There are many now in the world, who proudly lift up themselves against God. There are many open opposers of the cause and interest of Christ. “They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walketh through the earth.” Then God will show his glorious power in destroying these enemies.

The power of God is sometimes spoken of as very glorious, as appearing in the temporal destruction of his enemies;

“Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power; thy right hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the enemy.” (~~Exodus~~ Exodus 15:6.)

But how much more glorious will it appear in his triumphing over, and dashing in pieces at once, all his enemies, wicked men and devils together, all his haughty foes! The power of God will gloriously appear in dashing to pieces his enemies as a potter’s vessel. Moses rejoiced and sang when he saw God glorify his power in the destruction of Pharaoh and his host at the Red sea. But how much more will the saints in glory rejoice, when they shall see God gloriously triumphing over all his enemies in their eternal ruin! Then it will appear how dreadful God is, and how dreadful a thing it is to disobey and condemn him. It is often mentioned as a part of the glory of God, that he is a terrible God. To see the majesty, and greatness, and terribleness of God, appearing in the destruction of his enemies, will cause the saints to rejoice; and when they shall see how great and terrible a being God is, how will they prize his favour! how will they rejoice that they are the objects of his love how will they praise him the

more joyfully, that he should choose them to be his children, and to live in the enjoyment of him!

It will occasion rejoicing in them, as they will have the greater sense of their own happiness, by seeing the contrary misery. It is the nature of pleasure and pain, of happiness and misery, greatly to heighten the sense of each other. Thus the seeing of the happiness of others tends to make men more sensible of their own calamities; and the seeing of the calamities of others tends to heighten the sense of our own enjoyments.

When the saints in glory, therefore, shall see the doleful state of the damned, how will this heighten their sense of the blessedness of their own state, so exceedingly different from it! When they shall see how miserable others of their fellow-creatures are, who were naturally in the same circumstances with themselves; when they shall see the smoke of their torment, and the raging of the flames of their burning, and hear their dolorous shrieks and cries, and consider that they in the mean time are in the most blissful state, and shall surely be in it to all eternity; how will they rejoice!

This will give them a joyful sense of the grace and love of God to them, because hereby they will see how great a benefit they have by it. When they shall see the dreadful miseries of the damned, and consider that they deserved the same misery, and that it was sovereign grace, and nothing else, which made them so much to differ from the damned, that, if it had not been for that, they would have been in the same condition; but that God from all eternity was pleased to set his love upon them, that Christ hath laid down his life for them, and hath made them thus gloriously happy for ever, O how will they admire that dying love of Christ, which has redeemed them from so great a misery, and purchased for them so great happiness, and has so distinguished them from others of their fellow-creatures! How joyfully will they sing to God and the Lamb, when they behold this!

### SECTION 3

*An objection answered*

THE objection is, “If we are apprehensive of the damnation of others now, it in no wise becomes us to rejoice at it, but to lament it. If we see others in imminent danger of going to hell, it is accounted a very sorrowful thing, and it is looked upon as an argument of a senseless and wicked spirit to look upon it otherwise. When it is a very dead time with respect to religion, and a very degenerate and corrupt time among a people, it is accounted a thing greatly to be lamented; and on this account, that at such times there are but few converted and saved, and many perish. Paul tells us, that he had great heaviness and continual sorrow in his heart, because so many of the Jews were in a perishing state: ~~ROM~~ Romans 9:1, 2, 3. “I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ, for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.” And if a neighbour die, and his death be attended with circumstances which look darkly as to the state of his soul, we account it a sorrowful thing, because he hath left us no more comfortable grounds to hope for his salvation. Why is it not then an unbecoming thing in the saints in glory to rejoice when they see the damnation of the ungodly?

**Ans. 1.** It is now our duty to love all men, though they are wicked; but it will not be a duty to love wicked men hereafter. Christ, by many precepts in his word, hath made it our duty to love all men. We are commanded to love wicked men, and our enemies and persecutors. But this command doth not extend to the saint in glory, with respect to the damned in hell. Nor is there the same reason that it should. We ought now to love all, and even wicked men; we know not but that God loves them. However wicked any man is, yet we know not but that he is one whom God loved from eternity; we know not but that Christ loved him with a dying love, had his name upon his heart before the world was, and had respect to him when he endured those bitter agonies on the cross. We know not but that he is to be our companion in glory to all eternity.

But this is not the case in another world. The saints in glory will know concerning the damned in hell, that God never loved them, but that he hates them, and that they will be for ever hated of God. This hatred of God will be fully declared to them; they will see it, and will see the fruits of it in their misery. Therefore, when God has thus declared his hatred of

the damned, and the saints see it, it will be no way becoming in the saints to love them, nor to mourn over them. It becomes the saints fully and perfectly to consent to what God doth, without any reluctance or opposition of spirit; yea, it becomes them to rejoice in every thing that God sees meet to be done.

**Ans. 2.** We ought now to seek and be concerned for the salvation of wicked men, because now they are capable subjects of it. Wicked men, though they may be very wicked, yet are capable subjects of mercy. It is yet a day of grace with them, and they have the offers of salvation. Christ is as yet seeking their salvation; he is calling upon them, inviting and wooing them; he stands at the door and knocks. He is using many means with them, is calling them, saying, Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die? The day of his patience is yet continued to them; and if Christ is seeking their salvation, surely we ought to seek it.

God is wont now to make men the means of one another's salvation; yea, it is his ordinary way so to do. He makes the concern and endeavours of his people the means of bringing home many to Christ. Therefore they ought to be concerned for and endeavour it. But it will not be so in another world: there, wicked men will be no longer capable subjects of mercy. The saints will know that it is the will of God the wicked should be miserable to all eternity. It will therefore cease to be their duty any more to seek their salvation, or to be concerned about their misery. On the other hand, it will be their duty to rejoice in the will and glory of God. It is not our duty to be sorry that God hath executed just vengeance on the devils, concerning whom the will of God in their eternal state is already known to us.

**Ans. 3.** Rejoicing at the calamities of others now, rests not on the same grounds as that of the saints in glory. The evil of rejoicing at others' calamities now, consists in our envy, or revenge, or some such disposition is gratified therein; and not that God is glorified, that the majesty and justice of God gloriously shine forth.

**Ans. 4.** The different circumstances of our nature now from what will be hereafter, make that a virtue now which will be no virtue then. For instance, if a man be of a virtuous disposition, the circumstances of our nature now are such, that it will necessarily show itself by natural

affection, and to be without natural affection is a very vicious disposition; and is so mentioned in <sup><813></sup>Romans 1:31. But natural affection is no virtue in the saints in glory. Their virtue will exercise itself in a higher manner.

**Ans. 5.** The vengeance inflicted on many of the wicked will be a manifestation of God's love to the saints. One way whereby God shows his love to the saints is by destroying their enemies. God hath said, "He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of mine eye." And it is often mentioned in Scripture, as an instance of the great love of God to his people, that his wrath is so awakened, when they are wronged and injured. Thus Christ hath promised that God will avenge his own elect, <sup><280></sup>Luke 18:7, and hath said, that

"if any man offend one of his little ones, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea." (<sup><280></sup>Matthew 18:6.)

So the saints in glory will see the great love of God to them, in the dreadful vengeance which he shall inflict on those who have injured and persecuted them; and the view of this love of God to them will be just cause of their rejoicing. Thus, in the text, heaven and the holy apostles and prophets are called to rejoice over their enemies, because God hath avenged them of them.

## SECTION 4

### *The ungodly unwarned*

I SHALL apply this subject only in one use, viz. of warning to ungodly men. And in order to this, I desire such to consider,

**1.** How destitute of any comforting consideration your condition will be, if you perish at last. You will have none to pity you. Look which way you will, before or behind, on the right hand or left, look up to heaven, or look about you in hell, and you will see none to condole your case, or to exercise any pity towards you in your dreadful condition. You must bear these flames, you must bear that torment and amazement, day and night, for ever, and never have the comfort of considering, that there is so much as one that pities your case; there never will one tear be dropped for you.

**(1)** You have now been taught that you will have no pity from the created inhabitants of heaven. If you shall look to them, you will see them all rejoicing at the sight of the glory of God's justice, power, and terrible majesty, manifested in your torment. You will see them in a blissful and glorious state; you will see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God; you will see many come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and sit down in that glorious kingdom; and will see them all with one voice, and with united joy, praising God for glorifying himself in your destruction. You will wail and gnash your teeth under your own torments, and with envy of their happiness; but they will rejoice and sing: <sup>(291)</sup>Isaiah 65:13, 14. "Therefore thus saith the Lord, Behold, my servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry; behold, my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty: behold, my servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed: behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for vexation of spirit."

**(2.)** God will exercise no pity towards you. If you might have his pity in any degree, that would be of more worth to you than thousands of worlds. That would make your case to be not without comfort and hope. But God will exercise no pity towards you. He hath often said concerning wicked men, that his eye shall not spare, neither will he have pity, (<sup>(291)</sup>Ezekiel 5:11, and 7:4, 9. and 8:18.) He will cast fury upon you, and not spare; you will see nothing in God, and receive nothing from him, but perfect hatred, and the fierceness of his wrath; nothing but the mighty falls or outpourings of wrath upon you every moment; and no cries will avail to move God to any pity, or in the least to move him to lighten his hand, or assuage the fierceness and abate the power of your torments.

Jesus Christ, the Redeemer, will have no pity on you. Though he had so much love to sinners, as to be willing to lay down his life for them, and offers you the benefits of his blood, while you are in this world, and often calls upon you to accept them; yet then he will have no pity upon you. You never will hear any more instructions from him; he will utterly refuse to be your instructor: on the contrary, he will be your judge, to pronounce sentence against you.

**(3.)** You will find none that will pity you in hell. The devils will not pity you, but will be your tormentors, as roaring lions or hell-hounds to tear you in pieces continually. And other wicked men who shall be there will be like devils; they will have no pity on you, but will hate, and curse, and torment you. And you yourselves will be like devils; you will be like devils to yourselves, and will be your own tormentors.

**2.** Consider what an aggravation what you have heard under this doctrine will be to your misery. Consider how it will be at the day of judgment, when you shall see Christ coming in the clouds of heaven, when you shall begin to wail and cry, as knowing that you are those who are to be condemned; and perhaps you will be ready to fly to some of your godly friends; but you will obtain no help from them: you will see them unconcerned for you, with joyful countenances ascending to meet the Lord, and not the less joyful for the horror in which they see you. And when you shall stand before the tribunal at the left hand, among devils, trembling and astonished, and shall have the dreadful sentence passed upon you, you will at the same time see the blessed company of saints and angels at the right hand rejoicing, and shall hear them shout forth the praises of God, while they hear your sentence pronounced. You will then see those godly people, with whom you shall have been acquainted, and who shall have been your neighbours, and with whom you now often converse, rejoicing at the pronounciation and execution of your sentence.

Perhaps there are now some godly people, to whom you are near and dear, who are tenderly concerned for you, who are ready to pity you under all calamities, and willing to help you, and particularly are tenderly concerned for your poor soul, and have put up many fervent prayers for you. How will you bear to hear these singing for joy of heart, while you are crying for sorrow of heart, and howling for vexation of spirit, and even singing the more joyful for the glorious justice of God which they behold in your eternal condemnation?

You that have godly parents, who in this world have tenderly loved you, who were wont to look upon your welfare as their own, and were wont to be grieved for you when any thing calamitous befell you in this world, and especially were greatly concerned for the good of your souls, and industriously sought, and earnestly prayed for their salvation; how will

you bear to see them in the kingdom of God, crowned with glory? Or how will you bear to see them receiving the blessed sentence, and going up with shouts and songs, to enter with Christ into the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world, while you are amongst a company of devils, and are turned away with the most bitter cries, to enter into everlasting burnings, prepared for the devil and his angels? How will you bear to see your parents, who in this life had so dear an affection for you, now without any love to you, approving the sentence of condemnation, when Christ shall with indignation bid you depart, wretched, cursed creatures, into eternal burnings? How will you bear to see and hear them praising the Judge, for his justice exercised in pronouncing this sentence, and hearing it with holy joy in their countenances, and shouting forth the praises and hallelujahs of God and Christ on that account?

When they shall see what manifestations of amazement there will be in you at the hearing of this dreadful sentence, and that every syllable of it pierces you like a thunderbolt, and sinks you into the lowest depths of horror and despair; when they shall behold you with a frightened, amazed countenance, trembling and astonished, and shall hear you groan and gnash your teeth; these things will not move them at all to pity you, but you will see them with a holy joyfulness in their countenances, and with songs in their mouths. When they shall see you turned away and beginning to enter into the great furnace, and shall see how you shrink at it, and hear how you shriek and cry out; yet they will not be at all grieved for you, but at the same time you will hear from them renewed praises and hallelujahs for the true and righteous judgments of God, in so dealing with you.

Then you will doubtless remember how those your glorified parents seemed to be concerned for your salvation, while you were here in this world; you will remember how they were wont to counsel and warn you, and how little you regarded their counsels, and how they seemed to be concerned and grieved, that there appeared no more effect of their endeavours for the good of your souls. You will then see them praising God for executing just vengeance on you, for setting so light by their counsels and reproofs. However here they loved you, and were concerned for you, now they will rise up in judgment against you, and will declare how your sins are aggravated by the endeavours which they to no purpose used with you, to bring you to forsake sin and practice virtue, and to seek

and serve God; but you were obstinate under all, and would not hearken to them. They will declare how inexcusable you are upon this account. And when the Judge shall execute the more terrible wrath upon you on this account, chat you have made no better improvement of your parents' instructions, they will joyfully praise God for it. After they shall have seen you lie in hell thousands of years, and your torment shall yet continue without any rest, day or night; they will not begin to pity you then; they will praise God, chat his justice appears in the eternity of your misery.

You that have godly husbands, or wives, or brethren, or sisters, with whom you have been wont to dwell under the same roof, and to eat at the same table, consider how it will be with you, when you shall come to part with them; when they shall be taken and you left; ~~173~~ Luke 17:34, 35, 36. "I tell you, in that night, there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken and the other left. Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken and the other left. Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken and the other left." However you may wail and lament, when you see them parted from you, they being taken and you left, you will see in them no signs of sorrow, that you are not taken with them; that you ascend not with them to meet the Lord in the air, but are left below to be consumed with the world, which is reserved unto fire, against the day of the perdition of ungodly men.

Those wicked men, who shall go to hell from under the labours of pious and faithful ministers, will see chose ministers rejoicing and praising God upon the occasion of their destruction. Consider, ye that have long lived under Mr. Stoddard's ministry, and are yet in a natural condition, how dreadful it will be with you, to see him who was so tenderly concerned for the good of your souls while he was here, and so earnestly sought your salvation, to see him rising up in judgment against you, declaring your inexcusableness, declaring how often he warned you; how plainly he set your danger before you, and told you of the opportunity that you had; how fully he set forth the miserable condition in which you were, and the necessity there was that you should obtain an interest in Christ; how movingly and earnestly he exhorted you to get into a better state, and how regardless you were; how little you minded all chat he said to you; how you went on still in your trespasses, hardened your necks, and made your


hearts as an adamant, and refused to return! How dreadful will it be to you to hear him declaring how inexcusable you are upon these accounts! How will you be cut to the heart, when you shall see him approving the sentence of condemnation, which the Judge shall pronounce against you, and judging and sentencing you with Christ, as an assessor in judgment; for the saints shall judge the world (~~and~~ 1 Corinthians 6:2), and when you shall see him rejoicing in the execution of justice upon you for all your unprofitableness under his ministry!

**3.** Consider what a happy opportunity you have in your hands now. Now your case is very different from the case of wicked men in another world, of which you have now heard; and particularly in the following respects.

**(1.)** God makes it the duty of all the godly now to be concerned for your salvation. As to those who are damned in hell, the saints in glory are not concerned for their welfare, and have no love nor pity towards them; and if you perish hereafter, it will be an occasion of joy to all the godly. But now God makes it the duty of all the godly, to love you with a sincere good-will and earnest affection. God doth not excuse men from loving you, for your ill qualities: though you are wicked and undeserving, yet God makes it the duty of all sincerely to wish well to you; and it is a heinous sin in the sight of God for any to hate you. He requires all to be concerned for your salvation, and by all means to seek it. It is their duty now to lament your danger, and to pray for mercy to you, that you may be converted and brought home to Christ.

Now the godly who know you, desire your salvation, and are ready to seek it, and pray for it. If you be now in distress about the condition of your souls, you are not in such a forsaken, helpless condition, as those that are damned; but you may find many to pray for you, many who are willing to assist you by their advice and counsels, and all with a tender concern, and with hearty wishes that your souls may prosper. Now some of you have godly friends who are near and dear to you; you are beloved of those who have a great interest in heaven, and who have power with God by their prayers: you have the blessing of living under the same roof with them. Some of you have godly parents to pray for you, and to counsel and instruct you, who you may be sure will do it with sincere love and concern for you. And there is not only the command of God; God

hath not only made it the duty of others to seek your salvation, but hath given encouragement to others to seek it. He gives encouragement that they may obtain help for you by their prayers, and that they may be instrumental of your spiritual good. God reveals it to be his manner, to make our sincere endeavours a mean of each other's good. How different is the case with you from what it is with those that are already damned! And how happy an opportunity have you in your hands, if you would but improve it!

**(2.)** Now you live where there is a certain order of men appointed to make it the business of their lives to seek your salvation. Now you have ministers, not to rise up in judgment against you; but in Christ's stead, to beseech you to be reconciled to God;  2 Corinthians 5:20. God hath not only made it the duty of all to wish well to your souls, and occasionally to endeavour to promote your spiritual interests, but he hath set apart certain persons, to make it their whole work, in which they should spend their days and their strength.

**(3.)** Christ himself is now seeking your salvation. He seeks it by the fore-mentioned means, by appointing men to make it their business to seek it; he seeks it by them; they are his instruments, and they beseech you in Christ's stead, to be reconciled to God. He seeks it, in commanding your neighbours to seek it. Christ is represented in Scripture, as wooing the souls of sinners. He uses means to persuade them to choose and accept of their own salvation. He often invites them to come to him that they may have life, that they may find rest to their souls; to come and take of the water of life freely. He stands at the door and knocks; and ceases not, though sinners for a long time refuse him. He bears repeated repulses from them, and yet mercifully continues knocking, saying, "Open to me, that I may come in and sup with you, and you with me." At the doors of many sinners he stands thus knocking for many years together. Christ is become a most importunate suitor to sinners, that he may become their sovereign. He is often setting before them the need they have of him, the miserable condition in which they are, and the great provision that is made for the good of their souls; and he invites them to accept of this provision, and promises it shall be theirs upon their mere acceptance.

Thus how earnestly did Christ seek the salvation of Jerusalem, and he wept over it when they refused; <sup><D94></sup>Luke 19:41, 42. “And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from shine eyes.” And <sup><D33></sup>Matthew 23:37. “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!” Thus Christ is now seeking your salvation; such an opportunity have you now in your hands. Consider therefore how many means Christ is using with you, to bring you to salvation.

Besides those things which have been now mentioned, some of you have a degree of the inward strivings and influences of the Spirit, which makes your opportunity much greater. You have Christ’s internal calls and knockings. All the persons of the Trinity are now seeking your salvation. God the Father hath sent his Son, who hath made way for your salvation, and removed all difficulties, except those which are with your own heart. And he is waiting to be gracious to you; the door of his mercy stands open to you; he hath set a fountain open for you to wash in from sin and uncleanness. Christ is calling, inviting, and wooing you; and the Holy Ghost is striving with you by his internal motions and influences.

**4.** If you now repent, before it be too late, the saints and angels in glory will rejoice at your repentance. If you repent not till it is too late, they will, as you have heard, rejoice in seeing justice executed upon you. But if you now repent, they will rejoice at your welfare, that you who were lost, are found; that you who were dead, are alive again. They will rejoice that you are come to so happy a state already, and that you are in due time to inherit eternal happiness. <sup><D61></sup>Luke 15:3-10. So that if now you will improve your opportunity, there will be a very different occasion of joy in heaven concerning you, than that of which the doctrine speaks; not a rejoicing on occasion of your misery, but on occasion of your unspeakable blessedness.

**5.** If you repent before it is too late, you yourselves shall be of that joyful company. They will be so far from rejoicing on occasion of your rum, that you yourselves will be of that glorious company, who will rejoice in all the

works of God, who will have all tears wiped away from their eyes, to whom there will be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying, and from whom sorrow and sighing shall flee away. You yourselves will be of those who will rejoice at the glorious display of God's majesty and justice, in his wrath on his enemies. You will be of those that shall sing for joy of heart at the day of judgment, while others mourn for sorrow of heart, and howl for vexation of spirit; and you will enter into the joy of your Lord, and there shall never be any end or abatement of your joy!

# CHRIST EXALTED.

## JESUS CHRIST GLORIOUSLY EXALTED ABOVE ALL EVIL IN THE WORK OF REDEMPTION.

For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed, is death.  
(~~4125~~ 1 Corinthians 15:25, 26)

THE apostle in this chapter particularly opposes some among the Christian Corinthians, who denied the resurrection of the dead, and infested the church with their doctrine. There were two sorts of persons in that age, who were especially great opposers of the doctrine of the resurrection: one among the Jews, and the other among the heathen. Among the Jews there the Sadducees, of whom we read, ~~4128~~ Acts 23:8. For the Sadducees say, that there is no resurrection, either anger or spirit; and we have the same account in other places. Among the heathen, that were the chief opposers of this doctrine, were their philosophers. The doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, was not consistent with their philosophy, by the principles of which, it was impossible that one who was deprived of the habit of life, should ever receive it again. And therefore they ridiculed the doctrine when the apostle preachers it among them at Athens. Probably the church at Corinth received this corruption from the philosophers, and not the Sadducees. For Corinth was near to Athens, the place of the chief resort of the philosophers of Greece.

The apostle, in opposing this error, first insists on Christ's resurrection from the dead, and next on the resurrection of all the saints at the end of the world. And, in the verses next before the text, shows how both are connected, or that one arises or follows from the other. And then adds, "then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father, when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority, and power. For he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." — Observe,

**1.** Here is one thing wherein appears the glory of that exaltation and dominion, that Christ has as our redeemer, viz. that it issues in the subjection of all enemies under his feet. It is not said all his enemies, possibly, because those that shall be put under his feet, are not only his enemies, but also the enemies of his Father, and of his people. Their being under his feet, denotes their being perfectly subdued, and his being gloriously exalted over them. It shall be thus with respect to God's and bid, and his people's enemies universally, not one excepted; which universality is signified here two ways, all enemies — and the very lost enemy: when there shall be but one enemy left, that shall also be put under his feet.

**2.** We may learn what is here meant by enemies by the particular instance here given as the last that shall be destroyed, viz. death. Which shows, that by enemies is not meant persons only, that set themselves in opposition to God anti his people, but evils, whatever is against God and his people, and opposes Christ or his saints, whether they be persons or things.

## SECTION 1

*How evil of all kinds has prevailed and highly exalted itself in the world.*

Evil, of all kinds, has risen to an exceeding height in the world, and highly exalted itself against God, and Christ, and the church. — This will appear by the following particulars.

**1.** Satan has highly exalted himself, and greatly prevailed. He is vastly superior in his natural capacity and abilities, to mankind. He was originally one of the highest rank of creatures; but proudly exalted himself; in rebellion, against God in heaven. We are told, that pride was the condemnation of the devil. He became proud of his own superior dignity and mighty abilities, and the glory which his Creator had put upon him, and probably thought it too much to submit to the Son of God, and attempted to exalt his throne above him. And he prevailed to draw away vast multitudes of the heavenly hosts, into an open rebellion against God.

And after he was cast down from beaver, he proudly exalted himself in this world, and prevailed to do great things. By his subtle temptations he

procured the fall of our first parents, and so brought about the ruin of their whole race. He procured their ruin in body and soul, and the death of both; and that they should be exposed to all manner of calamity in this world, and to eternal ruin hereafter. He so far prevailed, that he drew men off from the service of their Maker, and set up himself to be the god of this world; and in a little time drew the world into that almost universal corruption, which brought on the flood of waters, by which it was destroyed. And after that, he drew off all nations, except the posterity of Jacob, from the worship of the true God, and darkened all the world with heathenism, and held them under this darkness for a great many ages, he himself being worshipful as God almost all over the world; the nations of the earth offered sacrifices to him; and multitudes offered up their children. And during that time, he often so far prevailed against the people of God, that he had almost swallowed them up. The church was often brought to the very brink of ruin.

And when Christ himself appeared in the world, how did he exalt himself against him! and prevailed so far, as to influence men to hate and despise him all the days of his life. And at last he persuaded one of his own disciples to betray him. Accordingly, he was delivered into the hands of men, to be mocked, buffeted, spit upon, and treated with the greatest ignominy that unrestrained malice could devise; and at last procured that he should be put to the most cruel and ignominious kind of death. And since that, he has greatly exalted himself against the gospel and kingdom of Christ. He has procured that the church, for the most part, has been the subject of great persecution; has often brought it to the brink of utter destruction; has accomplished great works in setting up those great kingdoms of antichrist and Mahomet; and darkened great part of the world, that was once enlightened with the gospel of Christ, with worse than heathen darkness. And he has infected the Christian world with multitudes of heresies and false ways of worship, and greatly promoted atheism and infidelity. Thus highly has the devil exalted himself against God and Christ, and the elect; and so far he prevailed.

**2.** Guilt is another evil which has come to a great height in the world. All guilt is an evil of a dreadful nature: the least degree of it is enough utterly to undo any creature. It is a thing that reaches unto heaven, and cries to God, and brings down his wrath. The guilt of any one sin is so terrible an

evil, that it prevails to bind over the guilty person to suffer everlasting burnings: so is in some respect infinite, in that it obliges to that punishment which has no end, and so is infinitely terrible. But this kind of evil has risen to a most amazing height in this world, where not only some persons are guilty, but all, in all nations and ages, are naturally guilty wretches. And they who live to act any time in the world, are not only guilty of one sin, but of thousands and thousands of thousands. What multiplied and what aggravated sins are some men guilty of! What guilt lies on some particular persons! How much more on some particular populous cities! How much more still on this wicked world! How much does the guilt of the world transcend all account, all expression, all powers of numbers or measures! And above all, how vast is the guilt of the world, in all ages, from the beginning to the end of it! To what a pitch has guilt risen! The world being, as it were, on every side, loaded with it, as with mountains heaped on mountains, above the clouds and stars of heaven.

And guilt, when it was imputed to Christ, greatly prevailed against him — though in himself innocent, and the eternal Son of God — even so as to hold him prisoner of justice for a while, and to open the flood-gates of God's wrath upon him, and briny his waves and billows over him.

**3.** Corruption and wickedness of heart, is another thing that has risen to an exceeding height in the world. Sin has so far prevailed, that it has become universal: all, mere men, are become sinful and corrupt creatures. Let us attend to St Paul's description of the worlds "Jews and Gentiles are all under sun. As is written, There is none righteous, no not one, there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way they are together become unprofitable, there is none that doeth good, no not one." And not only is every one corrupt, but they are all over corrupt, in every power, faculty, and principle, every part is depraved. Which is here represented by the several parts of the body being corrupt, as the throat, the tongue, the lips, the mouth, the feet. "Their throat is an open sepulchre, with their tongues they have used deceit, the poison of asps is under their lips; whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: their feet are swift to shed blood." And not only is every part corrupt, but exceeding corrupt, being possessed with dreadful principles of corruption, horribly evil dispositions and principles of sin, that may be represented by the poison of asps: which makes men like vipers and

devils: principles of all uncleanness, pride, deceit, injustice, enmity, malice, blasphemy, murder. Here their throats are compared to an open sepulchre, and their mouth is said to be full of cursing and bitterness, and destruction and misery are said to be in their ways.

And there are those principles of sin not only that are very bad, but every kind, here is no sort of wickedness but there is a seed of it in men. And these seeds and Principles have not only a being in men's hearts, but are there in great strength: they have the absolute possession and dominion over men, so that they are sold under sin. Yea, wicked principles, and those only, are in the heart. The imagination of the thoughts of their heart is evil only. There are bad principles only, and no good ones. "There is no fear of God before their eyes." Thus the hearts of all men are deceitful and desperately wicked.

And if we look, not only at the natural corruption of the heart, but at the contracted habits of sin, by wicked education and customs, how full shall we find the world of wickedness, in this respect! How have men, by bad customs in sinning, broken down all restraints upon natural corruption, and as it were abandoned themselves to wickedness! So far has corruption and wickedness prevailed in the world, and so high has it risen, that it is become a great and universal deluge, that overtops all things, and prevails with that strength, that it is like the raging waves of the tempestuous ocean; which are ready to bear down all before them.

**4.** Many of the devil's instruments have greatly prevailed, and have been exalted to an exceeding height in the in the world. It has been so in almost all ages of the world. Many of the devil's instruments have prospered and prevailed, till they have got to the head of great kingdoms and empires, with vast riches and mighty, power.

Those four great heathen monarchies that rose in the world before Christy are spoken of in Scripture as kingdoms set up in opposition to the kingdom of Christ. So they are represented in the interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream. These monarchies were exceeding powerful. The two last ruled over the greater part of the then known world. And the last especially, viz. the Roman empire, was exceeding mighty: so that it is said to be diverse from all kingdoms, and that it should devour the whole earth, and tread it down, and break it in pieces.

It is represented by the fourth beast, which was dreadful and terrible; and strong exceedingly; and had great iron teeth, that devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet. These four kingdoms all persecuted the church of God in their turns, especially the last. One of the governors of this monarchy put Christ to death. And afterwards one emperor after another, made dreadful havoc of the church, making a business of it, with the force of all the empire, to torment and destroy the Christians; endeavouring, if possible, to root out the Christian name from under heaven.

And in these latter ages, how have those two great instruments of the devil, viz. antichrist and Mahomet, prevailed, and to what a pitch of advancement have they arrived; ruling over vast empires, with mighty wealth, pride and power: so that the earth has been, as it were, subdued by them. Antichrist has set up himself as the vicar of Christ; and has for many ages usurped the power of God, “sitting in the temple of God, and showing himself that he is God; and exalting himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped.” And how dreadfully has he ravaged the church of God, being drunk with the blood of the saints, and the martyrs of Jesus. And has often, as it were, deluged the world in Christian blood, shed with the utmost cruelty that human wit and malice could invent. — And at this day, many other instruments of the devil, many heretics, atheists, and other infidels, are exerting themselves against Christ and his church, with great pride and contempt.

**5.** Affliction and misery have also prevailed and risen to an unspeakable height in the world. The spiritual misery which the elect are naturally in, is great. They are miserable captives of sin and Satan, and under obligations to suffer eternal burnings. This misery all mankind are naturally in. And spiritual troubles and sorrows have often risen to a great height in the elect. The troubles of a wounded spirit and guilty conscience, have been felt with intolerable end insupportable weight. “A mounded spirit who can bear? And the darkness that has risen to God’s people after conversion, through the temptations and buffetings of the devil, and the hidings of God’s face, and manifestations of his anger, have been very terrible. And temporal afflictions have often risen exceeding high. The church of God has, for the most part, all along, been a seat of great affliction and tribulation.

But the height to which the evil of affliction has risen, nowhere appears so much, as in the afflictions that Christ suffered. The evil of affliction and sorrow exalted itself so high, as to seize the Son of God himself, and to cause him to be all in a bloody sweat, and to make his soul exceeding sorrowful, even unto death. It caused him to cry out, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!” Affliction never prevailed to such a degree in this world, as in Christ, whose soul was, as it were, overwhelmed in an ocean of it.

**6.** Death is an evil which has greatly prevailed, and made dreadful havoc in this world. How does it waste and devour mankind, one age after another; sparing none, high or low, rich or poor, good or bad! Wild beasts have destroyed many; many cruel princes have taken away the lives of thousands, and laid waste whole countries: but death devours all; none are suffered to escape. And the bodies of the saints as well as others, fall a prey to this great devourer. Yea, so high did this enemy rise, that he took hold on Christ himself, and swallowed him among the rest. He became the prey of this great, insatiable monster. By his means, was his bodily frame destroyed, and laid dead in the dark and silent grave. And death still goes on destroying thousands every day. And therefore the grave is one of those things which Agur says, never has enough. — So have evils of every kind prevailed, and to such a degree have they exalted themselves in the world.

## SECTION 2

*How Jesus Christ, in the work of redemption,  
appears gloriously above all these evil.*

It was not the will of the infinitely wise and holy Governor of the world, that things should remain in this confusion; this reign of evil, which had prevailed and exalted itself to such a height. But he had a design of subduing it, and delivering an elect part of the world from it, and exalting them to the possession of the greatest good, and to reign in the highest glory, out of a state of subjection to all these evils. And he chose his Son as the person most fit for an undertaking that was infinitely too great for any mere creature: and he has undertaken the work of our redemption. And though these evils are so many and so great, and have prevailed to

such a degree, and have risen to such a height, and have been, as it were, all combined together; yet wherein they have exalted themselves, Christ, in the work of redemption, appears above them. He hath gloriously prevailed against them all, and brings them under his feet; and rides forth, in the chariots of salvation, over their heads; or leading them in triumph at his chariot wheels. He appears in this work infinitely higher and mightier than they, and sufficient to carry his people above them, and utterly to destroy them all.

**1.** Christ appears gloriously above all evil in what he did to procure redemption for us in his state of humiliation, by the righteousness he wrought out, and the atonement he made for sin. The evils mentioned, never seemed so much to prevail against him as in his sufferings: but in them, the foundation was laid for their overthrow. In them he appeared above Satan. Though Satan never exalted himself so high, as he did in procuring these sufferings of Christ; yet, then, Christ laid the foundation for the utter overthrow of his kingdom. He slew Satan, as it were, with his own weapon, the spiritual David cut off this Goliath's head with his own sword; and he triumphed over him in his cross. "Having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it:" *i.e.* in his cross, mentioned in the preceding words. Then the wisdom of Christ appeared gloriously above the subtlety of Satan. Satan, that old serpent, used a great deal of subtlety to procure Christ's death, and doubtless, when he had accomplished it, thought he had obtained a complete victory; being then ignorant of the contrivance of our redemption. But so did the wisdom of Christ order things, that Satan's subtlety and malice, should be made the very means of undermining the foundations of his kingdom, and so he wisely led him into the pit that he had digged.

In this also Christ appeared gloriously above the guilt of men. For he offered a sacrifice, that was sufficient to do away all the guilt of the whole world. Though the guilt of man was like the great mountains, whose heads are lifted up to the heavens, yet his dying love, and his merits, appeared as a mighty deluge that overflowed the highest mountains, or like a boundless ocean that swallows them up; or like an immense fountain of light, that with the fullness and redundancy of its brightness swallows up men's

greatest sins, as little motes are swallowed up and hidden in the disk of the sun.

In this Christ appeared above all the corruption of man, in that hereby he purchased holiness for the chief of sinners. And Christ in undergoing such extreme afflicting, got the victory over all misery; and laid a foundation for its being utterly abolished, with respect to his elect. In dying he became the plague and destruction of death. When death slew him, it slew itself: for Christ, through death, destroyed him that had the power of death, even the devil. By this he laid the foundation of the glorious resurrection of all his people to an immortal life.

**2.** Christ appears gloriously exalted above all evil, in his resurrection and ascension into heaven. When Christ rose from the dead, then it appeared that he was above death, which, though it had taken him captive, could not hold him.

Then he appeared above the devil. Then this Leviathan that had swallowed him, was forced to vomit him up again; as the Philistines that had taken captive the ark, were forced to return it, Dagon being fallen before it, with his head and hands broken off, and only the stumps left. — Then he appeared above our guilt: for he was justified in his resurrection. In his resurrection he appeared above all affliction. For though he had been subject to much affliction, and overwhelmed in it; he then emerged out of it, as having gotten the victory, never to conflict with any more sorrow.

When he ascended up into heaven, he rose far above the reach of the devil and all his instruments, who had before had him in their hands. And now has he sat down at the right hand of God, as being made head over all things to the church, in order to a complete and perfect victory over sin, Satan, death, and all his enemies. It was then said to him, “Sit thou on my right hand, until I make shine enemies thy footstool.” He entered into a state of glory, wherein he is exalted far above all these evils, as the forerunner of his people; and to make intercession for them, till they also are brought to be with him, in like manner exalted above all evil.

**3.** Christ appears gloriously above all evil, in his work in the hearts of the elect, in their conversion and sanctification. This is what the application of redemption, so far as it is applied in this world, consists in, which is done

by the Holy Ghost as the Spirit of Christ. In this work of Christ in the hearts of his elect, he appears glorious above Satan. For the strong man armed is overcome, and all his armor wherein he trusted, is taken from him, and his spoil divided. In this work, the lamb is, by the spiritual David, taken out of the mouth of the lion and bear: the poor captive is delivered from his mighty and cruel enemies.

In this Christ appears gloriously above the corruption and wickedness of the heart, above its natural darkness in dispelling it, and letting in light, and above its enmity and opposition, by prevailing over it, drawing it powerfully and irresistibly to himself, and turning a heart of stone into a heart of flesh: above the obstinacy and perverseness of the will, by making them willing in the day of his power. In this he appears above all their lusts. For all sin is mortified in this work, and the soul is delivered from the power and dominion of it. — In this work the grace of Christ gloriously triumphs over men's guilt. He comes over the mountains of their sins, and visits them with his salvation.

And God is wont often in this work, either in the beginning or progress of it, to give his people those spiritual comforts, in which he gloriously appears to be above all affliction and sorrow: and often gives them to triumph over the devil, and his powerful and cruel instruments. Many saints, by the influences of Christ's Spirit on their hearts, have rejoiced and triumphed, when suffering the greatest torments and cruelties of their persecutors. And in this work Christ sometimes gloriously appears above death, in carrying his people far above the fears of it, and making them to say, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory,"

**4.** Christ gloriously appears above all there forementioned evils, in his glorifying the souls of departed saints in heaven. In this he gives a glorious victory over death. Death by it is turned from an enemy into a servant; and their death, by the glorious change that passes in the state of their souls, is become a resurrection, rather than a death. Now Christ exalts the soul to a state of glory, wherein it is perfectly delivered from Satan and all his temptation's, and all his instruments; and from all remains of sin and corruption, and from all affliction: "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat — and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

**5.** Christ appears gloriously above these evils, in what he doth in his providence in the world, as head and redeemer of his church. If e appears gloriously above Satan and all his instruments in upholding his church, even from its first establishment, through all the powerful attempts that have been made against it by earth and hell: hereby fulfilling his promise, “That the gates of hell should never prevail against it.

Christ gloriously triumphed over these his enemies, in a remarkable success of his gospel, soon after his ascension, when many thousands in Jerusalem, and all parts of the world, were so soon turned from darkness unto light and from the power of Satan unto God: and in causing, his word to go on and prosper, and his church to increase and prevail against all the opposition of the heathen world, when they united all their power to put a stop to it, and root it out. So that, in spite of all that the philosophers and wise men, and emperors and princes could do, the gospel in a little time overthrew Satan’s old heathenish kingdom in the whole Roman empire, which was then the main part of the world; and so brought about the greatest and most glorious revolution. Instead of one single nation now the greater part of the nations of the known world were become God’s people.

And Christ’s exaltation above all evil in his government of the world, in his providence, as the Redeemer of his people, has since gloriously appeared in reviving his church by the reformation from popery, after it had for many ages lain in a great measure hid, and dwelt in a wilderness, under anti-christian persecution.

And he will yet far more gloriously triumph over Satan and all his Instruments, in all the mighty kingdoms the! have been set up in opposition to the kingdom of Christ, at the time of the fall of antichrist, and the beginning of those glorious tunes so much spoken of in Scripture prophecy. “Then shall the stone that has been cut out without hands smite all these kingdoms, and break them to pieces and they shall become like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors, and the wind shall carry them away, that no place should be found for them: and the stone which smote them shall become a great mountain, and fill the whole earth.” “Then shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed; and it shall break in pieces, and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.” “And then the kingdoms of this world shall

become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever.” Though great and mighty empires have been set up one after another in the world, in opposition to the kingdom of Christ, during the succession of so many ages, yet, Christ’s kingdom shall be the last and the universal kingdom, which he has given him, as the heir of the world. Whatever great works Satan has wrought; the final issue and event of all, in the winding up of things in the last ages of the world, shall be the glorious kingdom of Christ through the world; a kingdom of righteousness and holiness, of love and peace, established every where. Agreeable to the ancient prediction, “I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of man, came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all people nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is a everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.”

Then shall Christ appear gloriously exalted indeed above all evil: and then shall all the saints in earth and heaven gloriously triumph in him, and sing, “Hallelujah, salvation, and glory, and honour, and power unto the Lord our God; for true and righteous are his judgments; for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. Hallelujah: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.”

**6.** Christ will appear gloriously above all evil in the consummation of the redemption of his elect church at the end of the world. Then will be completed the whole work of redemption with respect to all that Christ died for, both in its application, and not till then. And then will Christ’s exaltation above all evil be most perfectly and fully manifest. Then shall the conquest and triumph be completed with respect to all of them. Then shall all the devils, and all their instruments, be brought before Christ, to be judged and condemned. And then shall be completed their destruction in their consummate and everlasting misery; when they shall be all cast into the lake of fire, no more to range, and usurp dominion in the world; or have

liberty to make opposition against God and Christ: they shall for ever be shut up, thenceforward only to suffer. Then shall death be totally destroyed. All the saints shall be delivered everlastingly from it. Even their bodies shall be taken from the power of death, by a glorious resurrection.

Then shall all guilt, and all sin and corruption, and all affliction, all sighs and tears, be utterly and eternally abolished, concerning every one of the elect, they being all brought to one complete body, to their consummate and immutable glory. And all this as the fruit of Christ's blood, and as an accomplishment of his redemption.

Then all that evil, which has so prevailed, and so exalted itself, and usurped and raged, and reigned, shall be perfectly and for ever thrust down and destroyed, with respect to all the elect, and all will be exalted to a skate wherein they will be for ever immensely above all these things. "And there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

### SECTION 3

*The subject improved and applied.*

**1.** IN this we may see how the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ appears in the work of redemption. It was because the Father had from eternity a design of exceedingly glorifying his Son, that he appointed him to be the person that should thus triumph over the evil in the world. The work of redemption is the most glorious of all God's works that are made known to us. The glory of God most remarkably shines forth in it. And this is one thing wherein its glory eminently appears, that therein Christ appears so gloriously above Satan and all his instruments, above all guilt, all corruption, all affliction, above death, at above all evil. And more especially, because evil hath so exhaled itself in the world, as we have heard, and exalted itself against Christ in particular.

Satan has ever had a peculiar enmity against the Son of God. Probably his first rebellion, which was his condemnation, was his proudly taking it in disdain, when God declared the decree in heaven, that his Son in man's nature, should be the King of heaven; and that all the angels should worship him. However that was, yet it is certain that his strife has ever

been especially against the Son of God. The enmity has always been between the seed of the woman, and the serpent And therefore that war which the devil maintains against God, is represented by the devil and his angels fighting against Michael and his angels. This Michael is Christ.

God had appointed his Son to be the heir of the world, but the devil has contested this matter with him, and has strove to set himself up as God of the world. And how exceedingly has the devil exalted himself against Christ! How did he oppose him as he dwelt among the Jews, in his tabernacle and temple! And how did he oppose him when on earth! And how has he opposed him since his ascension! What great and mighty works has Satan brought to pass in the world! How many Babels has he built up to heaven, in his opposition to the Son of God! How exceeding proud and haughty has he appeared in his opposition! How have he and his instruments, and sin, affliction, and death, of which he is the father raged against Christ? But yet Christ, in the work of redemption, appears infinitely above them all. In this work he triumphs over them, however they have dealt proudly; and they all appear under his feet. In this the glory of the Son of God, in the work of redemption, remarkably appears.

The beauty of good appears with the greatest advantage, when compared with its contrary evil. And the glory of that which is excellent, then especially shows itself, when it triumphs over in contrary, and appears vastly above it, in its greatest height. The glory of Christ, in this glorious exaltation over so great evil, that so exalted itself against him, the more remarkably appears, in that he is thus exalted out of so low a state.

Though he appeared in the world as a little child; yet how does he triumph over the most gigantic enemies of God and men! He who was “a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief,” is a man of war, and triumphed over his enemies in all their power. He who was meek and lowly of heart, has triumphed over those proud foes. And he is exalted over them all, in that which appears most despicable, even his cross.

**2.** Here is matter of exceeding great encouragement for all sinful miserable creatures in the world of mankind, to come to Christ. For let them be as sinful as they will, and ever so miserable, Christ, in the work of redemption, is gloriously exalted above all their sin and misery.

How high soever their guilt has risen, though mountains have been heaping on mountains all the days of their lives, till the pile appears towering up to heaven, and above the very stars; yet Christ in the work of redemption appears gloriously exalted above all this height. — Though they are overwhelmed in a mighty deluge of woe and misery; a deluge that is not only above their heads, but above the heads of the highest mountains; and they do not see how it is possible that they should escape; yet they have no reason to be discouraged from looking to Christ for help, who in the work of redemption, appears gloriously above the deluge of evil. Though they see dreadful corruption in their hearts; though their lusts appear like giants, or like the raging waves of the sea; yet they need not despair help; but may look to Christ, who appears in the work of redemption, gloriously above all this corruption.

If they apprehend themselves to be miser the captives of Satan, and find him too strong an adversary for esteem; and the devil is often tempting and buffeting them, and triumphing over them with great cruelty: if it seems to them that the devil has swallowed them up, and has got full possession of them, as the whale had of Jonah; yet there is encouragement for them to look again, as Jonah did, towards God's holy temple, and to trust in Christ for deliverance from Satan, who appears so gloriously exalted above him in the work of redemption.

If they are ready to sink with darkness and sorrows, distress of conscience, or those frowns of God upon them; so that God's waves and billows seem to pass over them; yet they have encouragement enough to look to Christ for deliverance. These waves and billows have before exalted themselves against Christ; and he appeared to be infinitely above them. — And if they are afraid of death; if it looks exceeding, terrible, as an enemy that would swallow them up, yet let them look to Christ who has appeared so gloriously above death; and their fears will turn into joy and triumph.

**3.** What cause have they who have an interest in Christ, to glory in their Redeemer! They are often beset with many evils, and many mighty enemies surround them on every side, with open mouths ready to devour them: but they need not fear any of them. They may glory in Christ, the rock of their salvation, who appears so gloriously above them all. They

may triumph over Satan, over this evil world, over guilt, and over death. For as their redeemer is mighty, and is so exalted above all evil; so shall they also be exalted in him. They are now, in a sense, so exalted, for nothing can hurt them. Christ carries them, as on eaglets wings, high out of the reach of all evils, so that they cannot come near them, to do them any real harm. And, in a little time, they shall be canted so out of their reach, that they shall not be able even to molest them any more for ever.

# THE VAIN SELF-FLATTERIES OF THE SINNER

“For he flattereth himself in his own eyes, until his iniquity be found to be hateful.” ~~191P~~ Psalm 36:2

In the foregoing verse, David says, that the transgression of the wicked said within his heart, “that there is no fear of God before his eyes;” that is, when he saw that the wicked went on in sin, in an allowed way of wickedness, it convinced him, that he was not afraid of those terrible judgments, and of that wrath with which God hath threatened sinners. If he were afraid of these he could never go on so securely in sin, as he doth. In our text he gives the reason why the wicked did not fear. It was a strange thing that men, who enjoyed such light as they did in the land of Israel, who read and heard those many awful threatenings which were written in the book of the law, should not be afraid to go on in sin. But saith the Psalmist, They flatter themselves in their own eyes: They have something or other which they make a foundation of encouragement, whereby they persuade themselves that they shall escape those judgments; and that makes them put far away the evil day. In this manner he proceeds, until his iniquity be found to be hateful; that is, until he finds by experience that it is a more dreadful thing to sin against God, and break his holy commands, than he imagined. He thinks sin to be sweet, and hides it as a sweet morsel under his tongue: He loves it, and flatters himself in it, till at length he finds, by experience, that it is bitter as gall and wormwood. Though he thinks the commission of sin to be lovely, yet he will find the fruit of it to be hateful, and what he cannot endure.

“At last it will bite like a serpent, and sting like an adder.”  
(~~192P~~ Proverbs 23:32.)

Here observe,

**1.** The subject spoken of is the WICKED MAN, of whom the Psalmist had been speaking in the foregoing verse.

2. His action in flattering himself in his own eyes; i.e. he makes himself and his case to appear to himself, or in his own eyes, better than it is.
3. How long he continues so to do, until his iniquity be found to be hateful. ‘Which may be taken for his sin itself, the wicked will see how odious sin is to God’, when he shall feel the effects of his hatred, and how hateful to angels and saints; or rather the cause is here put for the effect, the tree for its fruit, and he will find his iniquity to be hateful, as he will find the hatefulness and feel the terribleness of the FRUIT of his iniquity.

**Doctrine** Wicked men generally flatter themselves with hopes of escaping punishment, till it actually comes upon them.

There are but few sinners who despair, who give up the cause and conclude with themselves, that they shall go to hell; yet there are but few who do not go to hell. It is to be feared that men go to hell every day out of this country; yet very few of them suffer themselves to believe, that they are in any great danger of that punishment. They go on sinning and traveling in the direct road to the pit; yet by one mean or other they persuade themselves that they shall never fall into it, In my present discourse, I shall,

1. Mention some things in confirmation of the doctrine, that sinners flatter themselves with the hope of impunity.
2. Mention some of the various ways wherein sinners flatter themselves in that hope.
3. Show that sinners generally go on flattering themselves, till punishment actually overtakes them.

**I.** I am to mention some things in confirmation of the doctrine, that sinners flatter themselves with the hope of future impunity.

1. We are so taught in the word of God. Beside our text, you may see, ~~(1538)~~ Deuteronomy 29:18, 19 “Lest there should be among you man, or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turneth away this day from the Lord our God.”

Lest there should be among you a root that beareth gall and wormwood, “and it come to pass when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless

himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst.” Where it is supposed that they whose hearts turn away from God, and are roots that bear gall and wormwood, generally bless themselves in their hearts, saying, WE SHALL HAVE PEACE.

See also <sup><997</sup>Psalm 49:17, 18. “When he dieth, he shall carry nothing away: His glory shall not descend after him, though while he lived, he BLESSED HIS SOUL.” And <sup><998</sup>Psalm 1:21. “These things thou hast done. and I kept silence: Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself: But I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thee.”

**2.** It is very evident, that sinners flatter themselves that they shall escape punishment, by this, that otherwise they would be in dreadful and continual distress. Otherwise, as long as they are in sin, they could never live and go about so cheerfully as they now do: Their lives would be filled with sorrow and mourning, and they would be in continual uneasiness and distress; as much as those that are exercised with some violent pain of body. But it is evident that it is not in fact so; it is apparent that men are careless and secure; that they are not much concerned about future punishment, and that they cheerfully pursue their business and recreations. Therefore they undoubtedly flatter themselves, that they shall not be eternally miserable in hell, as they are threatened in the word of God

**3.** It is evident that they flatter themselves with hopes that they shall escape punishment, as otherwise they would certainly be restrained at least from many of those sins in which they now live: They would not proceed in willful courses of sin. The transgression of the wicked convinced the Psalmist, and is enough to convince every one, that there is no fear of God before his eyes, and that he flatters himself in his own eyes. It would be impossible for men allowedly from day to day to do those very things, which they know are threatened with everlasting destruction, if they did not some way encourage themselves, they should nevertheless escape that destruction.

**II.** I shall mention some of the various ways wherein sinners flatter themselves in their own eyes.

**1.** Some flatter themselves with a secret hope, that there is no such thing as another world. They hear a great deal of preaching, and a great deal of talk about hell, and about the eternal judgment; but those things do not seem to them to be real. They never saw any thing of them; they never saw hell, never saw the devils and damned spirits; and therefore are ready to say with themselves, How do I know that there is any such thing as another world? When the beasts die, there is an end of them, and how do I know but that it will be so with me? Perhaps all these things are nothing but the inventions of men, nothing but cunningly devised fables. Such thoughts are apt to rise in the minds of sinners, and the devil sets in to enforce them. Such thoughts are an ease to them; therefore they wish they were true, and that makes them the more ready to think that they are indeed true. So that they are hardened in the way of sin, by infidelity and atheistical thoughts. <sup><990></sup>Psalm 14:1. “The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.” <sup><990></sup>Psalm 94:6, 7.

“They slay the widow and the stranger, and murder the fatherless. Yet they say, the Lord shall not see; neither shall the God of Jacob regard it,”

**2.** Some flatter themselves that death is a great way off, and that they shall hereafter have much opportunity to seek salvation; and they think if they earnestly seek it, though it be a great while hence, they shall obtain. Although they see no reason to conclude that they shall live long, and perhaps they do not positively conclude that they shall; yet it doth not come into their minds that their lives are really uncertain, and that it is doubtful whether they will live another year. Such a thought as this doth not take any hold of them. And although they do not absolutely determine that they shall live to old age or to middle age, yet they secretly flatter themselves with such an imagination. They are disposed to believe so, and do so far believe it, that they act upon it and run the venture of it. Men will believe that things will be as they choose to have them, without reason, and sometimes without the appearance of reason, as is most apparent in this case, <sup><990></sup>Psalm 49:11. “Their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling places to all generations; they call their lands after their own names.”

The prepossession and desire of men to have it so, is the principal thing that makes them believe so. However, there are several other things which

they use as arguments to flatter themselves. Perhaps they think with themselves, that since they are at present in health, or in youth, or that since they are useful men, do a great deal of good, and both them selves and others pray for the continuance of their lives; they are not likely to be removed by death very soon.

If they shall live many years in the world, they think that it is very probable they shall be converted before they die; as they expect hereafter to have much more convenient opportunities to become converted, than they have now. And by some means or other, they think they shall get through their work before they arrive at old age.

**3.** Some flatter themselves that they lead moral and orderly lives, and therefore think that they shall not be damned. They think with themselves that they live not in any vice, that they take care to wrong no man, are just and honest dealers, that they are not addicted to hard drinking, or to uncleanness, or to bad language; that they keep the Sabbath strictly, are constant attendants on the public worship, and maintain the worship of God in their families. Therefore they hope that God will not cast them into hell. They see not why God should be so angry with them as that would imply, seeing they are so orderly and regular in their walk; they see not that they have done enough to anger him to that degree. And if they have angered him, they imagine they have also done a great deal to pacify him.

If they be not as yet converted, and it be necessary that they should experience any other conversion in order to their salvation, they hope that their orderly and strict lives will move God to give them converting grace. They hope that surely God will not see those that live as they do go to hell. Thus they flatter themselves, as those we read of.

“That trusted in themselves that they were righteous.”

( Luke 18:9.)

**4.** Some make the advantages under which they live an occasion of self flattery. They flatter themselves, because they live in a place where the gospel is powerfully preached and among a religious people, where many have been converted; and they think it will be much easier for them to be saved on that account. Thus they abuse the grace of God to their

destruction; they do that which the scriptures call despising the riches of God's goodness:

“Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?” (~~410~~ Romans 2:4.)

Some flatter themselves, because they are born of godly parents, who are dear to God, who have often and earnestly prayed for them, they hope that their prayers will be heard; and that encourages them to go on in the way of neglecting their souls. The Jews had great dependence upon this, that they were the children of Abraham: ~~413~~ John 8:33. they make their boast. “We be Abraham's seed; and in verse 39. “Abraham is our father.”

**5.** Some flatter themselves with their own intentions. They intend to neglect themselves, and give themselves liberty for a while longer, and then to reform. Though now they neglect their souls, and are going on in sin; yet they intend ere long to bestir themselves, to leave off their sins, and to set themselves to seek God. They hear that there is great encouragement for those who earnestly seek God, that they shall find him. So they intend to do; they propose to seek with a great deal of earnestness. They are told, that there are many who seek to enter the kingdom of heaven, who shall not be able; but they intend, not only to seek, but To STRIVE However, for the present they allow themselves in their ease, sloth, and pleasure, minding only earthly things.

Or if they should be seized with some mortal distemper, and should draw near to the grave, before the time which they lay out in their minds for reformation, they think how earnestly they would pray and cry to God for mercy; and as they hear God is a merciful God, who taketh no delight in the death of sinners, they hence flatter themselves that they shall move God to have pity on them.

There are but few who are sinners, and know themselves to be such, who do not encourage themselves with intentions of future repentance and reformation; but few who do not flatter themselves, that they shall in good earnest set themselves to seek God some time or other. Hell is full of GOOD INTENDERS who never proved to be TRUE PERFORMERS:

“Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season,  
I will call for thee.” (~~405~~ Acts 24:25.)

**6.** There are some who flatter themselves, that they do and have done, a great deal for their salvation, and therefore hope they shall obtain, when indeed they neither do what they ought to do, nor what they might do in their present state of unregeneracy; nor are they in any likely way to be converted. They think they are striving, when they neglect many moral and some instituted duties; nor do they exert themselves as if it were for their lives; they are not violent for the kingdom of heaven.

There are doubtless many such; many are concerned, and are seeking, and do many things, and think that they are in a very fair way to obtain the kingdom of God; yet there is great danger that they will prove at last to be some of the foolish virgins, and be found without oil in their vessels.

**7.** Some hope by their strivings to obtain salvation of themselves. They have a secret imagination, that they shall, by degrees, work in themselves sorrow and repentance of sin, and love towards God and Jesus Christ. Their striving is not so much an earnest seeking to God, as a striving to do them selves that which is the work of God. Many who are now seeking have this imagination, and labor, reach, pray, hear sermons and go to private meetings, with the view of making themselves holy, and of working in themselves holy affections.

Many, who only project and design to turn to God hereafter, are apt to think that it is an easy thing to be converted, that it is a thing which will be in their own power at any time, when they shall earnestly set themselves to it.

**8.** Some sinners flatter themselves that they are already converted. They sit down and rest in a false hope, persuading themselves that all their sins are pardoned; that God loves them; that they shall go to heaven when they die; and that they need trouble themselves no more:

“Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.” (~~417~~ Revelation 3:17.)

**III.** Sinners very generally go on flattering themselves in some or other of these ways, till their punishment actually overtakes them. These are the baits by which Satan catches souls, and draws them into his snare. They are such self flatteries as these that keep men from seeing what danger they are in, and that make them go securely on in the way they are in, “as the bird hasteth to the snare, and knoweth not that it is for his life.” Those that flatter themselves with hopes of living a great while longer in the world, very commonly continue so to do till death comes. Death comes upon them when they expect it not; they look upon it as a great way off, when there is but a step between them and death. They thought not of dying at that time, nor at anytime near it. When they were young, they proposed to live a good while longer; and if they happen to live till middle age, they still maintain the same thought, that they are not yet near death; and so that thought goes along with them as long as they live, or till they are just about to die.

Men often have a dependence on their own righteousness, and as long as they live are never brought off from it. Multitudes uphold themselves with their own intentions, till all their prospects are dashed in pieces by death. They put off the work which they have to do till such a time; and when that comes, they put it off to another time, until death, which cannot be put off, overtakes them. There are many also that hold a false hope, a persuasion that they belong to God; and as long as they live, by all the marks and signs which are given of a true convert, they never will be persuaded to let go their hope, till it is rent from them by death. Thus men commonly uphold themselves, and make themselves easy, till hell fire makes them uneasy. Everlasting ruin comes upon them as a snare, and all their hopes are at once cut off, and turned into everlasting despair:

“When they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.” (~~2~~<sup>1</sup> Thessalonians 5:3.)

### APPLICATION

**1.** Hence we learn one reason why there are but few saved, and why so many perish from under the gospel. All men know that they must die, and all that sit under the light of the gospel have been told many a time, that


after this there is an other world; that there are but two states in that other world, a state of eternal happiness, and a state of eternal misery; that there is but one way of escaping the misery and obtaining the blessedness of eternity, which is by obtaining an interest in Christ, through faith in him; and that this life is the only opportunity of obtaining an interest in Christ. Yet men are so much given to flatter themselves in those ways which we have mentioned, that there are but few that seasonably take care of their salvation. Indeed they cannot but be in some measure concerned about their souls; yet they flatter themselves with one thing or other, so that they are kept steadily and uninterruptedly going on in the broad way to destruction.

**2.** Hence we learn the reason why awakening truths of scripture, and awakening sermons, make no more impression upon men. It is in itself a wonderful and surprising thing, that God's denunciations of eternal misery, and threatenings of casting sinners into the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone for ever and ever, do not affect them, do not startle them. But the truth is, they flatter themselves, by such means as we have mentioned, that this dreadful misery is not for them; that they shall escape it, though multitudes of others are involved in it. They take not these threatenings to themselves; they seem to think that they do not belong to them.

How many are there in this congregation, who, for all the awakening sermons they have heard, are yet secure in sin! And who, although they are sensible that they are in a Christless condition, and are still going on in sin, yet intend to go to heaven, and expect that by some means or other they shall arrive there. They are often told, that God is very angry with them; yet they think God is a very merciful God, and they shall be able to pacify him. If they be told how uncertain life is, that doth not awaken them, because they flatter themselves with long life. If they be told how dangerous it is to delay the business of religion, they promise themselves, that they will hereafter engage in it with more earnestness than others, and so obtain the end, the salvation of their souls. Others, when they are told that many shall seek who shall not be able to obtain, think surely, that they, having done so much for salvation, shall not be denied.

**3.** Let every sinner examine himself, whether he do not flatter himself in some of those ways which have been mentioned. What is it in your own minds which makes you think it is safe for you to delay turning to God? What is it that encourages you to run such a venture as you do by delaying this necessary work? Is it that you hope there is no such state as heaven or hell, and have a suspicion that there is no God? Is It this that makes you secure? Or is it that you are not much afraid but that you shall have opportunity enough a great while hence to mind such things? Is it an intention of a future seeking a more convenient season? And are you persuaded that God will hearken to you then, after you shall have so long turned a deaf ear to his commands and gracious? Are you encouraged to commit sin, because you hope to repent of it? Are you encouraged by the mercy of God to be his enemies? And do you resolve still to provoke him to anger, because you think he is easily pacified? Or do you think that your conversion is in your own power, and that you can turn to God when you please? Is it because you have been born of godly parents that you are so secure? Or do you imagine that you are in a fair way to be converted? Do you think that what you have done in religion will engage God to pity you, and that he never can have the heart to condemn one who has lived in so orderly a manner? Or do you think that you are indeed converted already? And doth that encourage you to take a liberty in sinning? Or are you secure, because you are so stupid as to think nothing about these things? Do you let these concerns wholly alone, and scarcely ever think at all how it will be with you after you are dead?

Certainly it must be one or more of these things which keeps you in your security, and encourages you to go on in sin. Examine, therefore, and see which of them it is.

**4.** By the text and doctrine be persuaded to leave off thus flattering yourselves in your own eyes. You are therein informed, that those who do as you do commonly continue so doing till their punishment actually comes upon them. Thereby you may be convinced of the vanity of all such flatteries. Be afraid of that which you are sure is the devil's bait: "Surely in vain is the net spread in the sight of any bird,"  Proverbs 1:17. You are not only told in the scriptures, that sinners are generally thus allured to hell, but your own reason may convince you that it is so. For doubtless other sinners have as much ground to hope to escape

punishment as you; and it is evident, that they generally do hope to escape. Men under the gospel almost universally think they shall not go to hell: If it were otherwise, they could have no peace or comfort in the world. Yet what multitudes have we reason to conclude go down from under the preaching of the gospel to the pit of destruction! Now, this is surely enough to convince any sober, prudent person of the folly of such flattery, and of the folly of every one that doth not immediately set about his great work with his might. If you could have access to the damned, you would hear many of them curse themselves, for thus flattering themselves while they lived in this world; and you would have the same doctrine preached to you by their wailings and yellings which is now preached to you from the pulpit.

If your temptation to security be unbelief of the fundamental doctrines of religion, such as the being of God, of another world, and an eternal judgment, you may consider, that though that makes you secure at present, yet it will not do always, it will not stand by when you come to die. The fool often in health saith, There is no God; but when he comes to die, he cannot rest in any such supposition. Then he is generally so much convinced in his own conscience, that there is a God, that he is in dreadful amazement for fear of his eternal wrath. It is folly, therefore, to flatter yourselves with any supposition now which you will not then be able to hold.

If you depend on long life, consider how many who have depended on the same thing, and had as much reason to depend on it as you, have died within your remembrance.

Is it because you are outwardly of an orderly life and conversation, that you think you shall be saved? How unreasonable is it to suppose, that God should be so obliged by those actions, which he knows are not done from the least respect or regard to him, but wholly with a private view! Is it because you are under great advantages that you are not much afraid but that you shall some time or other be converted, and therefore neglect yourselves and your spiritual interests? And were not the people of Bethsaida, Chorazin and Capernaum, under as great advantages as you, when Christ himself preached the gospel to them, almost continually, and wrought such a multitude of miracles among them? Yet he says, that it

shall be more tolerable in the day of judgment for Sodom and Gomorrah, than for those cities.

Do you expect you shall be saved, however you neglect yourselves, because you were born of godly parents? hear what Christ saith,

“Think not to say within yourselves,  
we have Abraham to our father.” (~~4088~~ Matthew 3:9.)

Do you flatter yourselves that you shall obtain mercy, though others do not, because you intend hereafter to seek it more earnestly than others? Yet you deceive yourselves, if you think that you intend better than many of those others, or better than many who are now in hell once intended.

If you think you are in a way of earnest seeking, consider, whether or no you do not mind other things yet more? If you imagine that you have it in your own power to work yourselves up to repentance, consider, that you must assuredly give up that imagination before you can have repentance wrought in you. If you think yourselves already converted, and that encourages you to give yourselves the greater liberty in sinning, this is a certain sign that you are not converted.

Wherefore abandon all these ways of flattering yourselves; no longer follow the devil's bait; and let nothing encourage you to go on in sin; but immediately and henceforth seek God with all your heart, and soul, and strength.

# DISHONESTY;

OR,

## THE SIN OF THEFT AND OF INJUSTICE.

Thou shalt not steal. (~~Ex~~<sup>Ex</sup>odus 20:15)

THIS is one of the ten commandments, which constitute a summary of man's duty, as revealed by God. God made many revelations to the children of Israel in the wilderness by Moses: but this made in the ten commandments is the chief. Most of those other revelations contained ceremonial or judicial laws, but this contains the moral law. The most of those other laws respected the Jewish nation, but here is a summary of laws binding on all mankind. Those were to last till Christ should come, and have set up the Christian church; these are of perpetual obligation, and last to the end of the world. God every where, by Moses and the prophets, manifests a far greater regard to the duties of these commands, than to any of the rites of the ceremonial law.

These commands were given at mount Sinai, before any of the precepts of the ceremonial or judicial laws. They were delivered by a great voice out of the midst of fire, which made all the people in the camp tremble, and afterwards were engraved on tables of stone, and laid up in the ark, the first table containing the four first commandments, which teach our duty to God; the second table containing the six last, which teach our duty to man. The sum of the duties of the first table is contained in that which Christ says is the first and great commandment of the law,

“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy mind.” (~~Mat~~<sup>Mat</sup>thew 22:37.)

The sum of what is required in the second table, is what Christ calls the second command, like unto the first, verse 39. “The second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.”

Of the commands of this second table of the law, the first, (which is the fifth of the ten,) refers to that honour which is due to our neighbour, the second respects his life, the third his chastity, the fourth his estate; the fifth his good name, the sixth and last respects his possessions and enjoyments in general. It is that command which respects our neighbours estate, and which is the fourth command of the second table and the eighth of the whole decalogue, on which I am now to insist: and here I shall make the command itself, as the words of it lie before us in the decalogue, my subject: and as the words of the commandment are in the form of a prohibition, forbidding a certain kind of sin, so I shall consider particularly what it is that this command forbids. The sin that is forbidden in this command is called stealing, yet we cannot reasonably understand it only of that act, which in the more ordinary and strict sense of the word, is called stealing. But the iniquity which this command forbids, may be summarily expressed thus: — An unjust usurping of our neighbour's property, without his consent.

So much is doubtless comprehended in the text, yet this comprehends much more than is implied in the ordinary use of the word, stealing, which is only a secret taking of that which is anothers from his possession, without either his consent or knowledge. But the ten commands are not to be limited to the strictest sense of the words, but are to be understood in such a latitude, as to include all things that are of that nature or kind. Hence Christ reproves the Pharisees' interpretation of the sixth command, ⲁⲓⲉⲙ Matthew 5:21, 22., and also their interpretation of the seventh command, see verse 27, 28., by which it appears that the commands are not to be understood as forbidding only these individual sins, which are expressly mentioned, in the strictest sense of the expressions, but all other things of the same nature or kind. — Therefore, what is forbidden in this command is all unjust usurpation of our neighbour's property. Here it may be observed that an unjust usurpation of our neighbour's property is twofold, it may be, either by withholding what is our neighbour's, or, by taking it from him.

## SECTION 1

*The dishonesty of withholding what is our neighbour's.*

THERE are many ways in which persons may unjustly usurp, their neighbour's properly by withholding what is his due, but I shall particularize only two things.

**1.** The unfaithfulness of men in not fulfilling their engagements. Ordinarily when men promise any thing to their neighbour, or enter into engagements by undertaking any business with which their neighbour intrusts them, their engagements invest their neighbour with a right to that which is engaged, so that if they withhold it, they usurp, that which belongs to their neighbour. So, when men break their promises because they find them to be inconvenient, and they cannot fulfil them without difficulty and trouble, or merely because they have altered their minds since they promised. They think they have not consulted their own interest in the promise which they have made, and that if they had considered the matter as much before they promised as they have since, they should not have promised. Therefore they take the liberty to set their own promises aside. Besides, sometimes persons violate this command, by neglecting to fulfil their engagements, through a careless, negligent spirit.

They violate this command, in withholding what belongs to their neighbour, when they are not faithful in any business which they have undertaken to do for their neighbour. If their neighbour have hired them to labour for him for a certain time, and they be not careful well to husband the time, if they be hired to a day's labour, and be not careful to improve the day, as they have reason to think that he who hired justly expected of them, or if they be hired to accomplish such a piece of work, and be not careful to do it well do it not as if it were for themselves or as they would have others do for them, when they in like manner betrust them with any business of theirs, or if they be intrusted with any particular affair, which they undertake, but use not that care, contrivance, and diligence, to manage it so as will be to the advantage of him who intrusts them, and as they would manage it, or would insist that it should be managed, if the affair was their own: in all these cases they unjustly withhold what belongs to their neighbour.

**2.** Another way in which men unjustly withhold what is their neighbour's, is in neglecting, to pay their debts. Sometimes this happens because they run so far into debt debts, and this they do, either through pride and

affectation of living above their circumstances, or through a grasping, covetous disposition, or some other corrupt principle. Sometimes they neglect to pay their debts from carelessness of spirit about it, little concerning themselves whether they are paid or not, taking no care to go to their creditor, or to send to him and if they see him from time they neglect to pay their debts, because it would put them to some inconvenience. The reason why they do it not, is not because they cannot do it, but because they cannot do it so conveniently as they desire; and so they rather choose to put their creditor to inconvenience by being without what properly belongs to him, than to put themselves to inconvenience by being without what doth not belong to them, and what they have no right to detain. In any of these cases they unjustly usurp the property of their neighbour.

Sometimes persons have that by them with which they could pay their debts if they would; but they want to lay out their money for something else, to buy gay clothing for their children, or to advance their estates, or for some such end. They have other designs in hand, which must fail, if they pay their debts. When men thus withhold what is due, they unjustly usurp what is not their own. Sometimes they neglect to pay their debts, and their excuse for it is that their creditor doth not need it; that he hath a plentiful estate, and can well bear to lie out of his money. But if the creditor be ever so rich, that gives no right to the debtor to withhold from him that which belongs to him. If it be due, it ought to be paid: for that is the very notion of its being due. It is no more lawful to withhold from a man what is his due, without his consent, because he is rich and able to do without it, than it is lawful to steal from a man because he is rich, and able to bear the loss.

## SECTION 2

*The dishonesty of unjustly taking a neighbour's property.*

THE principal ways of doing this seem to be these four, by negligence, by fraud, by violence, or by stealing strictly so called.

**1.** The first way of unjustly depriving our neighbour of that which is his is by negligence, by carelessly neglecting that which is expected by neighbours, one of another, and is necessary to prevent our neighbours suffering in his estate by us or, by any thing that is ours: and necessary in

order that neighbours may live one by another, without suffering in their lawful interests, rights, and possessions, one by another.

For instance, when proper care is not taken by men to prevent their neighbour's suffering in the produce of his fields or enclosures, from their cattle, or other brute creatures, which may be either through negligence with regard to their creatures themselves, in keeping those that are unruly, and giving them their liberty, though they know that they are not fit to have their liberty and are commonly wont to break into their neighbour's enclosures greatly to his damage, or through a neglect of that which is justly expected of them, to defend others fields from suffering by the neighbourhood of their own. In such cases men are guilty of unjustly taking from their neighbour what is his property.

It is said in the law of Moses,

“If a man shall cause a field or vineyard to be eaten, and shall put in his beast, and shall feed in another man's field, of the best of his own field, and of the best of his vineyard, shall he make restitution.” (<sup>1221</sup>Exodus 22:5.)

Now a man may be unjustly the cause of his neighbour's field or vineyard being eaten either by putting in his beast, and so doing what he should not do, or by neglecting to do what he should do, to prevent his beast from getting into his field. What is said in the 144th Psalm, and two last verses, supposes that a people who carry themselves as becomes a people whose God is the Lord, will take thorough care that beasts do not break into their neighbour's enclosures: “That our oxen may be strong to labour, that there be no breaking in nor going out, that there be no complaining in our streets. Happy is that people that is in such a case; yea, happy is that people whose God is the Lord.”

**2.** Taking away that which is our neighbour's by fraud or by deceiving him, is another mode of usurping our neighbour's property. This is the case when men in their dealings take advantage of their neighbour's ignorance or at oversight, or mistake, to get something, from him, or when they make their gains, by concealing the defects of what they sell, putting off bad for good, though this be not done by speaking falsely, but only by keeping silence: or when they lake a higher price than what they sell is

really worth and more than they could get for it if the concealed defects were known: or when they sell that for good, which indeed is not merchantable, which is condemned in ~~<1086>~~ Amos 8:6. “Yea and sell the refuse of the wheat.”

If a man puts off something to another with defects that are concealed, knowing, that the other receives it as good and pays such a price for it under a notion of its having no remarkable defect but what he sees and takes the price which the buyer under that notion offers, the seller knows that he takes a price of the buyer for that which the buyer had not of him, for the buyer is deceived, and pays for those things which he finds wanting in what he buys. It is just the same thing, as if a man should take a payment that another offers him through a mistake for that which he never had of him, thinking that he had it of him, when he had it not.

So a man fraudulently takes away that which is his neighbour's, when he gets his money from him by falsely commending what he hath to sell, above what he knows to be the true quality of it, and attributes those good qualities to it which he knows it has not: or if he does not that yet sets forth the good qualities in a decree beyond what he knows to be the true degree, or speaks of the defects and ill qualities of what he has to sell, as if they were much less than he knows they are: or on the contrary when the buyer will cry down what he is about to buy contrary to his real opinion of the value of it. — These things, however common they be in men's dealings one with another, are nothing short of iniquity, and fraud, and a great breach of this commandment, upon which we are discoursing.

“It is nought, it is nought, saith the buyer; but when he is gone his way then he boasteth.” (~~<1086>~~ Proverbs 20:14.)

Many other ways there are whereby men deceive one another in their trading, and whereby they fraudulently and unjustly take away that which is their neighbour's.

**3.** Another mode of unjustly invading and taking away our neighbour's property, is by violence. This violence may be done in different degrees. — Men may take away their neighbour's goods either by mere open violence, either making use of superior strength, forcibly taking away any thing that is his; or by express or implicit threatenings forcing him to yield

up what he has into their hands; as is done in open robbery and piracy. Or, by making use of some advantages which they have over their neighbour, in their dealings with him, constrain him to yield to their gaining unreasonably of him, as when they take advantage of their neighbour's poverty to extort unreasonably from him for those things that he is under a necessity of procuring for himself or family. This is an oppression against which God hath shown a great displeasure in his word.

“And if thou sell ought unto thy neighbour, or buyest ought of thy neighbour, ye shall not oppress one another.” ~~Leviticus~~ <sup>Leviticus</sup> 25:14.

~~Proverbs~~ <sup>Proverbs</sup> 22:22, 23. “Rob not the poor, because he is poor, neither oppress the afflicted in the gate; for the Lord will plead their cause, and spoil the soul of those that spoiled them.” And, ~~Amos~~ <sup>Amos</sup> 4:1, 2. “Hear this word, Ye kine of Bashan, that are in the mount of Samaria, which oppress the poor, which crush the needy, the Lord hath sworn in his holiness, that he will take you away with hooks, and your posterity with fish-hooks.”

When the necessity of poor indigent people is the very thing whence others take occasion to raise the price of provisions, even above the market; this is such an oppression. There are many poor people whose families are in such necessity of bread, that they in their extremity will give almost any price for it, rather than go without it. Those who have to sell, though hereby they have an advantage in their hands, yet surely should not take the advantage to raise the price of provisions. We should doubtless think that we had just cause to complain, if we were in such necessity as they are, and were reduced to their straits, and were treated in this manner and let us remember, that it is owing only to the distinguishing goodness of God to us, that we are not in their circumstances, and whatever our present circumstances are, yet we know not but that the time may still come when their case may be ours.

Men may oppress others, though they be not poor, if they will take advantage of any particular necessities of their neighbour, unreasonably to extort from him. The case may be so at particular seasons, that those who are not poor, may stand in particular and extraordinary need of what we have, or what we can do for them, so that it would be greatly to their disadvantage or loss to be without it. Now to take advantage of their

urgent circumstances, to get from them an unreasonable price, is a violent dealing with our neighbours.

It is very unreasonable to say, Such men are so rich, and get money so much more easily than I, that it is no hurt for me to take advantage when they are in special need, and make them give me, for work that I do for them, a great deal more than I would desire to ask of other men. Let such consider, whether if they should by any means hereafter get forward in the world, and come to have plentiful estates, they would like that persons should act upon such principles towards them. That men are rich, gives us no more right to take away from them what is theirs in this way, than it does to steal from them because they come easily by their property, and can do without it better than we.

Again, another thing that is a kind of violent taking from our neighbour what is his is taking, the advantage of the law to gain from others, when their cause in honesty and conscience is just and good. The circumstances of mankind, their rights, possessions, and dealings one with another, are so various? that it is impossible that any body of human laws should be contrived to suit all possible cases and circumstances. Hence the best laws may be abused and perverted to purposes contrary to the general design of laws, which is to maintain the rights and secure the properties of mankind. Human laws have regard due to them, but always in subordination to the higher laws of God and nature. Therefore when it so happens, that we have an advantage by the law, to gain what the laws of moral honesty allow not, it is an oppression and violence to take the advantage. That human laws allow it, will not excuse us before God, the Judge of the world, who will judge us another day by his own laws and not by the laws of the commonwealth.

**4.** The fourth way of unjustly taking from our neighbour that which is his, is stealing so called. All unjust ways of taking away, or invading, or usurping what is our neighbour's, are called stealing in the most extensive use of the word, and all is included in the expression in this commend. Yet the word stealing, as It is more commonly used, is not of so great extent, and intends not all unjust invasion of our neighbour's property, but only a particular kind of unjust taking. So that in common speech when we speak of fraudulent dealings, of extortion, unfaithfulness in our trust, and of

stealing, we understand different sins by these expressions, though they are an usurpation of what is our neighbour's. Stealing, strictly so called, may be thus defined, A designed taking of our neighbour's goods from him, without his consent or knowledge. It is not merely a withholding of what is our neighbour's, but a taking away: and therein it differs from unfaithfulness in our undertakings and trustments, and also from negligence in the payment of debts. It is a designed or willful depriving of our neighbour of what is his, and so differs from wronging our neighbour in his estate through carelessness or negligence. It is a taking of our neighbour's goods without his knowledge; it is a private, clandestine taking away, and so differs from robbery by open violence.

So also it differs from extortion: for in that the person knows what is taken from him. The aim of him that takes is no other than that he should know it, for he makes use of other means than his ignorance, to obtain what is his neighbour's, viz. violence to constrain him to give it up. So also it differs from fraudulent dealing or trading. For though in fraudulent dealing the lawful possessor doth not understand the ways and means, by which he parts with his goods, and by which his neighbour becomes possessed of them; yet he knows the fact: the deceiver designedly conceals the manner only. But in stealing, strictly so called, he that takes, intends not that it shall be known that he takes. It also differs from extortion and fraudulent dealing, in that it is wholly without the consent of the owner. For in extortion, though there be no free consent, yet the consent of the owner is in some sort gained, though by oppressive means. So in fraudulent dealing consent is in some sort obtained, though it be by deceit. But in stealing no kind of consent is obtained.

A person may steal from another, yet not take his goods without the knowledge of the owner, because he may know of it accidentally, he may see what is done, unawares to the thief. Therefore I have defined stealing, a designed taking without the consent or knowledge of the owner. If it be accidentally known, Yet it is not known in the design and intention of the thief. The thief is so far at least private in it, that he gives no notice to the owner at the time. It must be also without the consent of the owner. A person may take without the knowledge of the owner, and yet not take without his consent. The owner may not know of his taking at the time, or of his taking any particular things: yet there may be his implicit consent.

There may have been a general consent, if not expressed, yet implied. The circumstances of the affair may be such, that his consent may well be presumed upon, either from an established custom, allowed by all. or from the nature of the case; the thing being of such a nature, that it may well be presumed that none would refuse their consent, as in the case of a person's accidentally passing through his neighbour's vineyard in Israel, and eating his fill of grapes: or from the circumstances of the persons, as in the case, in many instances, of the freedom which near neighbours and intimate friends often take, and of that boldness which they use with respect to each other's goods.

In all such cases though the owner do not particularly know what is done, yet he that takes, does it not with any contrived designed concealment. And though there is no express, particular consent, yet there is a consent either implied, or justly presumed upon; and he that takes, doth not designedly do it without consent.

It may happen in some cases, that one may take the goods of another both without his knowledge and consent, either explicit or implicit, but through mistake, yet he may not be guilty of stealing. Therefore the design of him who takes must come into consideration. When he designedly takes away that which is his neighbour's, without his consent or knowledge, then he steals. So that if it should happen, that he has both his consent and knowledge, without his design, he steals. And if it so happen that he takes without either his neighbour's consent or knowledge, and yet without his own design, he steals not. I desire therefore that this, which I take to be the true definition of theft or stealing, maybe borne in mind, viz. a designed taking of our neighbour's goods, without his consent or knowledge, because it is needful to clear up many things which I have yet to say on this subject.

### SECTION 3

#### *Dishonest excuses.*

HERE I shall particularly take notice of some things by which persons may be ready to excuse themselves, in privately taking, their neighbour's goods, which however cannot be a just excuse for it, nor will they make such a taking to be stealing.

**1.** That the person whose goods are privately taken, owes or is in debt to him that takes them. Some may be ready to say that they do not take that which is their neighbour's they take that which is their own, because as much is due to them, their neighbour owes them as much, and unjustly detains it, and they know not whether ever they shall get their due of him. Their neighbour will not do them right. and therefore they must right themselves.

But such pleas as these will not justify a man in going in a private and clandestine manner to take away any thing of his neighbour's from his possession, without his consent or knowledge his doing this is properly stealing. For though something of his neighbour's, which is as valuable as what he takes, may be due to him; that doth not give him such a right to his neighbour's goods, that he may take any thing that is his, according to his own pleasure, and at what time and in what manner he pleases. That his neighbour is in debt to him, doth not give him a right to take it upon himself to be his own judge, so that he may judge for himself, which of his neighbour's goods shall be taken from him to discharge the debt, and that he may act merely according to his own private judgment and pleasure in such a case, without so much as acquainting his neighbour with the affair.

In order to warrant such a proceeding as this, every thing that his neighbour has, must be his. A man may not take indifferently what he pleases out of a number of goods, without the consent or knowledge of any other person, unless all is his own, to be disposed of as he pleases. Such a way of using goods according to our own pleasure, taking what we will, and at what time we will, can be warranted by nothing but a dominion over the whole. And though he who is in debt may be guilty of great injustice in detaining what is due to another, yet it doth not thence follow, but that he that takes from him, may also be guilty of great injustice towards him. The course he takes to right himself may be very irregular and unreasonable, and such a course; that if universally allowed and pursued in such cases, would throw human society into confusion.

When men obtain a property in any of the professions of this life, they are at the same time also invested with a right to retain a possession of them, till they are deprived of them in some fair and regular proceeding. Every man has a right to hold his estate, and keep possession of his properties,

so that no other can lawfully use them as his own until he either parts with them of his own accord, or unto it be taken from him according to some established rule, in a way of open justice. Therefore he who, under presence of having just demands upon his neighbour, privately takes his goods without his consent, takes them unjustly, and is guilty of stealing.

**2.** Much less will it make such a private taking not to be stealing, that he who takes, has, in way of kindness or gift, done for the person from whom he takes, as much as is equivalent to the value of what he takes. If a man do his neighbour some considerable kindness, whether in labour, or in something that he gives him, what he does or gives is supposed to be done voluntarily, and he is not to make his neighbour debtor for it; and therefore if any thing be privately taken away, upon any such consideration, it is gross stealing.

For instance, when any person needs to have any services done for him, where a considerable number of hands are necessary; it is common for the neighbourhood to meet together and join in helping their neighbour, and frequently some provision is made for their entertainment. If any person who hath assisted on such an occasion, and is a partaker at such an entertainment, shall think within himself, the service I have done is worth a great deal more than what I shall eat and drink here, and therefore shall take liberty privately to take of the provision set before him, to carry away with him, purposely concealing the matter from him who hath entertained him, this is gross stealing; and it is a very ridiculous plea which they make to excuse so unmanly and vile an act.

Persons in such cases may say to themselves, that the provision is made for them, and set before them that it is a time wherein considerable liberty is given and they think, seeing they have done so much for their host, they may take something more than they eat and drink there. But then let them be open in it, let them acquaint those with it who make the entertainment; and let it not be done in any wise, in a secret, clandestine manner, with the least design or attempt to avoid their notice: on the contrary, let care be taken to give them notice and obtain their consent.

When persons do such things in a private manner, they condemn themselves by their own act, their doing what they do secretly, shows that they are conscious to themselves, that they go beyond what it is expected

they should do, and do what would not be allowed, if it were known. Such an act, however light they may make of it, is abominable theft, and what any person of religion or any sense of the dignity of their of own nature, would to the greatest degree abhor and detest.

**3.** It is not sufficient to make a private taking without consent not to be stealing, that it is but a small matter that is taken. If the thing be of little value, yet if it be worth a purposed concealing from the owner, the value is great enough to render the taking of it proper theft. If it be pretended that the think is of so small consequence, that It is not worth asking for; then surely it is not worth a purposed concealing from the owner, when it is taken. He who, under this presence, conceals his taking, in the very act contradicts his own presence; for his action shows that he apprehends, or at least suspects, that, as small a master as it is, the owner would not like the faking of it, if he knew it; otherwise the taker would not desire to conceal it.

The owner of the goods, and not other people, is the proper judge, whether what he owns be of such a value, that it is worth his while to keep it, and to refuse his consent to the taking of it from him. He who possesses, and not he who takes away, has a right to judge of what consequence his possessions are to him. He has a right to set what value he pleases on them, and to treat them according to that value. Besides, merely that a thing is of small value, cannot give a right to others, purposely and designedly to take it away, without the knowledge or consent of the owner. Because if this only gives a right, then all have a right to take things of small value; and at this rate a great number of persons, each of them taking from a man that which is of small value, might take away all he has.

Therefore, it will not justify persons, in purposely taking such things as fruit from the trees, or gardens, or fields of their neighbours, without their knowledge or consent, that the things which they take are things of small value, nor is that sufficient to render such an act not an act of theft properly so called. This shows also that the smallness of the value of what is privately taken at feasts and entertainment's, doth not render the taking of such things not stealing.

The small value of a thing may in some cases justify an occasional taking of things, so far as we may from thence, and from what is generally allowed, reasonably presume that the owner gives his consent. But if that be the case, and persons really take, as supposing that the owner consents to such occasional taking, then he that takes will not at all endeavour to do what he does secretly, nor in any measure to avoid notice. But merely the smallness of the value of a thing, can never justify a secret taking of what is another's.

## SECTION 4

*The subject applied. — The dishonest warned.*

THE first use I would make of this doctrine, is to warn against all injustice and dishonesty, as to what appertains to our neighbour's temporal goods or possessions. Let me warn all to avoid all ways of unjustly invading or usurping what is their neighbour's, and let me press that exhortation of the apostle,

“Provide things honest in the sight of all men,” (<sup><5127></sup>Romans 12:17)

which implies, that those things which we provide for ourselves, and use as our own, should be such as we come honestly by, and especially that we should avoid all clandestine or underhand ways of obtaining any thing that is our neighbour's, either by fraudulent dealing, or by that taking without our neighbour's knowledge and consent, of which we have been speaking.

I warn you to beware of dishonesty in withholding what is your neighbour's, either by unfaithfulness to your trust in any business which you undertake, or by withholding your neighbour's just and honest dues. Consider that saying of the apostle,

“Owe no man any thing, but to love one another.”  
(<sup><5128></sup>Romans 13:8.)

Be also warned against wronging your neighbour or injuring him in his enclosures, or in any of his just rights and properties, through careless neglect of what is reasonably expected by neighbours one of another, in order that they may live one by another without mutual injury. Let all

beware that they bring not guilt on their souls in the sight of God, by taking an advantage to oppress any person. Especially beware of taking advantage of others poverty to extort from them: for God will defend their cause, and you will be no gainers by such oppression.

Beware also of all injustice by deceitful and fraudulent dealing. You doubtless meet with abundance of temptation to fraud, and have need to keep a strong guard upon yourselves. There are many temptations to falsehood in trading, both about what you would buy and what you have to sell. There are, in buying, temptations to do as in ~~20:14~~ Proverbs 20:14. “It is nought, it is nought, saith the buyer.” There are many temptations to take indirect courses, to blind those with whom you deal, about the qualities of what you have to sell, to diminish the defects of your commodities, or to conceal them, and to put off things for good, which are bad. And there are doubtless many other ways that men meet with temptations to deceive others, which your own experience will better suggest to you than I can.

But here I shall take occasion to speak of a particular kind of fraud, which is very aggravated, and is rather a defrauding of God than man. Ah hat I mean is, the giving of that which is bad for good in public contributions. Though it be matter of great shame and lamentation that it should be so, yet it is to be feared, from what has sometimes been observed, that there are some who, when there is a public contribution to be made for the poor, or some other pious and charitable use, sometimes take that opportunity to put off their bad money. That which they find, or think, their neighbours will refuse to take at their hands because they will have opportunity to see what is offered them, and to observe the badness of it, even that they therefore take opportunity to put off to God.

Hereby they endeavour to save their credit, for they apprehend that they shall be concealed. They appear with others to go to the contribution, as it is not known but that they put in that which is good. But they cheat the church of God, and defraud the expectations of the poor: or rather, they lie to God: for those who receive what is given, stand as Christ’s receivers, and not as acting for themselves in this matter.

They that do thus, do that which is very much of the same nature with that sin, against which God denounces that dreadful curse in <3014>Malachi 1:14.

“Cursed be the deceiver which hath in his flock a male, and voweth and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing: for I am a great King, saith the Lord of hosts, and my name is dreadful among the heathen.”

That hath in his flock a male, *i.e.* That has in his flock that which is good and fit to be offered to God: for it was the male of the flock principally that was appointed’ in the law of Moses, to be offered in sacrifice. Be has in his flock that which is good, but he vows and sacrifices to the Lord “the torn, the lame, and the sick,” as it is said in the foregoing verse, ye said also, “Behold what a weariness is it, and ye have snuffed at it, saith the Lord of hosts; and ye brought that which was torn, and the lame, and the sick; thus ye brought an offering: should I accept this of your hands? saith the Lord.”

Contributions in the Christian church come in the room of sacrifices in the Jewish church: mercy comes in the room of sacrifice. And what is offered in the way of mercy is as much offered to God, as the sacrifices of old were. For what is done to the poor is done to Christ, and he that hath pity on the poor, lendeth to the Lord; <3017>Proverbs 19:17. The Jews that offered the sick and lame of the flock, knew that if they had offered it to their governor, and had attempted to put it off, as part of the tribute or public taxes due to their earthly rulers, it would not be accepted, and therefore they were willing to put it off to God. “And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? Offer it now unto thy governor, will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the Lord of hosts.”

So those persons who purposely put bad money into contributions, know that what they put in would not be accepted if they should offer to pay their public taxes. Yea, they know that their neighbours would not accept it at their hands; and therefore they are willing to save themselves, by putting it off to God.

This practice has also very much of the nature of the sin of Ananias and Sapphira. What they offered was by way of contribution for charitable uses. The brethren sold what they had, and brought it into a common stock, and put all under the care of deacons, that the poor might every one be supplied. Ananias and Sapphira brought a part of their possessions, and put it into the common stock; and their sin was, that they put it in for more than it really was. It was but a part of what they had, and they put it in, and would have it accepted, as if it had been all. So those among us of whom I am speaking, put off what they put into the charitable stock, for more than it is. For they put it in, under the notion that it is something of some value, they intend it shall be so taken by the church that sees them go to the contribution, when indeed they put in nothing at all.

Ananias and Sapphira were charged with lying to God, and doing an act of fraud towards God himself, in what they did: ~~Acts~~ Acts 5:4. “Whilst it remained, was it not thine own? And after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? Why hast thou conceived this thing in shine heart? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.” So those who knowingly put bad money for good into a contribution for a charitable use, as much as in them lies commit an act of fraud and deceit towards God. For the deacons who receive what is contributed, receive it not in their on names, but as Christ’s receivers. I hope these things may be sufficient to deter every reader from ever daring to do such a thing for the future. Again, another thing I would warn you against, is, stealing, properly and strictly so called; or designedly taking away any of your neighbour’s goods without his consent or knowledge. And especially I would now take occasion to warn against a practice which is very common in the country, particularly among children and young people; and that is, stealing fruit from their neighbour’s trees or enclosures. There is a licentious liberty taken by many children and young people, in making bold with their neighbour’s fruit; and it is to be feared, that they are too much countenanced in it by their parents and many elder people. I am sensible, that the great thing which is pleaded, and made very much the ground of this liberty which is taken and so much tolerated, is a very abusive and unreasonable construction and application of that text of Scripture in ~~Deuteronomy~~ Deuteronomy 23:24.

“When thou comest into thy neighbour’s vineyard, then thou mayest eat grapes thy fill. But thou shalt not put any in thy vessel.”

Because this text seems to be so much mistaken and mis-improved, I shall therefore endeavour particularly to state the matter of persons taking their neighbour’s fruit, and to set it in a just and clear light as concerning this text.

It was to eat their fill of grapes when they occasionally came into or passed through their neighbour’s vineyard, and not that they should go thither on purpose to eat grapes. This is manifest by the manner of expression, “When thou comest into thy neighbour’s vineyard, thou mayest eat,” *i.e.* when thou art come thither on some other occasion. If God had meant to give them leave to come thither on purpose, for no other end, it would not have been expressed so: but rather thus, Thou mayest come into thy neighbour’s vineyard, and eat grapes thy fill. — Such were the circumstances of that people, and vineyards among them were so common, that there was no danger that this liberty would be attended with ill consequence. It is manifest throughout the vineyards among them were so common that the general had them. Every husbandman among them was a vine-dresser, and a great part of the business of a husbandman among them, consisted in dressing and taking care of his vineyards. Grapes seem to have been the most common sort of fruit that they had. Besides, there was no liberty given for persons to go on purpose to a vineyard to eat the fruit of it. So that there was no danger of neighbours suffering one by another, by any such liberty. — The liberty did not tend to any such consequence, as the flocking of a great number to eat grapes, whereby the fruit of the vineyard might be much diminished.

Such were the circumstances of the case, that the consent of the owners of vineyards in general might well be presumed upon, though no such express liberty had been given. You may remember that in the definition of stealing, I observed, that explicit consent is not always necessary; because the case may be so circumstanced, that consent may be well presumed on. And the reason why consent might well be presumed on in the case of eating grapes, of which we are now speaking, is, that there could be no sensible injury, nor any danger of any ill consequences, by which a man

would sensibly suffer in the benefit of his vineyard. Hence it is the more easy to determine, what would and what would not be justified by this text, among us. Suppose a particular person among us had a vineyard of the same kind with those which the children of Israel had, it would not justify others in using the same liberty when occasionally passing through it; because it would be a rare thing, and the rarity and scarcity of the fruit would render it of much greater value. Besides, if one man were distinguished by such a possession, to allow of such a liberty would have a much greater tendency to ill consequences, than if they were common, as they were in the land of Canaan. There would be danger of many persons falsely pretending, and making occasions, to pass through the vineyard, for the sake of such rare fruit.

Nor would it be a parallel case, if men in general among us had each of them a few vines. That would be a very different thing from persons in general having large vineyards. Nor would this text, in such a case, warrant men's eating their fill of grapes when occasionally passing by. — And though all in general had vineyards, as they had in the land of Canaan, this text would not justify men in going into their neighbour's vineyard on purpose to eat the fruit. No such liberty is given in the text. If there had been such liberty, it might have been of ill consequence. For the sake of saving their own grapes, men might make a practice of going and sending their children into their neighbour's vineyards, to eat their fill from time to time.

But the liberty given in this text to the children of Israel, seems to be very parallel with the liberty taken among us, to take up an apple or two and eat, as we are occasionally passing through a neighbour's orchard: which as our circumstances are, we may do, unjustly presume that we have the owner's consent. This is a liberty that we take, and find no ill consequences. It was very much so with vineyards in the land of Canaan as it is with fruit; and there it would by no means be warrantable for persons to take the same liberty when occasionally passing by their neighbour's apple tree, which we warrantably take here, when going through a neighbour's orchard.

The consideration of these things will easily show the great abuse that is made of this text, when it is brought to justify such a resorting of children

and others to their neighbour's fruit-trees, as is sometimes, on purpose to take and eat the fruit. Indeed this practice is not only not justified by the law of Moses, but it is in itself unreasonable, and contrary to the law of nature. The consequences of it are pernicious, so that a man can have no dependence on enjoying the fruit of his labour, or the benefit of his property in those things, which possibly he may very much value. He can have no assurance but that he shall be mainly deprived of what he has, and that others will not have the principal benefit of it, and so that his end in planting and cultivating that from which he expected those fruits of the earth, which God hath given for the use, comfort, and delight of mankind, will not be in the main frustrated.

## SECTION 5

### *An exhortation to honesty.*

UNDER this use, I shall confine myself to two particulars, many other things having been already spoken to.

**1.** I shall hence take occasion to exhort parents to restrain their children from stealing, and particularly from being guilty of theft in stealing the fruits of their neighbour's trees or fields. Christian parents are obliged to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. But how much otherwise do they act, who bring them up in theft! And those parents are guilty of this, who — though they do not directly teach them to steal, by example and setting them about it, yet — tolerate them in it.

Parents should take effectual care, not only to instruct their children better, and to warn them against any such thievish practices, but also thoroughly to restrain them. Children who practice stealing, make themselves vile. Stealing, by the common consent of mankind, is a very vile practice; therefore those parents that will not take thorough care to restrain their children from such a practice, will be guilty of the same sin which God so highly resented, and awfully punished, in Eli, of which we read, <sup>(4083)</sup>1 Samuel 3:13. "For I have told him, that I will judge his house for ever, for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not."

**2.** I exhort those who are conscious in themselves that they have heretofore wronged their neighbour to make restitution. This is a duty the obligation to which is exceedingly plain. If a person was wronged in taking away any thing that was his, certainly he is wronged also in detaining it; and all the while that a person, who has been guilty of wronging his neighbour, neglects to make restitution, he lives in that wrong. He not only lives impenitent as to that first wrong of which he was guilty, but he continually wrongs his neighbour. A man who hath gotten any thing from another wrongfully, goes an to wrong him every day that he neglects to restore it, when he has opportunity to do it. The person injured did not only suffer wrong from the other when his goods were first taken from him, but he suffers new injustice from him all the while they are unjustly kept from him.

Therefore I counsel you who are conscious that you have heretofore wronged your neighbour, either by fraud, or oppression, or unfaithfulness, or stealing, whether lately or formerly, though it may have been a great while ago, speedily to go and make restitution for all the wrong your neighbour has suffered at your hands. That it was done long ago, doth not quit you from obligation to restore. This is a duty with which you must comply; you cannot be acquitted without it. As long as you neglect it, it will be unreasonable in you to expect any forgiveness of God. For what ground can you have to think that God will pardon you, as long as you willfully continue in the same wrong, and wrong the same man still every day, by detaining from him that which is his? You in your prayers ask of God, that he would forgive all your sins; but your very prayers are mockery, if you still willfully continue in those sins. — Indeed, if you go and confess your faults to your neighbour, and he will freely acquit you from making restitutions, you will be acquitted from the obligation; for in so doing, your neighbour gives you what before was his. But otherwise you cannot be acquitted.

I would leave this advice with all, for direction in their behaviour on their death-beds. Indeed you should not by any means put it off till you come to die; and you will run the most fearful risk in so doing. But if you will not do it now, while you are in health, I will leave it with you to remember, when you shall come to lie on your deathbeds. Doubtless, then if you have the use of your reason, you will be concerned for the salvation

of your poor souls. And let this be one thing then remembered, as absolutely necessary in order to your salvation, that before you die, you must make restitution for whatever wrong you shall have done any of your neighbours; or at least leave orders that such restitution be made, otherwise you will, as it were, go out of the world, and go before your great Judge, with stolen goods in your hands. And certainly it will not be very comfortable or safe, to bring them into his infinitely holy and dreadful presence, when he sits on his throne of judgment, with his eyes as a flame of fire, being more pure than to look on iniquity, when he is about to sentence you to your everlasting unalterable state.

Every one here present, who has been guilty of wronging his neighbour, and has not made restitution, must die. Let all such therefore remember this counsel now given them, on the day when death shall approach, if they shall be so foolish as to neglect it till that time.

# TEMPTATION AND DELIVERANCE;

## JOSEPH'S GREAT TEMPTATION AND GRACIOUS DELIVERANCE.

And he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out.  
(Genesis 39:12)

WE have here, and in the context, an account of that remarkable behaviour of Joseph in the house of Potiphar, which was the occasion both of his great affliction, and also of his high advancement and prosperity in the land of Egypt.

We read in the beginning of the chapter, how Joseph, after he had been so cruelly treated by his brethren, and sold into Egypt for a slave, was advanced in the house of Potiphar, who had bought him. Joseph was one that feared God, and therefore God was with him; and so influenced the heart of Potiphar his master, that instead of keeping him as a mere slave, to which purpose he was sold, he made him his steward and overseer over his house, and all that he had was put into his hands, in so much, that we are told, verse 6. “that he left all that he had in his hand, and he knew not ought that he had, save the bread which he did eat.” — While Joseph was in these prosperous circumstances, he met with a great temptation in his master's house. We are told that, he being a goodly person and well favoured, his mistress cast her eyes upon and lusted after him, and used all her art to tempt him to commit uncleanness with her.

Concerning this temptation, and his behaviour under it, many things are worthy to be noted. Particularly

We may observe, how great the temptation was, that he was under. It is to be considered, that Joseph was now in his youth; a season of life, when persons are most liable to be overcome by temptations of this nature. And he was in a state of unexpected prosperity in Potiphar's house; which has

a tendency to lift persons up, especially young ones, whereby commonly they more easily fall before temptations.

And then, the superiority of the person that laid the temptation before him, rendered it much the greater. She was his mistress, and he a servant under her. And the manner of her tempting him. She did not only carry herself so towards Joseph, as to give him cause to suspect that he might be admitted to such criminal converse with her, but she directly proposed it to him; plainly manifesting her disposition to it. So that here was no such thing as suspicion of her unwillingness to deter him, but a manifestation of her desire to entice him to it. Yea, she appeared greatly engaged in the matter. And there was not only her desire manifested to entice him, but her authority over him to enforce the temptation. She was his mistress, and he might well imagine, that if he utterly refused a compliance, he should incur her displeasure, and she, being his master's wife, had power to do much to his disadvantage, and to render his circumstances more uncomfortable in the family.

And the temptation was the greater, in that she did not only tempt him once, but frequently, day by day, verse 10. And at last became more violent with him. She caught him by his garment, saying, Lie with me.

His behaviour was very remarkable under these temptations. He absolutely refused any compliance with them: he made no reply that manifested as though the temptation had gained at all upon him, so much as to hesitate about it, or at all deliberate upon it. He complied in no degree, either to the gross act she proposed, or any thing tending towards it, or that should be gratifying to her wicked inclination. And he persisted resolute and unshaken under her continual solicitations, verse 10. "And it came to pass as she spake to Joseph day by day, that he hearkened not unto her, to lie by her, or to be with her." He, to his utmost, avoided so much as being where she was. And the motives and principles, from which he acted, manifested by his reply to her solicitations, are remarkable. — He first sets before her, how injuriously he should act against his master, if he should comply with her proposal: "Behold, my master — hath committed all that he hath to my hand; there is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me, but thee, because thou art his wife." But he then proceeded to inform her of that, which, above all

things, deterred him from a compliance, viz. that it would be great wickedness, and sin against God. — “How shall I do this, and sin against God?” He would not do any such thing, as he would not injure his master; but that which influenced more than all on this occasion, was the fear of sinning against God. On this account he persisted in his resolution to the last.

In the text we have an account of his behaviour under the last and greatest temptation that he had from her. This temptation was great, as it was at a time when there was nobody in the house but he and his mistress, verse 11. there was an opportunity to commit the fact with the greatest secrecy. And at this time it seems that she was more violent than ever before. She caught him by the garment, etc. She laid hold on him, as though she were resolute to attain her purpose of him.

Under these circumstances he not only refused her, but fled from her, as he would have done from one that was going to assassinate him, he escaped, as for his life. He not only would not be guilty of such a fact, but neither would he by any means be in the house with her, where he should be in the way of her temptation. — This behaviour of Joseph is doubtless recorded for the instruction of all. Therefore from the words I shall observe, that it is our duty, not only to avoid those things that are themselves sinful, but also, as far as may be, those things that lead and expose to sin.

## SECTION 1

*Why the should avoid what tends to sin.*

THUS did Joseph: he not only refused actually to commit uncleanness with his mistress, who enticed him; but refused to be there, where he should be in the way of temptation, verse 10. He refused to lie by her, or be with her. And in the text we are told, “he fled and got him out;” would by no means be in her company. Though it was no sin in itself, for Joseph to be in the house where his mistress was, but under these circumstances it would expose him to sin. Joseph was sensible he had naturally a corrupt heart, that tended to betray him to sin, and therefore he would by no means be in the way of temptation; but with haste he fled, he ran from the dangerous place. Inasmuch as he was exposed to sin in that house, he fled

out of it with as much haste as if it had been on fire, or full of enemies, who stood ready with drawn swords to stab him to the very heart. When she took him by the garment, he left his garment in her hands; he had rather lose his garment, than stay a moment there, where he was in such danger of losing his chastity.

I said, that persons should avoid things that expose to sin, as far as may be; because it is possible that persons may be called to expose themselves to temptation; and when it is so, they may hope for divine strength and protection under temptation.

It may be a man's indispensable duty to undertake an office, or a work, attended with a great deal of temptation. Thus ordinarily a man ought not to run into the temptation of being persecuted for the true religion; lest the temptation should be too hard for him, but should avoid it, as much as may be: therefore Christ thus directs his disciples,

“When ye be persecuted in one city, flee to another.”  
(~~1002~~ Matthew 10:23.)

Yet, the case may be so, that a man may be called not to flee from persecution, but to run the venture of such a trial, trusting in God to uphold him under it. Ministers and magistrates may be obliged to continue with their people in such circumstances; as Nehemiah says, ~~1001~~ Nehemiah 6:11. “Should such a man as I flee?” So the apostles. — Yea, they may be called to go into the midst of it, to those places where they cannot reasonably expect but to meet with such temptations. So Paul went up to Jerusalem, when he knew beforehand, that there bonds and affliction awaited him, ~~1003~~ Acts 20:23.

So in some other cases, the necessity of affairs may call upon men to engage in some business that is peculiarly attended with temptations. But when it is so, they are indeed least exposed to sin; for they are always safest in the way of duty.

“He that walketh uprightly, walketh surely.” (~~1000~~ Proverbs 10:9.)

And though there be many things by which they may have extraordinary temptations, in the affairs they have undertaken, yet if they have a clear call, it is no presumption to hope for divine support and preservation in it.

But for persons needlessly to expose themselves to temptation, and to do those things that tend to sin, is unwarrantable, and contrary to that excellent example set before us. And that we ought to avoid not only those things that are in themselves sinful, but also those things that lead and expose to sin, is manifest by the following arguments.

**1.** It is very evident that we ought to use our utmost endeavours to avoid sin, which is inconsistent with needlessly doing those things, that expose and lead to sin. And the greater any evil is, the greater care, and the more earnest endeavors, does it require to avoid it. Those evils that appear to us very great and dreadful, we use proportionally great care to avoid. And therefore the greatest evil of all, requires the greatest and utmost care to avoid it.

Sin is an infinite evil, because committed against an infinitely great and excellent Being, and so a violation of infinite obligation: therefore however great our care be to avoid sin, it cannot be more than proportionable to the evil we would avoid. Our care and endeavour cannot be infinite, as the evil of sin is infinite; but yet it ought to be to the utmost of our power; we ought to use every method that tends to the avoiding of sin. This is manifest to reason. — And not only so, but this is positively required of us in the word of God.

“Take diligent heed to do the commandment and the law, which Moses the servant of the Lord charged you, to love the Lord your God, and to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and to cleave unto him, and to serve him with all your soul.”

(<sup><BIB></sup>Joshua 22:5.)

<sup><BIB></sup>Deuteronomy 4:15,16. “Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves, lest ye corrupt yourselves.” Chapter 12:30. “Take heed to thyself, that thou be not snared,” etc. <sup><BIB></sup>Luke 11:36. “Take heed and beware of covetousness.” <sup><BIB></sup>1 Corinthians 10:12. “Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.” <sup><BIB></sup>Deuteronomy 4:9. “Take heed to thyself, keep thy soul diligently.” These and many other texts of Scripture, plainly require of us the utmost possible diligence and caution to avoid sin.

But how can he be said to use the utmost possible diligence and caution to avoid sin, that voluntarily does those things which naturally expose and

lead to sin? How can he be said with the utmost possible caution to avoid an enemy, that voluntarily lays himself in his way? How can he be said to use the utmost possible caution to preserve the life of his child, that suffers it to go on the edge of precipices or pits, or to play on the borders of a deep gulf; or to wander in a wood, that is haunted by beasts of prey!

**2.** It is evident that we ought to avoid those things that expose and lead to sin, because a due sense of the evil of sin, and a just hatred of it, will necessarily have this effect upon us, to cause us so to do. — If we were duly sensible of the evil and dreadful nature of sin, we should have an exceeding dread of it upon our spirits. We should hate it worse than death, and should fear it worse than the devil himself; and dread it even as we dread damnation. But those things that men exceedingly dread, they naturally shun; and they avoid those things that they apprehend expose to them. As a child, that has been greatly terrified by the sight of any wild beast, will by no means be persuaded to go where it apprehends that it shall fall in its way.

As sin in its own nature is infinitely hateful, so in its natural tendency it is infinitely dreadful. It is the tendency of all sin, eternally to undo the soul. Every sin naturally carries hell in it! Therefore, all sin ought to be treated by us as we would treat a thing that is infinitely terrible. If any one sin, yea, the least sin, do not necessarily bring eternal ruin with it, this is owing to nothing but the free grace and mercy of God to us, and not to the nature and tendency of sin itself. But certainly, we ought not to take the less care to avoid sin, or all that tends to it, for the freeness and greatness of God's mercy to us, through which there is hope of pardon; for that should be indeed a most ungrateful and vile abuse of mercy. Were it made known to us, that if we ever voluntarily committed any particular act of sin, we should be damned without any remedy or escape, should we not exceedingly dread the commission of such? Should we not be very watchful and careful to stand at the greatest distance from that sin, and from every thing that might expose us to it; and that has any tendency to stir up our lusts, or to betray us to such an act of sin? Let us then consider, that thorough the next voluntary act of known sin shall not necessarily and unavoidably issue in certain damnation, yet it will certainly deserve it. We shall thereby really deserve to be cast off; without any remedy or hope; and it can only be owing to free grace, that it will not

certainly and remedilessly he followed with such a punishment. And shall we be guilty of such a vile abuse of God's mercy to us, as to take encouragement from it, the more boldly to expose ourselves to sin!

**3.** It is evident that we ought not only to avoid sin, but things that expose and lead to sin; because this is the way we act in things that pertain to our temporal interest. — Men avoid not only those things that are themselves the hurt or ruin of their temporal interest, but also the things that tend or expose to it. Because they love their temporal lives, they will not only actually avoid killing themselves, but they are very careful to avoid those things that bring their lives into danger; though they do not certainly know but they may escape.

They are careful not to pass rivers and deep waters on rotten ice, though they do not certainly know that they shall fall through and be drowned. They will not only avoid those things that would be in themselves the ruin of their estates — as setting their own houses on fire, and burning them up with their substance; taking their money and throwing it into the sea, etc. — but they carefully avoid those things by which their estates are exposed. They have their eyes about them; are careful with whom they deal; are watchful, that they be not overreached in their bargains, and that they do not lay themselves open to knaves and fraudulent persons.

If a man be sick of a dangerous distemper, he is careful to avoid every thing that tends to increase the disorder; not only what he knows to be mortal, but other things that he fears may be prejudicial to him. Men are in this way wont to take care of their temporal interest. And therefore, if we are not as careful to avoid sin, as we are to avoid injury in our temporal interest, it will show a regardless disposition with respect to sin and duty; or that we do not much care though we do sin against God. God's glory is surely of as much importance and concern as our temporal interest. Certainly we should be as careful not to be exposed to sin against the Majesty of heaven and earth, as men are wont to be of a few pounds; yea, the latter are but mere trifles, compared with the former.

**4.** We are wont to do thus by our dear earthly friends. — We not only are careful of those things wherein the destruction of their lives, or their hurt and calamity in any respect, directly consist; but are careful to avoid those things that but remotely tend to it. We are careful to prevent all occasions

of their loss; and are watchful against that which tends, in any wise, to deprive them of their comfort or good name; and the reason is, because they are very dear to us. In this manner, men are wont to be careful of the good of their own children, and dread the approaches of any mischief that they apprehend they are, or may be, exposed to. And we should take it hard if our friends did not do thus by us.

And surely we ought to treat God as a dear friend: we might to act towards him, as those that have a sincere love and unfeigned regard to him; and so ought to watch and be careful against all occasion of that which is contrary to his honour and glory. If we have not a temper and desire so to do, it will show that, whatever our preferences are, we are not God's sincere friends, and have no true love to him. — If we should be offended at any that have professed friendship to us, if they treated us in this manner, and were no more careful of our interest; surely God may justly be offended, that we are no more careful of his glory.

**5.** We would have God, in his providence towards us, not to order those things that tend to our hurt, or expose our interest; therefore certainly we ought to avoid those things that lead to sin against him.

We desire and love to have God's providence such towards us, as that our welfare may be well secured. No man loves to live exposed, uncertain and in dangerous circumstances. While he is so, he lives uncomfortably, in that he lives in continual fear. We desire that God would so order things concerning us, that we may be safe from fear of evil, and that no evil may come nigh our dwelling, and that because we dread calamity. So we do not love the appearance and approaches of it; and love to have it at a great distance from us. We desire to have God to be to us as a wall of fire round about us, to defend us, and that he would surround us as the mountains do the valleys, to guard us from every danger, or enemy; that so no evil may come nigh us.

Now this plainly shows, that we ought, in our behaviour towards God, to keep at a great distance from sin, and from all that exposes to it: as we desire God, in his providence to us, should keep calamity and misery at a great distance from us, and not to order those things that expose our welfare.

**6.** Seeing we are to pray we may not be led into temptation, certainly we ought not to run ourselves into it. — This is one request thus Christ directs us to make to God in that form of prayer, which he taught his disciples — “Lead us not into temptation.” And how inconsistent shall we be with ourselves, if we pray to God, that we should not be led into temptations, and at the same time, we are not careful to avoid temptation, but bring ourselves into it, by doing those things that lead and expose to sin. What self-contradiction is it, for a man to pray to God that he may be kept from that, which he takes no care to avoid! By praying that we may be kept from temptation, we profess to God that being in temptation is a thing to be avoided, but by running into it we show that we choose the contrary, viz. not to avoid it.

**7.** The apostle directs us to avoid those things that are in themselves lawful, but tend to lead others into sin, surely then we should avoid what tends to lead ourselves into sin. — The apostle directs, ~~1~~<sup>1</sup> ~~Corinthians~~ 8:9. “Take heed lest — this liberty of yours become a stumbling-block to them that are weak.” ~~54~~<sup>54</sup> ~~Romans~~ 14:13. “That no man put a stumbling-block, or an occasion to fall, in his brother’s way.” Verse 15. “But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with the meat.” Verse 20, 21. “For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure, but it is evil for that man who eateth with offense. It is good neither to eat flesh nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.” — Now if this rule of the apostle be agreeable to the word of Christ, as we must suppose, or expunge what he says out of the canon of the Scripture; then a like rule obliges more strongly in those things that tend to lead ourselves into sin.

**8.** There are many precepts of Scripture, which directly and positively imply, that we ought to avoid those things that tend to sin.

This very thing is commanded by Christ, ~~18~~<sup>18</sup> ~~Matthew~~ 26:41. Where he directs us to “watch lest we enter into temptation.” But certainly running ourselves into temptation, is the rever. of watching against it. — We are commended to abstain from all appearance of evil; *i.e.* do by sin as a man does by a shine, the sight or appearance of which he hates; and therefore

will avoid any thing that looks like it; and will not come near or in sight of it.

Again, Christ commanded to separate from us those things that are stumbling-blocks, or occasions of sin, however dear they are to us.

<sup>(M)</sup>Matthew 5:29. “If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee.” Verse 30 “And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off.” By the right hand offending us, is not meant its paining us; but the word in the original signifies, being a stumbling block, if thy right hand prove a stumbling-block, or occasion to fall, *i.e.* an occasion to sin. Those things are called offenses or stumbling-blocks in the New Testament, which are the occasions of falling into sin. — Yea, Christ tells us, we must avoid them, however dear they are to us, though as dear as our right hand or right eye. If there be any practice that naturally tends and exposes us to sin, we must have done with it, though we love it never so well, and are never so loth to part with it; though it be as contrary to our inclination, as to cut off our own right hand, or pluck out our own right eye; and that upon pain of damnation, for it is intimated that if we do not, we must go with two hands and two eyes into hell fire.

Again, God took great care to forbid the children of Israel those things that tended to lead them into sin. For this reason, he forbid them marrying strange wives, (<sup>(M)</sup>Deuteronomy 7:3, 4.) “Neither shalt thou make marriages with them, — for they will turn away thy sons from following me, that they may serve other gods.” For this reason they were commanded to destroy all those things, that the nations of Canaan had used in their idolatry, and if any were enticed over to idolatry, they were to be destroyed without mercy; though ever so near and dear friends. They were not only to be parted with, but stoned with stones; yea, they themselves were to fall upon them, and put them to death, though son or daughter, or their bosom friend. (<sup>(M)</sup>Deuteronomy 13:6, etc.) “If thy brother, — or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, — thou shalt not consent unto him — neither shall thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him. But thou shalt surely kill him; thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death.”

Again, The wise man warns us to avoid those things that tend and expose us to sin; especially the sin of uncleanness.

“Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burnt!  
Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burnt? — So,  
whosoever touches her, shall not be innocent.” (<sup>1067</sup>Proverbs 6:27.)

This is the truth held forth; avoid those customs and practices that naturally tend to stir up lust. And there are many examples in Scripture, which have the force of precept; and recorded, as not only worthy, but demand our imitation. The conduct of Joseph is one; and that recorded of king David, is another. <sup>1801</sup>Psalm 39:1, 2. “I said I will take heed to my ways that I sin not with my tongue; I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me. I was dumb with silence, I held my peace, even from good” — even from good — that is, he was so watchful over his words’ end kept at such a great distance from speaking what might in any way tend to sin; that he avoided, in certain circumstances, speaking what was in itself lawful; lest he should be betrayed into that which was sinful.

**9.** A prudent sense of our own weakness, and exposedness to yield to temptation, obliges us to avoid that which leads or exposes to sin.

Whoever knows himself, and is sensible how weak he is, and his constant exposedness to run into sin — how full of corruption his heart is, which, like fuel, is ready to catch fire, and bring destruction upon him — how much he has in him to incline him to sin and how unable he is to stand of himself — who is sensible of this, and has any regard of his duty, will be not be very watchful against every thing that may lead and expose to sin? On this account Christ directed us,

“To watch and play, lest we enter into temptation.”  
(<sup>4184</sup>Matthew 26:41.)

The reason is added, the flesh is weak! He who, in confidence of his own strength, boldly runs the venture of sinning, by going into temptation, manifests great presumption, and a sottish insensibility of his own weakness.

“He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool.” (<sup>2183</sup>Proverbs 28:26.)

The wisest and strongest, and some of the most holy men in the world, have been overthrown by such means. So was David, so was Solomon, — his wires turned away his heart. If such persons so eminent for holiness were this way led into sin, surely it should be a warning to us. “Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.”

## SECTION 2

*What things lead and expose to sin.*

IF any thing be made out clearly, from reason and the word of God, to be our duty, this would be enough with all Christians. Will a follower of Christ stand objecting and disputing against what is irrefragably proved and demonstrated to be his duty?

But some may be ready to inquire, How shall we know what things do lead and expose to sin? Let a man do what he will, he cannot avoid sinning, as long as he has such a corrupt heart within him. And there is nothing a man can do, but he may find some temptation in it. And though it be true, that a man ought to avoid those things that lead and expose to sin — and that those things which have a special tendency to expose men to sin, are what we ought to shun, as much as in us lies — yet how shall we judge and determine what things have a natural tendency to sin, or do especially lead to it?

I would answer in some particulars which are plain and easy; and which cannot be denied without the greatest absurdity.

**1.** That which borders on those sins, to which the lusts of men’s hearts strongly incline them, is of this sort. Men come into the world with many strong and violent lusts in their hearts and are exceeding prone of themselves to transgress; even in the safest circumstances in which they can be placed. And surely so much the nearer they are to that sin, to which they are naturally strongly inclined; so much the more are they exposed. If any of us who are parents should see our children near the brink of some deep pit, or close by the edge of the precipice of a high mountain; and not only so, but the ground upon which the child stood slippery, and steeply descending directly toward the precipice, should we not reckon a child

exposed in such a case? should we not be in haste to remove the child from its very dangerous situation?

It was the manner among the Israelites, to build their houses with flat roofs, so that persons might walk on the tops of their houses. And therefore God took care to make it a law among them, that every man should have battlements upon the edges of their roofs, lest any person should fall offend be killed.

“When thou buildest a new house, then thou shalt make a battlement for thy roof, that thou bring not blood upon thine house, if any man fall from thence.” (<sup>1528</sup>Deuteronomy 22:8.)

And certainly we ought to take the like care that we do not fall into sin, which carries in it eternal death. We should, as it were, fix a battlement, a guard, to keep us from the edge of the precipice. Much more ought we to take care, that we do not go upon a roof that is not only without battlements, but when it is steep, and we shall naturally incline to fall. — Men’s lusts are like strong enemies, endeavouring to draw them into sin. If a man stood upon a dangerous precipice, and had enemies about him, pulling and drawing him, endeavouring to throw him down; would he, in such a case, choose or dare to stand near the edge? Would he look upon himself safe, close on the brink? Would he not endeavour, for his own safety, to keep at a distance?

**2.** Those things that tend to feed lusts in the imagination, are of this kind. — They lead and expose men to sin. Those things that have a natural tendency to excite in the mind the imagination of that which is the object of the lust, certainly tend to feed and promote that lust. What can be more evident, than that a presenting of the object tends to stir up the appetite? Reason and experience teach this. — Therefore, all things, whether words or actions, which have a tendency and expose to sin, tend also to raise in the mind imaginations of what the lust tends to. It is certainly wrong to feed a lust, even in the imagination. It is quite contrary to the holy rules of God’s words. <sup>2180</sup>Proverbs 24:9. “The thought of foolishness is sin.”

<sup>4058</sup>Matthew 5:28. “Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery.” A man, by gratifying his lusts in his imagination and thoughts, may make his soul in the sight of God to be a hold of foul spirits, and like a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. And sinful

imaginations tend to sinful actions, and outward behaviour in the end. Lust is always first conceived in the imagination, and then brought forth in the outward practice. You may see the progress of it in <sup><sin></sup>James 1:15. “Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin.” — Such things are abominable ill the sight of a pure and holy God. We are commended to keep at a great distance from spiritual pollution; and to hate even the very “garment spotted with the flesh.” Jude 23.

**3.** Those things that the experience and observation of mankind show to be ordinarily attended or followed with sm. are of this sort. Experience is a good rule to determine by in things of this nature. How do we know the natural tendency of any thing, but by observation and experience? Men observe and find, that some things are commonly attended and followed with other things; and hence mankind pronounce, that they have a natural tendency to them. We have no other way to know the tendency of any thing. Thus men by observation and experience know that the warmth of the sun, and showers of rain, are attended with the growth of plants; and hence they learn, that they have a tendency to it. So they find by experience, that the bite of some kinds of serpents is commonly followed with illness, and often with death; and hence they learn, that the bite of such serpents has a natural tendency to bring disorder upon the body, and exposes to death. — And so, if experience and common observation shows, that any particular practice or custom is commonly attended with that which is very sinful, we may safely conclude that such a practice tends to sin; that it leads and exposes to it.

Thus we may determine that tavern-haunting and gaming are things that tend to sin; because common experience and observation show, that those practices are attended with a great deal of sin and wickedness. The observation of all ages and all nations, with one voice, declares it. It shows, where taverns are much frequented for drinking and the like, they are especially places of sin, of profaneness, and other wickedness; and It shows, that those towns, where there is much of this, are places where no good generally prevails. And it also shows, that those persons that are given much to frequenting taverns are most commonly vicious persons. And so of gaming; as playing at cards, experience shows, that those persons that practice this, do generally fall into much sin. Hence these practices are become infamous among all sober virtuous persons.

**4.** Another way by which persons may determine of some things, that they lead and expose to sin, is by their own experience, or what they have found in themselves. — This surely is enough to convince them, that such things actually lead and expose to sin; for what will convince men, if their own experience will not? Thus if men have found by undeniable experience, that any practice or custom stirs up lust in them, and has betrayed them into foolish and sinful behaviour, or sinful thoughts; they may determine that they lead to sin. If they, upon examining themselves, must own that a custom or practice has disposed them to the omission of known duty, such as secret or family prayer, and has indisposed them to reading and religious meditation — or if they find, since they have complied with such a custom, they are less watchful of their hearts, less disposed to any thing that is serious; that the frame of their mind is more light, and their hearts less disposed on the things of another world, and more after vanity — these are sinful effects; and therefore if experience shows a custom or practice to be attended with these things, then experience shows that they lead and expose to sin.

**5.** We may determine whether a thing be of an evil tendency or not, by the effect that an outpouring of the Spirit of God, and a general flourishing of religion, has with respect to it. If this puts a stop to any practice or custom, and roots it out; surely it argues, that that practice or custom is of no good tendency. For if there be no hurt in it, and it tends to no hurt, why should the Spirit of God destroy it? The Spirit of God has no tendency to destroy any thing that is neither sinful, nor has any tendency to sin. Why should it! Why should we suppose, that he is an enemy to that which has no hurt in it; nor has any tendency to that which is hurtful?

The flourishing of religion has no tendency to abolish or expel any thing that is no way against religion. That which is not against religion, religion will not appear against. It is a rule that holds in all contraries and opposites: the opposition is equal on both sides. So contrary as light is to darkness, so contrary is darkness to light. So contrary as the flourishing of religion is to any custom, just so contrary is that custom to the flourishing of religion. That custom that religion tends to destroy, that custom, if it prevail, tends also to destroy religion. Therefore, if the flourishing of religion, and the outpouring of the Spirit of God, tends to overthrow any

custom, that takes place or prevails, we may surely determine, that that custom is either in itself sinful, or tends and exposes to evil.

**6.** We may determine, by the effect that a general decay of religion has with respect to them, whether they be things of a sinful tendency or not. If they be things that come with a decay of religion, that creep in as that decays, we may determine they are things of no good tendency. The withdrawing of good does not let in good but evil. Evil, not good, comes in, as good gradually ceases. What is it but darkness that comes in, as light withdraws?

Therefore, if there be any decay of religion in the town, or in particular persons, and upon this, any certain customs or practices take place and are allowed, which were wholly abstained from and renounced, when religion was in a more flourishing state; we may safely conclude that such customs and practices are contrary to the nature of true religion; and therefore in themselves sinful, or tending to sin.

**7.** We may in many things determine whether any custom be of a good tendency, by considering what the effect would be, if it was openly and universally owned and practiced. There are many things which persons practice somewhat secretly, and which they plead to be not hurtful, but which if they had suitable consideration to discern the consequence of every body openly practicing the same, would soon show a most woeful state of things. If therefore there be any custom, that will not bear universal open practice and profession; we may determine that that custom is of an ill tendency. For if it is neither sinful in itself, nor tends to any thing sinful, then it is no matter how open it is: for we need not be afraid of that custom being too prevalent and universal, that has no ill tendency in it.

### SECTION 3

*A serious warning to all, and especially young people.*

THUS I have mentioned some general rules, by which to determine and judge, what things are of a bad and sinful tendency. And these things are so plain, that for a person to deny them, would be absurd and ridiculous. — I would now, in the name of God, warn all persons to avoid such

things, as appear by these rules to lead and expose to sin. And particularly, I would take occasion to warn young; people, as they would approve themselves fearers of God, to avoid all such things in company, that being tried by these rules, will appear to have a tendency to sin. Avoid all such ways of talking and acting as have a tendency to this, and follow the example of Joseph. Not only gross acts of uncleanness, but all decrees of lasciviousness, both in talking and acting, are strictly forbidden in Scripture, as what should not be so much as once named among saints or Christians.

“Now the works of the flesh are manifest, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness.” (⋈Galatians 5:9.)

⋈Ephesians 5:3; 4, 5. “But fornication, and all uncleanness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient; for this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ, and of God.” We should hate even the garments spotted with the flesh, *i.e.* should hate and shun all that, in the least degree, approaches to any such thing.

And I desire that certain customs, too common among young people, may be examined by those rules that have been mentioned. That custom in particular, of young people of different sexes reclining together — however little is made of it, and however ready persons may be to laugh at its being condemned — if it be examined by the rules that have been mentioned, it will appear, past all contradiction, to be one of those things that lead and expose to sin. And I believe experience and fact abundantly bear witness to it. It has been one main thing that has led to the growth of uncleanness in the land. And there are other customs and liberties, customarily used among young people in company, which they who use them know that they lead to sin. They know that they stir up their lusts, and this is the very end for which they do it, to gratify their lusts in some measure. Little do such persons consider, what a holy God they are soon to be judged by, who abominates the impurities of their hearts. — If therefore they do actually stir up and feed lust, then certainly they tend to further degrees and more gross acts. That which stirs up lust, makes it more violent, and does therefore certainly the more expose persons to be

overcome by it. How evident and undeniable are these things, and how strange that any should make a derision of them!

Possibly you may be confident of your own strength; and may think with yourself, that you are not in danger, that there is no temptation in these things, but what you are able easily to overcome. But you should consider that the most self-confident are most in danger. Peter was very confident that he should not deny Christ, but how dreadfully otherwise was the event! If others that have fallen into gross sins, should declare how it was with them; doubtless they would say that they at first thought there was no danger; they were far from the thought that ever they should commit such wickedness; but yet by venturing further and further, they fell at last into the foulest and grossest transgressions. Persons may long withstand temptation, and be suddenly overcome at last. None so much in danger, as the most bold. They are most safe, who are most sensible of their own weakness; most distrustful of their own hearts; and most sensible of their continual need of restraining grace. Young persons, with respect to the sin of uncleanness, are dealt with the devil, just as some give an account of serpents charming birds and other animals down into their mouths. If the serpent takes them with his eyes, though they seem to be affrighted by it, yet they will not flee away, but will keep the serpent in sight, and approach nearer and nearer to him, till they fall a prey.

Another custom that I desire may be examined by the fore-mentioned rules, is that of young people of both sexes getting together in companies for mirth, and spending the time together till late in the night, in their jollity. I desire our young people to suffer their ears to be open to what I have to say upon this point; as I am the messenger of the Lord of hosts to them; and not determine that they will not hearken, before they have heard what I shall say. I hope there are but few persons among us so abandoned, as to determine that they will go on in a practice, whether they are convinced that it is unlawful or not; or though it should be proved to them to be unlawful by undeniable arguments. — Let us then examine this custom and practice by what has been said. It has been proved undeniably, that we ought not to go on in a practice that leads and exposes to sin; and rules have been laid down to judge what does thus expose and lead to it, which I think are plain and undeniable. Certainly a Christian will not be unwilling to have his practices examined and tried by the rules of reason

and God's word but will rather rejoice in it. And I desire particularly that the practice may be tried by that sure touch-stone of experience. This is one of the rules of trial that have been mentioned, that any custom which the experience and observation of mankind show to be ordinarily attended with sin may be concluded to be unlawful. And if we look abroad in the country, I doubt not but these two things will be found.

**1.** That as to those places, where there is most of this carried on among young people, (as there is more of it in some places than others,) it will be found, as a thing that universally holds, that the young people there are commonly a loose, vain, and irreligious generation; little regarding God, heaven or hell, or any thing but vanity. And that commonly in those towns where most frolicking is carried on, there are the most frequent breakings out of gross sins; fornication in particular.

**2.** If we go though the country, we shall for the most part find, that those persons who are most addicted to this practice, are the furthest from serious thought, and are the vainest and loosest upon other accounts. And whence should this be, if such a practice was not sinful, or had not a natural tendency to lead persons into sin.

Now I appeal to those who have made presence's to serious religion and saving piety. You have formerly pretended to keep up religion in your closets, and in your own souls, now seriously ask yourselves whether or no you have not found, that this practice has indisposed you to serious religion, and taken off your minds from it? Has it not tended to your neglect of secret prayer? And, if you have not wholly neglected it, have you not found, that you have been abundantly more ready to turn it off in any manner, and glad to have done with it? more backward to reading and serious meditation, and such things? And that your mind has been exceedingly diverted from religion and that for some time? — I do not send you far off to find out whether this custom be not of bad tendency — not beyond the sea, but your own breast; there let the matter be determined.

Let us now try this custom by the effect which the outpouring of the Spirit of God on a people has with respect to it. This we are under great advantage to do, because there has lately been, in this place, the most remarkable outpouring of the Spirit of God, that was ever been in New England, and it may be in the world, since the apostles' days. And it is

well known, that before then, the custom did prevail in the town, but after, the custom was altogether laid aside, and was so for several years. — No account can be given why the Spirit of God, and the nourishing of religion, should abolish such a custom, unless that custom be either in its nature or tendency an enemy to the Spirit of God, and to religion. — The fruits of the Spirit of God are good, and therefore it is good that this custom should be removed, for this is plainly one of the effects. And if so, it is because the custom is bad, either in its nature or tendency, otherwise there would be no good in its being removed. The Spirit of God abolished this custom for this reason, because if it had been kept up in the town, it would have had a direct tendency to hinder that work which the Spirit was about to do amongst us. This was undeniably the reason.

Supposing such a custom had been begun and set up, by the young people all over the town, in the midst of the time of the late outpouring of the Spirit, all of a sudden, would any wise persons, that have truly the cause of religion at heart; rejoiced at it? Would not every one have concluded, without any hesitation, that there was great danger that it would take off people's minds from religion, and make them vain, and so put an end to the flourishing of religion? Would not every considerate person have thought thus of it? And if such a custom would have had an ill tendency then, so it will now.

**OBJECTION.** The town is not in such circumstances now as it was then: it might have done hurt then, by putting an end to the great concern, but now it may do no hurt for there is now no such great concern to be interrupted by it.

**ANSWER.** Though the town is not in such circumstances now as it was then, yet there ought to be as much engagedness of mind about religion, as much concern among sinners, and as much engagedness among the godly, as then, and it is to our shame that there is not. And if such a practice would have tended to destroy such a religious concern then, it certainly tends to prevent it now. It is a rule that will hold, that what has a tendency to destroy a thing when it is, tends to prevent when it is not. And are we not praying from sabbath to sabbath, and from day to day, for such a concern again? And do not those who pretend to be converted, and yet have lately set up this custom, pray for the same? Are you a convert, a

saint, and yet not desire that there should be any more pouring out of the Spirit of God? The town has cause to be ashamed of such converts, if it has any such. And if ye do, why do you do what tends to prevent it.

Again, Let this practice be tried by the effect that a general decay of religion has with respect to it. Now we have a trial it is now a time that religion is greatly decayed amongst us; and the effect is, that this custom comes in with this decay. Young people begin again to set up their old custom of frolicking, (as it is called,) and spending a great part of the night in it, to the violation of family order. What is the reason, if this custom is not had, either in its nature or tendency, that it did not come in before, when religion was lively? Why does it stay till it can take the advantage of the withdrawment of religion? This is a sign that it is a custom that shuns a spirit of lively religion, as darkness shuns the light, and never comes in till light withdraws.

And here again, I would send persons to their over experience. How did this practice come in with you in particular; you, that two or three years ago seemed to be so engaged in religion? Did it not come in, did you not begin to practice it, as the sense of religion wore off? And what is the matter? Why did not you set up the practice then, when your heart was taken up about reading, meditation, and secret prayer to God? If this do not at ail stand in the way of them, and is no hinderance to them, why was you not engaged in both together? What account can you give of it? Why did you leave off this practice and custom, or abstain from it? To what purpose is this changing? One while it must be avoided as evil, and another while practiced and pleaded for as good? The making such an alteration does not look well, not will it be for the honour of religion in the eye of the world. For whether the practice be lawful or not, yet such a thing will surely be improved to our disadvantage. For your avoiding it then has this appearance in the eye of the country, that then you condemned it; and therefore your now returning to it, will appear to them as backsliding in you. Such changelings are evermore, in the eve of the world? greatly to the dishonour of their profession, let it be what It will.

Indeed, this custom, as it is practiced, does not only tend to sin, but is in itself very disorderly, sinful, and shameful. For it is attended late in the night, and in the dead of the night, to the neglect of family prayer, and


violating all family order, which is disorder and profaneness. Is it lawful to rob God of his ordinary sacrifices, for the sake of your pleasure, diversion, and jollity? Are you of that mind, that it is a decent thing that the stated worship of the great God should give way to your mirth, and your diversions? Is this the way of God's holy children? Those works that are commonly done in the dead of night, seem to have a black mark set upon them by the apostle, and Christians are exhorted to avoid them, Mom.

13:12, 13. "Let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness." The word here rendered rioting is of far different signification from the term, as used in our laws; for the forcible doing an unlawful thing, by three or more persons assembled together for that purpose. But the word here properly signifies, a disorderly convention of persons in order to spend their time together in pleasure and jollity. So the word is commonly used in Scripture: Proverbs 33:20. "Be not amongst riotous eaters of flesh." ~~13:12~~ Proverbs 28:7. "He that is a companion of riotous men, shameth his father." ~~13:13~~ Luke 15:13. — "wasted his substance with riotous living." — Again, a black mark seems to be set on such in Scripture, as in ~~13:14~~ 1 Thessalonians 5:5 — 7. "Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep, sleep in the night; and they that he drunken are drunken in the night."

Many of you that have lately set up this practice of frolicking and jollity, profess to be children of the light and of the day; and not to be the children of darkness. Therefore walk as in the day; and do not those works of darkness, that are commonly done at unseasonable hours of the night. Such things are not only condemned by the apostle, but are looked upon as infamous in all ages among sober people, as all past writings manifest. Therefore it is a thing of bad report, and so forbidden. ~~13:15~~ Philippians 4:8. "Whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue — any praise, think on these things."

**OBJECTION.** But the wise man allows of this practice, when he says, ~~13:16~~ Ecclesiastes 3:4. "There is a time to mourn and a time to dance."

**ANSWER.** This is nothing to the purpose; for the utmost that any can pretend that it proves, is that it may be used under some circumstances; but not at all, that dancing and other things used by our young people in their frolics are lawful, in those circumstances: any more than what is said in the same chapter, verse 3. — “there is a time to kill,” proves that it is lawful for a man to commit murder. — To deny that dancing, under any circumstances whatever, was lawful, would be absurd; for there was a religious dancing in the Jewish church, which was a way of expressing their spiritual mirth. So David danced before the Lord. And he calls upon others to praise God in the dance. So there may be other circumstances wherein dancing may not be unlawful. But all this makes nothing to the present purpose; to prove that this particular custom is not of a bad tendency. Besides, when the wise man says, “there is a time to dance,” that does not prove, that the dead of the night is the time for it. The same wise man doth not justify carnal mirth, but condemns it.

“I said of laughter, it is mad; and of mirth, what doth it?”  
( Ecclesiastes 2:2.)

**OBJECTION.** If we avoid all such things, it will be the way for our young people to be ignorant how to behave themselves in company.

**ANSWER.** But consider what this objection comes to. It certainly comes to this, viz. That the pouring out of the Spirit of God upon a people, tends to banish all good conduct, good breeding, and decent behaviour from among them, and to sink them down into clownishness and barbarity! The Spirit of God did actually put an end to this practice among us. — But who is not ashamed to make such an objection? Will any of our young converts talk thus? Will you, that think you were converted by the late pouring out of the Spirit of God, and are made holy persons, heirs of eternal life, talk so blasphemously of it?

If our young people are resolute still to go on notwithstanding all that has been said, I hope that those of them who call themselves converted, will first find out some rational, satisfying answer to the arguments that have been used against it. This at least may be reasonably expected of them seeing they make such a profession. You have this day been partaking of the sacrament of the Lord’s supper, and therein solemnly renewed your profession. — If after such light set before you, and such mercy given,

you will go on, be it known to you, that your eating now, and at other times, will prove only an eating and drinking judgment to yourselves.

And I desire heads of families, if they have any government over their children, or any command of their own houses, would not tolerate their children in such practices nor suffer such conventions in their houses. — I do not desire that young people should be abridged of any lawful and proper liberties. But this custom can be of no benefit or service in the world: it tends only to mischief. — Satan doubtless would be glad to have such an interest amongst us as he used to have, and is therefore striving to steal in, while we are sleeping but let us rouse up ourselves, and vigorously oppose his encroachments. I shall repeat those words of the apostle, ~~✠~~ Romans 13:12-14. and leave them to the serious consideration of all persons, old and young. “The night is far spent, the day is at hand, let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.”

# THE PRECIOUS IMPORTANCE OF TIME.

## AND THE IMPORTANCE OF REDEEMING IT.

Redeeming the time. (<sup>496</sup>Ephesians 5:16)

CHRISTIANS should not only study to improve the opportunities they enjoy, for their own advantage, as those who would make a good bargain; but also labour to reclaim others from their evil courses; that so God might defer his anger, and time might be redeemed from that terrible destruction, which, when it should come, would put an end to the time of divine patience. And it may be upon this account, that this reason is added, Because the days are evil. As if the apostle had said, the corruption of the times tends to hasten threatened judgments, but your holy and circumspect walk will tend to redeem time from the devouring jaws of those calamities. — However, thus much is certainly held forth to us in the words, viz. That upon time we should set a high value, and be exceeding careful that it be not lost; and we are therefore exhorted to exercise wisdom and circumspection, in order that we may redeem it. And hence it appears, that time is exceedingly precious.

### SECTION 1

*Why time is precious.*

TIME is precious for the following reasons:

**1.** Because a happy or miserable eternity depends on the good or ill improvement of it. Things are precious in proportion to their importance, or to the degree wherein they concern our welfare. Men are wont to set the highest value on those things upon which they are sensible their interest chiefly depends. And this renders time so exceedingly precious, because our eternal welfare depends on the improvement of it. — Indeed our welfare in this world depends upon its improvement. If we improve it not,

we shall be in danger of coming to poverty and disgrace; but by a good improvement of it, we may obtain those things which will be useful and comfortable. But it is above all things precious, as our state through eternity depends upon it. The importance of the improvement of time upon other accounts, is in subordination to this.

Gold and silver are esteemed precious by men; but they are of no worth to any man, only as thereby he has an opportunity of avoiding or removing some evil, or of possessing himself of some good. And the greater the evil is which any man hath advantage to escape, or the good which he hath advantage to obtain, by any thing that he possesses, by so much the greater is the value of that thing to him, whatever it be. Thus if a man, by any thing which he hath, may save his life, which he must lose without it he will look upon that by which he hath the opportunity of escaping so great an evil as death, to be very precious. — Hence it is that time is so exceedingly precious, because by it we have opportunity of escaping everlasting misery, and of obtaining everlasting blessedness and glory. On this depends our escape from an infinite evil, and our attainment of an infinite good.

**2.** Time is very short, which is another thing that renders it very precious. The scarcity of any commodity occasions men to set a higher value upon it, especially if it be necessary and they cannot do without it. Thus when Samaria was besieged by the Syrians, and provisions were exceedingly scarce, “an ass’s head was sold for fourscore pieces of silver, and the fourth part of a cab of dove’s dung for five pieces of silver” <sup><1165></sup>2 Kings 6:25. — So time is the more to be prized by men, because a whole eternity depends upon it, and yet we have but a little of time.

“When a few years are come, then I shall go the way whence  
I shall not return.” (<sup><18162></sup>Job 16:22.)

“My days are swifter than a post. They are passed away as the swift ships, as the eagle that hasteth to the prey.” <sup><18125></sup>Job 9:25, 26. “Our life, what is it? it is but a vapour which appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.” <sup><5044></sup>James 4:14. It is but as a moment to eternity. Time is so short, and the work which we have to do in it is so great, that we have none of it to spare. The work which we have to do to prepare for eternity must be done in time, or it never can be done; and it is found to be a work

of great difficulty and labour, and therefore that for which time is the more requisite.

**3.** Time ought to be esteemed by us very precious, because we are uncertain of its continuance. We know that it is very short, but we know not how short. We know not how little of it remains, whether a year, or several years, or only a month, a week, or a day. We are every day uncertain whether that day will not be the last, or whether we are to have the whole day. There is nothing that experience doth more verify than this. — If a man had but little provision laid up for a journey or a voyage, and at the same time knew that if his provision should fail, he must perish by the way, he would be the more choice of it. — How much more would many men prize their time if they knew that they had but a few months, or a few days, more to live! And certainly a wise man will prize his time the more, as he knows not but that it will be so as to himself. This is the case with multitudes now in the world, who at present enjoy health, and see no signs of approaching death: many such, no doubt, are to die the next month, many the next week, yea, many probably to-morrow, and some this night; yet these same persons know nothing of it, and perhaps think nothing of it, and neither they nor their neighbours can say that they are more likely soon to be taken out of the world than others. This teaches us how we ought to prize our time, and how careful we ought to be, that we lose none of it.

**4.** Time is very precious, because when it is past, it cannot be recovered. There are many things which men possess which if they part with, they can obtain them again. If a man have parted with something which he had, not knowing the worth of it, or the need he should have of it; he often can regain it, at least with pains and cost. If a man have been overseen in a bargain, and have bartered away or sold something, and afterwards repent of it, he may often obtain a release, and recover what he had parted with. — But it is not so with respect to time; when once that is gone, it is gone for ever; no pains, no cost will recover it. Though we repent ever so much that we let it pass, and did not improve it while we had it, it will be to no purpose. Every part of it is successively offered to us, that we may choose whether we will make it our own, or not. But there is no delay; it will not wait upon us to see whether or no we will comply with the offer. But if we refuse, it is immediately taken away, and never offered more. As

to that part of time which is gone, however we have neglected to improve it, it is out of our possession and out of our reach.

If we have lived fifty, or sixty, or seventy years, and have not improved our time, now it cannot be helped; it is eternally gone from us: all that we can do, is to improve the little that remains. Yea, if a man have spent all his life but a few moments unimproved, all that is gone is lost, and only those few remaining moments can possibly be made his own, and if the whole of a man's time be gone, and it be all lost, it is irrecoverable. — Eternity depends on the improvement of time; but when once the time of life is gone, when once death is come, we have no more to do with time, there is no possibility of obtaining the restoration of it, or another space in which to prepare for eternity. If a man should lose the whole of his worldly substance, and become a bankrupt, it is possible that his loss may be made up. He may have another estate as good. But when the time of life is gone, it is impossible that we should ever obtain another such time. All opportunity of obtaining eternal welfare is utterly and everlastingly gone.

## SECTION 2

### *Reflections on time past.*

You have now heard of the preciousness of time; and you are the persons concerned, to whom God hath committed that precious talent. You have an eternity before you. When God created you, and gave you reasonable soul he made you for an endless duration. He gave you time here in order to a preparation for eternity, and your future eternity depends on the improvement of time. — Consider, therefore, what you have done with your past time. You are not now beginning your time, but a great deal is past and gone; and all the wit, and power, and treasure of the universe, cannot recover it. Many of you may well conclude, that more than half of your time is gone; though you should live to the ordinary age of man, your glass is more than half run; and it may be there are but few sands remaining. Your sun is past the meridian, and perhaps just setting, or going into an everlasting eclipse. Consider, therefore, what account you can give of your improvement of past time. How have you let the precious golden sands of your glass run?

Every day that you have enjoyed has been precious; yea, your moments have been precious. But have you not wasted your precious moments, your precious days, yea your precious years? If you should reckon up how many days you have lived, what a sum would there be! and how precious hath every one of those days been! Consider, therefore, what have you done with them? what is become of them all? What can you show of any improvement made, or good done, or benefit obtained. answerable to all this time which you have lived? When you look back, and search, do you not find this past time of your lives in a great measure empty, having not been filled up with any good improvement? And if God, that hath given you your time, should now call you to an account, what account could you give to him?

How much may be done in a year! how much good is there opportunity to do in such a space of time! How much service may persons do for God, and how much for their own souls, if to their utmost they improve it! How much may be done in a day! But what have you done in so many days and years that you have lived? What have you done with the whole time of your youth, you that are past your youth? What is become of all that precious season of life? Hath it not all been in vain to you? Would it not have been as well or better for you, if all that time you had been asleep, or in a state of non-existence?

You have had much time of leisure and freedom from worldly business; consider to what purpose you have spent it. You have not only had ordinary time, but you have had a great deal of holy time. What have you done with all the sabbath-days which you have enjoyed? Consider those things seriously, and let your own consciences make answer.

### SECTION 3

*Who are chiefly deserving of reproof from the subject  
of the preciousness of time.*

How little is the preciousness of time considered, and how little sense of it do the greater part of mankind seem to have! and to how little good purpose do many spend their time! There is nothing more precious, and yet nothing of which men are more prodigal. Time is with many, as silver was in the days of Solomon, as the stones of the street, and nothing

accounted of. They act as if time were as plenty as silver was then, and as if they had a great deal more than they needed, and knew not what to do with it. If men were as lavish of their money as they are of their time, if it were as common a thing for them to throw away their money, as it is for them to throw away their time, we should think them beside themselves, and not in the possession of their right minds. Yet time is a thousand times more precious than money; and when it is gone, cannot be purchased for money, cannot be redeemed by silver or gold. — There are several sorts of persons who are reprov'd by this doctrine, whom I shall particularly mention.

**1.** Those who spend a great part of their time in idleness, or in doing nothing that turns to any account, either for the good of their souls or bodies; nothing either for their own benefit, or for the benefit of their neighbour, either of the family or of the body-politic to which they belong. There are some persons upon whose hands time seems to lie heavy, who, instead of being concerned to improve it as it passes, and taking care that it pass not without making it their own, act as if it were rather their concern to contrive ways how to waste and consume it; as though time, instead of being precious, rather a mere encumbrance to them. Their hands refuse to labour, and rather than put themselves to it, they will let their families suffer, and will suffer themselves:

“An idle soul shall suffer hunger.” (<sup>2195</sup>Proverbs 19:15.)

“Drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags.” (<sup>2122</sup>Proverbs 22:21.)

Some spend much of their time at the tavern, over their cups, and in wandering about from house to house, wasting away their hours in idle and unprofitable talk which will turn to no good account. (<sup>2143</sup>Proverbs 14:23. “In all labour there is profit; but the talk of the lips tendeth only to poverty.” The direction of the apostle, in <sup>4003</sup>Ephesians 4:28. is, that we should “labour, working with our hands the thing that is good, that we may have to give to him that needeth.” But indolent men, instead of gaining any thing to give to him that needeth, do but waste what they have already:

“He that is slothful in his work, is brother to him that is a great waster.” (<sup>2189</sup>Proverbs 18:9.)

**2.** They are reprov'd by this doctrine who spend their time in wickedness, who do not merely spend their time in doing nothing to any good purpose, but spend it to ill purposes. Such do not only lose their time, but they do worse; with it they hurt both themselves and others. — Time is precious, as we have heard, because eternity depends upon it. By the improvement of time, we have opportunity of escaping eternal misery, and obtaining eternal blessedness. But those who spend their time in wicked works, not only neglect to improve their time to obtain eternal happiness, or to escape damnation, but they spend it to a quite contrary purpose, viz. to increase their eternal misery, or to render their damnation the more heavy and intolerable.

Some spend much time in revelling, and in unclean talk and practices, in vicious company-keeping, in corrupting and ensnaring the minds of others, setting bad examples, and leading others into sin, undoing not only their own souls, but the souls of others. Some spend much of their precious time in detraction and backbiting; in talking against others; in contention, not only quarrelling themselves, but fomenting and stirring up strife and contention. It would have been well for some men, and well for their neighbours, if they had never done any thing at all; for then they would have done neither good nor hurt. But now they have done a great deal more hurt than they have done or ever will do good. There are some persons whom it would have been better for the towns where they live, to have been at the charge of maintaining them in doing nothing, if that would have kept them in a state of inactivity.

Those who have spent much of their time in wickedness, if ever they shall reform, and enter upon a different mode of living, will find, not only that they have wasted the past, but that they have made work for their remaining time, to undo what they have done. How will many men when they shall have done with time, and shall look back upon their past lives, wish that they had had no time! The time which they spend on earth will be worse to them than if they had spent so much time in hell, for an eternity of more dreadful misery in hell will be the fruit of their time on earth, as they employ it.

**3.** Those are reprov'd by his doctrine, who spend their time only in unworldly pursuits, neglecting their souls. Such men lose their time, let

them be ever so diligent in their worldly business, and though they may be careful not to let any of it pass so, but that it shall some way or other turn to their worldly profit. They that improve time only for their benefit in time, lose it, because time was not given for itself, but for that everlasting duration which succeeds it. — They, therefore, whose time is taken up in caring and labouring for the world only, in inquiring what they shall eat, and what they shall drink and wherewithal they shall be clothed, in contriving to lay up for themselves treasures Upon earth, how to enrich themselves, how to make themselves great in the world, or how to live in comfortable and pleasant circumstances, while here, vitro busy their minds and employ their strength in these things only, and the stream of whose affections is directed towards these things; they lose their precious thee.

Let such, therefore, as have been guilty of thus spending their time, consider it. You have spent a great part of your time, and a great part of your strength, in getting a little of the world; and how little good doth it afford you, now you have gotten it! What happiness or satisfaction can you reap from it? will it give you peace of conscience, or any rational quietness or comfort? What is your poor, needy, perishing soul the better for it? and what better prospects doth it afford you of your approaching eternity? and what will all that you have acquired avail you when time shall be no longer?

## SECTION 4

### *An exhortation to improve thee.*

CONSIDER what hath been said of the preciousness of time, how much depends upon it, how short and uncertain it is, how irrecoverable It will be when gone. If you have a right conception of these things, you will be more choice of your time than of the most fine gold. Every hour and moment will seem precious to you. — But besides those considerations which have been already set before you, consider also the following.

**1.** That you are accountable to God for your time. Time is a talent given us by God; he hath set us our day; and it is not for nothing, our day was appointed for some work; therefore he will, at the day's end, call us to an account. We must give account to him of the improvement of all our time. We are God's servants; as a servant is accountable to his master, how he

spends his time when he is sent forth to work, so are we accountable to God. If men would aright consider this, and keep it in mind, would they not improve their time otherwise than they do? Would you not behave otherwise than you do, if you considered with yourselves every morning, that you must give an account to God, how you shall have spent that day? and if you considered with yourselves, at the beginning of every evening, that you must give an account to God, how you shall have spent that evening? Christ hath told us, that “for every idle word which men speak, they shall give account in the day of judgment,” <sup>403</sup>Matthew 12:36. How well, therefore, may we conclude, that we must give an account of all our idle misspent time!

**2.** Consider how much time you have lost already. For your having lost so much, you have the greater need of diligently improving what yet remains. You ought to mourn and lament over your lost time; but that is not all, you must apply yourselves the more diligently to improve the remaining part, that you may redeem lost time. — You who are considerably advanced in life, and have hitherto spent your time in vanities and worldly cares, and have lived in a great measure negligent of the interests of your souls, may well be terrified and amazed, when you think how much time you have lost and wasted away. — In that you have lost so much time, you have the more need of diligence, on three accounts.

**(1.)** As your opportunity is so much the shorter. — Your time at its whole length is short But set aside all that you have already lost, and then how much shorter is it! As to that part of your time which you have already lost, it is not to be reckoned into your opportunity; for that will never be any more, and it is no better, but worse to you, than if it never had been.

**(2.)** You have the same work to do that you had at first, and that under greater difficulties. Hitherto you have done nothing at all of your work, all remains to be done, and that with vastly greater difficulties and opposition in your way than would have been if you had set about it seasonably. So that the lime in which to do your work is not only grown shorter, but your work is grown greater. You not only have the same work to do, but you have more work, for while you have lost your time, you have not only shortened it, but you have been making,

work for yourselves. How well may this consideration awaken you to a thorough care, not to let things run on in this manner any longer, and rouse you up immediately to apply yourselves to your work with all your might!

**(3.)** That is the best of your time which you have lost. The first of a man's time, after he comes to the exercise of his reason, and to be capable of performing his work, is the best. You who have lived in sin till past your youth have lost the best part. So that here are all these things to be considered together, viz. that your time in the whole is but short, there is none to spare, a great part of that is gone, so that it is become much shorter; that which is gone is the best, yet all your work remains, and not only so, but with greater difficulties than ever before attended it and the shorter your time is, the more work you have to do.

What will make you sensible of the necessity of a diligent improvement of remaining time, if these things will not? Sometimes such considerations as these have another effect, viz. to discourage persons, and to make them think that seeing they have lost so much time, it is not worth their while to attempt to do any thing now. The devil makes fools of them for when they are young, he tells them, there is time enough hereafter, there is no need of being in haste, it will be better seeking salvation hereafter and then they believe him. Afterwards, when their youth is past, he tells them, that now they have lost so much, and the best of their time, that it is not worth their while to attempt to do anything, and now they believe him too. So that with them no time is good. The season of youth is not a good time, for that is most fit for pleasure and mirth, and there will be enough afterwards, and what comes afterwards is not a good time because the best of it is gone. Thus are men infatuated and; ruined.

But what madness is it for persons to give way to discouragement, so as to neglect their work, because their time is short! What need have they rather to awake out of sleep, thoroughly to rouse up themselves, and to be in good earnest, that if possible they may yet obtain eternal life! Peradventure God may yet give them repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth, that they may be saved. Though it be late in the day, yet God calls upon you to rouse, and to apply yourselves to your work; and will

you not hearken to his counsel in this great affair, rather than to the counsel of your mortal enemy?

**3.** Consider how time is sometimes valued by those who are come near to the end of it. What a sense of its preciousness have poor sinners sometimes, when they are on their death-beds! Such have cried out, O, a thousand worlds for an inch of time! Then time appears to them indeed precious. An inch of time could do them no more good than before, when they were in health, supposing a like disposition to improve it, nor indeed so much; for a man's time upon a death-bed is attended with far greater disadvantage for such an improvement as will be for the good of his soul, than when he is in health. — But the near approach of death makes men sensible of the inestimable worth of time. Perhaps, when they were in health, they were as insensible of its value as you are, and were as negligent of it. But how are their thoughts altered now! It is not because they are deceived, that they think time to be of such value, but because their eyes are opened; and it is because you are deceived and blind that you do not think as they do.

**4.** Consider what a value we may conclude is set upon time by those who are past the end of it. What thoughts do you think they have of its preciousness, who have lost all their opportunity for obtaining eternal life, and are gone to hell? Through they were very lavish of their time while they lived, and set no great value upon it; yet how have they changed their judgments! How would they value the opportunity which you have, if they might but have it granted to them! What would they not give for one of your days, under the means of grace! — So will you, first or last, be convinced. But if you be not convinced except in the manner in which they are, it will be too late.

There are two ways of making men sensible of the preciousness of time. One is, by showing them the reason why it must be precious, by telling them how much depends on it, how short it is, how uncertain, etc. The other is experience, wherein men are convinced how much depends on the improvement of time. The latter is the most effectual way; for that always convinces, if nothing else doth. — But if persons be not convinced by the former means, the latter will do them no good. If the former be ineffectual, the latter, though it be certain, yet is always too late. Experience never

fails to open the eyes of men, though they were never opened before. But if they be first opened by that, it is no way to their benefit. Let all therefore be persuaded to improve their time to their utmost.

## SECTION 5

*Midwife repecting the improvement of time.*

I SHALL conclude with advising to three things in particular.

**1.** Improve the present time without any delay. If you delay and put off its improvement, still more time wilt be lost, and it will be an evidence that you are not sensible of its preciousness. Talk not of more convenient seasons hereafter, but improve your time while you have it, after the example of the psalmist,

“I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments.”  
(~~HB~~ Psalm 119:60.)

**2.** Be especially careful to improve those parts of time which are most precious. Though all time is very precious, yet some parts are more precious than others; as, particularly, holy time is more precious than common time. Such time is of great advantage for our everlasting welfare; therefore, above all, improve your sabbaths, and especially the time of public worship, which is the most precious part. Lose it not either in sleep, or in carelessness, inattention, and wandering imaginations. How sottish are they who waste away, not only their common, but holy time, yea the very season of attendance on the holy ordinances of God! — The time of youth is precious, on many accounts. Therefore, if you be in the enjoyment of this time, take heed that you improve it. Let not the precious days and years of youth slip away without improvement. A time of the strivings of God’s Spirit is more precious than other time. Then God is near; and we are directed, in ~~2RD~~ Isaiah 55:6. “To seek the Lord while he may be found, and to call upon him while he is near.” Such especially is an accepted time, and a day of salvation: ~~4RD~~ 2 Corinthians 6:2. “I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in a day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.”

**3.** Improve well your time of leisure from worldly business. Many persons have a great deal of such time, and all have some. If men be but disposed to it, such time may be improved to great advantage. When we are most free from cares for the body, and business of an outward nature, a happy opportunity for the soul is afforded. Therefore spend not such opportunities unprofitably, nor in such a manner that you will not be able to give a good account thereof to God. Waste them not away wholly in unprofitable visits, or useless diversions or amusements. Diversion should be used only in subserviency to business. So much, and no more, should be used, as doth most fit the mind and body for the work of our general and particular callings.

You have need to improve every talent, advantage, and opportunity, to your utmost, while time lasts; for it will soon be said concerning you, according to the oath of the angel, in ~~color~~ Revelation 10:5, 6. “And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer.”

# PROCRASTINATION.

OR,

## THE SIN AND FOLLY OF DEPENDING ON FUTURE TIME.

Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day  
may bring forth. (<sup><107></sup>Proverbs 27:1)

THE design of the wise man in this book of Proverbs, is to give us the precepts of true wisdom, or to teach us how to conduct ourselves wisely in the course of our lives. Wisdom very much consists in making a wise improvement of time, and of the opportunities we enjoy. This is often in Scripture spoken of as a great part of true wisdom; as <sup><152></sup>Deuteronomy 32:29. “O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!” And <sup><1012></sup>Psalms 90:12. “So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.” So the wisdom of the wise virgins is represented as consisting much in this, that they improved the proper season to buy oil.

Therefore the wise man in these books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, agreeably to his design, insists on this part of wisdom. He tells us the advantage of seeking Christ early, <sup><1087></sup>Proverbs 8:17. And advises us “to do what our hand findeth to do, with our might.” <sup><1090></sup>Ecclesiastes 9:10. He advises young people to remember their Creator in the days of their youth while the evil days come not, in which they shall say they have no pleasure, <sup><1111></sup>Ecclesiastes 12:1. So here he advises us to a wise improvement of the present season. — In the words are two things to be particularly observed.

**1.** The precept not to boast of to-morrow; *i.e.* not to speak or act as though it were our own. It is absurd for men to boast of that which is not theirs. The wise man would not have us behave ourselves as though any time were ours but the present. He that boasts of to-morrow, acts as

though he had to-morrow in his possession or had something whereby he might depend on it, and call it his own.

**2.** The reason given for this precept, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth. It is a good reason why we should not behave ourselves as though the morrow were our own, that indeed it is not, we are not sure of it, we have no hold of future time, we know not whether we shall see the morrow: or if we do know that we shall see it, we know not what we shall see on it. — Hence, we ought to behave ourselves every day, as though we had no dependence on any other.

## SECTION 1

### *Needful precautions.*

To prevent a misunderstanding of the doctrine, I observe that it is not meant, that we should in every respect behave as though we knew that we should not live another day. Not depending on another day, is a different thing, from concluding, that we shall not live another day. We may have reason for the one, and not for the other. We have good reason not to depend on another day, but we have no reason to conclude, that we shall not live another day.

In some respects we ought to carry ourselves, as though we know we should not live another day, and should improve every day as if it were the last. Particularly, we should live every day as conscientiously and as holily as if we knew it were the last. We should be as careful every day to avoid all sin, as if we knew that that night our souls should be required of us. We should be as careful to do every duty which God requires of us, and take as much care that we have a good account to give to our Judge, of our improvement of that day, as if we concluded that we must be called to give an account before another day.

But in many other respects, we are not obliged to behave ourselves as though we concluded that we should not live to another day. If we had reason to conclude that we should not live another day, some things would not be our duty which now are our duty. As for instance, in such a case it would not be the duty of any person to make provision for his temporal subsistence during another day: to neglect which, as things now are would

be very imprudent and foolish, as the consequences would show, if every man were to act in this manner. If so, it would never be man's duty to plough or sow the field, or to lay up for winter; but these things are man's duty, as ~~and~~ Proverbs 6:6. "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest." And chapter 10:5, etc. "He that gathereth in the summer is a wise son: but he that sleepeth in harvest, is a son that causeth shame." And many other places might be mentioned.

So on the other hand, if we were certain that we should not live another day, some things would be our duty today, which now are not so. As for instance, it would be proper for us to spend our time in giving our dying counsels, and in setting our houses in order. If it were revealed to us, that we should die before to-morrow morning we ought to look upon it as a call of God to us, to spend the short remainder of our lives in those things which immediately concern our departure, more than otherwise it would be our duty to do. — Therefore, the words which forbid us to boast of to-morrow, cannot be extended so far as to signify, that we ought in all respects to live, as if we knew we should not see another day. Yet they undoubtedly mean, that we ought not to behave ourselves in any respect, as though we depended on another day.

## SECTION 2

### *The precept explained.*

Boast not thyself of tomorrow. In this precept two things seem to be forbidden.

**1.** Boasting ourselves of what shall be on the morrow, or behaving ourselves as though we depended on particular things to come to pass in this world, in some future time. As when men behave themselves, as though they depended on being rich, or promoted to honour hereafter: or as though they were sure of accomplishing any particular design another day. So did the rich man in the gospel, when he did not only promise himself, that he should live many years, but promised himself also, that he should be rich many years. Hence he said to his soul, that he had much goods laid up for many years. And if men act as though they depended

upon it, that they should another day accomplish such and such things for their souls, then may they be said to boast themselves of to-morrow, and not to behave themselves as though they depended on no other day. As when they behave themselves, as though they depended upon it, that they should at another day have such and such advantages for the good of their souls; that they should at another day have the strivings of God's Spirit; that they should at another day find themselves disposed to be thorough in seeking their salvation; that they should at another day have a more convenient season; and that God at another day would stand ready to hear their prayers, and show them mercy.

Or if they act as though they depended upon it that they should have considerable opportunity on a death-bed to seek mercy, or whatever they promise themselves should come to pass respecting them in this world, if they act as depending on it, they boast themselves of tomorrow.

**2.** Another thing implied, is our boasting of future time itself, or acting as though we depended on it, that we should have our lives continued to us another day. Not only is the command of God delivered in the text transgressed by those who behave themselves as depending upon it, that they shall see and obtain such and such things to-morrow; but by those who act as depending upon it, that they shall remain in being in this world to-morrow.

Both these ways of boasting of to-morrow are reproved by the apostle James, chapter 4:13. "Go to now, ye that say, To-day or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain." By promising themselves that they shall do such and such things, and that they shall get gain, they boast themselves of what shall come to pass in such a time. The apostle in the next verse teaches them, that they ought not to do this, no nor so much as depend upon seeing another day, or on having their lives continued, verse 14. "Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow: for what is your life? It is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." And in verse 15. he teaches us that both are uncertain and dependent on the will of God, viz. Whether we shall live another day, and if we do, whether such and such things shall come to pass?" For that you ought to say, If the Lord will, we

shall live, and do this or that.” Therefore he adds in verse 16. “But now you rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil.”

### SECTION 3

*When men act as though they depend on another day.*

**1.** THEY will do so, if they set their hearts on the enjoyments of this life. I mean not, if they have any manner of affection to them. We may have some affection to the enjoyments of this world; otherwise they would cease to be enjoyments. If we might have no degree of rejoicing in them, we could not be thankful for them. Persons may in a degree take delight in earthly friends, and other earthly enjoyments. It is agreeable to the wise man’s advice that we should do so, <sup><215></sup>Ecclesiastes 5:18. “It is good and comely for one to eat and to drink, and to enjoy the good of all this labour that he taketh under the sun.” — But by setting our hearts on these things, by placing our happiness on them, and letting out the current of our affections after them — by fuming and fixing our inclinations so much upon them, that we cannot well enjoy ourselves without them, so that very much of the strength of the faculties of our minds is employed and taken up about these things — we show that we have our dependence on another day.

The man who doth thus, acts as though he depended on another day, yea many other days, in the world; for it is most evident, that if the enjoyments of this world be of such a nature that they are not to be depended on for one day more, they are not worth the setting of our hearts upon them, or the placing of our happiness in them. We may rejoice in the enjoyments of the world, but not in such a manner as to place the rest of our souls in them. As the apostle saith, we should rejoice in them as though we rejoiced not, <sup><417></sup>1 Corinthians 7:30. So that if this joy should fail, our stock may hold good; and in this case we must behave ourselves only as if we had lost a small stream of joy, but still had the fountain in full possession. We should conduct ourselves as those who have not the foundation of their joy shaken, though some appurtenances have failed. Our happiness as to the body of it, if I may so speak, should yet stand as on an immovable foundation.

They who are very much pleased and elated with the enjoyments of the world, certainly behave themselves as though they had much dependence on their continuance for more than one or two days more. They who addict themselves to vain mirth, and lead a jovial life, show that they set their hearts on the enjoyments of the world, and act as those who depend on more days than the present. For if they were sensible that they could not depend on any future time, but that death would put an eternal end to all their carnal mirth before to-morrow, they would have no heart to spend the present day in such a manner as they now do. It would immediately produce in them a disposition far from levity and vanity.

And when persons are very much sunk with the loss of any temporal enjoyments, or with any temporal disappointments, It shows that they set their hearts upon them, and behave as though they boasted of tomorrow, and depended on their long continuance in life. If they had no such dependence, they would not be frustrated, or would not be overwhelmed by their frustration. If they be very much sunk, and the comfort of their lives be destroyed by it, it shows that those temporal enjoyments were too much the foundation on which their comfort stood. That which makes a building totter, and threatens its destruction, is not the taking away of some of the exterior parts of the superstructure, but the removal of some considerable part of the foundation on which the house stands.

**2.** If men are proud of their worldly circumstances, it shows that they have a dependence on to-morrow, for no man would think it worth his while to vaunt himself in that which is to be depended on only for a day. Though a man have a great estate to-day, he will not be puffed up with it, unless he depend upon having it to-morrow. A man who hath no dependence, but that he may to-morrow be in the grave, where the small and great are upon a level, <sup>Job 3:19</sup> will not be much lifted up with his advancement to a post of honour.

That person will not be proud of his rich and fine clothes, who is sensible that he may be stripped by death to-morrow, and sent out of the world, as he came naked into it. He will not to-day be very proud of his personal beauty, who hath no dependence on escaping to-morrow that stroke of death which will mar all his beauty, and make that face which he now

thinks so comely, appear ghastly and horrid, when instead of a ruddy and florid countenance, there will be the blood settled, cold and congealed, the flesh stiff and clayey, the teeth set, the eyes fixed and sunk into the head. Nor will he to-day very much affect to beautify and adorn with gaudy and flaunting apparel, that body concerning which he is sensible that it may be wrapped in a winding sheet to-morrow, to be carried to the grave, there to rot, and be covered and filled with worms.

**3.** When men envy others their worldly enjoyments, their wealth, their worldly ease, or their titles and high places — their sensual pleasures, or any of their worldly circumstances — it shows, that they set their hearts on the things of the world; and that they are not sensible that these things are not to be depended upon for another day. If they were, they would not think them worth their envy. They would appear so worthless in their eyes, that they would not care who had them, nor who went without them. — So when they contend about worldly possessions and enjoyments, (as almost all the contentions that are in the world are about these things,) it shows that they have dependence on to-morrow; otherwise they would not think the enjoyments of the world worth contending about. They would be very much of the temper recommended by Jesus Christ,

“He that will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.” (<sup>4054</sup>Matthew 5:40.)

**4.** Men behave themselves as if they depended on another day, when they rest at ease to-day, in a condition out of which they must be delivered before they die. When a man's mind is at rest, there is something that he rests in: it must have some foundation, either real or imaginary. But if the man be in a condition from which he is sensible he must some time or other be delivered, or be undone, it is impossible that he should rest in the thoughts of remaining in his condition always, and never being delivered from it: for no man is willing to be ruined, no man can rest in that which he conceives to be connected with his own misery and undoing. — Therefore, if he rest in such a condition for the present, it must be on a supposition, that he shall be delivered from it. If he rest in it to-day, it must be because he depends on being delivered another day, and therefore depends on seeing another day.

We in this land generally profess, that as we are by sinful nature, we are exposed to eternal death, and that therefore there is a necessity that we get out of a natural condition some time before we die. And those among us who are sensible that they have never passed through any such change as in Scripture is called a being born again, though they be not sufficiently convinced that there is any such place as hell, yet have a kind of belief of it at least they do not conclude that there is no such place, and therefore cannot but be sensible that it would be dreadful to die unconverted. Therefore, if they be in a considerable degree of ease and quietness in their condition, it must be because they have a dependence on being delivered out of such a condition some time before they die.

Inasmuch as they are easy, remaining in such a condition to-day, without any prospect of present deliverance, it shows plainly that they depend on another day. If they did not, they could have no quietness in their spirits, because, if there be no grounds of dependence on any further opportunity, then what they are exposed to, by missing the opportunity which they have today, is infinitely dreadful. — Persons who are secure in their sins, under the light of the gospel, unless they be deceived with a false hope, are generally so because they boast themselves of to-morrow. They depend on future opportunity, they flatter themselves with hopes of living long in the world, they depend on what shall come to pass hereafter, they depend on the fulfillment of their good intentions as to what they will do at a more convenient season.

**5.** Men behave themselves as those who depend on another day, when they neglect any thing to-day which must be done before they die. If there be any thing, which is absolutely necessary to be done some time before death, and the necessity of it be sufficiently declared and shown to the person for whom it is thus necessary, if he neglect setting about it immediately, sincerely, and with all his might, certainly it carries this face with it that the man depends upon its being done hereafter, an] consequently that he shall have opportunity to do it. — Because, as to those things which are absolutely necessary to be done, there is need, not only of a possibility of a future opportunity, but of something which is to be depended on, some good ground to conclude that we shall have future opportunity, therefore, whoever lives under the gospel, and does not this day thoroughly reform his life, by casting away every abomination, and

denying every lust — and doth not apply himself to the practice of the whole of his duty towards God and man, and begin to make religion his main business — he acts as one who depends on another day, because he is abundantly taught that these things must be done before he dies.

Those who have been seeking salvation for a great while, in a dull, insincere, and slightly manner, and find no good effect of it, have abundant reason to conclude, that some time before they die, they must not only seek, but strive to enter in at the strait gate, and must be violent for the kingdom of heaven, and therefore, if they do not begin thus to-day, they act as those who depend on another day. — So those who have hitherto lived in the neglect of sonic particular known duty, whether it be secret prayer, or paying some old debt, which they have long owed to their neighbour — or the duty of confessing some fault to a brother who hath aught against them, or of making restitution for some injury — they act as those who depend on another day.

**6.** Men behave themselves as though they depended on another day, if they do that to-day which some time or other must be undone. There are many things done by men which must be undone by them. They must go back again from the way which they have gone, or they are ruined to all eternity. Therefore, in doing these things, they act as those who depend on future opportunity to undo them: as when a man cheats or defrauds his neighbour in any thing, he acts as one that boasts of to-morrow: for he must undo what he doth before he dies; he must some time or other make restitution, or divine justice, which oversees all things, and governs the whole world and will see to it that right be done, will not let go its hold of him.

So when men hearken to temptation, and yield to the solicitations of their lusts to commit any sin, they act as those who depend on another day. They do what must be undone. What they then do must be undone by hearty and thorough repentance, or they are ruined and lost for ever. So if persons have been seeking salvation for a time, and afterwards are guilty of backsliding, and turn back after their hands have been put to the plough, they act as those who depend on another day. For what they now do, they must undo some time or other, they must go back again from their backsliding, and have all their work to do over again. And these things

must be undone in this world, while men live, for there will be no undoing of them afterwards; they may be suffered for, but never can be undone.

## SECTION 4

*Why we ought not to boast of tomorrow.*

I COME now to show, why we ought not thus to boast ourselves of tomorrow; but on the contrary, to behave ourselves every day as though we had no dependence on another. And there is this plain and sufficient REASON for it, viz. That we have no grounds of dependence on another day. We have neither any foundation to depend upon seeing any particular things come to pass another day, which we may hope or wish for, nor upon enjoying another day in this world. We have nothing for a foundation of dependence that we shall not be in eternity before tomorrow, as both reason and experience show. — We have no promise of God that we shall ever see another day. We are in God's hands; our lives are in his hands; he hath set our bounds; the number of our months and days are with him; nor hath he told them to us. We see that the life of man at longest is very short, and nothing is more uncertain, and it is a thing universal among mankind, that they know not the day of their death. We see that great natural abilities, and sharpness of wit, and clearness of discernment, do not help to any discovery in this matter. Wise men are as uncertain of the term of their lives as others.

There are so many ways and means whereby the lives of men come to an end, that no circumstances in which a man can be are any security to him from death. That it is but a very little while till to-morrow, is no good ground of dependence that we shall live till then. We see that deaths as sudden as our dying before to-morrow morning, are common in the world. We very often see or hear of sudden deaths. How many suddenly, in a few minutes, pass from a state of health to a state of death, in the daytime, by several kinds of disease, which give no warning of their approach, and by many unforeseen accidents! How many go to sleep in health, and are found dead in their beds in the morning! So that our present health is no good ground of dependence that we shall live to see another day. — That persons are now in youth is no good ground of dependence upon another day, for sudden unexpected deaths are common even among those who are

in the bloom of youth. Nor is it any ground of dependence in this case, that a man is of a more than ordinary healthy and strong constitution. It is found by experience, that such are liable to sudden death as well as others:

“One dieth in his full strength. His breasts are full of milk, and his bones are moistened with marrow.” (~~2013~~ Job 21:23.)

That persons have already lived to see a great many days, and that after they had been often in times past told, that they were uncertain of any future time; or that persons have a strong desire to live longer; or that they are now very unprepared for death, both on temporal and spiritual accounts; is no ground of dependence on the future. Death tarries for no man, but comes when and to whom he is sent, and strikes the deadly blow, whether the man be prepared or not. That men have been very useful in their day, and that it is of great importance to their families and neighbours that they should live longer, is no ground of dependence. The most useful men are often cut down by death, in the midst of their usefulness. The same may be said, though we cannot see which way death should come at us before to-morrow. To how many accidents, to how many diseases, are we liable, which may prove fatal before tomorrow, which yet it is impossible for us to foresee! So, if we be very careful of our lives, and our health, not to expose ourselves to any dangers, still this is no ground of dependence as to any future time. Death comes in many ways which were not thought of. Men foresee not the means of their death, any more than the fish securely swimming in the water foresee the net, or the bird that securely feeds upon the bait sees the snare. It is as the wise man observes, in ~~2012~~ Ecclesiastes 9:12.

“For man also knoweth not his time as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare, so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them.”

## SECTION 5

### *Serious inquiries.*

I SHALL improve this doctrine, by putting you upon examining yourselves, whether you do not boast yourselves of to-morrow, or

whether you do not live in such a manner as you would not, were it not that you depend on future time and future opportunity in the world. Would not your behaviour be very different from what it now is, if you every day lived and acted without any dependence on seeing one day more? — You cannot but acknowledge it to be most reasonable, that you should live and act thus. You cannot but own, that you have no good ground of dependence on another day; and therefore that you cannot act wisely any otherwise than in acting as one who hath no dependence on any such thing. Therefore inquire whether you act wisely and reasonably in this respect.

**1.** Do you not set your hearts much more on this world, than you would, if you had no dependence on the morrow? Is not the language of the rich man in the gospel, the secret language of your hearts? “Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years,” etc. Is not this the language of your hearts, with respect to what you have gotten already; which makes you place your happiness so much in it? And with respect to what of the world you are seeking and pursuing, is it not with a dependence on enjoying it for a great while, when you shall have obtained it? Are not your lands and other possessions which you have gotten, or are about to get, in your own imagination, yours for a great while? — Would your mind be so filled with thoughts and cares about these things, so much to the exclusion of another world would you lay yourselves under so great disadvantages for your soul’s good, by involving yourselves in worldly cares; if you had no dependence on having any thing to do with these things for more than the present day? If you did not depend on considerably more time in the world, would your inquiry be so much, What shall we eat, and what shall we drink, and wherewithal shall we be clothed? and so little, How shall we make our calling and election sure? how shall we be assured that we are upon a good foundation for another world, and that we are in such a state, that death cannot hurt us! How shall we be sure that we are ready to appear before the judgment-seat of a heart-searching God? — Would there be so much of your time spent in laying up treasure on earth — and so little in laying up treasure in heaven, that you might have store against the day of death — were it not that you put death at a distance? Would you be so much raised at your temporal prosperity, and so much sunk when you meet with crosses and

disappointments in your worldly affairs, if you did not think that continuance in the world is to be depended on for more days than the present? — Let those who very much affect to adorn their bodies in gaudy apparel inquire whether they would think it worth their while to spend so much time to make themselves fine, and to set themselves forth as gayer than others, if they really had no dependence that their bodies would be preserved one day longer from being clasped in the cold arms of death?

**2.** Inquire, whether you would not much less meddle with the concerns of others, and be much more employed with your own hearts, if each day you had no dependence on living another day. If you were sensible that you had had no other day to depend upon than this, you would be sensible that you had great affairs of your own to attend to. You would find a great deal of business at home between God and your own soul; and considering that you cannot depend on another day, it would seem to you that you have but a short time in which to do it, and that therefore you have need to be much engaged. You would say as Christ did, I must work while the day lasts, for the night cometh, wherein no man can work. You would find so much to be done, and so much difficulty in doing it, that you would have little leisure, and little heart, to intermeddle with the business of others. Your business would be confined to a much narrower compass. You would have so much to do at home in your closets, and with your own hearts, that you would find no occasion to go abroad for intermeddling business to fill up your time.

But the truth is, men conceive of a great deal of time which they have to be filled up, and hence they want business: They depend on tomorrow, and the day following, and next month, and next year, yea many years to come. When they are young they depend on living to be middle-aged, and when middle-aged they depend on old age, and always put far away the day of death. Let them be young or old, there always seems to them to be a great vacancy between them and death; hence they wander to and fro for business to fill up that vacancy. — Whereas if they were sensible of the uncertainty of life, they would, in the first place, make sure of their own business; the business of their own precious, immortal souls would be done, before they would attend much to the business of other people. They would have no desire or disposition to concern themselves with every private quarrel which breaks out in the neighbourhood. They would

not think it much concerned them to inquire into the matter, and to pass their censure on the affair. They would find something else to do, than to set by the hour together, discussing and censuring the conduct of such and such persons, gathering up or rehearsing the stories which are carried about to the disadvantage of this and that person.


We seldom, if ever see men who are upon sick-beds, and look upon themselves very dangerously sick, disposed to spend their time in this manner; and the reason is, that they look upon it doubtful whether they shall live long. They do not, so much as others, depend on much time to spare; hence their minds are taken up more about their own souls' concerns, than about the concerns of others. So it would be with persons in health, if their health did not make them depend on a great deal of time in the world.

**3.** If you each day depend on no other but the present, would you not engage and interest yourselves much less in party designs and schemes, than you are now wont to do? Among a people divided into two parties as this town hath been for a long time, there is commonly much done by the partisans in forming schemes of opposition to one another. There is always a strife, who shall get their wills and carry their point. This often engages them, if not in open quarrels, in secret intrigues. That there is so much done in these things, is a certain evidence that they boast themselves of to-morrow, and put death at a distance.

Men would certainly find themselves very much indisposed to such things, if they were so sensible of the uncertainty of life, as to depend on no other day than the present. It is therefore very proper, that you should examine yourselves in this particular, at this time. If you really depended on no other day than the present, would your hearts be so much engaged in strife between two parties, as they often are? Would your spirits be so often raised and ruffled? Would you go about with so much prejudice against such and such men: harbouring so much of the old leaven, which so often breaks out in heats of spins; and, as an old sore which was skinned over but not cured, sets to racing with a touch which would not have hurt sound flesh? — Commonly in the management of a strife between two parties, there is a great deal of envy. When any who belong to one of the parties seem to prosper, the other party will envy them; it is a grievous

thing to them. So there is also much contempt; when one of the parties gets the ascendant a little over the other, they are ready to make the utmost improvement of it, and to insult the other party. — And there is commonly in such cases a great deal of mutual secret reproach. When those of one party get together, then is the time to inveigh against those of the other party, and to set forth their injustice and their fraudulent practices. Then is the time for them to pass their censure on their words and actions. Then is the time to expose their own surmises and suspicions of what the other party intends, what it aims at in such and such things, what the purposes of individuals are, and what they suppose their secret actions are. — Then is the time for all that are friends in the cause, and engaged in the same designs, to entertain one another by ridiculing the words and actions of the other party, and to make themselves sport of their folly and disappointments; and much is done at calling one another Raca and fools, or other names equivalent, if not much more than equivalent. Then is the time to lay their heads together, to plot and contrive how they shall manage such an affair so as to disappoint the other party, and obtain their own wills.

Brethren, these things ought not so to be among a Christian people; especially among a people that has made the profession which we have made. Nor would they be so if it were not for your dependence on much future time in the world. If you were so sensible of your continual liableness to death, that every day was the last you depended upon, these things certainly would not be so. For let us but consider what are the effects of death with respect to such things. It puts an end to party quarrels. Many men hold these quarrels as long as they live. They begin young, and hold on through many great and sore afflictions and chastisements of Providence. The old sore remains, when the supporters of nature bow, and the eyes grow dim, and the hands tremble with age. But death, when that comes, puts an end to all their quarrelling in this world. Death silences the most clamorous, and censorious, and backbiting tongue. When men are dead, they cease to lay schemes against those of another party; death dashes all their schemes, so far as they have any concern in them.

“His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.” (  Psalm 146:4.)

When men are dead, they cease to bite and devour others; as it is said to have been of old a proverb among the Egyptians, Dead men do not bite. There are many who will bite and devour as long as they live, but death tames them. Men could not be quiet or safe by them while alive, but none will be afraid of them when dead. The bodies of those that made such a noise and tumult when alive, when dead, lie as quietly among the graves of their neighbours as any others. Their enemies, of whom they strove to get their wills while alive, get their wills of them when they are dead. Nothing can please their enemies better than to have them out of their way. It suits them, that those who were so troublesome to them, are locked up safe in the close grave, where they will no more stand in their way. — There are no more effects of their pride, their craftiness, their hatred and envy.

“Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy is now perished.”

(~~200~~ Ecclesiastes 9:6.)

The time will soon come, when you who have for many years been at times warmly contending one with another, will be very peaceable as to this world. Your dead bodies will probably lie quietly together in the same burying place. If you do not leave off contending before death, now natural will it be for others to have such thoughts as these, when they see your corpses; What! is this the man who used to be so busy in carrying on the designs of his party? Oh, now he has done; now he hath no more any part in any of these things; now it doth not at all concern him, who get their wills, or what party is uppermost. We shall hear his voice no more in our town meetings. He will not sit any more to reproach and laugh at others. He is gone to appear before his Judge, and to receive according to his conduct in life. — The consideration of such things as these would certainly have a mighty effect among us, if we did not put far away the day of death. If all acted every day as not depending on any other day, we should be a peaceable, quiet people.

**4.** Inquire, whether or no you do not allow yourselves in some things, and endeavour to flatter yourselves that there is no evil in them, which you would by no means dare to do if you had not a dependence on living till tomorrow. It is very common among men, when they are strongly enticed to some sinful practice, by their worldly interest, or by their carnal appetites, to pretend that they do not think there is any evil in it; when

indeed they know better. Their presence is only to serve a present turn. And if they expected to have their souls required of them that night, they would by no means dare to persist in the practice. — Therefore examine the liberties you take by this test. What would you think of them, if you now should have the following news sent you by some messenger from heaven; John, or Thomas, (or whatever your name be,) this night shall thy soul be required of thee. How would such tidings strike you! How would they alter the face of things! Doubtless your thoughts would be very quick; you would soon beam to reflect on yourselves, and to examine your past and present conduct. And in what colours would the liberties you now take, appear to you in the ease now supposed? Would you then conclude, that there is no evil in them? Would you not be less bold to go forward and meet death, for having continued in such practices? Would you dare to commit such acts again before you die, which now you pretend are lawful? Would not the few hours which you would have to live, be at all the more uncomfortable to you for having done such things? Would you not presently wish that you had let them alone? Yea, would they not appear frightful and terrifying to you? If it be thus, it is a sign that the reason why you now allow yourselves in them, and plead for their lawfulness, is that you put death at a distance, and depend on many other days in the world.

**5.** Inquire, whether you do not some things on the presumption, that you shall hereafter repent of them. Is not this the very thing which causes you to dare to do some things? Is it not the very ground on which you venture to gratify your lusts! Let young people examine all their secret carriage; what they do alone in the dark and in secret corners. God knoweth, and your own hearts know, though men do not. Put the question impartially to your own consciences; is not this the very thing that gives you courage, that God is very merciful, and that he often of his sovereign mercy gives repentance of great sins, and even wilful sins, and in consequence of repentance forgives? And so you hope that one day or other he will do so to you. You intend some time hereafter earnestly to seek; and you hope you shall be awakened. And if you be very earnest, as you intend to be, you hope you shall be converted, and then you shall be forgiven, and it will be as well as if you had never committed such sins.

If this be the case, consider how you boast of to-morrow, and foolishly depend on future opportunity to repent, as well as foolishly presume on the mercy of God to give you repentance, at the same time that you take a course to provoke God, for ever to give you up to a sealed hardness and blindness, and to a most fearful damnation; not considering that God will glorify his revenging justice as well as his mercy; nor remembering the sad example of Esau, “who for a morsel of meat sold his birthright; and afterwards, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.”

~~8026~~ Hebrews 12:16, 17.

**6.** Inquire, whether you improve this day, as one who doth not depend upon ever having opportunity to keep another sabbath, or to hear or read another discourse. It appears from what hath been already said, that you have no grounds to depend on any more such opportunities. Now the day is present, and so you are in the better capacity to determine how it is with you. It is but for you to reflect upon yourselves, to look inward, and see how it is with you at this present time. And how is it? Are you as strict and as diligent in keeping this sabbath, watching your thoughts, keeping your hearts, striving in duties both public and private, and improving ordinances, as might be expected of one who hath no dependence on ever enjoying such a opportunity any more; one who doth not depend on ever setting foot again within the walls of God’s house? — Do you attend to this address with that care, and desire, and endeavour to improve it for your good, as you would, if you did not depend upon it, that your bodies would not be in the grave, and your souls fixed in eternity, in their unalterable state, before the next sabbath?

**7.** Are you careful to see to it that the grounds of your hope are good? A man who hath some hope of being in a state of acceptance with God, but is not sure, if he had no dependence on any other day’s opportunity of making it sure, would be very strict in examining himself and searching the grounds of his hope, and would not rest in an uncertainty. He would be very thorough in informing himself what might be depended on as good evidence of an interest in Christ, and what not; and would be exceedingly strict in searching his own heart, to see whether there was any thing in him that comes up to the requisites laid down in the Scriptures. — If what appears hopeful in him were dim and obscure, he would set himself very

earnestly to obtain that which would be more clear and manifest, and would cry earnestly to God for it, and would apply himself to a diligent use of means in order to it. And good reason why for he depends on no other opportunity to make his calling and election sure, than what he hath to-day. Inquire therefore whether you be thus thorough in examining your hope. And are you thus careful effectually to see to it that you are on a sure foundation? If not, then you behave yourselves as those that depend on to-morrow.

## SECTION 6

### *How to spend every day.*

GOD hath concealed from us the day of our death without doubt, partly for this end that we might be excited to be always ready, and might live as those that are always waiting for the coming of their Lord, agreeably to the counsel which Christ gives us, <sup>4140</sup>Matthew 24:42, 43, 44. 25:13. and <sup>4139</sup>Mark 13:32 etc. — That watchman is not faithful who, being set to defend a house from thieves, or a city from an enemy at hand, will at any hour venture to sleep, trusting that the thief or the enemy will not come. Therefore it is expected of the watchman, that he behave himself every hour of the night, as one who doth not depend upon it that the enemy will tarry until the next hour. Now therefore let me, in Christ's name, renew the call and counsel of Jesus Christ to you to watch as those that know not what hour your Lord will come. Let me call upon you who are hitherto in an unrenewed condition. Depend not upon it, that you will not be in hell before tomorrow morning. You have no reason for any such dependence; God hath not promised to keep you from it, or to withhold his wrath so long.

How can you reasonably be easy or quiet for one day, or one night, in such a condition, when you know not but your Lord will come this night? And if you should then be found, as you now are, unregenerate, how unprepared would you be for his coming, and how fearful would be the consequence! Be exhorted therefore, for your own sakes, immediately to awake from the sleep of sin, out of sleep, and sleep no more, as not depending on any other day. — Let me exhort you to have no dependence on any future time; to keep every sabbath, and to hear every sermon, as if

it were the last. And when you go into your closet, and address yourself to your Father who seeth in secret, do it in no dependence on any future opportunity to perform the same duty.

When you that are young go into company for amusement and diversion, consider that it may be the last opportunity of the like nature that ever you may have. In all your dealings with your neighbours, act as if you were never to make another bargain. Behave in your families every day, as though you depended on no other. — Here I shall offer you two motives.

**1.** Consider, if you will hearken to this counsel, how much it will tend to your safety and peace in life and death. It is the way really and truly to be ready for death, yea, to be fit to live or fit to die, to be ready for affliction and adversity, and for whatever God in his providence shall tarry upon you. It is the way to be in, not only an habitual, but actual preparedness for all changes, and particularly for your last change. — It is the way to possess your souls in a serene and undisturbed peace, and to enable you to go on with an immovable fortitude of soul, to meet the most frightful changes, to encounter the most formidable enemies, and to be ready with unshaken confidence to triumph over death whenever you meet him; to have your hearts fixed, trusting in God, as one that stands on a firm foundation, and hath for his habitation the munitions of rocks, that is not afraid of evil tidings, but laughs at the fear of the enemy. It will be the way for you to possess that quietness and assurance spoken of,

“The work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever.” (~~2307~~ Isaiah 32:17.)

The servant who always stands watching, will not be at all surprised at the news that his Lord is coming. This will be the way for you to live above the fear of death. Yea, if heaven and earth should shake, you may stand firm and unshaken, being settled on a rock, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever. O how happy are such persons, who have such safety and peace! What a blessed peace is that which arises from such a constant preparation for death! How happy therefore is that servant whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing!

**2.** What dismal calamities and miseries mankind are subject to for want of this, for want of behaving themselves every day, as not depending on any

future day! The way of the world is, one day foolishly to depend on another, yea on many others. And what is the consequence? Why, the consequence with respect to the greater part of the world is, that they live all their days without any true peace or rest of soul. They are all their lifetime subject to bondage through fear of death. And when death sensibly approaches they are put into a terrible fright. They have a dismal view of their past lives, the ill improvement of their time, and the sins they have been guilty of, stand staring them in the face, and are more frightful to them than so many devils. And when they look forward into that eternity whither they are going, how dismal is the prospect! O how do their hearts shrink at the thought of it! They go before the judgment-seat of God, as those that are dragged thither, while they would gladly, if they could, hide themselves in the caves and dens of the earth.

And what is worse yet than all the disquietude and terror of conscience in this world; the consequence of a contrary behaviour, with respect to the bulk of mankind, is their eternal perdition. They flatter themselves that they shall see another day, and then another, and trust to that, until finally most of them are swallowed up in hell to lament their folly to all eternity, in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone. — Consider how it was with all the foolish virgins who trusted to the delay of the bride-groom's coming: when he came they were surprised, and found unprepared, having no oil in their lamps; and while they went to buy, those who were ready went in with him to the marriage; and the door was shut against them, and they came afterwards crying in vain, Lord, Lord, open to us.

# THE CHRISTIAN PILGRIM:

OR

## THE TRUE CHRISTIAN'S LIFE A JOURNEY TOWARDS HEAVEN.

And confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.  
For they that say such things, declare plainly that they seek a  
country. (Hebrews 11:13, 14)

THE apostle is here setting forth the excellencies of the grace at faith, by the glorious effects and happy issue of it in the saints of the Old Testament. He had spoken in the preceding part of the chapter particularly, of Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Jacob Having enumerated those instances, he takes notice that “these all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers,” &c — In these words the apostle seems to have a more particular respect to Abraham and Sarah, and their kindred, who came with them from Haran, and from Ur of the Chaldees, as appears by the 15th verse, where the apostle says, “and truly if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned.”

Two things may be observed here:

**1.** What these saints confessed of themselves, viz. that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. — Thus we have a particular account concerning Abraham, “I am a stranger and a sojourner with you.” And it seems to have been the general sense of the patriarchs, by what Jacob says to Pharaoh. “And Jacob said to Pharaoh, The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained to the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage.” “I am a stranger and a sojourner with thee, as all my fathers were.”

**2.** The inference that the apostle draws from hence, viz. that they sought another country as their home. “For they that say such things, declare plainly that they seek a country.” In confessing that they were strangers, they plainly declared that this is not their country, that this is not the place where they are at home. And in confessing themselves to be pilgrims, they declared plainly that this is not their settled abode; but that they have respect to some other country, which they seek, and to which they are travelling.

## SECTION 1

*That this life ought to be so spent by us, as to be only a journey or pilgrimage towards heaven.*

HERE I would observe,

**1.** That we ought not to rest in the world and its enjoyments, but should desire heaven. We should “seek first the kingdom of God.” We ought above all things to desire a heavenly happiness; to be with God, and dwell with Jesus Christ. Though surrounded with outward enjoyments, and settled in families with desirable friends and relations; though we have companions whose society is delightful, and children in whom we see many promising qualifications; though we live by good neighbours, and are generally beloved where known, yet we ought not to take our rest in these things as our portion. We should be so far from resting in them, that we should desire to leave them all, in God’s due time. We ought to possess enjoy, and use them, with no other view but readily to quit them, whenever we are called to it, and to change them willingly and cheerfully for heaven.

A traveler is not wont to rest in what he meets with, however comfortable and pleasing, on the road. If he passes through pleasant places, flowery meadows, or shady groves; he does not take up his content in these things, but only takes a transient view of them as he goes along. He is not enticed by fine appearances to put off the thought of proceeding. No, but his journey’s end is in his mind. If he meets with comfortable accommodations at an inn, he entertains no thoughts of settling there. He considers that these things are not his own, that he is but a stranger, and when he has refreshed himself, or tarried for a night, he is for going

forward. And it is pleasant to him to think that so much of the way is gone.

So should we desire heaven more than the comforts and enjoyments of this life. The apostle mentions it as an encouraging, comfortable consideration to Christians, that they draw nearer their happiness. “Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.” — Our hearts ought to be loose to these things, as that of a man on a journey; that we may as cheerfully part with them, whenever God calls.

But this I say, brethren, the time is short, it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as not abusing it; for the fashion of this world passeth away.” — These things are only lent to us for a little while, to serve a present turn; but we should set our hearts on heaven, as our inheritance for ever.

**2.** We ought to seek heaven, by travelling in the way that leads thither. This is a way of holiness. We should choose and desire to travel thither in this way and in no other; and part with all those carnal appetites which, as weights, will tend to hinder us. “Let us Lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race set before us.” However pleasant the gratification of any appetite may be, we must lay it aside, if it be a hindrance, or a stumbling-block in the way to heaven.

We should travel on in the way of obedience to all God’s commands, even the difficult as well as the easy denying all our sinful inclinations and interests. The way to heaven is ascending; we must be content to travel up hill, though it be hard and tiresome, and contrary to the natural bias of our flesh. We should follow Christ, the path he travelled, was the right way to heaven. We should take up our cross and follow him, in meekness and lowliness of heart obedience and charity, diligence to do good, and patience under afflictions. The way to heaven is a heavenly life; an imitation of those who are in heaven, in their holy enjoyments, loving, adoring, serving, and praising God and the Lamb. Even if we could go to heaven with the gratification of our lusts, we should prefer a way of holiness and conformity to the spiritual self-denying rules of the gospel.

**3.** We should travel on in this way in a laborious manner. — Long Journeys are attended with toil and fatigue especially if through a wilderness. Persons in such a case expect no other than to suffer hardships and weariness. — So we should travel in this way of holiness, improving our time and strength, to surmount the difficulties and obstacles that are in the way. The land we have to travel through, is a wilderness; there are many mountains, rocks, and rough places that we must go over, and therefore there is a necessity that we should lay out our strength.

**4.** Our whole lives ought to be spent in travelling this road. — We ought to begin early. This should be the first concern, when persons become capable of acting. When they first set out in the world, they should set out on this journey. — And we ought to travel on with assiduity. It ought to be the work of every day. We should often think of our journey's end, and make it our daily work to travel on in the way that leads to it. — He who is on a journey, is often thinking of the destined place, and it is his daily care and business to get along, and to improve his time to get towards his journey's end. Thus should heaven be continually in our thoughts, and the immediate entrance or passage to it, viz. death, should be present with us. — We ought to persevere in this way as long as we live.

“Let us run with patience the race that is set before us.” Though the road be difficult and toilsome, we must hold out with patience, and be content to endure hardships. Though the journey be long, yet we must not stop short; but hold on till we arrive at the place we seek. Nor should we be discouraged with the length and difficulties of the way, as the children of Israel were, and be for turning back again. All our thought and design should be to press forward till we arrive.

**5.** We ought to be continually growing in holiness, and in that respect coming nearer and nearer to heaven. — We should be endeavouring to come nearer to heaven, in being more heavenly; becoming more and more like the inhabitants of heaven, in respect of holiness and conformity to God; the knowledge of God and Christ, in clear views of the glory of God, the beauty of Christ, and the excellency of divine things, as we come nearer to the beatific vision. — We should labour to be continually growing in divine love — that this may be an increasing flame in our hearts, till they ascend wholly in this flame — in obedience and a heavenly

conversation; that we may do the will of God on earth as the angels do in heaven; in comfort and spiritual joy; in sensible communion with God and Jesus Christ Our path should be as “the shining light, that shines more and more to the perfect day.” We ought to be hungering and thirsting after righteousness; after an increase in righteousness. “As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.” The perfection of heaven should be our mark. “This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things that are before, I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”

**6.** All other concerns of life ought to be entirely subordinate to this. — When a man is on a journey, all the steps he takes are subordinated to the aim of getting to his journey’s end. And if he carries money or provisions with him, it is to supply him in his journey. So we ought wholly to subordinate all our other business, and all our temporal enjoyments, to this affair of travelling to heaven. When any thing we have becomes a clog and hinderance to us, we should quit it immediately. The use of our worldly enjoyments and possessions, should be with such a view, and in such a manner, as to further us in our way heavenward. Thus we should eat, and drink, and clothe ourselves, and improve the conversation and enjoyment of friends. And whatever business we are setting about, whatever design we are engaging in, we should inquire with ourselves, whether this business or undertaking will forward us in our way to heaven? And if not, we should quit our design.

## SECTION 2

*Why the Christian’s life is a journey, or pilgrimage?*

**1.** THIS world is not our abiding place. Our continuance here is but very short. Man’s days on the earth are as a shadow. It was never designed by God that this world should be our home. Neither did God give us these temporal accommodations for that end. If God has given us ample estates, and children or other pleasant friends, it is with no such design, that we should be furnished here, as for a settled abode; but with a design that we should use them for the present, and then leave them in a very little time. When we are called to any secular business, or charged with the care of a

family, if we improve our lives to any other purpose, than as a journey toward heaven, all our labor will be lost. If we spend our lives in the pursuit of a temporal happiness; as riches or sensual pleasures; credit and esteem from men; delight in our children, and the prospect of seeing them well brought up, and well settled, etc. — All these things will be of little significancy to us. Death will blow up all our hopes, and will put an end to these enjoyments. “The places that have known us, will know us no more:” and “the eye that has seen us, shall see us no more.” We must be taken away for ever from all those things; and it is uncertain when: it may be soon after we are put into the possession of them. And then, where will be all our worldly employments and enjoyments, when we are laid in the silent grave? “So man lieth down and riseth not again, till the heavens be no more.”

**2.** The future world was designed to be our settles and everlasting abode. There it was intended that we should be fixed; and there alone is a lasting habitation, and a lasting inheritance. The present state is short and transitory; but our state in the other world, is everlasting. And as we are there at first, so we must be without change. Our state in the future world, therefore, being eternal, is of so much greater importance than our state here, that all our concerns in this world should be wholly subordinated to it.

**3.** Heaven is that place alone where our highest end, and highest good, is to be obtained. God hath made us for himself. “Of him, and through him, and to him are all things.” Therefore, then do we attain to our highest end, when we are brought to God: but that is by being brought to heaven; for that is God’s throne, the place of his special presence. There is but a very imperfect union with God to be had in this world, a very imperfect knowledge of him in the midst of much darkness; a very imperfect conformity to God, mingled with abundance of estrangement. Here we can serve and glorify God but in a very imperfect manner; our service being mingled with sin, which dishonours God. — But when we get to heaven, (if ever that be,) we shall be brought to a perfect union with God, and have more clear views of him. There we shall be fully conformed to God, without any remaining sin, for “we shall see him as he is.” There we shall serve God perfectly; and glorify him in an exalted manner, even to the utmost of the powers and capacity of our nature. Then we shall perfectly

give up ourselves to God; our hearts will be pure and holy offerings, presented in a flame of divine love.

God is the highest good of the reasonable creature, and the enjoyment of him is the only happiness with which our souls can be satisfied. — To go to heaven, fully to enjoy God, is infinitely better than the most pleasant accommodations here. Fathers and mothers, husbands, wives, or children, or the company of earthly friends, are but shadows; but the enjoyment of God is the substance. These are but scattered beams; but God is the sun. These are but streams; but God is the fountain. These are but drops; but God is the ocean. — Therefore it becomes us to spend this life only as a Journey towards heaven, as it be comes us to make the seeking of our highest end and proper good, the whole work of our lives, to which we should subordinate all other concerns of life. Why should we labour for, or set our hearts on, any thing else, but that which is our proper end, and true happiness!

**4.** Our present state, and all that belongs to it, is designed by him that made all things, to be wholly in order to another world. This world was made for a place of preparation for another. Man's mortal life was given him, that he might be prepared for his fixed state. And all that God has here given us, is given to this purpose. The sun shines, and the rain falls upon us and the earth yields her increase to us for this end. Civil, ecclesiastical, and family affairs, and all our personal concerns, are designed and ordered in subordination to a future world, by the maker and disposer of all things. To this therefore they ought to be subordinated by us.

### SECTION 3

*Instruction afforded by the consideration, that life is a, journey, or pilgrimage, towards heaven.*

**1.** THIS doctrine may teach us moderation in our mourning for the loss of such dear friends, who, while they lived, improved their lives to right purposes — If they lived a holy life, then their lives were a journey towards heaven. And why should we be immoderate in mourning, when they are got to their journey's end? Death, though it appears to us with a frightful aspect, is to them a great blessing. Their end is happy, and better

than their beginning. “The day of their death is better to them than the day of their birth.” While they lived, they desired heaven, and chose it above this world, or any of its enjoyments. For this they earnestly longed, and why should we grieve that they have obtained it? — Now they have got to their Father’s house. They find more comfort a thousand times, now they are got home, than they did in their journey. In this world they underwent much labour and toil, it was a wilderness they passed through. There were many difficulties in the way; mountains and rough places. It was laborious and fatiguing to travel the road; and they had many wearisome days and nights but now they have got to their everlasting rest. “And I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write, blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.” They look back upon the difficulties, and sorrows, and dangers of life, rejoicing that they have surmounted them all.

We are ready to look upon death as their calamity, and to mourn, that those who were so dear to us, should be in the dark grave; that they are there transformed to corruption and worms, taken away from their dear children and enjoyments, etc. as though they were in awful circumstances. But this is owing to our infirmity; they are in a happy condition, inconceivably blessed. They do not mourn, but rejoice with exceeding joy: their mouths are filled with joyful songs, and they drink at rivers of pleasure. They find no mixture of grief, that they have changed their earthly enjoyments, and the company of mortals, for heaven. Their life here, though in the best circumstances, was attended with much that was adverse and afflictive: but now there is an end to all adversity. “They shall hunger no more, nor thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”

It is true, we shall see them no more in this world, yet we ought to consider that we are travelling towards the same peace, and why should we break our hearts that they have soted there before us! We are following after them, and hope, as soon as we get to our journey’s end, to be with them again, in better circumstances. A degree of mourning for near relations when departed is not inconsistent with Christianity, but very agreeable to

it, for as long as we are flesh and blood, we have animal propensities and affections. But we have just reason that our mourning should be mingled with joy. “But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them that are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others that have no hope:” (*i.e.*) that they should not sorrow as the heathen, who had no knowledge of a future happiness. This appears by the following verse, “for if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him.”

**2.** If our lives ought to be only a journey towards heaven; how ill do they improve their lives, that spend them in travelling towards hell! — Some men spend their whole lives, from their infancy to their dying day, in going down the broad way to destruction. They not only draw nearer to hell as to time, but they every day grow more ripe for destruction, they are more assimilated to the inhabitants, of the infernal world. While others press forward in the strait and narrow way to life, and laboriously travel up the hill toward Zion, against the inclinations and tendency of the flesh; these run with a swift career down to eternal death. This is the employment of every duty, with all wicked men; and the whole day is spent in it. As soon as ever they awake in the morning, they set out anew in the way to hell, and spend every waking moment in it. They begin in early days. “The wicked are estranged from the womb, they go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies.” They hold on it with perseverance Many of them who live to be old, are never weary in it; though they live to be a hundred years old, they will not cease travelling in the way to hell, till they arrive there. And all the concerns of life are subordinated to this employment. A wicked man is a servant of sin, his powers and faculties are employed in the service of sin, and in fitness for hell. And all his possessions are so used by him as to be subservient to the same purpose. Men spend their time in treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath. Thus do all unclean persons, who live in lascivious practices in secret; all malicious persons; all profane persons, that neglect the duties of religion. Thus do all unjust Persons; and those who are fraudulent and oppressive in their dealings. Thus do all backbiters and revilers, all covetous persons, that set their hearts chiefly on the riches of this world. Thus do tavern-haunters, and frequenters of evil company; and many other kinds that might be mentioned. Thus the bulk of mankind are hasting on in the broad way to

destruction; which is, as it were, filled up with the multitude that are going in it with one accord. And they are every day going into hell out of this broad way by thousands. Multitudes are continually flowing down into the great lake of fire and brimstone, as some mighty river constantly disembogues its water into the ocean.

**3.** Hence when persons are converted, they do but begin their work, and set out in the way they have to go. — They never till then do any think at that work in which their whole lives ought to be spent. Persons before conversion never take a step that way. Then does a man first set out on his journey, when he is brought home to Christ; and so far is he from having done his work, that his care and labour in his Christian work and business is then but begun, in which he must spend the remaining part of his life.

Those persons do ill, who when they are converted, and have obtained a hope of their being in a good condition, do not strive as earnestly as they did before, while they were under awakenings. They ought, henceforward, as long as they live, to be as earnest and laborious, as watchful and careful, as ever; yea, they should increase more and more. It is no just excuse, that now they have obtained conversion. Should not we be as diligent that we may serve and glorify God, as that we ourselves may be happy? And if we have obtained grace, yet we ought to strive as much that we may obtain the other degrees that are before, as we did to obtain that small degree that is behind. The apostle tells us, that he forgot what was behind, and reached forth towards what was before.

Yea, those who are converted, have now a further reason to strive for grace; for they have seen something of its excellency. A man who has once tasted the blessings of Canaan, has more reason to press towards it, than he had before. And they who are converted, should strive to “make their calling and election sure.” All those who are converted are not sure of it; and those who are sure, do not know that they shall be always so, and still seeking and serving God with the utmost diligence, is the way to have assurance, and to have it maintained.

## SECTION 4

*An exhortation, so to spend the present life,  
that it may only be a journey towards heaven.*

LABOUR to obtain such a disposition of mind that you may choose heaven for your inheritance and home; and may earnestly long for it, and be willing to change this world, and ail its enjoyments, for heaven. Labour to have your heart taken up so much about heaven, and heavenly enjoyments, as that you may rejoice when God calls you to leave your best earthly friends and comforts for heaven, there to enjoy God and Christ.

Be persuaded to travel in the way that leads to heaven; viz. in holiness, self-denial, mortification, obedience to all the commands of God, following Christ's example, in a way of a heavenly life, or imitation of the saints and angels in heaven. Let it be your daily work, from morning till night, and hold out in it to the end, let nothing stop or discourage you or turn you aside from this road. And let all other concerns be subordinated to this. Consider the reasons that have been mentioned why you should thus spend your life; that this world is not your abiding place, that the future world is to be your everlasting abode; and that the enjoyments and concerns of this world are given entirely in order to another. And consider further for motive,

**1.** How worthy is heaven that your life should be wholly spent as a journey towards it. — To what better purpose can you spend your life, whether you respect your duty or your interest? What better end can you propose to your Journey, than to obtain heaven? You are placed in this world, with a choice given you, that you may travel which way you please; and one way leads to heaven. Now, can you direct your course better than this way? All men have some aim or other in living. Some mainly seek worldly things; they spend their days in such pursuits. But is not heaven, where is fullness of joy for ever, much more worthy to be sought by you? How can you better employ your strength, use your means, and spend your days, than in travelling the road that leads to the everlasting enjoyment of God; to his glorious presence; to the new Jerusalem to the heavenly mount Zion; where all your desires will be filled, and no danger of ever losing your happiness? — No man is at home

in this world, whether he choose heaven or not; here he is but a transient person. Where can you choose your home better than in heaven?

**2.** This is the way to have death comfortable to us. — To spend our lives so as to be only a journeying towards heaven, is the way to be free from bondage, and to have the prospect and forethought of death comfortable. Does the traveler think of his journey's end with fear and terror? Is it terrible to him to think that he has almost got to his journey's end? Were the children of Israel sorry, after forty years travel in the wilderness, when they had almost got to Canaan? This is the way to be able to part with the world without grief. Does it grieve the traveler when he has got home, to quit his staff and load of provisions that he had to sustain him by the way?

**3.** No more of your life will be pleasant to think of when you come to die, than has been spent after this manner. — If you have spent none of your life this way, your whole life will be terrible to you to think of, unless you die under some great delusion. You will see then, that all of your life that has been spent otherwise, is lost. You will then see the vanity of an other aims that you may have proposed to yourself. The thought of what you here possessed and enjoyed, will not be pleasant to you, unless you can think also that you have subordinated them to this purpose.

**4.** Consider that those who are willing thus to spend their lives as a journey towards heaven may have heaven. — Heaven, however high and glorious, is attainable for such poor worthless creatures as we are. We may attain that glorious region which is the habitation of angels; yea, the dwelling-place of the Son of God; and where is the glorious presence of the great Jehovah. And we may have it freely, without money and without price: if we are but willing to travel the road that leads to it, and bend our course that way as long as we live, we may and shall have heaven for our eternal resting place.

**5.** Let it be considered, that if our lives be not a journey towards heaven, they will be a journey to hell. All mankind, after they have been here a short while, go to either of the two great receptacles of all that depart out of this world: the one is heaven, whither a small number, in comparison, travel; and the other is hell whither the bulk of mankind throng. And one or the other of these must be the issue of our course in this world.

I shall conclude by giving a few directions:

- 1.** Labour to get a sense of the vanity of this world, ml account of the little satisfaction that is to be enjoyed here; its short continuance, and unserviceableness when we most stand in need of help, viz. on a deathbed. — All men, that live any considerable time in the world, might see enough to convince them of its vanity, if they would but consider. — Be persuaded therefore to exercise consideration, when you see and hear, from time to time, of the death of others. Labour to turn your thoughts this way. See the vanity of the world in such a glass.
- 2.** Labour to be much acquainted with heaven. — If you are not acquainted with it, you will not be likely to spend your life as a journey thither. You will not be sensible of its worth, nor will you long for it. Unless you are much conversant in your mind with a better good, it will be exceeding difficult to you to have Your hearts loose from these things, and to use them only in subordination to something else, and be ready to part with them for the sake of that better good. — Labour therefore to obtain a realizing sense of a heavenly world to get a firm belief of its reality, and to be very much conversant with it in your thoughts.
- 3.** Seek heaven only by Jesus Christ. — Christ tells us that he is the way, and the truth, and the life. He tells us that he is the door of the sheep. “I am the door, by me if any man enter in he shall be saved; and go in and out and find pasture.” If we therefore would Improve our lives as a journey towards heaven, we must seek it by him, and not by our own righteousness; as expecting to obtain it only for his sake, looking to trim’ haying our dependence on him, who has procured it for us by his merit. And expect strength to walk in holiness, the way that leads to heaven, only from him.
- 4.** Let Christians help one another in going this journey. — There are many ways whereby Christians might greatly forward one another in their way to heaven, as by religious conference, etc. Wherefore let them be exhorted to go this journey as it were in company, conversing together, and assisting one another. Company is very desirable in a journey, but in none so much as this. — Let them go united and not fall out by the way, which would be to hinder one another; but use all means they can to help

each other up the hill. — This would insure a more successful travelling, and a more joyful meeting at their Father's house in glory.

# MAN'S NATURAL BLINDNESS IN THE THINGS OF RELIGION.

Understand, ye brutish among the people: and ye fools, when will ye be wise? He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? he that formed the eye, shall he not see? He that chastiseth the heathen, shall not he correct? he that teacheth man knowledge, shall not he know? The Lord knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are vanity. (~~194B~~ Psalm 94:8-11)

## SECTION 1

### *Introductory observations.*

IN these words the following particulars are to be observed.

- (1.) A certain spiritual disease charged on some persons, viz. darkness, and blindness of mind, appearing in their ignorance and folly.
- (2.) The great degree of this disease; so as to render the subjects of it fools. Ye fools, when will ye be wise? And so as to reduce them to a degree of brutishness. Ye brutish among the people. This ignorance and folly were to such a degree, as to render men like beasts.
- (3.) The obstinacy of this disease; expressed in that interrogation, When will ye be wise? Their blindness and folly were not only very great; but deeply rooted and established, resisting all manner of cure.
- (4.) Of what nature this blindness is. It is especially in things pertaining to GOD. They were strangely ignorant of his perfections, like beasts: and had foolish notions of him, as though he did not see, nor know; and as though he would not execute justice, by chastising and punishing wicked men.
- (5.) The unreasonableness and sottishness of the notion they had of God, that he did not hear, did not observe their reproaches of him and his people, is shown by observing that he planted the ear.

It is very unreasonable to suppose that he, who gave power of perceiving words to others, should not perceive them himself. And the sottishness of their being insensible of God's all-seeing eye, and particularly of his seeing their wicked actions, appears, in that God is the being who formed the eye, and gave others a power of seeing. The sottishness of their apprehension of God, as though he did not know what they did, is argued from his being the fountain and original of all knowledge. The unreasonableness of their expecting to escape God's just chastisements and judgments for sin, is set forth by his chastising even the heathen, who did not sin against that light, or against so great mercies, as the wicked in Israel did; nor had ever made such a profession as they.

(6.) We may observe, that this dreadful disease is ascribed to mankind in general. The Lord knoweth the thoughts of MAN, that they are vanity. The psalmist had been setting forth the vanity and unreasonableness of the thoughts of some of the children of men; and immediately upon it he observes, that this vanity and foolishness of thought is common and natural to mankind.

From these particulars we may fairly deduce the following doctrinal observation: THAT THERE IS AN EXTREME AND BRUTISH BLINDNESS IN THINGS OF RELIGION, WHICH NATURALLY POSSESSES THE MUTANTS OF MANKIND. — This doctrine is not to be understood as any reflection on the capacity of the human nature; for God hath made man with a noble and excellent capacity. The blindness I speak of, is not a merely negative ignorance; such as in trees and stones, that know nothing. They have no faculties of understanding and perception, whereby they should be capable of any knowledge. And inferior animals, though they have sensitive perception, are not capable of any intellectual views. There is no fault to be found with man's natural faculties. God has given men faculties truly noble and excellent; well capable of true wisdom and divine knowledge. Nor is the blindness I speak of like the ignorance of a new-born infant; which arises from want of necessary opportunity to exert these faculties.

The blindness that is in the heart of man, which is spoken of in the text and doctrine, is neither for want of faculties, nor opportunity to know, but from some positive case. There is a principle in his heart, of such a blinding and nature, that it hinders the exercises of his faculties about the

things of religion, exercises for which God has made him well capable, and for which he gives him abundant opportunity.

In order to make it appear, that such an extreme brutish blindness, with respect to the things of religion, does naturally possess the hearts of men, I shall show bow this is manifest in those things that appear in men's open profession, and how it is manifest in those things that are found by inward experience, and are visible in men's practice.

## SECTION 2

*Man's natural blindness in religion, manifested by those things which appear in men's open profession.*

I WOULD now show, how it is manifest that there is a sottish and brutish blindness in the hearts of men in the things of religion, by those things which appear in men's open profession.

**1.** It appears in the grossness of that ignorance and those delusions, which have appeared among mankind. Man has faculties given him whereby he is well capable of inferring the being of the Creator from the creatures. The invisible things of God are very plainly and clearly to be seen by the things that are made and the perfections of the Divine Being, his eternal power and Godhead, are very manifest in the works of his hands. And yet grossly absurd notions concerning the Godhead have prevailed in the world. Instead of acknowledging and worshipping the true God, they have fallen off to the worship of idols. Instead of acknowledging the one only true God, they have made a multitude of deities. Instead of worshipping a God, who is an almighty, infinite, all wise, and holy Spirit, they have worshipped the hosts of heaven, the sun, moon, and stars, and the works of their own hands, images of gold and silver, brass and iron, wood and stone; gods that can neither hear, nor see, nor walk, nor speak, nor do, nor know any thing. Some in the shape of men, others in the shape of oxen and calves; some in the shape of serpents, others of fishes, etc.

The sottishness of men in thus worshipping the lifeless images which they themselves have made, Is elegantly and forcibly represented by the prophet Isaiah. "The smith with the tongs both worketh in the coals, and fashioneth it with hammers, and worketh it with the strength of his arms.

Yea, he is hungry, and his strength falleth; he drinketh no water, and is faint. The carpenter stretcheth out his rule; he marketh it out with a line: he fitteth it with planes, and he marketh it out with the compass, and maketh it after the figure of a man, according to the beauty of a man, that it may remain in the house. He heweth him down cedars, and taketh the cypress and the oak, which he strengtheneth for himself among the trees of the forest, he planteth an ash, and the rain doth nourish it. Then shall it be for a man to burn; for he will take thereof and warm himself, yea, he kindleth it, and baketh bread, yea, he maketh a god, and worshippeth it: he maketh it a graven image, and falleth down thereto. He burneth part thereof in the fire: with part thereof he eateth flesh: he roasteth roast, and is satisfied: yea, he warmeth himself, and saith, Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire. And the residue thereof he maketh a god, even his graven image: he falleth down unto it, and worshipeth it, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me, for thou art my god. They have not known, nor understood: for he hath shut their eyes, that they cannot see, and their hearts, that they cannot understand. And none considereth in his heart, neither is there knowledge nor understanding to say, I have burned part of it in the fire, yea, also I have baked bread upon the coals thereof, I have roasted flesh, and eaten it, and shall I make the residue thereof an abomination? shall I fall down to the stock of a tree?"

Many of the images which the heathen worshipped were made in the most monstrous and terrible shapes they could devise, and the more hideous and frightful they appeared, the better they supposed they would serve their turn for gods. Some of their images were made so as to be the most unclean representations, images of men openly exposing their nakedness. These unclean images, they Judged, appeared in a god-like manner, and worthy to be worshipped. Many, instead of worshipping a holy and good God, and infinitely perfect Being, ascribed vices to many of the gods which they worshipped. One god they reckoned notorious for drunkenness, others notorious for uncleanness: to others they ascribed lying and stealing; to others cruelty, and yet looked upon them worthy to be worshipped as gods! Many worshipped devils, who appeared to them, and whom they themselves reckoned to be evil spirits; but yet built temples, and offered sacrifices to them, because they were afraid of them. Many worshiped beasts and birds and fishes, and the most hateful and loathsome animals

were most worshipped; particularly, serpents were more commonly worshipped than any other beast. Many worshipped rivers, and trees, and mountains. They worshiped many diseases. There is scarcely any thing of which men have not made gods.

And so far has that principle of blindness prevailed, with respect to the things of religion, that it has in a great measure extinguished all light in the minds of many, even in matters of morality, and things that have but a distant relation to religion. So that many whole nations have professedly approved of many things directly contrary to the light of nature, and the most horrid vices and immoralities have been esteemed harmless, yea, accounted virtue among them, such as revenge, cruelty, and incest. Many nations have openly allowed the practice of sodomy. And with some it has been accounted commendable to marry their nearest relations. Many have even worshipped their gods in their temples with acts of drunkenness and whoredom, and the most abominable lewdness. And the more filthy they were in their uncleanness, they thought their gods the more pleased and delighted with it.

Many nations have been so under the influence of mental blindness, that they have been void of all civility, and have been reduced to a state very little above the beasts in their common customs, and ordinary way of living; and in a great many things far below the beasts: being, if I may so speak, much more beastly than the beasts themselves. Now this has not been, because these men, with whom this has been the case, have not had the same faculties that we have. That we are not as ignorant as they, is not because we have better natural understandings, or that our minds are by nature more clear, and our eyes more discerning; or that our hearts are not naturally so inclined to sottishness and delusion as theirs. But only because God has not left us so much to ourselves, as he has them. He has given us more instruction to help us against our delusions. God has so ordered it in his providence, that we should have his good word to instruct us and has caused that we should grow up from our infancy under Christian instruction.

**2.** The extreme blindness and sottishness in things of religion, which is naturally in the hearts of men, appears not only in embracing and professing those errors that are very great, but also those that are so

unnatural. They have not only embraced errors which are very contrary to truth, but very contrary to humanity, not only against the light of nature, but against the more innocent inclinations of nature. Such has been, and still is, the blindness of many nations in the world, that they embrace those errors which do not only exclude all true virtue, all holy dispositions, but those that have swallowed up the more harmless inclinations of human nature.

Thus they have embraced many gross delusions, that are as contrary as possible to natural affection. Such as offering up their own children in sacrifice to their idol, which has been a common thing in the heathen world.

And the parents have not only offered them up to deals, but they have brought them and offered them up to the most cruel and tormenting deaths: as, to be burnt alive, to be broiled to death in burning brass, which was the way of offering up children to Moloch. The image of the idol being made of brass, in a horrid shape, was heated red hot, and the poor child was laid naked in this burning brass, and so burnt to death. And the parents themselves brought the child to this offering, however sweet and pleasant a child it might be. And thus the innocent child was tormented till it died, without any regard to its piteous cries. And it has been the manner of some nations, to offer in sacrifice the fairest and best beloved child that they had. And thus many thousands of poor babes have been offered up. So strong has been the tendency of the hearts of men to delusion, that it has thus overcome those strong natural affections which men have to the fruit of their own bodies.

And many of these delusions have been against men's natural love of their own ease, and aversion to pain. Many have worshipped their idols, and do so to this day, with such rites as are most painful and tormenting; cutting, gashing, and mangling their own flesh. Thus they sottishly worshipped Baal of old. "And they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them." And it is still the custom in some nations grievously to torment themselves: to kindle a fire to scorch their own bodies in a most miserable manner; and to put themselves to various and long-continued torments to please their idols. And it is the manner in some countries for persons, on certain

occasions, to kill themselves; yea, to put themselves to cruel deaths; to cast themselves into great fires, and there burn themselves to death. How powerful must be the delusions of the human mind, and how strong the tendency of the heart to carry them such a length, and so to overcome the tenderest feelings of human nature.

**3.** The extreme blindness of the mind of man will appear further, if we consider how general gross ignorance and delusion has been. It has for the most part prevailed through the greater part of the world. For most of the time from Noah's flood to the coming of Christ, all nations, except the children of Israel, were overspread with gross heathenish darkness; being given up to the most vain and ridiculous notions, and all manner of superstitious, barbarous, absurd, and unnatural practices. And, for the greater part of the time since, most nations of the world have been covered with gross darkness.

So it is at this day. Many nations are under popish darkness, and are in such gross delusions that they worship the Virgin Mary, and a great multitude of dead men, whom their church has canonized for saints; some real saints, and others abominably wicked men. So they worship the bread in the sacrament, and account it not only the real body of Christ, but real Christ in body and soul, and divinity. They carry a wafer, a small piece of bread, in procession, fall down before it, adore it, and account it Christ himself, both in his divine and human nature; and yet believe that the body of Christ is in heaven, and in ten thousand different places on earth at the same time. They think they can do works of supererogation; that is, more good works than they are obliged to do, whereby they bring God into debt to them. They whip themselves, and put themselves to other ridiculous penance's and sufferings, whereby they think they appease the anger of God for their sins. And they pay money to the priests, to buy the pardon of their sins; yea, they buy indulgences for future crimes, or pardon for sins before they commit them. They think they defend themselves from evil spirits, by sprinkling holy water. They pay money to buy the souls of their departed friends out of purgatory; they worship the relics of dead saints, such as pieces of their bones, their teeth, their hair, pieces of their garments, and the like. And innumerable other such foolish delusions are they under.

A great part of the nations of the world are Mahometans; many of the articles of whose belief are too childish and ridiculous to be publicly mentioned in a solemn assembly. — But the greater part of the inhabitants of the world are to this day gross, barbarous heathens who have not the knowledge of the true God, but worship idols and devils, with all manner of absurd and foolish rites and ceremonies; and are destitute of even common civility: multitudes of nations being like beasts in human shape. — Now this barbarous ignorance and gross delusion being of such great extent and continuance, shows that the cause is general, and that the defect is in the corrupted nature of mankind, man's natural blindness and proneness of his heart to delusion.

**4.** The sottish blindness and folly of the heart of men appears in their being so prone to fall into such gross delusions, soon after they have been favoured with clear light. Were not the minds of men exceeding dark, they never would entertain such absurd notions at all, for they are as contrary as possible to reason: much less would they fall into them, after they had once been instructed in the truth. For, were it not very strange and great sottishness indeed, they would — when they come to be informed of the truth, and have opportunity to compare it with those gross errors — behold such a reasonableness in the truth, and such absurdity in those errors, that they would never be in danger of being deluded by them any more. But yet so it is; mankind, after they have been fully instructed and have lived in clear light, have, time after time, presently lost the knowledge of the truth, and have exchanged it for the most barbarous and brutish notions.

So it was early after the flood, whereby the wicked world, those that were visibly so, were destroyed, and none were left but those who professed the true religion: and they had such an eminently holy man as Noah to instruct them. And though the true God had so wonderfully and astonishingly manifested himself in that great work of vengeance against his enemies; yet the posterity of Noah, in great part, presently lost the knowledge of the true God, and fell away to idolatry; and that even while Noah was living. And the ancestors of Abraham were tainted with that idolatry; even Terah his own father. “And Joshua said unto all the people, thus saith the Lord God of Israel, your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah the father of Abraham, and the father of

Nachor: and they served other gods. And I took your father Abraham from the other side of the flood,” etc. It seems as though Abraham was called away from his father’s house, and from his own country, for this reason, that the country was overrun with idolatry.

And even many of the posterity of Abraham and Isaac — Abraham’s posterity by Hagar and Keturah, and that part of Isaac’s posterity which were of Esau — though the true religion was so thoroughly taught and practiced in the houses of those holy patriarchs, and God had from time to time so wonderfully and miraculously manifested himself to them, yet — soon east off the true God, and fell away to idolatry. For, not very long after, we read of the posterity of Jacob as being the only people of God, that he had in all the earth. — And so the people of that part of the land of Canaan, who were under that holy king Melchizedeck, soon totally east off the worship of the one only true God, which he taught and maintained. For before Joshua brought in the children of Israel, the inhabitants of that land were wholly given to idolatry. So the people of the land of Uz, who were under the government of so great and holy a man as Job, soon lost the knowledge of the true God, and all those religious truths which were then known among them, and sunk into gross idolatry.

So the posterity of Jacob, themselves — though God had manifested himself to them, and had wrought such wonders for them in the time of Jacob and Joseph, yet presently fell to worship the gods of Egypt. This appears from the words of Joshua, “Put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt.” And how soon did they fall to worship a golden calf in the wilderness, in the midst of the wonderful and miraculous manifestations of the one only true God! And notwithstanding idolatry was so strictly forbidden, and the folly and wickedness of it so clearly manifested, in the law of Moses and in God’s providence yet, how soon did they fall into idolatry after they were brought into the land of Canaan! And when God raised up eminent men, judges to instruct and govern them, and reclaim them from their idolatrous practices, from time to time; though they processed to be convinced of their foolish delusion, yet they would soon fall again into the most sottish idolatry. And this they did soon after such great light as they enjoyed in the time of Samuel, David, and Solomon, and so, from time to time, down to the Babylonish captivity.

And in the apostle's times, when such great things were done to rouse the attention of mankind, and such great light was spread over many nations, multitudes, after they had been instructed in the Christian religion by the apostles and others, fell away into the grossest heresies, and embraced the most corrupt and absurd notions. — After the Roman empire had been converted from heathenism to Christianity, and the light of the gospel had driven out the sottish ignorance and gross absurdities of pagan idolatry, in which they had continued so long; they soon began to fall away from the truth into anti-christian superstition and idolatry, in which are opinions and practices no less absurd than those of the heathen. And a great part of the Christian world fell away to Mahometanism.

And since the reformation, wherein God wonderfully restored gospel light in a great part of the Christian world, which was but about two hundred years ago, many are fallen away again, some to popery, some to gross heresies, and some to atheistical principles: so that the reformed church is greatly diminished. — And as to our nation in particular, which has been a nation favoured with light, since the reformation, above most, if not any in the world; how soon has it in great part fallen away! A great part of it to atheism, deism, and gross infidelity, and others to Arminianism, and to the Socinian and Arian heresies, to believe that Christ is a created dependent God, and to hold other foolish absurdities! And many have of late openly disputed and denied the moral evil of some of the greatest and most heinous vices. These things show how desperately prone mankind are to blindness and delusion, how addicted they are to darkness. — God now and then, by his instructions, lifts up some nations out of such gross darkness: but then, how do they sink down into it again, as soon as his hand is withdrawn! like a heavy stone, which, though it may be forced upwards, yet sinks down again; and will continue to sink lower and lower with a swift progress, if there be nothing to restrain it. That is the woeful tendency of the mind of man since the fall, notwithstanding his noble powers and faculties; even to sink down into a kind of brutality, to lose and extinguish all useful light, and to sink lower and lower into darkness.

**5.** The extreme and brutish blindness that possesses the hearts of men naturally, appears in their being so confident in gross errors and delusions. Some things mentioned already, show how confident and assured they are; particularly their running such great ventures as offering up their children,

and cutting and mangling themselves. Multitudes live and die in the most foolish and absurd notions and principles, and never seem to make any doubt of their being in the right.

The Mahometans seem to make no doubt but that, when they die, they shall go to such a paradise as Mahomet has promised them, where they shall live in all manner of sensual pleasures, and shall spend their time in gratifying the hosts of the flesh. Mahomet promised there, that all who die in war for the defense of the Mahometan religion, shall go to this paradise, and they make no doubt of it. Therefore, many of them, as it were, willingly rush on upon the point of the sword.

The papists, many of them at least, make no doubt of the truth of those foolish notions of a purgatory, and the power of the priests to deliver them out of it, and give them eternal life, and therefore will not spare vast sums of money to purchase deliverance from those imaginary torments. How confident are many heretics in the grossest heresies! and how bold are many deists in their infidelity!

**6.** The desperateness of that blindness which is in the heart of man, appears, in that no nation or people in the world ever have had any remedy or deliverance from such gross ignorance and delusion, from themselves. No instance can be mentioned of any people whatsoever, who have once fallen into heathenish darkness, or any other gross superstitions and ridiculous opinions in religion, that ever had any remedy by any wisdom of their own; or that have of themselves, grown wiser by the improvement of their own faculties, and by instructing one another, or that ever had any remedy at all, by the teaching of any wise men who did not professedly act as moved and directed of God, and did not declare, that they had their instructions, in the first place, from him.

Thus in the heathen world. Before Christ's time, the whole world, except the Jews, lay in their darkness for a great many hundred years, even beyond all time of which they had any certain history among them. And there was no remedy, nor any appearance of a remedy; they continued, ages after ages, waxing worse and worse, sinking deeper and deeper. Among all the many nations in the world, no one ever bethought themselves, and emerged out of their brutish darkness. There were indeed some nations that emerged out of slavery, east off the yoke of their

enemies, grew great, and conquered great part of the world; but they never conquered the blindness of their own hearts.

There were some nations who excelled in other knowledge, as the Greeks and Romans. They excelled in policy, and in the form of their civil government. They had wise political rulers, they had excellent laws for regulating their civil state, many of which have been imitated, as a pattern, by many Christian nations ever since. They excelled many other nations in arts, government, and civility, almost as much as men in common do beasts. Yet they never could deliver themselves from their heathenism. Though they were so wise in other things, yet in matters of religion they were very absurd and brutish. For even the Greeks and Romans, in their most flourishing state, worshipped innumerable gods; and some to whom they ascribed great vices: and some they worshipped with most obscene and horrid rites. To some they offered human sacrifices. The Romans had a temple dedicated to the furies, which they worshipped. And they had a multitude of childish notions and fables about their gods.

And though there were raised up some wise men and philosophers among the Greeks and Romans, who borrowed some things concerning the true God from the Jews; yet their instructions never were effectual to deliver any one people, or even one city or town, from their barbarous heathenism, or so much as to get any one society, or company of men, to unite in the public worship of the true God. And these philosophers themselves had many grossly absurd opinions, mingled with those scraps of truth which they had gathered up.

And the Jews, when fallen awe to idolatry, as they often did, never recovered of themselves. Never any remedy appeared, unless God raised up, and extraordinarily moved, some person to reprove and instruct them. — And in this age of knowledge, an age wherein learning is carried to a great height, even many learned men seem to be carried! away with the gross errors and fool cries of the popish religion.

Europe is a part of the world the most famed for arts and sciences of any, and these things have been carried to a much greater height in this age than in many others: yet many learned men in Europe at this day, who greatly excel in human arts and literature, are still under popish darkness. A deceived heart has turned them aside; nor do they seem to have any power

to deliver their souls; nor does it come into their minds, that there is a lie in their right hands.

Many men in France and in other countries, who are indeed men of great learning, knowledge, and abilities, yet seem really to think that the church of Rome is the only true church of Christ, and are zealous to uphold and propagate it. And though now, within this hundred years, human learning has been very much promoted, and has risen to a greater height than ever in the world; and has greatly increased not only in our nation, but in France and Italy, and other popish countries; yet there seems to be no such effect of it, as any considerable turning from popish delusions; but the church of Rome has rather increased of late, than otherwise.

And in England, a land wherein learning flourishes a; much as in any in the world, and which is perhaps the most favoured with light of any; there are many men of vast learning, and great and strong reason, who have embraced, and do at this day embrace, the gross errors of the Arians and Deists. Our nation, in all its light and learning, is full of infidels, and those that are further from Christianity than the very Mahometans themselves. Of so little avail is human strength, or human reason and learning, as a remedy against the extreme blindness of the human mind. The blindness of the mind, or an inclination to delusion in things of religion, is so strong, that it will overcome the greatest reaming, and the strongest natural reason.

Men, if let alone, will not help one another; nor will they help themselves. The disease always proves without remedy, unless God delivers. This was observed of old: “And none considereth in his heart, neither is there knowledge nor understanding to say, I have burnt part of it in the fire; yea, also I have baked bread upon the coals thereof, I have roasted flesh, and eaten it: and shall I make the residue thereof an abomination? shall I fall down to the stock of a tree? He feedeth on ashes: a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, is there not a lie in my right hand?”

If God lets men alone, no light arises; but the darkness grows thicker and thicker. How is it now, at this very day, among all the nations where the light of the gospel has not come? Many of whose ancestors, without doubt, have been in the midnight darkness of heathenism for above three thousand years: and not one People have delivered themselves, who have

not had the light of the gospel. And this is not owing to their want of as good natural abilities as we have; nor is it because they have an inclination more to neglect their natural abilities, or make a worse improvement of them than we.

**7.** The extreme blindness of man's heart, in matters of religion, appears, by men falling into gross delusions, or continuing in them, at the same time that they have been under great means of instruction from God. We have many instances of this, as Rachel in Jacob's family; and the Israelites in the wilderness etc. These last had great means of instruction, yet they set up the golden calf, etc. And after Joshua's time, they persisted in their delusions and folly, from time to time, even under the reproofs of the prophets, and even in such horrid delusions, so contrary to natural affection, as offering their children in sacrifice to Moloch, burning them alive, in a most cruel manner.

In the time of Christ and the apostles the Jews had great means of instruction, and most of the nations of the world were put under great advantages to come to the knowledge of the truth, yet what was the effect? It would be easy to pursue these remarks respecting the papists in the time of the reformation, and since — the Arians and Deists in our day, etc. — but what has been said may be quite sufficient, if the reader will but indulge reflection.

**8.** The exceedingly great blindness of men, in things of religion, appears in the endless disputes and controversies, that there have been, and are, among men, about those things which concern religion. — Of old, the wise men and philosophers among the heathen, were, so to speak, infinitely divided among themselves. Varro, who was one of them, reckons up several hundred opinions about that one point, Wherein man's happiness consisted? And they were continually in disputes one with another. But the effect of their disputes was not any greater union, or any better agreement in their opinions. They were as much divided after they had disputed many ages, as they were at first; yea, much more.

So there have long been disputes in the Christian world about opinions and principles in religion. There is a vast variety of sects and opinions, and disputes have been carried on, age after age, with great warmth, and thousands of volumes have been written one against another, And all these

disputes have not terminated the differences, but they still subsist as much as ever; yea, they increase and multiply more and more. Instead of ending controversies by disputing, one dispute only lays a foundation for another. And thus the world goes on jangling and contending, daily writing and printing; being as it were deluged with controversial books; and all to no purpose.

The increase of human learning does not bring these controversies to an issue, but does really increase and multiply them. There probably never was a time in our nation wherein there was such a vast variety of opinions in matters of religion, as at this day. Every now and then, a new scheme of things is broached, and various and contrary opinions are mixed and jumbled, divided and subdivided; and every new writer is willing to have the credit of some new notion.

And after this manner does this miserable world go on in endless confusion; like a great multitude of fool-hardy persons, who go on in the dark, stumbling and justling one against another, without perceiving any remedy for their own, or affording any for their neighbour's, calamity. — Thus I have shown how the extreme blindness that possesses the hearts of men is manifest in what appears in their profession.

### SECTION 3

*Men's extreme blindness manifested by inward experience, and especially in their practices under the gospel.*

I COME now to show, how this is manifest in those things that are found by inward experience, and are visible in men's practices under the light of the gospel.

**1.** This appears in their being so prone to be deceived so many ways, or being liable to such a multiplicity of deceits. There are thousands of delusions in things which concern the affairs of religion, that men commonly are led away with, who yet live under the light of the gospel. — They are many ways deceived about God. They thirsts him to be an exceeding diverse kind of being from what he is; altogether such an one as themselves, they are deceived about his holiness! they do not realize it, that he is such a holy being as he indeed is, or that he hates sin with such a

hatred as he declares he does. They are not convinced of his truth, or that he certainly will fulfil his threatenings or his promises. They are not convinced of his justice in punishing sin, as he does. They have very wrong notions of Christ. They are not convinced of his ability to save them, or of the sufficiency of his sacrifice and righteousness; nor of his willingness to receive them.

Men are commonly subject to a great many errors about their duty. They are ready to bring their principles to agree with their practices, instead of bringing their practices to their principles, as they ought to do. They will put innumerable false glosses on the rules of God's word, to bend them to a compliance with their lusts; and so they "put darkness for light, and light for darkness; bitter for sweet, and sheet for bitter."

They are subject to deceits and delusions about the things of this world. They imagine that there is happiness and satisfaction to be found in the profits, pleasures, and honours which are to be had here. They believe all the deluding flatteries and promises of a vain world. And they will hold that deceit and grand delusion, that these things are the highest good; and will act accordingly; will choose these things for their portion. And they will hold and practice upon that error, that these things are of long continuance, and are to be depended upon.

They are greatly deceived about the things of another world. They undervalue that heavenly glory, which is promised to the saints; and are not much terrified with what they hear of the damnation of hell; they cannot realize it, that its torments are so dreadful as they hear; and are very ready to imagine that they are not eternal, but will some time or other have an end.

They are deceived about the state of good men. They think they are not happy, but live a melancholy life. And they are deceived about the wicked. They envy the state of many of them, as accounting them well off. "They call the proud happy, and bless the covetous, whom God abhors." And they strive a great deal more after such enjoyments as these have, than after such as are the portion of the godly.

They are subject to a thousand deceits and delusions about themselves. They think themselves wise, when they are fools. They are deceived about

their own hearts; they think them much better than they really are. They think they see many good things in themselves, when indeed there is nothing good there. They appear lovely in their own eyes, when their hearts are like the inside of a grave, full of dead men's bones and rotten flesh, crawling worms, and all uncleanness or rather, the inward vault of hell, that is a habitation of devils and every foul spirit. Those things in their hearts are highly esteemed by them, which are an abomination in the sight of God.

Men are very prone to be deceived about their own state; to think themselves something when they are nothing; and to suppose themselves "rich and increased in goods, and to have need of nothing; when they are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." They are greatly deceived about the principles they act from. They think they are sincere in that in which there is no sincerity; and that they do those things from love to God, which they do only from love to themselves. They call mere speculative or natural knowledge, spiritual knowledge; and put conscience for grace; a servile, for a childlike fear; and common affections, that are only from natural principles, and have no abiding effect, for high discoveries, and eminent acting's of grace. Yea, it is common with men to call their vicious dispositions by the name of some virtue. They call their anger and malice zeal for a righteous cause, or zeal for the public good; and their covetousness, frugality.

They are vastly deceived about their own righteousness. They think their affections and performances lovely to God, which indeed are hateful to him. They think their tears, reformations, and Graven, sufficient to make atonement for their sins, when indeed if all the angels in heaven should offer themselves in sacrifice to God., it would not be sufficient to atone for one of their sins. They think their prayers and works, and religious doings, a sufficient price to purchase God's favour and eternal glory; when, as they perform them, they do nothing but merit hell.

They are greatly deceived about their strength. They think they are able to mend their own hearts, and work some good principles in themselves; when they can do no more towards it, than a dead corpse does towards raising itself to life. They vainly flatter themselves, they are able to come to Christ, when they are not. They are greatly deceived about the stability

of their own hearts. They foolishly think their own intentions and resolutions of what good they will do hereafter, to be depended on, when indeed there is no dependence at all to be had on them. They are greatly deceived about their opportunities. They think that the long continuance of their opportunity is to be depended on, and that to-morrow it is to be boasted of; when indeed there is the utmost uncertainty of it. They flatter themselves that they shall have a better opportunity to seek salvation hereafter, than they have now, when there is no probability of it, but a very great improbability.

They are greatly deceived about their own actions and practices. Their own faults are strangely hid from their eyes. They live in ways that are very unbecoming Christians, but yet seem not to be at all sensible of it. Those evil ways of theirs, which are very plain to others, are hid from them. Yea, those very things, which they themselves account great faults in others, they will justify themselves in. Those things for which they will be very angry with others, they at the same time do themselves, and oftentimes in a much higher degree, and never once think of it. While they are zealous to pull the mote out of their brother's eye, they know not that a beam is in their own eye.

Those sins that they commit, which they are sensible are sins, they are woefully deceived about. They call great sins, little ones; and in their own imaginations, find out many excuses, which make the guilt very small, while the many heinous aggravations are hid from their eyes. They are greatly deceived about themselves, when they compare themselves with others. They esteem themselves better than their neighbours, who are indeed much better than themselves. They are greatly deceived about themselves, when they compare themselves with God. They are very insensible of the difference there is between God and them, and act in many things as if they thought themselves his equals, yea, as if they thought themselves above him. Thus manifold are the deceits and delusions that men fall into.

**2.** The desperate blindness that is natural to men, appears in their being so ignorant and blind in things that are so clear and plain. Thus if we consider how great God is and how dreadful sin against him must be, and how much sin we are guilty of, and of what importance it is that his infinite Majesty

should be vindicated, how plain is it, that man's righteousness is insufficient! And yet how greatly will men confide in it! how will they ascribe more to it than can be ascribed to the righteousness of the sinless and glorious angels of heaven. What can be more plain in itself, than that eternal things are of infinitely greater importance than temporal things? And yet how hard is it thoroughly to convince men of it! How plain is it, that eternal misery in hell is infinitely to be dreaded! And yet how few appear to be thoroughly convinced of this! How plain is it, that life is uncertain! And yet how much otherwise do most men think! How plain is it, that it is the highest prudence in matters of infinite concern to improve the first opportunity, without trusting to another! But yet how few are convinced of this! How reasonable is it considering that God is a wise and just being, to suppose that there shall be a future state of rewards and punishments, wherein every man shall receive according to his works! And yet, how does this seem like a dream to most men!

What can be in itself more plain and manifest, and easily to be known by us, if it were not for a strange blindness' than we are to ourselves, who are always with, never absent from ourselves; always in our own view, before our own eyes who have opportunity to look into our own hearts, and see all that passes there? And yet what is there that men are more ignorant of, than they are of themselves? There are many vicious practices, the unlawfulness of which is very plain; the sins are gross, and contrary not only to the word of God, but to the light of nature: and yet men will often plead, there is no harm in such sins; such as, many acts of gross uncleanness; and many acts of fraud, injustice and deceitfulness; and many others that might be mentioned.

There is no one thing whatsoever more plain and manifests, and more demonstrable, than the being of a God. It is manifest in ourselves, in our own bodies and souls, and in every thing about us wherever we turn our eye, whether to heaven, or to the earth, the air, or the seas. And yet how prone is the heart of man to call this into question! So inclined is the heart of man to blindness and delusion, that it is prone to even atheism itself.

**3.** The great blindness of the heart of man appears, in that so little a thing will deceive him, and confound his judgment. A little self-interest, or only the bait of some short gratification of a sensual appetite, or a little stirring

of passion, will blind men's eyes, and make them argue and judge most strangely and perversely, and draw the most absurd conclusion; such as, if they were indifferent, they would see to be most unreasonable. The devil finds easy work to deceive them a thousand ways; an argument of the great weakness and blindness of our minds. As a little child, weak in understanding, is very easily deceived.

**4.** The woeful blindness that possesses the hearts of men naturally, appears in their being all totally ignorant of that in God, which they had most need to know; viz. the glory and excellency of his nature. Though our faculties, which we have above the beasts, were chiefly given us, that we might know this, and though without this knowledge all other will signify nothing to us, and our faculties are as capable of it, as of any other knowledge whatsoever — and which is as plainly and abundantly manifested as any thing whatsoever, innumerable ways, both in the word and works of God — yet all men naturally are totally ignorant of this; as ignorant as one born blind is of colours. Natural men of the greatest abilities and learning, are as ignorant of it, as the weakest and the most unlearned; yea, as ignorant as the very stocks and stones; for they see, and can see nothing at all of it.

**5.** It appears, in that they are so blind in those same things in religious matters, which they are sufficiently sensible of in other matters. In temporal things they are very sensible that it is a point of prudence to improve the first opportunity in things of great importance. But in matters of religion, which are of infinitely the greatest importance, they have not this discernment. In temporal matters they are sensible that it is a great folly long to delay and put off, when life is in danger, and all depends upon it. But in the concerns of their souls, they are insensible of this truth. So in the concerns of this world, they are sensible it is prudence to improve times of special advantage, and to embrace a good offer when made them. They are sensible that things of long continuance are of greater importance, than those of short duration; yet in religious concerns, none of these things are sensibly discerned. In temporal things they are sufficiently sensible, that it is a point of prudence to lay up for hereafter, in summer to lay up for winter, and to lay up for their families, after they are dead; but men do not generally discern the prudence of making a proper provision for a future state. — In matters of importance in this world, they are

sensible of the wisdom of taking thorough care to be on sure grounds, but in their soul's concerns they see nothing of this. Our Saviour observed this to be the case with the Jews when he was upon earth. "Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky, and of the earth: but how is it that ye do not discern this time?"

**6.** The desperate blindness that naturally possesses the hearts of men under the gospel, appears in their remaining so stupidly insensible and deceive, under so great means of instruction and conviction. If they were brought up under heathenish darkness, it would not be so full a demonstration of it: but thus they remain, though under the clearest light, under the glorious light of the gospel, where they enjoy God's own instructions in his word, in a great fullness and plainness, and have the evidence and truth of things set before them from time to time in the plainest manner. They have the arguments of God's being and perfection, and of another world. They are told how eternal things are of greater importance than temporal; and of what importance it is to escape eternal misery.

How much it is worth while to take pains for heavenly glory; and how vain their own righteousness is: but yet to what little purpose!

And they have not only great means of instruction in God's word, but also in providence. They have the evidence of the shortness and uncertainty of life. "He seeth that wise men die, likewise the fool and the brutish person perish, and leave their wealth to others." Yet "their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling places to all generations: they call their lands after their own names. Nevertheless man being in honour, abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish. This their way is their folly: yet their posterity approve their sayings." They find the world is vain and unsatisfactory; they find the great instability and treachery of their own hearts; and how their own good intentions and resolutions are not to be depended on. They open find by experience, that their attempts to make them better, fail; but, alas! with what small effect!

Such abundant evidence is there, both in what appears in the open profession of men; and also by what is found in their inward experience, and is evident in their practice, of the extreme and brutish ignorance and blindness, which naturally possess their hearts.

## SECTION 4

*Practical inferences and application of the subject.*

HAVING shown how the truth of the doctrine is evident, both by what appears in men's open profession, and by those things which are found by inward experience, and are manifest by what is visible in men's practice; I proceed to improve the subject.

**I.** By this we may see how manifest are the ruins of the full of man. It is observable in all the kinds of God's creatures that we behold, that they have those properties and qualities, which are every way proportioned to their end; so that they need no more, they stand in need of no greater degree of perfection, in order well to answer the special use for which they seem to be designed. The brute creatures, birds, beasts, fishes, and insects, though there be innumerable kinds of them, yet all seem to have such a degree of perception and perfection given them, as best suits their place in the creation, their manner of living, and the ends for which they were made. There is no defect visible in them; they are perfect in their kind; there seems to be nothing wanting, in order to their filling up their allotted place in the world. And there can be no reasonable doubt but that it was so at first with mankind. It is not reasonable to suppose, that God would make many thousands of kinds of creatures in this lower world, and one kind the highest of them all, to be the head of the rest; and that all the rest should be complete in their kinds, every way endowed with such qualifications as are proportioned to their use and end: and only this most noble creature of all, left exceeding imperfect, notoriously destitute of what he principally stands in need of to answer the end of his being. The principal faculty by which God has distinguished this noble creature from the rest, is his understanding: but would God so distinguish man in his creation from other creatures, and then seal up that understanding with such an extreme blindness, as to render it useless, as to the principal ends of it; and wholly to dissemble him from answering the ends of an intelligent creature, and to make his understanding rather a misery than a blessing to him; and rendering him much more mischievous than useful? Therefore, if the Scripture had not told us so, yet we might safely conclude, that mankind are not now, as they were made at first; but that they are in a fallen state and condition.

**II.** From what has been said, plainly appears the necessity of divine revelation. The deists deny the Scripture to be the word of God, and hold that there is no revealed religion; that God has given mankind no other rule but his own reason; who is sufficient, without any word or revelation from heaven, to give man a right understanding of divine things, and of his duty. But how is it proved in fact? How much trial has there been, whether man's reason, without a revelation, would be sufficient or not! The whole world, excepting one nation, had the trial till the coming of Christ. And was not this long enough for trial, whether man's reason alone was sufficient to instruct him? Those nations, who all that time lay in such gross darkness, and in such a deplorable helpless condition, had the same natural reason that the deists have. And during this time, there was not only one man, or a succession of single persons, that had the trial, whether their own reason would be sufficient to lead them to the knowledge of the truth but all nations, who all had the same human faculties that we have. If human reason is really sufficient, and there be no need of any thing else, why has it never proved so? Why has it never happened, that so much as one nation, or one city or town, or one assembly of men, have been brought to tolerable notions of divine things, unless it be by the revelation contained in the Scriptures? If it were only one nation that had remained in such darkness, the trial might not be thought so great; because one particular people might be under some disadvantages, which were peculiar. But thus it has been with all nations, except those which have been favoured with the Scriptures, and in all ages. Where is any people, who to this day have ever delivered themselves by their own reason, or have been delivered without light fetched from the Scriptures, or by means of the gospel of Jesus Christ?

If human reason is sufficient without the Scripture, is it not strange that, in these latter ages — since navigation has been so improved, and America and many other parts of the world have been discovered, which were before unknown — no one nation has any where been found already enlightened, and possessed of true notions about the Divine Being and his perfection's, by virtue of that human reason they have been possessed of so many thousand years? The many poor, barbarous nations here, in America, had the faculty of reason to do what they pleased with, before the Europeans came hither, and brought over the light of the gospel. If

human reason alone was sufficient, it is strange, that no one people were found in any corner of the land, who were helped by it, in the chief concern of man.

There has been a great trial, as to what men's reason can do without divine help, in those endless disputes that have been maintained. If human reason alone could help mankind, it might be expected that these disputes would have helped them, and have put an end to men's darkness. The heathen philosophers had many hundreds of years to try their skiff in this way: but all without effect. That divine revelation, which the church of God has been possessed of, has been in the world "as a light shining in a dark place." It is the only remedy which God has provided for the miserable, brutish blindness of mankind, a remedy without which this fallen world would have sunk down for ever in brutal barbarism without any remedy. It is the only means that the true God has made successful in his providence, to give the nations of the world the knowledge of himself; and to bring them off from the worship of false gods.

If human reason be the only proper means, the means that God has designed for enlightening mankind, is it not very strange, that it has not been sufficient, nor has answered this end in any one instance? All the right speculative knowledge of the true God, which the deists themselves have, has been derived from divine revelation. How vain is it to dispute against fact, and the experience of so many thousand years! and to pretend that human reason is sufficient without divine revelation, when so many thousand years, experience, among so many hundreds of nations, of different tempers, circumstances, and interests, has proved the contrary! One would think all should acknowledge, that so long a time is sufficient for a trial; especially considering the miseries that the poor nations of the world have been under all this while, for want of light: the innumerable temporal calamities and miseries — such as sacrificing children, and many other cruelties to others and even to themselves — besides that eternal perdition, which we may reasonably suppose to be the consequence of such darkness.

**III.** This doctrine should make us sensible, how great a mercy it is to mankind, that God has sent his own Son into the world, to be the light of the world. — The subject shows what great need we stand in of some

teacher to be sent from God. And even some of the wiser men among the heathen saw the need of this. They saw that they disputed and jangled among themselves without coming to a satisfying discovery of the truth; and hence they saw, and spoke of, the need there was of a teacher sent from heaven. And it is a wonderful instance of divine mercy that God has so beheld us in our low estate, as to provide such a glorious remedy. He has not merely sent some created evangelic to instruct us, but his own Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, and of the same nature and essence with him, and therefore infinitely better acquainted with him and more sufficient to teach a blind world. He has sent him to be the light of the world, as he says of himself, "I am come a light into the world." When he came he brought glorious light. It was like the day-spring from on high, visiting a dark world, as Zacharias observes." After Christ came, then the glorious gospel began to spread abroad delivering those "that had sitteth in darkness, and in the region of the shadow of death."

What reason have we to rejoice, and praise God, that he has made such excellent provision for us, and has set so glorious a sun in our firmament, such a "Sun of righteousness," after we had extinguished the light which at first enlightened us, and had, as it were, brought the world into that state, in which it was when "without form, and void and darkness was on the face of it." The glory of that light which God has sent into the world, is fully answerable to the grossness of that darkness which filled it. For Christ who came to enlighten us, is truth and light itself, and the fountain of all light. "He is the light, and in him is no darkness at all."

**IV.** Hence we may learn, what must be the thing which will bring to pass those glorious days of light which are spoken of in God's word. —

Though mankind be fallen into such darkness, and the world be mostly in the kingdom of darkness, yet the Scripture often speaks of a glorious day, wherein light shall fill the earth. "For behold the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people, but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising." "And he will destroy in this mountain, the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations." "The knowledge of God shall fill the earth, as the waters cover the sea."

By what we have heard, we may on good grounds conclude, that whenever this is accomplished, it will not be effected by human learning, or by the skill or wisdom of great men. What has been before observed of this reamed age, is a presumptive evidence of it, wherein spiritual darkness increases with the increase of learning. God will again make foolish the wisdom of this world and will, as it were, say in his providence, “Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world?”

When this shall be accomplished. it will be by a remarkable pouring out of God’s own Spirit, with the plain preaching of the gospel of his Son; the preaching of the spiritual, mysterious doctrines of Christ crucified, which to the reamed men of this world are foolishness; those doctrines, which are the stumbling-block of this, learned age. “Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.” It will not be by the enticing words of man’s wisdom; but by the demonstration of the Spirit, and of power. Not by the wisdom of this world, nor by the princes of this world, that come to nought: but by the gospel, that contains the wisdom of God in a mystery even the hidden wisdom, which none of the princes of this world, who have nothing to enlighten them but their own learning, know any thing of.

The Spirit of God, who searches all things, even the deep things of God, must reveal it. For let natural men be never so worldly wise and learned, they receive not the things of the Spirit: they are foolishness to them; nor can they know them, because they are spiritually discerned. This great effect, when it is accomplished, will be a glorious effect indeed: and it will be accomplished in such a manner, as most remarkably to show it to be the work of God, and his only. It will be a more glorious work of God than that which we read of in the beginning of Genesis. “And the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters: and God said, Let there be light, and there was light.”

**V.** Hence we may learn the misery of all such persons, as are under the power of that darkness which naturally possesses their hearts. There are two degrees of this misery.

**1.** That of which all who are in a natural condition like the subjects. The doctrine shows, that all such as are in a natural condition, are in a miserable

condition: for they are in an extremely dark and blind condition. It is uncomfortable living in darkness. What a sorrowful state would we all be in, if the sun should no more rise upon us, and the moon were to withdraw her shining, and the stars to be put out, and we were to spend the rest of our time in darkness! The world would soon perish in such darkness. It was a great plague in Egypt, when they had a total darkness for three days. They who are deprived of sight, are deprived of the most noble of the senses; they have no benefit of external light, one of the most excellent and needful of all the things which God has made in the visible creation. But they who are without spiritual sight and light, are destitute of that which is far more excellent and necessary.

That natural men are not sensible of their blindness, and the misery they are under by reason of it, is no argument that they are not miserable. For it is very much the nature of this calamity to be hid from itself, or from those who are under it. Fools are not sensible of their folly. Solomon says, "The fool is wiser in his own conceit, than seven men that can render a reason." The most barbarous and brutish heathens are not sensible of their own darkness; are not sensible but that they enjoy as great light, and have as good understanding of things, as the most enlightened nations in the world.

**2.** Another degree of this misery, is of those who are Judicially given up of God, to the blindness of their own minds. The Scripture teaches us that there are some such. "What then; Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for, but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded." "But their minds were blinded; for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away." "And he said, go and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, and understand not; and see ye indeed, and perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and convert and be healed." This judgment, when inflicted. is commonly for the contempt and abuse of light which has been offered, for the commission of presumptuous sins, and for being obstinate in sin, and resisting the Holy Ghost, and many gracious calls and counsels, warnings and reproofs.

Who the particular persons are, that are thus judicially given up of God to the blindness of their minds, is not known to men. But we have no reason to suppose that there are not multitudes of them; and most in places of the greatest light. There is no manner of reason to suppose, that this judgment, which is spoken of in Scripture, is in a great measure peculiar, to those old times. As there were many who fell under it in the times of the prophets of old, and of Christ and his apostles, so doubtless there are now also. And though the persons are not known) yet doubtless there may be more reason to fear it concerning some than others. All who are under the power of the blindness of their own minds, are miserable; but such as are given up to this blindness, are especially miserable, for they are reserved, and sealed over to the blackness of darkness for ever.

## SECTION 5

### *Address to sinners.*

THE consideration of what has been said of the desperate blindness which possesses the hearts of us all naturally, may well be terrifying to such as are yet in a Christless condition, in this place of light; where the gospel has been so long enjoyed, and where God has in times past so wonderfully poured out his Spirit.

And let such persons, for their awakening, consider the following things:

**1.** That they are blinded by the god of this world. Their blindness is from hell. This darkness which natural men are under, is from the prince of darkness. This the apostle says expressly of those who remain in unbelief and blindness under the gospel. “But if our gospel be hid, it is hid from them that are lost; in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not.” They belong to the kingdom of darkness. In that darkness which reigns in their souls, the devil reigns; and he holds his dominion there.

**2.** Consider how God in his word manifests his abhorrence and wrath towards those who remain so sottishly blind and ignorant, in the midst of light. How does God speak of them! “Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge?” “Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said, It is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my

ways. Unto whom I swore in my wrath, that they should not enter into my rest.” “The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master’s crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider. Ah, sinful nation — they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto angered.” It is a people of no understanding therefore he that made them will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them will show them no favour.” “My people is foolish they have not known me, they are sottish children and they have no understanding: they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge.” “Declare this in the house of Jacob, and publish it in the house of Judah, saying, Hear now this, O foolish people, and without understanding, which have eyes and see not, which have ears and hear not. Fear ye not ME, saith the Lord, will ye not tremble at MY presence?”

**3.** Consider how much wilfulness there is in your ignorance. Sinners are ready wholly to excuse themselves in their blindness; whereas, as observed already, the blindness that naturally possesses the hearts of men, is not a merely negative thing, but they are blinded by “the deceitfulness of sin.” There is a perverseness in their blindness. There is not a mere absence of light, but a malignant opposition to the light, as God says, “they know not, neither will they understand, they walk on in darkness.” Christ observes, “that every one that doeth evil, hateth the light, neither cometh to the light.” And that “this is their condemnation, that light is come into the world, yet men loved darkness rather than light.” And I may appeal to your own consciences, whether you have not willfully rejected the many instructions you have had; and refused to hearken? Whether you have not neglected to seek after the light, and neglected your Bible? Whether you have not been a very negligent hearer of the word preached, and neglected other proper means of other proper means of knowledge? Whether you have not neglected to cry to God for that wisdom which you need,? Yea, have you not resisted the means of know ledge? Have you not resisted and quenched the motions of the Spirit, which at times you have had? And taken a course to make yourself more and more stupid, by the convictions of your own conscience, and doing contrary to the light thereof, whereby you have done those things that have tended to sear your conscience, and make yourself more and more senseless and sottish?

**4.** Consider what is the course that God will take to teach those who will not be taught by the instructions of his word. He will teach them by briers

and thorns, and by the flames of hell. Though natural men will remain to all eternity ignorant of the excellency and loveliness of God's nature, and so will have no spiritual knowledge yet God in another world will make them thoroughly to understand many things, which senseless unawakened sinners are sottishly ignorant of in this world. Their eyes in many respects shall be thoroughly opened in hell. Their judgments will be rectified. They shall be of the same Judgment with the godly. They shall be convinced of the reality of those things which they would not be convinced of here, as the being of God, his power, holiness and justice; that the Scriptures are the word of God, that Christ is the Son of God, and that time is short and uncertain. They will be convinced of the vanity of the world, of the blessed opportunity they had in the world and how much it is men's wisdom to improve their time. We read of the rich man, who was so sottishly blind in this world, that "in hell he lift up his eyes, and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom." With many men, alas! the first time they open their eyes is in hell.

God will make all men to know the truth of those great things which he speaks of in his word, one way or another; for he will vindicate his own truth. He has undertaken to convince all men. They who will not be convinced in this world, by the gentle and gracious methods which God uses with them now, shall be convinced hereafter by severe means. If they will not be convinced for salvation, they shall be convinced by damnation. God will make them know that he is the Lord. And he will make them know that he bears rule. "Consume them in wrath, that they may not be, and let them know that God ruleth in Jacob, unto the ends of the earth." "Let them be confounded and troubled for ever yea, let them be put to shame, and perish. That men may know that thou, whose name is Jehovah, art the Most High over all the earth."

What great care we had need all have, that we be not deceived in matters of religion. If our hearts are all naturally possessed with such an extreme brutish ignorance and blindness in things of religion, and we are exceedingly prone to delusion; then surely great care ought to be taken to avoid it. For that we are naturally prone to delusion, shows our denser, but the greater our denser of any calamity is, the greater had our watchfulness need to be. — Let us therefore be hence warned to take heed that we be not deceived about our duty; about our own hearts; about our

ways, about our state, and about our opportunities. Thousands are deceived in these things, and thousands perish by that means. Multitudes fall on our right hand and on our left, and are ruined eternally by their delusion in these things.

How foolish a thing it is for men to lean to their own understanding, and trust their own hearts. If we are so blind, then our own wisdom is not to be depended on and that advice of the wise man is most reasonable “Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not to thine own understanding.” “And he that trusteth in his own heart, is a fool.” — They therefore are fools, who trust to their own wisdom, and will question the mysterious doctrines of religion; because they cannot see through them, and will not trust to the infinite wisdom of God.

Let us therefore become fools; be sensible of our own natural blindness and folly. There is a treasure of wisdom contained in that one sentence; “If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise.” Seeing our own ignorance, and blindness, is the first step towards having true knowledge. “If any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.”

Let us ask wisdom of God. If we are so blind in ourselves, then knowledge is not to be sought for out of our own stock, but must be sought from some other some other source. And we have no where else to go for it, but to the fountain of light and wisdom. True wisdom is a precious jewel; and none of our fellow-creatures can give us, nor can we buy it with any price we have to give. It is the sovereign gift of God. The way to obtain it, is to go to him, sensible of our weakness, and blindness, and misery on that account. “If any lack wisdom, let him ask of God.”