

**THE DOCTRINE OF THE  
TRINITY AND THE PERSON  
AND SATISFACTION OF CHRIST**

*by John Owen*

A BRIEF DECLARATION AND VINDICATION  
OF THE  
DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY  
AND ALSO OF THE  
PERSON AND SATISFACTION OF CHRIST

*accommodated to the capacity and use of such as may be in danger to be  
seduced and the establishment of the truth*

by

JOHN OWEN

## PREFATORY NOTE

Few of Owen's treatises have been more extensively circulated and generally useful than his "Brief Declaration and Vindication of the Doctrine of the Trinity," etc. It was published in 1669; and the author of the anonymous memoir of Owen, prefixed to an edition of his Sermons in 1720, informs us "This small piece has met with such an universal acceptance by true Christians of all denominations, that the seventh edition of it was lately published." An edition printed in Glasgow was published in 1798, and professes to be the eighth. A translation of the work appeared in the Dutch language (Vitringa, Doct. Christ., pars 6: p. 6, edit. 1776).

At the time when the treatise was published, the momentous doctrines of the Trinity and the Atonement were violently assailed; but it was not so much for the refutation of opponents as for "the edification and establishment of the plain Christian," that our author composed the following little work. The reader will find in it traces of that deep and familiar acquaintance with opposing views, and with the highest theology involved in the questions which might be expected from Dr. Owen on a subject which he seems to have studied with peculiar industry and research. Reference may be made to his "Vindiciae Evangelical," and his "Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews", in proof how thoroughly he had mastered the whole controversy in regard to the divinity and satisfaction of Christ, so far as the discussion had extended in his day. His controversy with Biddle, in which he wrote his "Vindiciae Evangelical," took place in 1655; and the first volume of the "Exposition" was published only the year before the "Brief Declaration," etc., appeared. The latter may be regarded, accordingly, as the substance of these important works, condensed and adapted to popular use and comprehension, in all that relates to the proper Godhead of the Son, and the nature of the work which he accomplished in the redemption of his people.

For the special object which he had in view, he adopts the course which has since been generally approved of and pursued, as obviously the wisest

and safest in defending and expounding the doctrine of the Trinity. He appeals to the broad mass of Scripture evidence in favor of the doctrine, and after proving the divine unity, together with the divinity of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost respectively, is careful not to enter on any discussion in regard to the unrevealed mysteries involved in the relations of the Trinity, beyond what was necessary for the refutation of those who argue, that whatever in this high doctrine is incomprehensible by reason, must be incompatible with revelation. This little work is farther remarkable for the almost total absence of the tedious digressions, which abound in the other works of Owen. Such logical unity and concentration of thought is the more remarkable, when we find that the treatise was written, as he tells us, "in a few hours." But it was a subject on which his mind was fully stored, and his whole heart was interested. The treatise which follows, therefore, was not the spark struck in some moment of collision, and serving only a temporary purpose, but a steady flame nourished from the beaten oil of the sanctuary.

Editor

## TO THE READER

Reader,

This small treatise has no other design but thy good, and establishment in the truth. And therefore, as laying aside that consideration alone, I could desirously have been excused from the labor of those hours which were spent in its composure; so in the work itself I admitted no one thought, but how the things treated of in it might and ought to be managed unto thy spiritual benefit and advantage. Other designs most men have in writing what is to be exposed to public view, and lawfully may have so; in this I have nothing but merely thy good. I have neither been particularly provoked nor opposed by the adversaries of the truth here pleaded for, nor have any need, from any self-respect, to publish such a small, plain discourse as this. Love alone to the truth, and the welfare of thy soul, has given efficacy to their importunity who pressed me to this small service.

The matters here treated of are on all hands confessed to be of the greatest moment, such as the eternal welfare of the souls of men is immediately and directly concerned in. This all those who believe the sacred truths here proposed and explained do unanimously profess and contend for, nor is it denied by those by whom they are opposed. There is no need, therefore, to give thee any especial reasons to evince thy concernment in these things, nor the greatness of that concernment, thereby to induce thee unto their serious consideration. It were well, indeed, that these great, sacred, and mysterious truths might, without contention or controversies about them, be left unto the faith of believers, as proposed in the Scripture, with that explanation of them which, in the ordinary ministry and dispensation of the gospel, is necessary and required.

Certainly, these tremendous mysteries are not by us willingly to be exposed, or prostituted to the cavils of every perverse querist and disputer; — those learned researchers of this century, whose pretended wisdom (indeed ignorance, darkness, and folly) God has designed to confound and destroy in them and by them. For my part, I can assure thee, reader, I have no mind to contend and dispute about these things, which I humbly adore and believe as they are revealed. It is the

importunity of adversaries, in their attempts to draw and seduce the souls of men from the truth and simplicity of the gospel in these great fundamentals of it, that alone can justify any to debate upon, or eristically [in the form of controversy] to handle these awful mysteries. This renders it our duty, and that indispensably, inasmuch as we are required to “contend earnestly for the faith once delivered unto the saints.” But yet, also, when this necessity is imposed on us, we are by no means discharged from that humble reverence of mind wherewith we ought always to be conversant about them; nor from that regard unto the way and manner of their revelation in the Scripture which may preserve us from all unnecessary intermixture of litigious or exotic phrases and expressions in their assertion and declaration. I know our adversaries could, upon the matter, decry any thing peculiarly mysterious in these things, although they are frequently and emphatically in the Scriptures affirmed so to be. But, whilst they deny the mysteries of the things themselves — which are such as every way become the glorious being and wisdom of God, — they are forced to assign such an enigmatical sense unto the words, expressions, and propositions wherein they are revealed and declared in the Scripture, as to turn almost the whole gospel into an allegory, wherein nothing is properly expressed but in some kind of allusion unto what is so elsewhere: which irrational way of proceeding, leaving nothing certain in what is or may be expressed by word or writing, is covered over with a pretence of right reason; which utterly refuses to be so employed. These things the reader will find afterward made manifest, so far as the nature of this brief discourse will bear. And I shall only desire these few things of him that intends its perusal: — First, That he would not look on the subject here treated of as the matter of an ordinary controversy in religion, —

“Neque enim hic levia aut ludicra petuntur  
Praemia; lectoris de vita animaeque salute Certatur.”

They are things which immediately and directly in themselves concern the eternal salvation of the souls of men, and their consideration ought always to be attended with a due sense of their weight and importance. Secondly, Let him bring with him a due reverence of the majesty, and infinite, incomprehensible nature of God, as that which is not to be prostituted to the captious and sophistical scanning of men of corrupt minds, but to be

humbly adored, according to the revelation that he has made of himself. Thirdly, That he be willing to submit his soul and conscience to the plain and obvious sense of Scripture propositions and testimonies, without seeking out evasions and pretences for unbelief. These requests I cannot but judge equal, and fear not the success where they are sincerely complied withal.

I have only to add, that in handling the doctrine of the satisfaction of Christ, I have proceeded on that principle which, as it is fully confirmed in the Scripture, so it has been constantly maintained and adhered unto by the most of those who with judgment and success have managed these controversies against the Socinians: and this is, that the essential holiness of God with his justice or righteousness, as the supreme governor of all, did indispensably require that sin should not also lately go unpunished; and that it should do so, stands in a repugnancy to those holy properties of his nature. This, I say, has been always constantly maintained by far the greatest number of them who have thoroughly understood the controversy in this matter, and have successfully engaged in it. And as their arguments for their assertion are plainly unanswerable, so the neglect of abiding by it is causelessly to forego one of the most fundamental and invincible principles in our cause. He who first labored in the defense of the doctrine of the satisfaction of Christ, after Socinus had formed his imaginations about the salvation that he wrought, and began to dispute about it, was Covetus, a learned man, who laid the foundation of his whole disputation in the justice of God, necessarily requiring, and indispensably, the punishment of sin. And, indeed, the state of the controversy as it is laid down by Socinus, in his book “*De Jesu Christy Servatore,*” which is an answer to this Covetus, is genuine, and that which ought not to be receded from, as having been the direct ground of all the controversial writings on that subject which have since been published in Europe. And it is in these words laid down by Socinus himself: “*Communes et orthodoxy (ut asseris) sentential est, Jesum Christum ideo servatorem nostrum esse, quia divinae justitiae per quam peccatores damnari merebamur, pro peccatis nostris plane satisfecerit; quae satisfactio, per Fidem, imputatur nobis ex dono Dei credentibus.*” This he ascribes to Covetus: “The common and orthodox judgment is, that Jesus Christ is therefore our Savior, because he has satisfied the justice of God, by which we, being

sinner, deserved to be condemned for all our sins” [which satisfaction, through faith, is imputed to us who through the grace of God believe.] In opposition whereunto he thus expresses his own opinion: “Ego vero censeo, et orthodoxam sententiam esse arbitror, Jesum Christum ideo servatorem nostrum esse, quia salutem eternam nobis annuntiaverit, confirmaverit, et in sua ipsius persona, cum vitae exemplo, tum ex mortuis resurgendo, manifeste ostenderit; vitamque aeternam nobis ei fidem habentibus ipse daturus sit. Divinae autem justitiae, per quam peccatores damnari meremur, pro peccatis nostris neque illum satisfacisse, neque et satisfaceret, opus fuisse arbitror;” — “I judge and suppose it to be the orthodox opinion, that Jesus Christ is therefore our Savior, because he has declared unto us the way of eternal salvation, and confirmed it in his own person; manifestly showing it, both by the example of his life and by rising from the dead; and in that he will give eternal life unto us, believing in him. And I affirm, that he neither made satisfaction to the justice of God, whereby we deserved to be damned for our sins, nor was there any need that he should so do.” This is the true state of the question; and the principal subtlety of Crellius, the great defender of this part of the doctrine of Socinus, in his book of the “Causes of the Death of Christ,” and the defense of this book, “De Jesu Christo Salvatore,” consists in speaking almost the same words with those whom he does oppose, but still intending the same things with Socinus himself. This opinion, as was said of Socinus, Covetus opposed and everted on the principle before mentioned.

The same truth was confirmed also by Zarnovitius, who first wrote against Socinus’ book; as also by Otto Casmannus, who engaged in the same work; and by Abraham Salinarius. Upon the same foundation do proceed Paraeus, Piscator, Lubbertus, Lucius, Camero, Voetius, Amyraldus, Placaeus, Rivetus, Walaeus, Thysius, Althingius, Maresius, Essenius, Arnoldus, Turretinus, Baxter, with many others. The Lutherans who have managed these controversies, as Tarnovius, Meisnerus, Calovius, Stegmannus, Martinius, Franzius, with all others of their way, have constantly maintained the same great fundamental principle of this doctrine of the satisfaction of Christ; and it has well and solidly been of late asserted among ourselves on the same foundation. And as many of these authors do expressly blame some of the school men, as Aquinas,



Durandus, Biel, Tataretus, for granting a possibility of pardon without satisfaction, as opening a way to the Socinian error in this matter; so also they fear not to affirm, that the foregoing of this principle of God's vindictive justice indispensably requiring the punishment of sin, does not only weaken the cause of the truth, but indeed leave it indefensible. However, I suppose men ought to be wary how they censure the authors mentioned, as such who expose the cause they undertook to defend unto contempt; for greater, more able, and learned defenders, this truth has not as yet found, nor does stand in need of.

*John Owen*

## THE PREFACE

The disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ having made that great confession of him, in distinction and opposition unto them, who accounted him only as a prophet, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,” Matthew 16:14, 16, he does, on the occasion thereof, give out unto them that great charter of the church’s stability and continuance, “Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it,” verse 18. He is himself the rock upon which his church is built, — as God is called the rock of his people, on the account of his eternal power and immutability, Deuteronomy 32:4, 18, 31, Isaiah 26:4; and himself the spiritual rock which gave out supplies of mercy and assistance to the people in the wilderness, 1 Corinthians 10:4.

The relation of the professing church unto this rock consists in the faith of this confession, that he is “the Christ, the Son of the living God.” This our Lord Jesus Christ has promised to secure against all attempts; yet so as plainly to declare, that there should be great and severe opposition made thereunto For whereas the prevalence of the gates of hell in an enmity unto this confession is denied, a great and vigorous attempt to prevail therein is no less certainly foretold. Neither has it otherwise fallen out. In all ages, from the first solemn foundation of the church of the New Testament, it has, one way or other, been fiercely attempted by the “gates of hell.” For some time after the resurrection of Christ from the dead, the principal endeavors of Satan, and men acting under him, or acted by him, were pointed against the very foundation of the church, as laid in the expression before mentioned. Almost all the errors and heresies wherewith for three or four centuries of years it was perplexed, were principally against the person of Christ himself; and, consequently, the nature and being of the holy and blessed Trinity. But being disappointed in his design herein, through the watchful care of the Lord Christ over his promise, in the following ages Satan turned his craft and violence against sundry parts of the superstructure, and, by the assistance of the Papacy, cast them into confusion, — nothing, as it were, remaining firm, stable, and in order, but

only this one confession, which in a particular manner the Lord Christ has taken upon himself to secure.

In these latter ages of the world, the power and care of Jesus Christ reviving towards his church, in the reformation of it, even the ruined heaps of its building have been again reduced into some tolerable order and beauty. The old enemies of its peace and welfare falling hereby under a disappointment, and finding his travail and labor for many generations in a great part frustrate, he is returned again to his old work of attacking the foundation itself; as he is unwearied and restless, and can be quiet neither conqueror nor conquered, — nor will be so, until he is bound and cast into the lake that burns with fire. For no sooner had the reformation of religion firmed itself in some of the European provinces, but immediately, in a proportion of distance not unanswerable unto what fell out from the first foundation of the church, sundry persons, by the instigation of Satan, attempted the disturbance and ruin of it, by the very same errors and heresies about the Trinity, the person of Christ and his offices, the person of the Holy Ghost and his grace, wherewith its first trouble and ruin was endeavored. And hereof we have of late an instance given among ourselves, and that so notoriously known, through a mixture of imprudence and impudence in the managers of it, that a very brief reflection upon it will suffice unto our present design.

It was always supposed, and known to some, that there are sundry persons in this nation, who, having been themselves seduced into Socinianism, did make it their business, under various pretences, to draw others into a compliance with them in the same way and persuasion. Neither has this, for sundry years, been so secretly carried, but that the design of it has variously discovered itself by overt acts of conferences, disputations, and publishing of books; which last way of late has been sedulously pursued. Unto these three is now a visible accession made, by that sort of people whom men will call Quakers, from their deportment at the first erection of their way (long since deserted by them), until, by some new revolutions of opinions, they cast themselves under a more proper denomination. That there is a conjunction issued between both these sorts of men, in an opposition to the holy Trinity, with the person and grace of Christ, the pamphlets of late published by the one and the

other do sufficiently evince. For however they may seem in sundry things as yet to look diverse ways, yet, like Samson's foxes, they are knit together by the tail of consent in these firebrand opinions, and jointly endeavor to consume the standing corn of the church of God. And their joint management of their business of late has been as though it were their design to give as great a vogue and report to their opinions as by any ways they are able. Hence, besides their attempts to be proclaiming their opinions, under various pretences, in all assemblies whereinto they may intrude themselves (as they know) without trouble, they are exceeding sedulous in scattering and giving away, yea, imposing gratis (and, as to some, ingratiis), their small books which they publish, upon all sorts of persons promiscuously, as they have advantage so to do. By this means their opinions being of late become the talk and discourse of the common sort of Christians, and the exercise of many, — amongst whom are not a few that, on sundry accounts, which I shall not mention, may possibly be exposed unto disadvantage and prejudice thereby, — it has been thought meet by some that the sacred truths which these men oppose should be plainly and briefly asserted and confirmed from the scripture; that those of the meanest sort of professors, who are sincere and upright, exercising themselves to keep a good conscience in matters of faith and obedience to God, may have somewhat in a readiness, both to guide them in their farther inquiry into the truth, as also to confirm their faith in what they have already received, when at any time it is shaken or opposed by the "cunning sleight of men that lie in wait to deceive."

And this comprises the design of the ensuing discourse. It may possibly be judged needless by some, as it was in its first proposal by him by whom it is written; and that because this matter at present is, by an especial providence, cast on other hands, who both have, and doubtless, as occasion shall require, will well acquit themselves in the defense of the truths opposed. Not to give any other account of the reasons of this small undertaking it may suffice, that "in publico discrimine omnis homo miles est," — "every man's concernment lying in a common danger," — it is free for every one to manage it as he thinks best, and is able, so it be without prejudice to the whole or the particular concerns of others. If a city be on fire, whose bucket that brings water to quench it ought to be refused? The attempt to cast fire into the city of God by the opinions mentioned, is

open and plain; and a timely stop being to be put unto it, the more hands that are orderly employed in its quenching, the more speedy and secure is the effect like to be.

Now, because the assertors of the opinions mentioned do seem to set out themselves to be some great ones, above the ordinary rate of men, as having found out, and being able publicly to maintain, such things as never would have entered into the minds of others to have thought on or conceived; and also that they seem with many to be thought worthy of their consideration because they now are new, and such as they have not been acquainted withal; I shall, in this prefatory entrance, briefly manifest that those who have amongst us undertaken the management of these opinions have brought nothing new unto them, but either a little contemptible sophistry and caption of words, on the one hand, or futile, affected, unintelligible expressions, on the other, — the opinions themselves being no other but such as the church of God, having been opposed by and troubled with from the beginning, has prevailed against and triumphed over in all generations. And were it not that confidence is the only relief which enraged impotency adheres unto and expects supplies from, I should greatly admire that those amongst us who have undertaken an enforcement of these old exploded errors, whose weakness does so openly discover and proclaim itself in all their endeavors, should judge themselves competent to give a new spirit of life to the dead carcass of these rotten heresies, which the faith of the saints in all ages has triumphed over, and which truth and learning have, under the care and watchfulness of Christ, so often baffled out of the world.

The Jews, in the time of our Savior's converse on the earth, being fallen greatly from the faith and worship of their forefathers, and ready to sink into their last and utmost apostasy from God, seem, amongst many other truths, to have much lost that of the doctrine of the holy Trinity, and of the person of the Messiah. It was, indeed, suited, in the dispensation of God, unto the work that the Lord Jesus had to fulfill in the world, that, before his passion and resurrection, the knowledge of his divine nature, as unto his individual person, should be concealed from the most of men. For this cause, although he was "in the form of Good, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, yet he made himself of no reputation, by

inking on him the form of a servant, and being made in the likeness of men, that being found in the fashion of a man, he might be obedient unto death," Philippians 2:6- 8; whereby his divine glory was veiled for a season, until he was "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead," Romans 1:4; and then "was glorified with that glory which he had with the Father before the world was," John 17:6. And as this dispensation was needful unto the accomplishment of the whole work which, as our mediator, he had undertaken, so, in particular, he who was in himself the Lord of hosts, a sanctuary to them that feared him, became hereby "a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem," Isaiah 8:13, 14. See Luke 2:34; Romans 9:33; 1 Peter 2:8; Isaiah 28:16. But yet, notwithstanding, as occasions required, suitably unto his own holy ends and designs, he forbore not to give plain and open testimony to his own divine nature and eternal pre-existence unto his incarnation. And this was it which, of all other things, most provoked the carnal Jews with whom he had to do; for having, as was said, lost the doctrine of the Trinity and person of the Messiah, in a great measure, whenever he asserted his Deity, they were immediately enraged, and endeavored to destroy him. So was it, plainly, John 8:66-69. Says he, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad. Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am. Then took they up stones to cast at him." So, also, John 10:30-33, "I and my Father are one. Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him. Jesus answered them, Many good works hare I showed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me? The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makes thyself God." They understood well enough the meaning of those words, "I and my Father are one," namely, that they were a plain assertion of his being God. This caused their rage. And this the Jews all abide by to this day, — namely, that he declared himself to be God, and therefore they slew him. Whereas, therefore, the first discovery of a plurality of persons in the divine essence consists in the revelation of the divine nature and personality of the Son, this being opposed, persecuted, and blasphemed by these Jews, they may be justly looked upon and esteemed as the first

assertors of that misbelief which now some seek again so earnestly to promote. The Jews persecuted the Lord Christ, because he, being a man, declared himself also to be God; and others are ready to revile and reproach them who believe and teach what he declared.

After the resurrection and ascension of the Lord Jesus, all things being filled with tokens, evidences, and effects of his divine nature and power (Romans 1:4), the church that began to be gathered in his name, and according to his doctrine, being, by his especial institution, to be initiated into the express profession of the doctrine of the holy Trinity, as being to be baptized in the name of the Father, and, the Son, and the holy Ghost, — which confession comprises the whole of the truth contended for, and by the indispensable placing of it at the first entrance into all obedience unto him, is made the doctrinal foundation of the church, — it continued for a season in the quiet and undisturbed possession of this sacred treasure.

The first who gave disquietment unto the disciples of Christ, by perverting the doctrine of the Trinity, was Simon Magus, with his followers; — an account of whose monstrous figments and unintelligible imaginations, with their coincidence with what some men dream in these latter days, shall elsewhere be given. Nor shall I need here to mention the colluvies of Gnostics, Valentians, Marcionites, and Manichees; the foundation of all whose abominations lay in their misapprehensions of the being of God, their unbelief of the Trinity and person of Christ, as do those of some others also.

In especial, there was one Cerinthus, who was more active than others in his opposition to the doctrine of the person of Christ, and therein of the holy Trinity. To put a stop unto his abominations, all authors agree that John, writing his Gospel, prefixed unto it that plain declaration of the eternal Deity of Christ which it is prefaced withal. And the story is well attested by Irenaeus, Eusebius, and others, from Polycarpus, who was his disciple, that this Cerinthus coming into the place where the apostle was, he left it, adding, as a reason of his departure, lest the building, through the just judgment of God, should fall upon them. And it was of the holy, wise providence of God to suffer some impious persons to oppose this

doctrine before the death of that apostle, that he might, by infallible inspiration, farther reveal, manifest, and declare it, to the establishment of the church in future ages. For what can farther be desired to satisfy the minds of men who in any sense own the Lord Jesus Christ and the Scriptures, than that this controversy about the Trinity and person of Christ (for they stand and fall together) should be so eminently and expressly determined, as it were, immediately from heaven?

But he with whom we have to deal in this matter neither ever did, nor ever will, nor can, acquiesce or rest in the divine determination of any thing which he has stirred up strife and controversy about: for as Cerinthus and the Ebionites persisted in the heresy of the Jews, who would have slain our Savior for bearing witness to his own Deity, notwithstanding the evidence of that testimony, and the right apprehension which the Jews had of his mind therein; so he excited other to engage and persist in their opposition to the truth, notwithstanding this second particular determination of it from heaven, for their confutation or confusion. For after the more weak and confused oppositions made unto it by Theodotus Coriarius [i.e., the tanner], Artemon, and some others, at length a stout champion appears visibly and expressly engaged against these fundamentals of our faith. This was Paulus Samosatenus, bishop of the church of Antioch, about the year 272; — a man of most intolerable pride, passion, and folly, — the greatest that has left a name upon ecclesiastical records. This man openly and avowedly denied the doctrine of the Trinity, and the Deity of Christ in an especial manner. For although he endeavored for a while to cloud his impious sentiments in ambiguous expressions, as others also have done (Euseb., lib. vii. cap. 27), yet being pressed by the professors of the truth, and supposing his party was somewhat confirmed, he plainly defended his heresy, and was cast out of the church wherein he presided. Some sixty years after, Photinus, bishop of Sirmium, with a pretence of more sobriety in life and conversation, undertook the management of the same design, with the same success.

What ensued afterward among the churches of God in this matter is of too large and diffused a nature to be here reported. These instances I have fixed on only to intimate, unto persons whose condition or occasions afford them not ability or leisure of themselves to inquire into the memorials of



times past amongst the professors of the gospel of Christ, that these oppositions which are made at present amongst us unto these fundamental truths, and derived immediately from the late renewed enforcement of them made by Faustus Socinus and his followers, are nothing but old banded, attempts of Satan against the rock of the church and the building thereon, in the confession of the Son of the living God.

Now, as all men who have aught of a due reverence of God or his truth remaining with them, cannot but be wary how they give the least admittance to such opinions as have from the beginning been witnessed against and condemned by Christ himself, his apostles and all that followed them in their faith and ways in all generations; so others whose hearts tremble for the danger they apprehend which these sacred truths may be in of being corrupted or defamed by the present opposition against them, may know that it is no other but what the church and faith of professors has already been exercised with, and, through the power of Him that enables them, have constantly triumphed over. And, for any part, I look upon it as a blessed effect of the holy, wise providence of God, that those who have long harbored these abominations of denying the holy Trinity, and the person and satisfaction of Christ, in their minds, but yet have sheltered themselves from common observation under the shades of dark, obscure, and uncouth expressions, with many other specious pretences, should be given up to join themselves with such persons (and to profess a community of persuasion with them in those opinions, as have rendered themselves infamous from the first foundation of Christianity), and wherein they will assuredly meet with the same success as those have done who have gone before them.

For the other head of opposition, made by these persons unto the truth in reference unto the satisfaction of Christ, and the imputation of his righteousness thereon unto our justification, I have not much to say as to the time past. In general, the doctrine wherein they boast, being first brought forth in a rude misshapen manner by the Pelagian heretics, was afterward improved by one Abelardus, a sophistical scholar in France; but owes its principal form and poison unto the endeavors of Faustus Socinus, and those who have followed him in his subtle attempt to corrupt the whole doctrine of the gospel. Of these men are those amongst us who at

this day so busily dispute and write about the Trinity, the Deity of Christ, and his satisfaction. — the followers and disciples. And it is much more from their masters, who were some of them men learned, diligent, and subtle, than from themselves, that they are judged to be of any great consideration. For I can truly say, that, upon the sedate examination of all that I could ever yet hear or get a sight of, either spoken or written by them, — that is, any amongst us, — I never yet observed an undertaking of so great importance managed with a greater evidence of incompetency and inability, to give any tolerable countenance unto it. If any of them shall for the future attempt to give any new countenance or props to their tottering errors, it will doubtless be attended unto by some of those many who cannot but know that it is incumbent on them “to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered unto the saints.” This present brief endeavor is only to assist and direct those who are less exercised in the ways of managing controversies in religion, that they may have a brief comprehension of the truths opposed, with the firm foundations whereon they are built, and be in a readiness to shield their faith both against the fiery darts of Satan, and secure their minds against the “cunning sleight of men, who lie in wait to deceive.” And wherein this discourse seems in any thing to be too brief or concise, the author is not to be blamed who was confined unto these strait bounds by those whose requests enjoined him this service.

# DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY TRINITY

## EXPLAINED AND VINDICATED

The doctrine of the blessed Trinity may be considered two ways:

**First,** In respect unto the revelation and proposal of it in the Scripture, to direct us unto the author, object, and end of our faith, in our worship and obedience.

**Secondly,** As it is farther declared and explained, in terms, expressions, and propositions, reduced from the original revelation of it, suited whereunto, and meet to direct and keep the mind from undue apprehensions of the things it believes, and to declare them, unto farther edification.

In the first way, it consists merely in the propositions wherein the revelation of God is expressed in the Scripture; and in this regard two things are required of us. First, To understand the terms of the propositions, as they are enunciations of truth; and, Secondly, To believe the things taught, revealed, and declared in them.

In the first instance, no more, I say, is required of us, but that we assent unto the assertions and testimonies of God concerning himself, according to their natural and genuine sense, as he will be known, believed in, feared, and worshipped by us, as he is our Creator, Lord, and Rewarder; and that because he himself has, by his revelation, not only warranted us so to do, but also made it our duty, necessary and indispensable. Now, the sum of this revelation in this matter is, that God is one; — that this one God is Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; — that the Father is the Father of the Son; and the Son, the Son of the Father; and the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of the Father and the Son; and that, in respect of this their mutual relation, they are distinct from each other.

This is the substance of the doctrine of the Trinity, as to the first direct concernment of faith therein. The first intencion of the Scripture, in the revelation of God towards us, is, as was said, that we might fear him, believe, worship, obey him, and live unto him, as God. That we may do this in a due manner, and worship the only true God, and not adore the false imaginations of our own minds it declares, as was said, that this God is one, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; — that the Father is this one God; and therefore is to be believed in, worshipped, obeyed, lived unto, and in all things considered by us as the first cause, sovereign Lord, and last end of all; — that the Son is the one true God; and therefore is to be believed in, worshipped, obeyed, lived unto, and in all things considered by us as the first cause, sovereign Lord, and last end of all; — and so, also, of the Holy Ghost. This is the whole of faith's concernment in this matter, as it respects the direct revelation of God made by himself in the Scripture, and the first proper general end thereof. Let this be clearly confirmed by direct and positive divine testimonies, containing the declaration and revelation of God concerning himself, and faith is secured as to all it concerns; for it has both its proper formal object, and is sufficiently enabled to be directive of divine worship and obedience.

The explication of this doctrine unto edification, suitable unto the revelation mentioned, is of another consideration; and two things are incumbent on us to take care of therein: — First, That what is affirmed and taught do directly tend unto the ends of the revelation itself, by informing and enlightening of the mind in the knowledge of the mystery of it, so far as in this life we are, by divine assistance, capable to comprehend it; that is, that faith may be increased, strengthened, and confirmed against temptations and oppositions of Satan, and men of corrupt minds; and that we may be distinctly directed unto, and encouraged in, the obedience unto, and worship of God, that are required of us. Secondly, That nothing be affirmed or taught herein that may beget or occasion any undue apprehensions concerning God, or our obedience unto him, with respect unto the best, highest, securest revelations that we have of him and our duty. These things being done and secured, the end of the declaration of this doctrine concerning God is attained. In the declaration, then, of this doctrine unto the edification of the church, there is contained a farther explanation of the things before asserted, as proposed directly and in

themselves as the object of our faith, — namely, how God is one, in respect of his nature, substance, essence, Godhead, or divine being; how, being Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, he subsists in these three distinct persons or hypostases; and what are their mutual respects to each other, by which, as their peculiar properties, giving them the manner of their subsistence, they are distinguished one from another; with sundry other things of the like necessary consequence unto the revelation mentioned. And herein, as in the application of all other divine truths and mysteries whatever, yea, of all moral commanded duties, use is to be made of such words and expressions as, it may be, are not literally and formally contained in the Scripture; but only are, unto our conceptions and apprehensions, expository of what is so contained. And to deny the liberty, yea, the necessity hereof, is to deny all interpretation of the Scripture, — all endeavors to express the sense of the words of it unto the understandings of one another; which is, in a word, to render the Scripture itself altogether useless. For if it be unlawful for me to speak or write what I conceive to be the sense of the words of the Scripture, and the nature of the thing signified and expressed by them, it is unlawful for me, also, to think or conceive in my mind what is the sense of the words or nature of the things; which to say, is to make brutes of ourselves, and to frustrate the whole design of God in giving unto us the great privilege of his word.

Wherefore, in the declaration of the doctrine of the Trinity, we may lawfully, nay, we must necessarily, make use of other words, phrases, and expressions, than what are literally and syllabically contained in the Scripture, but teach no other things.

Moreover, whatever is so revealed in the Scripture is no less true and divine as to whatever necessarily follows thereon, than it is as unto that which is principally revealed and directly expressed. For how far soever the lines be drawn and extended, from truth nothing can follow and ensue but what is true also; and that in the same kind of truth with that which it is derived and deduced from. For if the principal assertion be a truth of divine revelation, so is also whatever is included therein, and which may be rightly from thence collected. Hence it follows, that when the Scripture reveals the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost to be one God, seeing it necessarily and unavoidably follows thereon that they are one in essence

(wherein alone it is possible they can be one), and three in their distinct subsistences (wherein alone it is possible they can be three), — this is no less of divine revelation than the first principle from whence these things follow.

These being the respects which the doctrine of the Trinity falls under, the necessary method of faith and reason, in the believing and declaring of it, is plain and evident: —

**First.** The revelation of it is to be asserted and vindicated, as it is proposed to be believed, for the ends mentioned. Now, this is, as was declared, that there is one God; that this God is Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and so, that the Father is God, so is the Son, so is the Holy Ghost.

This being received and admitted by faith, the explication of it is, —

**Secondly,** To be insisted on, and not taken into consideration until the others be admitted. And herein lies the preposterous course of those who fallaciously and captiously go about to oppose this sacred truth: — they will always begin their opposition, not unto the revelation of it, but unto the explanation of it; which is used only for farther edification. Their disputes and cavils shall be against the Trinity, essence, substance, persons, personality, respects, properties of the divine persons, with the modes of expressing these things; whilst the plain scriptural revelation of the things themselves from whence they are but explanatory deductions, is not spoken to, nor admitted into confirmation. By this means have they entangled many weak, unstable souls, who, when they have met with things too high, hard, and difficult for them (which in divine mysteries they may quickly do), in the explication of this doctrine, have suffered themselves to be taken off from a due consideration of the full and plain revelation of the thing itself in Scripture; until, their temptations being made strong, and their darkness increased, it was too late for them to return unto it; as bringing along with them the cavils wherewith they were prepossessed, rather than that faith and obedience which is required. But yet all this while these explanations, so excepted against, are indeed not of any original consideration in this matter. Let the direct, express revelations of the doctrine be confirmed, they will follow of themselves, nor will be

excepted against by those who believe and receive it. Let that be rejected, and they will fall of themselves, and never be contended for by those who did make use of them. But of these things we shall treat again afterward.

This, therefore, is the way, the only way that we rationally can, and that which in duty we ought to proceed in and by, for the asserting and confirming of the doctrine of the holy Trinity under consideration, — namely, that we produce divine revelations or testimonies, wherein faith may safely rest and acquiesce, that God is one; that this one God is Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; so that the Father is God, so also is the Son, and the Holy Ghost likewise, and, as such, are to be believed in, obeyed, worshipped, acknowledged, as the first cause and last end of all, — our Lord and reward. If this be not admitted, if somewhat of it be not, particularly [if it be] denied, we need not, we have no warrant or ground to proceed any farther, or at all to discourse about the unity of the divine essence, or the distinction of the persons.

We have not, therefore, any original contest in this matter with any, but such as deny either God to be one, or the Father to be God, or the son to be God, or the Holy Ghost so to be. If any deny either of these in particular, we are ready to confirm it by sufficient testimonies of Scripture, or clear and undeniable divine revelation. When this is evinced and vindicated, we shall willingly proceed to manifest that the explications used of this doctrine unto the edification of the church are according to truth, and such as necessarily are required by the nature of the things themselves. And this gives us the method of the ensuing small discourse, with the reasons of it: —

1. The first thing which we affirm to be delivered unto us by divine revelation as the object of our faith, is, that God is one. I know that this may be uncontrollably evinced by the light of reason itself, unto as good and quiet an assurance as the mind of man is capable of in any of its apprehensions whatever; but I speak of it now as it is confirmed unto us by divine revelation. How this assertion of one God respects the nature, essence, or divine being of God, shall be declared afterward. At present it is enough to represent the testimonies that he is one, — only one. And because we have no

difference with our adversaries distinctly about this matter, I shall only name few of them. Deuteronomy 6:4, “Hear, O Israel; The LORD our God is one LORD.” A most pregnant testimony; and yet, notwithstanding, as I shall elsewhere manifest, the Trinity itself, in that one divine essence, is here asserted. Isaiah 44:6, 8, “Thus saith the LORD the being of Israel, and his Redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God. Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any.” In which also we may manifest that a plurality of persons is included and expressed. And although there be no more absolute and sacred truth than this, that God is one, yet it may be evinced that it is nowhere mentioned in the Scripture, but that, either in the words themselves or the context of the place, a plurality of persons in that one sense is intimated.

2. Secondly, It is proposed as the object of our faith, that the Father is God. And herein, as is pretended, there is also an agreement between us and those who oppose the doctrine of the Trinity. But there is a mistake in this matter. Their hypothesis, as they call it, or, indeed, presumptuous error, casts all the conceptions that are given us concerning God in the Scripture into disorder and confusion. For the Father, as he whom we worship, is often called so only with reference unto his Son; as the Son is so with reference to the Father. He is the “only begotten of the Father,” John 10:14. But now, if this Son had no pre-existence in his divine nature before he was born of the Virgin, there was no God the Father seventeen hundred years ago, because there was no Son. And on this ground did the Marcionites of old plainly deny the Father (whom, under the New Testament, we worship) to be the God of the Old Testament, who made the world, and was worshipped from the foundation of it. For it seems to follow, that he whom we worship being the Father, and on this supposition that the Son had no pre-existence unto his incarnation, he was not the Father under the Old Testament; he is some other from him that was so revealed. I know the folly of that inference; yet how, on this opinion of the sole existence of the Son in time, men can prove the Father to be God, let others determine. “He that abideth in the



doctrine of Christ, he has both the Father and the Son;” but “whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, has not God,” 2 John 9. Whoever denies Christ the Son, as the Son, that is, the eternal Son of God, he loses the Father also, and the true God; he has not God. For that God which is not the Father, and which ever was, and was not the Father, is not the true God. Hence many of the fathers, even of the first writers of the church, were forced unto great pains in the confirmation of this truth, that the Father of Jesus Christ was he who made the world, gave the law, spoke by the prophets, and was the author of the Old Testament; and that against men who professed themselves to be Christians. And this brutish apprehension of theirs arose from no other principle but this, that the Son had only a temporal existence, and was not the eternal Son of God.

But that I may not in this brief discourse digress unto other controversies than what lies directly before us, and seeing the adversaries of the truth we contend for do, in words at least, grant that the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is the true God, or the only true God, I shall not farther show the inconsistency of their hypothesis with this confession, but take it for granted that to us “there is one God, the Father,” 1 Corinthians 8:6; see John 17:3. So that he who is not the Father, who was not so from eternity, whose paternity is not equally coexistent unto his Deity, is not God unto us.

3. Thirdly, It is asserted and believed by the church that Jesus Christ is God, the eternal Son of God; — that is, he is proposed, declared, and revealed unto us in the Scripture to be God, that is to be served, worshipped, believed in, obeyed as God, upon the account of his own divine excellencies. And whereas we believe and know that he was man, that he was born, lived, and died as a man, it is declared that he is God also; and that, as God, he did preexist in the form of God before his incarnation, which was effected by voluntary actings of his own, — which could not be without a pre-existence in another nature. This is proposed unto us to be believed upon divine testimony and by divine revelation. And the

sole inquiry in this matter is, whether this be proposed in the Scripture as an object of faith, and that which is indispensably necessary for us to believe? Let us, then, nakedly attend unto what the Scripture asserts in this matter, and that in the order of the books of it, in some particular instances which at present occur to mind; as these that follow:

- Psalm 45:6: “Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.” Applied unto Christ, Hebrews 10:8: “But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.”
- Psalm 68:17,18: “The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the LORD is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place. Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the LORD God might dwell among them.”. Applied unto the Son, Ephesians 4:8-10: “Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens that he might fill all things.”
- Psalm 110:1: “The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand.” Applied unto Christ by himself, Matthew 22:44.
- Psalm 102:25-27: “Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the work of thy hands. 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.” Declared by the apostle to be meant of the Son, Hebrews 10:10-12.

Proverbs 8:22-31: “The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth: while as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. When he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth: when he established the clouds above: when he strengthened the fountains of the deep: when he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment: when he appointed the foundations of the earth: then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him; rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men.”

Isaiah 6:1-3: “I saw also the LORD sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphim: each one had six wings; With twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.” Applied unto the Son, John 12:41.

Isaiah 8:13, 14: “Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offense to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.” Applied unto the Son, Luke 2:34; Romans 9:33; 1 Peter 2:8.

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, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end.”

- Jeremiah 23:5, 6: “Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch; and this is his name whereby he shall be called, Jehovah our Righteousness.”
- Hosea 12:3-5: “He took his brother by the heel in the womb, and by his strength he had power with God: yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed: he wept, and made supplication unto him: he found him in Bethel, and there he spake with us; even the LORD God of hosts; the LORD is his memorial.”
- Zechariah 2:8, 9: “For thus saith the LORD of hosts, After the glory has he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you: and ye shall know that the LORD of hosts has sent me.”
- Matthew 16:16: “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.”
- Luke 1:35: “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.”
- John 10:1-3. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.”
- Verse 14: “And we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father.”

- John 3:13: “And no man has ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man, which is in heaven.”
- John 8:57, 58: “Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.”
- John 10:30: “I and my Father are one.”
- John 17:5: “And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.”
- John 20:28: “And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.”
- Acts 20:28: “Feed the church of God, which he has purchased with his own blood.”
- Romans 10:3, 4: “Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.”
- Romans 9:5: “Of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.”
- Romans 14:10-12: “For we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.”

- 1 Corinthians 8:6: “And one Lord Jesus, by whom are all things, and we by him.”
- 1 Corinthians 10:9: “Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents;” compared with Numbers 21:6.
- Philippians 2:5, 6: “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God.”
- Colossians 1:15-17: “Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: 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, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist.”
- 1 Timothy 3:16: “Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh.”
- Titus 2:13, 14: “Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us.
- Hebrews 1 throughout.
- Chap. 3:4: “For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God.”
- 1 Peter 1:11: “Searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify.”
- Chap. 3:18-20: “For Christ also has once suffered for sins, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: by which also he went and preached unto the spirits in

prison; which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah.”

- 1 John 3:16: “Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us.”
- Chap. 5:20: “And we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.”
- 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.”
- Verses 11-13: “I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou sees, write in a book..... And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And, being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man.”
- Verse 17: “And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last.”
- Chap. 2:23: “I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.”

These are some of the places wherein the truth under consideration is revealed and declared, — some of the divine testimonies whereby it is confirmed and established, which I have not at present inquired after, but suddenly repeated as they came to mind. Many more of the like nature and importance may be added unto them, and shall be so as occasion does require.

Let, now, any one who owns the Scripture to be the word of God, — to contain an infallible revelation of the things proposed in it to be believed, — and who has any conscience exercised towards God for the receiving and submitting unto what he declares and reveals, take a view of these

testimonies, and consider whether they do not sufficiently propose this object of our faith. Shall a few poor trifling sophisms, whose terms are scarcely understood by the most that amongst us make use of them, according as they have found them framed by others, be thought meet to be set up in opposition unto these multiplied testimonies of the Holy Ghost, and to cast the truth confirmed by them down from its credit and reputation in the consciences of men? For my part, I do not see in any thing, but that the testimonies given to the Godhead of Christ, the eternal Son of God, are every way as clear and unquestionable as those are which testify to the being of God, or that there is any God at all. Were men acquainted with the Scriptures as they ought to be, and as the most, considering the means and advantages they have had, might have been; did they ponder and believe on what they read, or had they any tenderness in their consciences as to that reverence, obedience, and subjection of soul which God requires unto his word; it were utterly impossible that their faith in this matter should ever in the least be shaken by a few lewd sophisms or loud clamors of men destitute of the truth, and of the spirit of it.

That we may now improve these testimonies unto the end under design, as the nature of this brief discourse will bear, I shall first remove the general answers which the Socinians give unto them, and then manifest farther how uncontrollable they are, by giving an instance in the frivolous exceptions of the same persons to one of them in particular. And we are ready, God assisting, to maintain that there is not any one of them which does not give a sufficient ground for faith to rest on in this matter concerning the Deity of Christ, and that against all the Socinians in the world.

They say, therefore, commonly, that we prove not by these testimonies what is by them denied. For they acknowledge Christ to be God, and that because he is exalted unto that glory and authority that all creatures are put into subjection unto him, and all, both men and angels, are commanded to worship and adore him. So that he is God by office, though he be not God by nature. He is God, but he is not the most high God. And this last expression they have almost continually in their mouths, "He is not the most high God." And commonly, with great contempt and scorn, they are



ready to reproach them who have solidly confirmed the doctrine of the Deity of Christ as ignorant of the state of the controversy, in that they have not proved him to be the most high God, in subordination unto whom they acknowledge Christ to be God, and that he ought to be worshipped with divine and religious worship.

But there cannot be any thing more empty and vain than these pretences; and, besides, they accumulate in them their former errors, with the addition of new ones. For, —

**First.** The name of the most high God is first ascribed unto God in Genesis 14:18, 19, 22, denoting his sovereignty and dominion. Now, as other attributes of God, it is not distinctive of the subject, but only descriptive of it. So are all other excellencies of the nature of God. It does not intimate that there are other gods, only he is the most high, or one over them all; but only that the true God is most high, — that is, endued with sovereign power, dominion, and authority over all. To say, then, that Christ indeed is God, but not the most high God, is all one as to say he is God, but not the most holy God, or not the true God; and so they have brought their Christ into the number of false gods, whilst they deny the true Christ, who, in his divine nature, is “over all, God blessed for ever,” Romans 9:5; a phrase of speech perfectly expressing this attribute of the most high God.

**Secondly.** This answer is suited only unto those testimonies which express the name of God with a corresponding power and authority into that name; for in reference unto these alone can it be pleaded, with any pretence of reason, that he is a God by office, — though that also be done very futilously and impertinently. But most of the testimonies produced speak directly unto his divine excellencies and properties, which belong unto his nature necessarily and absolutely. That he is eternal, omnipotent, immense, omniscient, infinitely wise; and that he is, and works, and produces effects suitable unto all these properties, and such as nothing but they can enable him for; is abundantly proved by the foregoing testimonies. Now, all these concern a divine nature, a natural essence, a Godhead, and not such power or authority as a man may be exalted unto;

yea, the ascribing any of them to such a one, implies the highest contradiction expressible.

**Thirdly.** This God in authority and of office, and not by nature, that should be the object of divine worship, is a new abomination. For they are divine, essential excellencies that are the formal reason and object of worship, religious and divine; and to ascribe it unto any one that is not God by nature, is idolatry. By making, therefore, their Christ such a God as they describe, they bring him under the severe combination of the true God. 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 heavens.” That Christ they worship they say is a God; but they deny that he is “that God that made the heavens and the earth:” and so leave him exposed to the threatenings of him, who will accomplish it to the uttermost.

Some other general exceptions sometimes they make use of, which the reader may free himself from the entanglement of, if he do but heed these ensuing rules: —

**First.** Distinction of persons (of which afterwards), it being in an infinite substance, does no way prove a difference of essence between the Father and the Son. Where, therefore, Christ, as the Son, is said to be another from the Father, or God, spoken personally of the Father, it argues not in the least that he is not partaker of the same nature with him. That in one essence there can be but one person, may be true where the substance is finite and limited, but has no place in that which is infinite.

**Secondly.** Distinction and inequality in respect of office in Christ, does not in the least take away his equality and sameness with the Father in respect of nature and essence, Philippians 2:7, 8. A son, of the same nature with his father, and therein equal to him, may in office be his inferior, — his subject.

**Thirdly.** The advancement and exaltation of Christ as mediator to any dignity whatever, upon or in reference to the work of our redemption and salvation, is not at all inconsistent with the essential honor, dignity, and

worth, which he has in himself as God blessed for ever. Though he humbled himself, and was exalted in office, yet in nature he was one and the same; he changed not.

**Fourthly.** The Scriptures, asserting the humanity of Christ, with the concernments thereof, as his birth, life, and death, do no more thereby deny his Deity than, by asserting his Deity, with the essential properties thereof, they deny his humanity.

**Fifthly.** God working in and by Christ as he was mediator, denotes the Father's sovereign appointment of the things mentioned to be done, — not his immediate efficiency in the doing of the things themselves.

These rules are proposed a little before their due place in the method which we pursue. But I thought meet to interpose them here, as containing a sufficient ground for the resolution and answering of all the sophisms and objections which the adversaries use in this cause.

From the cloud of witnesses before produced, every one whereof is singly sufficient to evert the Socinian infidelity, I shall in one of them give an instance, both of the clearness of the evidence and the weakness of the exceptions which are wont to be put in against them, as was promised; and this is John 10:1-3, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.”

By the Word, here, or “ho Logos”, on what account soever he be so called, either as being the eternal Word and Wisdom of the Father, or as the great Revealer of the will of God unto us, Jesus Christ the Son of God is intended. This is on all hands acknowledged; and the context will admit of no hesitation about it. For of this Word it is said, that “he came” into the world, verse 10; “was rejected by his own,” verse 11; “was made flesh and dwelt among us, whose glory was the glory as of the only begotten Son of the Father,” verse 14; called expressly “Jesus Christ,” verse 17; “the only begotten Son of the Father,” verse 18. The subject, then, treated of, is here agreed upon; and it is no less evident that it is the design of the apostle to

declare both who and what he was of whom he treats. Here, then, if any where, we may learn what we are to believe concerning the person of Christ; which also we may certainly do, if our minds are not perverted through prejudice, “whereby the God of this world does blind the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them,” 2 Corinthians 4:4. Of this Word, then, this Son of God, it is affirmed, that he “was in the beginning.” And this word, if it does not absolutely and formally express eternity, yet it does a pre-existence unto the whole creation; which amounts to the same: for nothing can preexist unto all creatures, but in the nature of God, which is eternal; unless we shall suppose a creature before the creation of any. But what is meant by this expression the Scripture does elsewhere declare. Proverbs 8:23, “I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was.” John 17:5, “Glorify thou me with thins own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.” Both which places, as they explain this phrase, so also do they undeniably testify unto the eternal pre-existence of Christ the Son of God. And in this case we prevail against our adversaries, if we prove any pre-existence of Christ unto his incarnation; which, as they absolutely deny, so to grant it would overthrow their whole heresy in this matter. And therefore they know that the testimony of our Savior concerning himself, if understood in a proper, intelligible sense, is perfectly destructive of their pretensions, John 8:58, “Before Abraham was, I am.” For although there be no proper sense in the words, but a gross equivocation, if the existence of Christ before Abraham was born be not asserted in them (seeing he spoke in answer to that objection of the Jews, that he was not yet fifty years old, and so could not have seen Abraham, nor Abraham him; and the Jews that were present, understood well enough that he asserted a divine pre-existence unto his being born, so long ago, as that hereon, after their manner, they took up stones to stone him, as supposing him to have blasphemed in asserting his Deity, as others now do in the denying of it); yet they [Socinians], seeing how fatal this pre-existence, though not here absolutely asserted to be eternal, would be to their cause, contend that the meaning of the words is, that “Christ was to be the light of the world before Abraham was made the father of many nations;” — an interpretation so absurd and Scottish, as never any man

not infatuated by the God of this world could once admit and give countenance unto.

But “in the beginning,” as absolutely used, is the same with “from everlasting,” as it is expounded, Proverbs 8:23, and denotes an eternal existence; which is here affirmed of the Word, the Son of God. But let the word “beginning,” be restrained unto the subject matter treated of (which is the creation of all things), and the pre-existence of Christ in his divine nature unto the creation of all things is plainly revealed, and inevitably asserted. And indeed, not only the word, but the discourse of these verses, does plainly relate unto, and is expository of, the first verse in the Bible, Genesis 1:1, “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” There it is asserted that in the beginning God created all things; here, that the Word was in the beginning, and made all things. This, then, is the least that we have obtained from this first word of our testimony, — namely, that the Word or Son of God had a personal pre-existence unto the whole creation. In what nature this must be, let these men of reason satisfy themselves, who know that Creator and creatures take up the whole nature of beings. One of them he must be; and it may be well supposed that he was not a creature before the creation of any.

But, secondly, Where, or with whom, was this Word in the beginning? “It was,” says the Holy Ghost, “with God.” There being no creature then existing, he could be nowhere but with God; that is, the Father, as it is expressed in one of the testimonies before going, Proverbs 8:22, “The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old;” verse 30, “Then was I by him as one brought up with him, and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him;” that is, in the beginning this Word, or Wisdom of God, was with God.

And this is the same which our Lord Jesus asserts concerning himself, John 3:13, “And no man,” says he, “has ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.” And so in other places he affirms his being in heaven, — that is, with God, — at the same time when he was on the earth; whereby he declares the immensity of his nature, and the distinction of his person; and his coming down from heaven before he was incarnate on the earth, declaring his

pre-existence; by both manifesting the meaning of this expression, that “in the beginning he was with God.” But hereunto they have invented a notable evasion. For although they know not well what to make of the last clause of the words, that says, then he was in heaven when he spoke on earth, — “The Son of man which is in heaven,” answerable to the description of God’s immensity, “Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord,” Jeremiah 23:24, but say that he was there by heavenly meditation, as another man may be; yet they give a very clear answer to what must of necessity be included in his descending from heaven, namely, his pre-existence to his incarnation: for they tell us that, before his public ministry, he was in his human nature (which is all they allow unto him) taken up into heaven, and there taught the gospel, as the great impostor Mohammed pretended he was taught his Koran. If you ask them who told them so, they cannot tell; but they can tell when it was, — namely, when he was led by the Spirit into the wilderness for forty days after his baptism. But yet this instance is subject to another misadventure; in that one of the evangelists plainly affirms that he was “those forty days in the wilderness with the wild beasts,” Mark 10:13, and so, surely, not in heaven in the same nature, by his bodily presence, with God and his holy angels.

And let me add this, by the way, that the interpretation of this place, John 10:1, to be mentioned afterward, and those of the two places before mentioned, John 8:58, 3:13, Faustus Socinus learned out of his uncle Laelius’ papers, as he confesses; and does more than intimate that he believed he had them as it were by revelation. And it may be so; they are indeed so forced, absurd, and irrational, that no man could ever fix upon them by any reasonable investigation; but the author of these revelations if we may judge of the parent by the child, could be no other but the spirit of error and darkness. I suppose, therefore, that notwithstanding these exceptions, Christians will believe “that in the beginning the Word was with God;” that is, that the Son was with the Father, as is frequently elsewhere declared.

But who was this Word? Says the apostle, He was God. He was so with God (that is, the Father), as that he himself was God also; — God, in that notion of God which both nature and the Scripture do represent; not a

God by office, one exalted to that dignity (which cannot well be pretended before the creation of the world), but as Thomas confessed him, “Our Lord and our God,” John 20:28; or as Paul expresses it, “Over all, God blessed for ever;” or the most high God; which these men love to deny. Let not the infidelity of men, excited by the craft and malice of Satan, seek for blind occasions, and this matter is determined; if the word and testimony of God be able to umpire a difference amongst the children of men. Here is the sum of our creed in this matter, “In the beginning the Word was God,” and so continues unto eternity, being Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the Lord God Almighty.

And to show that he was so God in the beginning, as that he was one distinct, in something, from God the Father, by whom afterward he was sent into the world, he adds, verse 2, “The same was in the beginning with God.” Farther, also, to evince what he has asserted and revealed for us to believe, the Holy Ghost adds, both as a firm declaration of his eternal Deity, and also his immediate care of the world (which how he variously exercised, both in a way of providence and grace, he afterward declares), verse 3, “All things were made by him.” He was so in the beginning, before all things, as that he made them all. And that it may not be supposed that the “all” that he is said to make or create was to be limited unto any certain sort of things, he adds, that “without him nothing was made that was made;” which gives the first assertion an absolute universality as to its subject. And this he farther describes, verse 10, “He was in the world, and the world was made by him.” The world that was made, has a usual distribution, in the Scripture, into the “heavens and the earth, and all things contained in them;” — as Acts 4:24, “Lord, thou art God, which best made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is;” that is, the world, the making whereof is expressly assigned unto the Son, Hebrews 1:10, “Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands.” And the apostle Paul, to secure our understandings in this matter, instances in the most noble parts of the creation, and which, if any, might seem to be excepted from being made by him, Colossians 1:16, “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, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and for him.” The Socinians say, indeed, that

he made angels to be thrones and principalities; that is, he gave them their order, but not their being: which is expressly contrary to the words of the text; so that a man knows not well what to say to these persons, who, at their pleasure, cast off the authority of God in his word: “By him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth.”

What now can be required to secure our faith in this matter? In what words possible could a divine revelation of the eternal power and Godhead of the Son of God be made more plain and clear unto the sons of men? Or how could the truth of any thing more evidently be represented unto their minds? If we understand not the mind of God and intention of the Holy Ghost in this matter, we may utterly despair ever to come to an acquaintance with any thing that God reveals unto us; or, indeed, with any thing else that is expressed or is to be expressed, by words. It is directly said that the Word (that is Christ, as is acknowledged by all) “was with God,” distinct from him; and “was God,” one with him; that he was so “in the beginning,” before the creation, that he “made all things,” — the world, all things in heaven and in earth: and if he be not God, who is? The sum is, — all the ways whereby we may know God are, his name, his properties, and his works; but they are all here ascribed by the Holy Ghost to the Son, to the Word: and he therefore is God, or we know neither who nor what God is.

But say the Socinians, “These things are quite otherwise, and the words have another sense in them than you imagine.” What is it, I pray? We bring none to them, we impose no sense upon them, we strain not any word in them, from, beside, or beyond its native, genuine signification, its constant application in the Scripture, and common use amongst men. What, then, is this latent sense that is intended, and is discoverable only by themselves? Let us hear them coining and stamping this sense of theirs.

First, they say that by “In the beginning,” is not meant of the beginning of all things, or the creation of them, but the beginning of the preaching of the gospel. But why so, I pray? Wherever these words are else used in the Scripture, they denote the beginning of all things, or eternity absolutely, or an existence preceding their creation. “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth,” Genesis 1:1. “I was set up from everlasting, from



the beginning, or ever the earth was,” Proverbs 8:23. “Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth,” Hebrews 1:10. And besides, these words are never used absolutely anywhere for the beginning of the gospel. There is mention made, indeed, of the “beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ,” Mark 1:1, which is referred to the preaching of John Baptist: but “In the beginning,” absolutely, is never so used or applied; and they must meet with men of no small inclination unto them, who will, upon their desire, in a matter of so great importance, forego the sense of words which is natural and proper, fixed by its constant use in the Scripture, when applied in the same kind, for that which is forced and strained, and not once exemplified in the whole book of God. But the words, they say, are to be restrained to the subject-matter treated of. Well, what is that subject-matter? “The new creation, by the preaching of the gospel.” But this is plainly false; nor will the words allow any such sense, nor the contempt, nor is any thing offered to give evidence unto this corrupt perverting of the words, unless it be a farther perverting of other testimonies no less clear than this.

For what is, according to this interpretation, the meaning of these words, “In the beginning was the Word?” “That is, when John Baptist preached, and said, “This is the Lamb of God,” which was signally the beginning of the gospel, — then he was.” That is, he was when he was, — no doubt of it! And is not this a notable way of interpreting of Scripture which these great pretenders to a dictatorship in reason, indeed hucksters in sophistry, do make use of? But to go on with them in this supposition, How was he then with God, — “The Word was with God?” “That is,” say they, “he was then known only to God, before John Baptist preached him in the beginning.” But what shall compel us to admit of this uncouth sense and exposition, — “‘He was with God;’ that is, he was known to God alone?” What is there singular herein? Concerning how many things may the same be affirmed? Besides, it is absolutely false. He was known to the angel Gabriel, who came to his mother with the message of his incarnations Luke 1:35. He was known to the two angels which appeared to the shepherds upon his birth, Luke 2:9, — to all the heavenly host assembled to give praise and glory to God on the account of his nativity, as those who came to worship him, and to pay him the homage due unto him, Luke 2:10,13,14. He was known to his mother, the blessed Virgin, and to

Joseph, and Zacharias, and to Elizabeth, to Simon and Anna, to John Baptist, and probably to many more to whom Simon and Anna spoke of him, Luke 2:38. So that the sense pretended to be wrung out and extorted from these words, against their proper meaning and intendment, is indeed false and frivolous, and belongs not at all unto them.

But let this pass. What shall we say to the next words, “And the Word was God?” Give us leave, without disturbance from you, but to believe this expression, which comprises a revelation of God, proposed to us on purpose that we should believe it, and there will be, as was said, an end of this difference and debate. Yea, but say they, “These words have another sense also.” Strange! They seem to be so plain and positive, that it is impossible any other sense should be fixed on them but only this, that the Word was in the beginning, and was God; and therefore is so still, unless he who is once God can cease so to be. “But the meaning is, that afterwards God exalted him, and made him God, as to rule, authority, and power.” This making of him God is an expression very offensive to the ears of all sober Christians; and was therefore before exploded. And these things here, as all other figments, hang together like a rope of sand. In the beginning of the gospel he was God, before any knew him but only God; that is, after he had preached the gospel, and died, and rose again, and was exalted at the right hand of God, he was made God, and that not properly, which is absolutely impossible, but in an improper sense! How prove they, then, this perverse nonsense to be the sense of these plain words? They say it must needs be so. Let them believe them who are willing to perish with them.

Thus far, then, we have their sense: — “In the beginning,” that is, about sixteen or seventeen hundred years ago, “the Word,” that is, the human nature of Christ before it was made flesh, which it was in its being, “was with God,” that is, known to God alone; and “in the beginning,” that is afterwards, not in the beginning, was made God! — which is the sum of their exposition of this place.

But what shall we say to what is affirmed concerning his making of all things, so as that without him, that is, without his making of it, nothing was made that was made; especially seeing that these “all things” are

expressly said to be the world, verse 10, and all things therein contained, even in heaven and earth? Colossians 1:16. An ordinary man would think that they should now be taken hold of, and that there is no way of escape left unto them; but they have it in a readiness. By the “all things” here, are intended all things of the gospel, — the preaching of it, the sending of the apostles to preach it, and to declare the will of God; and by the “world,” is intended the world to come, or the new state of things under the gospel. This is the substance of what is pleaded by the greatest masters amongst them in this matter, and they are not ashamed thus to plead. And the reader, in this instance, may easily discern what a desperate cause they are engaged in, and how bold and desperate they are in the management of it. For, —

**First,** The words are a plain illustration of the divine nature of the Word, by his divine power and works, as the very series of them declares. He was God, and he made all things: “He that built all things is God,” Hebrews 3:4.

**Secondly,** There is no one word spoken concerning the gospel, nor the preaching of it, nor any effects of that preaching; which the apostle expressly insists upon and declares afterward, verse 15, and so onwards.

**Thirdly,** The making of all things, here ascribed unto the Word, was done in the beginning; but that making of all things which they intend, in erecting the church by the preaching of the word, was not done in the beginning, but afterwards, — most of it, as themselves confess, after the ascension of Christ into heaven.

**Fourthly,** In this gloss, what is the meaning of “All things?” “Only some things,” say the Socinians. What is the meaning of “Were made?” “That is, were mended.” “By him?” “That is, the apostles, principally preaching the gospel.” And this “In the beginning?” “After it was past;” — for so they say expressly, that the principal things here intended were effected by the apostles afterwards.

I think, since the beginning, place it when you will, — the beginning of the world or the beginning of the gospel, — there was never such an exposition of the words of God or man contended for.

**Fifthly,** It is said, “He made the world,” and he “came” into it, — namely, the world which he made; and “the world,” or the inhabitants of it “knew him not.” But the world they intend did know him: for the church knew him, and acknowledged him to be the Son of God; for that was the foundation that it was built upon.

I have instanced directly in this only testimony, to give the reader a pledge of the full confirmation which may be given unto this great fundamental truth, by a due improvement of those other testimonies, or distinct revelations, which speak no less expressly to the same purpose. And of them there is not any one but we are ready to vindicate it, if called whereunto, from the exceptions of these men; which how bold and sophisticated they are we may, in these now considered, also learn and know.

It appears, then, that there is a full, sufficient revelation made in the Scripture of the eternal Deity of the Son of God; and that he is so, as is the Father also. More particular testimonies I shall not at present insist upon, referring the full discussion and vindication of these truths to another season.

4. Fourthly, We are, therefore, in the next place, to manifest that the one, or the like testimony, is given unto the Deity of the Holy Spirit; that is, that he is revealed and declared in the Scripture as the object of our faith, worship, and obedience, on the account and for the reason of those divine excellencies which are the sole reason of our yielding religious worship unto any, or expecting from any the reward that is promised unto us, or to be brought by them to the end for which we are. And herein lies, as was showed, the concernment of faith. When that knows what it is to believe as on divine revelation, and is enabled thereby to regulate the soul in its present obedience and future expectation, seeing it is its nature to work by love and hope, there it rests. Now, this is done to the utmost satisfaction in the revelation that is made of the divine existence, divine excellencies,

and divine operations of the Spirit; as shall be briefly manifested. But before we proceed, we may, in our way, observe a great congruency of success in those who have denied the Deity of the Son and those who have denied that of the Holy Spirit. For as to the Son, after some men began once to disbelieve the revelation concerning him, and would not acknowledge him to be God and man in one person, they could never settle nor agree, either what or who he was, or who was his Father, or why he was the Son. Some said he was a phantasm or appearance, and that he had no real subsistence in this world; and that all that was done by him was an appearance, he himself being they know not what elsewhere. That proud beast, Paulus Samosatenus, whose flagitious life contended for a preeminence in wickedness with his prodigious heresies, was one of the first, after the Jews, that positively contended for his being a man, and no more; who was followed by Photinus and others. The Arians perceiving the folly of this opinion, with the odium of it amongst all that bare the name of Christians, and that they had as good deny the whole Scripture as not grant unto him a pre-existence in a divine nature antecedent to his incarnation, they framed a new Deity, which God should make before the world, in all things like himself, but not the same with him in essence and substance, but to be so like him that, by the writings of some of them, ye can scarce know the one from the other; and that this was the Son of God, also, who was afterward incarnate. Others, in the meantime, had more monstrous imaginations: some, that he was an angel; some, that he was the sun; some, that he was the soul of the world; some, the light within men. Departing from their proper rest, so have they hovered about, and so have they continued to do until this day.

In the same manner it is come to pass with them who have denied the Deity of the Holy Ghost. They could never find where to stand or abide; but one has cried up one thing, another another. At first they observed that such things were everywhere ascribed unto him in the Scripture as uncontrollably evidence him to be an intelligent, voluntary agent. This they found so plain and evident, that they could not deny but that he was a person, or an intelligent subsistence. Wherefore, seeing they were resolved not to assent unto the revelation of his being God, they made him a created spirit, chief and above all others; but still, whatever else he were, he was only a creature. And this course some of late also have steered.

The Socinians, on the other hand, observing that such things are assigned and ascribed unto him, as that, if they acknowledge him to be a person, or a substance, they must, upon necessity, admit him to be God, though they seemed not, at first, at all agreed what to think or say concerning him positively, yet they all concurred peremptorily in denying his personality. Hereon, some of them said he was the gospel, which others of them have confuted; some, that he was Christ. Neither could they agree whether there was one Holy Ghost or more; — whether the Spirit of God, and the good Spirit of God, and the Holy Spirit, be the same or no. In general, now they conclude that he is “vis Dei” or “virtue Dei,” or “efficacia Dei;” — no substance, but a quality, that may be considered either as being in God, and then they say it is the Spirit of God; or as sanctifying and conforming men unto God, and then they say it is the Holy Ghost. Whether these things do answer the revelation made in the Scripture concerning the eternal Spirit of God, will be immediately manifested. Our Quakers, who have for a long season hovered up and down like a swarm of flies, with a confused noise and humming, begin now to settle in the opinions lately by them declared for. But what their thoughts will fall in to be concerning the Holy Ghost, when they shall be contented to speak intelligibly, and according to the usage of other men, or the pattern of Scripture the great rule of speaking or treating about spiritual things, I know not, and am uncertain whether they do so themselves or no. Whether he may be the light within them, or an infallible afflatus, is uncertain. In the meantime, what is revealed unto us in the Scripture to be believed concerning the Holy Ghost, his Deity and personality, may be seen in the ensuing testimonies.

The sum of this revelation is, — that the Holy Spirit is an eternally existing divine substance, the author of divine operations, and the object of divine and religious worship; that is, “Over all, God blessed for ever,” as the ensuing testimonies evince: —

Genesis 10:2:            “The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters”

- Psalm 33:6: “By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the Spirit of his mouth.”
- Job 26:13: “By his Spirit he has garnished the heavens.”
- Job 33:4: “The Spirit of God has made me.”
- Psalm 104:30: “Thou sendest forth thy Spirit, they are created.”
- Matthew 28:19: “Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”
- Acts 1:16: “That scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake.”
- Acts 5:3: “Peter said, Ananias, why has Satan filled thins heart to lie to the Holy Ghost?” verse 4: “Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.”
- Acts 28:20, 26: “Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, saying, Go unto this people, and say,” etc.
- 1 Corinthians 3:16: “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?”
- 1 Corinthians 12:11: “All these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.” Verse 6: “And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.”
- 2 Corinthians 13:14: “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all.”

- Acts 20:28: “Take heed to the flock over the which the Holy Ghost has made you overseers.”
- Matthew 12:31: “All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.”
- Psalms 139:7: “Whither shall I go from thy Spirit?”
- John 14:26: “But the comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things.”
- Luke 12:12: “The Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say.”
- Acts 13:2: “As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.”
- Verse 4: “So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia,” etc. 2 Peter 1:21: “For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”

It is evident, upon the first consideration, that there is not any thing which we believe concerning the Holy Ghost, but that it is plainly revealed and declared in these testimonies. He is directly affirmed to be, and is called, “God,” Acts 5:3, 4; which the Socinians will not say is by virtue of an exaltation unto an office or authority, as they say of the Son. He is an intelligent, voluntary, divine agent; he knows, he works as he will: which things, if, in their frequent repetition, they are not sufficient to evince an intelligent agent, a personal subsistence, that has being, life, and will, we must confess that the Scripture was written on purpose to lead us into mistakes and misapprehensions of what we are under penalty of eternal ruin, rightly to apprehend and believe. It declares, also, that he is the



author and worker of all sorts of divine operations, requiring immensity, omnipotence, omniscience, and all other divine excellencies, unto their working and effecting. Moreover, it is revealed that he is peculiarly to be believed in, and may peculiarly be sinned against, [as] the great author of all grace in believers and order in the church. This is the sum of what we believe, of what is revealed in the Scripture concerning the Holy Ghost.

As, in the consideration of the preceding head, we vindicated one testimony in particular from the exceptions of the adversaries of the truth, so on this we may briefly sum up the evidence that is given us in the testimonies before produced, that the reader may the more easily understand their intendment, and what, in particular, they bear witness unto.

The sum is that the Holy Ghost is a divine, distinct person, and neither merely the power or virtue of God, nor any created spirit whatever. This plainly appears, from what is revealed concerning him. For he who is placed in the same series or order with other divine persons, without the least note of difference or distinction from them, as to an interest in personality; who has the names proper to a divine person only, and is frequently and directly called by them; who also has personal properties, and is the voluntary author of personal, divine operations, and the proper object of divine worship, — he is a distinct divine person. And if these things be not a sufficient evidence and demonstration of a divine, intelligent substance, I shall, as was said before, despair to understand any thing that is expressed and declared by words. But now thus it is with the Holy Ghost, according to the revelation made conceding him in the Scripture. For, —

**First.** He is placed in the same rank and order, without any note of difference or distinction as to a distinct interest in the divine nature (that is, as we shall see, personality) with the other divine persons. Matthew 28:19, “Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. 1 John 5:7, “There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one.” 1 Corinthians 12:3-6, “No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. Now, there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And

there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all." Neither does a denial of his divine being and distinct existence leave any tolerable sense unto these expressions. For read the words of the first place from the mind of the Socinians, and see what is it that can be gathered from them, "Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the virtue or efficacy of the Father." Can any thing be more assonant from faith and reason than this absurd expression? and yet it is the direct sense, if it be any, that these men put upon the words. To join a quality with acknowledged persons, and that in such things and cases as wherein they are proposed under a personal consideration, is a strange kind of mystery. And the like may be manifested concerning the other places.

**Secondly.** He also has the names proper to a divine person only; for he is expressly called "God," Acts 5. He who is termed the "Holy Ghost," verse 3, and the "Spirit of the Lord," verse 9, is called also "God," verse 4. Now, this is the name of a divine person, on one account or other. The Socinians would not allow Christ to be called God were he not a divine person, though not by nature, yet by office and authority. And I suppose they will not find out an office for the Holy Ghost, whereunto he might be exalted, on the account whereof he might become God, seeing this would acknowledge him to be a person, which they deny. So he is called the "Comforter," John 16:7. A personal appellation this is also; and because he is the Comforter of all God's people, it can be the name of none but a divine person. In the same place, also, it is frequently affirmed, that he shall come, that he shall and will do such and such things; all of them declaring him to be a person.

**Thirdly.** He has personal properties assigned unto him; as a will, 1 Corinthians 12:11, "He divideth to every man severally as he will;" and understanding, 1 Corinthians 2:10, "The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God;" — as also, all the acting that are ascribed unto him are all of them such as undeniably affirm personal properties in their principal and agent. For, —

**Fourthly.** He is the voluntary author of divine operations. He of old cherished the creation, Genesis 1:2, “The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.” He formed and garnished the heavens. He inspired, acted, and spoke, in and by the prophets, Acts 28:25, “Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers;” 2 Peter 1:21, “The prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” He regenerates, enlightens, sanctifies, comforts, instructs, leads, guides, all the disciples of Christ, as the Scriptures everywhere testify. Now, all these are personal operations, and cannot, with any pretence of sobriety or consistency with reason, be constantly and uniformly assigned unto a quality or virtue. He is, as the Father and Son, God, with the properties of omniscience and omnipotence, of life, understanding, and will; and by these properties, works, acts, and produces effects, according to wisdom, choice, and power.

**Fifthly.** The same regard is had to him in faith, worship, and obedience, as unto the other persons of the Father and Son. For our being baptized into his name, is our solemn engagement to believe in him, to yield obedience to him, and to worship him, as it puts the same obligation upon us to the Father and the Son. So also, in reference unto the worship of the church, he commands that the ministers of it be separated unto himself; Acts 13:2, “The Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them;” verse 4, “So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed;” — which is comprehensive of all the religious worship of the church.

And on the same account is he sinned against, as Acts 5:3, 9; for there is the same reason of sin and obedience. Against whom a man may sin formally and ultimately, him he is bound to obey, worship, and believe in. And this can be no quality, but God himself. For what may be the sense of this expression, “Thou hast lied to the efficacy of God in his operations” or how can we be formally obliged unto obedience to a quality? There must, then, an antecedent obligation unto faith, trust, and religious obedience be supposed, as the ground of rendering a person capable of being guilty of sin towards any; for sin is but a failure in faith, obedience, or worship. These, therefore, are due unto the Holy Ghost; or a man could

not sin against him so signally and fatally as some are said to do in the foregoing testimonies.

I say, therefore, unto this part of our cause, as unto the other, that unless we will cast off all reverence of God, and, in a kind of atheism which, as I suppose, the prevailing wickedness of this age has not yet arrived unto, say that the Scriptures were written on purpose to deceive us, and to lead us into mistakes about, and misapprehensions of, what it proposes unto us, we must acknowledge the Holy Ghost to be a substance, a person, God; yet distinct from the Father and the Son. For to tell us, that he will come unto us, that he will be our comforter, that he will teach us, lead us, guide us; that he spoke of old in and by the prophets, — that they were moved by him, acted by him; that he “searcheth the deep things of God,” works as he will; that he appoints to himself ministers in the church; — in a word, to declare, in places innumerable, what he has done, what he does, what he will do, what he says and speaks, how he acts and proceeds, what his will is, and to warn us that we grieve him not, sin not against him, with things innumerable of the like nature; and all this while to oblige us to believe that he is not a person, a helper, a comforter, a searcher, a willer, but a quality in some especial operations of God, or his power and virtue in them, were to distract men, not to instruct them, and leave them no certain conclusion but this, that there is nothing certain in the whole book of God. And of no other tendency are these and the like imaginations of our adversaries in this matter.

But let us briefly consider what is objected in general unto the truth we have confirmed: —

They say, then, “The Holy Spirit is said to be given, to be sent, to be bestowed on men, and to be promised unto them: and therefore it cannot be that he should be God; for how can any of these things he spoken of God?”

I answer:

**First,** As the expressions do not prove him to be God (nor did ever any produce them to that purpose), yet they undeniably prove him to be a

person, or an intelligent, voluntary agent, concerning whom they are spoken and affirmed. For how can the power of God, or a quality, as they speak, be said to be sent, to be given, to be bestowed on men? So that these very expressions are destructive to their imaginations.

**Secondly.** He who is God, equal in nature and being with the Father, may be promised, sent, and given, with respect unto the holy dispensation and condescension wherein he has undertaken the office of being our comforter and sanctifier.

**Thirdly.** The communications, distributions, impartings, divisions of the Spirit, which they mention, as they respect the object of them, or those on whom they were or are bestowed, denote only works, gifts, operations, and effects of the Spirit; the rule whereof is expressed, 1 Corinthians 12:11. He works them in whom he will, and as he will. And whether these and the like exceptions, taken from acting and operations which are plainly interpreted and explained in sundry places of Scripture, and evidently enough in the particular places where they are used, are sufficient to impeach the truth of the revelation before declared, all who have a due reverence of God, his word, and truths, will easily understand and discern.

These things being declared in the Scripture concerning the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, it is, moreover, revealed, “And these three are one;” that is, one God, jointly to be worshipped, feared, adored, believed in, and obeyed, in order unto eternal life. For although this does absolutely and necessarily follow from what is declared and has been spoken concerning the one God, or oneness of the Deity, yet, for the confirmation of our faith, and that we may not, by the distinct consideration of the three be taken off from the one, it is particularly declared that “these three are one;” that one, the one and same God. But whereas, as was said before, this can no otherwise be, the testimonies given whereunto are not so frequently multiplied as they are unto those other heads of this truth, which, through the craft of Satan, and the pride of men, might be more liable to exceptions. But yet they are clear, full, and distinctly sufficient for faith to acquiesce in immediately, without any other expositions, interpretations or arguments, beyond our understanding of the naked importance of the words. Such are they, of the Father [and] the Son, John

10:30, "I and my Father are one;" — Father, Son, and Spirit, 1 John 5:7, "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one." Matthew 28:19, "Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." For if those into whose name we are baptized be not one in nature, we are by our baptism engaged into the service and worship of more gods than one. For, as being baptized, or sacredly initiated, into or in the name of any one, does sacramentally bind us unto a holy and religious obedience unto him, and in all things to the avowing of him as the God whose we are, and whom we serve, as here we are in the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit; so if they are not one God, the blasphemous consequence before mentioned must unavoidably be admitted: which it also must upon the Socinian principle, who, whilst of all others they seem to contend most for one God, are indeed direct polytheists, by owning others with religious respect, due to God alone, which are not so.

Once more: It is revealed, also, that these three are distinct among themselves, by certain peculiar relative properties, if I may yet use thee terms. So that they are distinct, living, divine, intelligent, voluntary principles of operation or working, and that in and by internal acts one towards another, and in acts that outwardly respect the creation and the several parts of it. Now, this distinction originally lies in this, — that the Father begets the God, and the Son is begotten of the Father, and the Holy Spirit proceeds from both of them. The manner of these things, so far as they may be expressed unto our edification, shall afterwards be spoken to. At present it suffices, for the satisfaction and confirmation of our faith, that the distinctions named are clearly revealed in the Scripture, and are proposed to be its proper object in this matter: — Psalm 2:7, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." Matthew 16:16, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." John 10:14, "We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father." Verse 18, "No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he has declared him." John 5:26, "For as the Father has life in himself, so has he given to the Son to have life in himself." 1 John 5:20, "The Son of God is come, and has given us an understanding." John 15:26, "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the

Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceeds from the Father, he shall testify of me.”

Now, as the nature of this distinction lies in their mutual relation one to another, so it is the foundation of those distinct acting and operations whereby the distinction itself is clearly manifested and confirmed. And these acting, as was said, are either such as where one of them is the object of another’s acting, or such as have the creature for their object. The first sort are testified unto, Psalm 110: 1; John 10:18, 5:20, 17:5; 1 Corinthians 2:10, 11; Proverbs 8:22; most of which places have been before recited. They which thus know each other, love each other, delight in each other, must needs be distinct; and so are they represented unto our faith. And for the other sort of acting, the Scripture is full of the expressions of them. See Genesis 19:24; Zechariah 2:8; John 5:17; 1 Corinthians 12:7-11; 2 Corinthians 8:9.

Our conclusion from the whole is, — that there is nothing more fully expressed in the Scripture than this sacred truth, that there is one God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; which are divine, distinct, intelligent, voluntary, omnipotent principles of operation and working: which whosoever thinks himself obliged to believe the Scripture must believe; and concerning others, in this discourse, we are not solicitous.

This is that which was first proposed, — namely, to manifest what is expressly revealed in the Scripture concerning God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; so as that we may duly believe in him, yield obedience unto him, enjoy communion with him, walk in his love and fear, and so come at length to be blessed with him for evermore. Nor does faith, for its security, establishment, and direction, absolutely stand in need of any farther exposition or explanation of these things, or the use of any terms not consecrated to the present service by the Holy Ghost. But whereas it may be variously assaulted by the temptations of Satan, and opposed by the subtle sophisms of men of corrupt minds; and whereas it is the duty of the disciples of Christ to grow in the knowledge of God, and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, by an explicit apprehension of the things they do believe, so far as they are capable of them; this doctrine has in all ages of the church been explained and taught in and by such expressions, terms and

propositions, as farther declare what is necessarily included in it, or consequent unto it; with an exclusion of such things, notions, and apprehensions, as are neither the one nor the other. This I shall briefly manifest, and then vindicate the whole from some exceptions, and so close this dissertation.

**[First.]** That God is one, was declared and proved. Now this oneness can respect nothing but the nature, being, substance, or essence of God. God is one in this respect. Some of these words, indeed, are not used in the Scripture; but whereas they are of the same importance and signification, and none of them include any thing of imperfection, they are properly used in the declaration of the unity of the Godhead. There is mention in the Scripture of the Godhead of God, Romans 1:20, “His eternal power and Godhead;” and of his nature, by excluding them from being objects of our worship who are not God by nature, Galatians 4:8. Now, this natural godhead of God is his substance or essence, with all the holy, divine excellencies which naturally and necessarily appertain whereunto. Such are eternity, immensity, omnipotence, life, infinite holiness, goodness, and the like. This one nature, substance, or essence, being the nature, substance, or essence of God, as God, is the nature, essence, and substance of the Father, Son, and Spirit; one and the same absolutely in and unto each of them: for none can be God, as they are revealed to be, but by virtue of this divine nature or being. Herein consists the unity of the Godhead.

**Secondly.** The distinction which the Scripture reveals between Father, Son, and Spirit, is that whereby they are three hypostases or persons, distinctly subsisting in the same divine essence or being. Now, a divine person is nothing but the divine essence, upon the account of an especial property, subsisting in an especial manner. As in the person of the Father there is the divine essence and being, with its property of begetting the Son, subsisting in an especial manner as the Father, and because this person has the whole divine nature, all the essential properties of that nature are in that person. The wisdom, the understanding of God, the will of God, the immensity of God, is in that person, not as that person, but as the person is God. The like is to be said of the persons of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Hereby each person having the understanding, the will, and power of God, becomes a distinct principle of operation; and yet all



their acting ad extra being the acting of God, they are undivided, and are all the works of one, of the selfsame God. And these things do not only necessarily follow, but are directly included, in the revelation made concerning God and his subsistence in the Scriptures.

**[Thirdly.]** There are, indeed, very many other things that are taught and disputed about this doctrine of the Trinity; as, the manner of the eternal generation of the Son, — of the essence of the Father. — of the procession of the Holy Ghost, and the difference of it from the generation of the Son, — of the mutual in-being of the persons, by reason of their unity in the same substance or essence, — the nature of their personal subsistence, with respect unto the properties whereby they are mutually distinguished; — all which are true and defensible against all the sophisms of the adversaries of this truth. Yet, because the distinct apprehension of them, and their accurate expression, is not necessary unto faith, as it is our guide and principle in and unto religious worship and obedience, they need not here be insisted on. Nor are those brief explications themselves before mentioned so proposed as to be placed immediately in the same rank or order with the original revelations before insisted on, but only are pressed as proper expressions of what is revealed, to increase our light and farther our edification. And although they cannot rationally be opposed or denied, nor ever were by any, but such as deny and oppose the things themselves as revealed, yet they that do so deny or oppose them, are to be required positively, in the first place, to deny or disapprove the oneness of the Deity, or to prove that the Father, or Son, or Holy Ghost, in particular, are not God, before they be allowed to speak one word against the manner of the explication of the truth concerning them. For either they grant the revelation declared and contended for, or they do not. If they do, let that concession be first laid down, namely, — that the Father, Son, and Spirit, are one God and then let it be debated, whether they are one in substance and three in persons, or how else the matter is to be stated. If they deny it, it is a plain madness to dispute of the manner of any thing, and the way of expressing it, whilst the thing itself is denied to have a being; for of that which is not, there is neither manner, property, adjunct, nor effect. Let, then, such persons as this sort of men are ready to attempt with their sophistry, and to amuse with cavils about persons, substances, subsistence, and the like, desire to know of them what it is that they

would be at. What would they deny? What would they disapprove? Is it that God is one? Or that the Father is God, or the Son, or the Holy Ghost is so? If they deny or oppose either of these, they have testimonies and instances of divine revelation, or may have, in a readiness, to confound the devil and all his emissaries. If they will not do so, if they refuse it, then let them know that it is most foolish and unreasonable to contend about expressions and explications of any thing, or doctrine, about the manner, respects, or relations of any thing, until the thing itself, or doctrine, be plainly confessed or denied. If this they refuse, as generally they do and will (which I speak upon sufficient experience), and will not be induced to deal openly, properly, and rationally, but will keep to their cavils and sophisms about terms and expressions, all farther debate or conference with them may justly, and ought, both conscientiously and rationally, to be refused and rejected. For these sacred mysteries of God and the gospel are not lightly to be made the subject of men's contests and disputations.

But as we dealt before in particular, so here I shall give instances of the sophistical exceptions that are used against the whole of this doctrine, and that with respect unto some late collections and representations of them; from whence they are taken up and used by many who seem not to understand the words, phrases, and expressions themselves, which they make use of.

The sum of what they say in general is, —

1. "How can these things be? How can three be one, and one be three Every person has its own substance; and, therefore, if there be three persons, there must be three substances, and so three Gods."

Ans. Every person has distinctly its own substance, for the one substance of the Deity is the substance of each person, so it is still but one; but each person has not its own distinct substance, because the substance of them all is the same, as has been proved.

2. They say, "That if each person be God, then each person is infinite, and there being three persons, there must be three infinites."

Ans. This follows not in the least; for each person is infinite as he is God. All divine properties, such as to be infinite is, belong not to the persons on the account of their personality, but on the account of their nature, which is one, for they are all natural properties.

3. But they say, "If each person be God, and that God subsist in three persons, then in each person there are three persons or Gods."

Ans. The collusion of this sophism consists in that expression, "be God" and "that God." In the first place the nature of God is intended; in the latter, a singular person. Place the words intelligibly, and they are thus: — If each person be God, and the nature of God subsists in three persons, then in each person there are three persons; and then the folly of it will be evident.

4. But they farther infer, "That if we deny the persons to be infinite, then an infinite being has a finite mode of subsisting, and so I know not what supposition they make hence; that seeing there are not three infinites, then the Father, Son, and Spirit are three unites, that make up an infinite."

The pitiful weakness of this cavil is open to all; for finite and infinite are properties and adjuncts of beings, and not of the manner of the subsistence of any thing. The nature of each person is infinite, and so is each person because of that nature. Of the manner of their subsistence, finite and infinite cannot be predicated or spoken, no farther than to say, an infinite being does so subsists.

5. “But you grant,” say they, “that the only true Good is the Father, and then if Christ be the only true God, he is the Father.”

Ans. We say, the only true God is Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. We never say, the Scripture never says, that the Father only is the true God; whence it would follow, that, he that is the true God is the Father. But we grant the Father to be the only true God; and so we say is the Son also. And it does not at all thence follow that the Son is the Father; because, in saying the Father is the true God, we respect not his paternity, or his paternal relation to his Son, but his nature, essence, and being. And the same we affirm concerning the other persons. And to say, that because each person is God, one person must be another, is to crave leave to disbelieve what God has revealed, without giving any reason at all for their so doing.

But this sophism being borrowed from another, namely, Crellius, who insisted much upon it, I shall upon his account, and not on theirs, who, as far as I can apprehend, understand little of the intendment of it, remove it more fully out of the way. It is proposed by him in way of syllogism, thus, “The only true God is the Father; Christ is the only true God therefore he is the Father.” Now, this syllogism is ridiculously sophistical. For, in a categorical syllogism the major proposition is not to be particular, or equipollent to a particular; for, from such a proposition, when any thing communicable to more is the subject of it, and is restrained unto one particular, nothing can be inferred in the conclusion. But such is this proposition here, The only true God is the Father. It is a particular proposition, wherein the subject is restrained unto a singular or individual predicate, though in itself communicable to more. Now, the proposition being so made particular, the terms of the subject or predicate are supposed reciprocal, — namely, that one God, and the Father, are the same; which is false, unless it be first proved that the name God is communicable to no more, or no other, than is the other term of Father: which to suppose, is to beg the whole question; for the only true God has a larger signification than the term of Father or Son. So that, though the only true God be the Father, yet every one who is true God is not the Father. Seeing, then, that the name of God here supplies the place of a

species, though it be singular absolutely, as it respects the divine nature, which is absolutely singular and one, and cannot be multiplied, yet in respect of communication it is otherwise; it is communicated unto more, — namely, to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. And, therefore, if any thing be intended to be concluded from hence, the proposition must be expressed according to what the subject requires, as capable of communication or attribution to more than one, as thus: Whoever is the only true God is the Father; — which proposition these persons and their masters shall never be able to prove.

I have given, in particular, these strictures thus briefly upon these empty sophisms; partly because they are well removed already, and partly because they are mere excriptions out of an author not long since translated into English, unto whom an entire answer may see long be returned.

That which at present shall suffice, is to give a general answer unto all these cavils, with all of the same kind which the men of these principles do usually insist upon.

1. “The things,” they say, “which we teach concerning the Trinity, are contrary to reason;” and thereof they endeavor to give sundry instances, wherein the sum of the opposition which they make unto this truth does consist. But first, I ask, What reason is it that they intend? It is their own, the carnal reason of men. By that they will judge of these divine mysteries. The Scripture tells us, indeed, that the “spirit of a man which is in him knows the things of a man,” — a man’s spirit, by natural reason, may judge of natural things; — “but the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God,” 1 Corinthians 2:11. So that what we know of these things, we must receive upon the revelation of the Spirit of God merely, if the apostle may be believed. And it is given unto men to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, — to some, and not to others; and unless it be so given them, they cannot know them. In particular, none can know the Father unless the Son reveal him. Nor will, or does, or can, flesh and blood reveal or understand Jesus Christ to be the Son of the living God, unless the Father

reveal him, and instruct us in the truth of it, Matthew 16:17. The way to come to the acknowledgment of these things, is that described by the apostle, Ephesians 3:14-19, “For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints,” etc. As also, Colossians 2:2, 3, That ye might come “unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” It is by faith and prayer, and through the revelation of God, that we may come to the acknowledgment of these things, and not by the carnal reasonings of men of corrupt minds.

2. What reason do they intend? If reason absolutely, the reason of things, we grant that nothing contrary unto it is to be admitted. But reason as it is in this or that man, particularly in themselves, we know to be weak, maimed, and imperfect; and that they are, and all other men, extremely remote from a just and full comprehension of the whole reason of things. Are they in such an estate as that their apprehension shall pass for the measure of the nature of all things? We know they are far from it. So that though we will not admit of any thing that is contrary to reason, yet the least intimation of a truth by divine revelation will make me embrace it, although it should be contrary to the reason of all the Socinians in the world. Reason in the abstract, or the just measure of the answering at one thing unto another, is of great moment: but reason — that is, what is pretended to be so, or appears to be so unto this or that man, especially in and about things of divine revelation — is of very small importance (of none at all) where it rises up against the express testimonies of Scripture, and these multiplied, to their mutual confirmation and explanation.

3. Many things are above reason, — that is, as considered in this or that subject, as men, — which are not at all against it. It is an easy thing to compel the most curious inquirers of these days to a ready confession hereof, by multitudes of instances in things finite and temporary; and shall any dare to deny but it may be so in things heavenly, divine, and spiritual? Nay, there is no concernment of the being of God, or his properties, but is absolutely above the comprehension of our reason. We cannot by searching find out God, we cannot find out the Almighty to perfection.
4. The very foundation of all their objections and cavils against this truth, is destructive of as fundamental principles of reason as are in the world. They are all, at best, reduced to this: It cannot be thus in things finite; the same being cannot in one respect be one, in another three, and the like: and therefore it is so in things infinite. All these seasonings are built upon this supposition, that that which is finite can perfectly comprehend that which is infinite, — an assertion absurd, foolish, and contradictory unto itself. Again; it is the highest reason in things of pure revelation to captivate our understandings to the authority of the Revealer; which here is rejected. So that by a loud, specious, pretence of reason, these men, by a little captious sophistry, endeavor not only to countenance their unbelief, but to evert the greatest principles of reason itself.
5. The objections these men principally insist upon, are merely against the explanations we use of this doctrine, — not against the primitive revelation of it, which is the principal object of our faith; which, how preposterous and irrational a course of proceeding it is, has been declared.
6. It is a rule among philosophers, that if a man, on just grounds and reasons, have embraced any opinion or persuasion, he is not to desert it merely because he cannot answer every objection against it. For if the objections wherewith we may be entangled be not of the same weight and importance with the reason on which we embraced the opinion, it is a madness to forego it on the account

thereof. And much more must this hold amongst the common sort of Christians, in things spiritual and divine. If they will let go and part with their faith in any truth, because they are not able to answer distinctly some objections that may be made against it, they may quickly find themselves disputed into atheism.

7. There is so great an intimation made of such an expression and resemblance of a Trinity in unity in the very works of the creation, as learned men have manifested by various instances, that it is most unreasonable to suppose that to be contrary to reason which many objects of rational consideration do more or less present unto our minds.
8. To add no more considerations of this nature, let any of the adversaries produce any one argument or grounds of reason, or those pretended to be such, against that that has been asserted, that has not already been baffled a thousand times, and it shall receive an answer; or a public acknowledgment, that it is indissoluble.



## OF THE PERSON OF CHRIST

The next head of opposition made by the men of this conspiracy against this sacred truth, is against the head of all truth, the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Socinians, indeed, would willingly put a better face or colour upon their error about the person of Christ than it will bear or endure to lie on it. For in their catechism, unto this question, “Is the Lord Jesus Christ *purus homo*, a mere man?” they answer, “By no means.” “How then? Has he a divine nature also?” Which is their next question. To this they say, “By no means; for this is contrary to right reason.” How, then, will these pretended masters of reason reconcile these things? For to us it seems, that if Christ has no other nature but that of man, he is as to his nature *purus homo*, a mere man, and no more. Why, they answer, that “he is not a mere man, because he was born of a virgin.” Strange that that should be an argument to prove him more than a man, which the Scripture, and all men in their right wits, grant to be an invincible reason to prove him to be a man, and, as he was born of her, no more. Romans 10:3, “Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh” Romans 9:5, “Whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came.” Galatians 4:4, “God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law.” But, say they, “He was endowed with the Spirit, wrought miracles, was raised from the dead, had all power given [him] in heaven and earth; for by these degrees he became to be God.” But all men see that the inquiry is about the nature of Christ, and this answer is about his state and condition. Now this changes not his nature on the one hand, no more than his being humbled, poor, and dying, did on the other. This is the right reason we have to deal withal in these men! If a man should have inquired of some of them of old, whether Melchizedek were *purus homo*, a mere man, some of them would have said, “No, because he was the Holy Ghost;” some, “No, because he was the Son of God himself;” and some, “No, because he was an angel;” — for such foolish opinions have men fallen into. But how Scottish soever their conceptions were, their answer to that inquiry would have been regular, because the question and answer respect the same subject in the same respect; but never any was so stupid as to answer, “He was not a mere

man, (that is, by nature,) because he was a priest of the high God,” — which respects his office and condition. Yet, such is the pretence of these men about the person of Christ, to incrustate and give some colour unto their foul misbelief; as supposing that it would be much to their disadvantage to own Christ only as a mere man, — though the most part of their disputes that they have troubled the Christian world withal have had no other design nor aim but to prove him so to be, and nothing else. I shall briefly, according to the method insisted on, first lay down what is the direct revelation which is the object of our faith in this matter, then express the revelation itself in the Scripture testimonies wherein it is recorded; and having vindicated some one or other of them from their exceptions, manifest how the doctrine hereof is farther explained, unto the edification of them that believe. That there is a second person, the Son of God, in the holy tri-unity of the Godhead, we have proved before. That this person did, of his infinite love and grace, take upon him our nature, — human nature, — so as that the divine and human nature should become one person, one Christ, God and man in one, so that whatever he does in and about our salvation, it is done by that one person, God and man, is revealed unto us in the Scripture as the object of our faith: and this is that which we believe concerning the person of Christ. Whatever acts are ascribed unto him, however immediately performed, in or by the human nature, or in and by his divine nature, they are all the acts of that one person, in whom are both these natures. That this Christ, God and man, is, because he is God, and on the account of what he has done for us as man, to be believed in, worshipped with worship religious and divine, to be trusted and obeyed, this also is asserted in the Scripture. And these things are, as it were, the common notions of Christian religion, — the common principles of our profession, which the Scriptures also abundantly testify unto.

Isaiah 7:14, “Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel;” that is, he shall be God with us, or God in our nature. Not that that should be his name whereby he should be called in this world; but that this should be the condition of his person, — he should be “God with us,” God in our nature. So are the words expounded, Matthew 1:20-23, “That which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he

shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel; which, being interpreted, is, God with us.” his name whereby he was to be called, was Jesus; that is, a Savior. And thereby was accomplished the prediction of the prophet, that he should be Emmanuel; which, being interpreted, is, “God with us.” Now, a child born to be “God with us,” is God in that child taking our nature upon him; and no otherwise can the words be understood.

Isaiah 9:6, “Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and his name shall be called The mighty God.” The child that is born, the son that is given, is the mighty God; and as the mighty God, and a child born, or son given, he is the Prince of Peace, as he is there called, or our Savior.

John 1:14, “The Word was made flesh.” That the Word was God, who made all things, he had before declared. Now, he affirms that this Word was made flesh. How? Converted into flesh, into a man, so that he who was God ceased so to be, and was turned or changed into flesh, — that is, a man? Besides that this is utterly impossible, it is not affirmed. For the Word continued the Word still, although he was “made flesh,” or “made of a woman,” as it is elsewhere expressed, — or made of the seed of David, — or took our flesh or nature to be his own. Himself continuing God, as he was, became man also, which before he was not “The Word was made flesh;” This is that which we believe and assert in this matter.

See John 3:13, 31, 6:62, 16:28. All which places assert the person of Christ to have descended from heaven in the assumption of human nature, and ascended into heaven therein [in that nature] being assumed; and to have been in heaven as to his divine nature, when he was on the earth in the flesh that he had assumed.

Acts 20:28, “Feed the church of God, which he has purchased with his own blood.” The person spoken of is said to be God absolutely, — “the church of God.” And this God is said to have blood of his own; — the blood of Jesus Christ, being the blood of him that was God, though not the

blood of him as God; for God is a spirit. And this undeniably testifies to the unity of his person as God and man.

Romans 1:3, 4, “Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.” Romans 9:5, “Whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.” This is all we desire that we may believe without disturbance from the glamors of these men, — namely, that the same Christ, as concerning the flesh, came of the fathers, of David, and, in himself, is over all, God blessed for ever. This the Scripture asserts plainly; and why we should not believe it firmly, let these men give a reason when they are able.

Galatians 4:4, “God sent forth his Son made of a woman.” He was his Son, and was made of a woman, according as he expresses it, Hebrews 10:5, “A body hast thou prepared me;” as also, Romans 8:3.

Philippians 2:5-7, “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.” It is the same Christ that is spoken of. And it is here affirmed of him, that he was “in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God.” But is this all? Is this Jesus Christ God only? Does he subsist only in the form or nature of God? No; says the apostle, “He took upon him the form of a servant, was made in the likeness of men, and was found in fashion as a man.” That his being truly a man is expressed in these words our adversaries deny not; and we therefore believe that the same Jesus Christ is God also, because that is no less plainly expressed.

1 Timothy 3:16, “And without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels.” It is a mystery, indeed; under which name it is despised now and reproached; nor are we allowed so to call it, but are reflected on as flying to mysteries for our defense. But we must take leave to speak in this matter according to His directions without whom we cannot speak at all.

A mystery it is, and that a great mystery; and that confessedly so, by all that do believe. And this is, that “God was manifested in the flesh.” That it is the Lord Christ who is spoken of, every one of the ensuing expressions do evince: “Justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.” And this, also, is the substance of what we believe in this matter, — namely, that Christ is God manifest in the flesh; which we acknowledge, own, and believe to be true, but a great mystery, — yet no less great and sacred a truth notwithstanding.

Hebrews 2:14, “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same.” Verse 16, “For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham.” and this plainly affirms his preexistence unto that assumption of our nature, and the unity of his person in it being so assumed.

1 John 3:16, “Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us.” He who was Glad laid down for a season and parted with that life which was his own, in that nature of ours which he had assumed. And that taking of our nature is called his “coming in the flesh;” which whose denies, is “not of God, but is the spirit of Antichrist,” chap. 4:3.

These are some of the places wherein the person of Christ is revealed unto our faith, that we may believe in the Son of God, and have eternal life.

The method formerly proposed would require that I should take off the general objections of the adversaries against this divine revelation, as also vindicate some peculiar testimonies from their exceptions; but because a particular opposition unto this truth has not, as yet, publicly and directly been maintained and managed by any that I know of among ourselves, though the denial of it be expressly included in what they do affirm, I shall leave the farther confirmation thereof unto some other occasion, if it be offered, and it be judged necessary.

And this is that which the faith of believers rests in, as that which is plainly revealed unto them, — namely, that Jesus Christ is God and man

in one person; and that all his acting in their behalf are the actings of him who is God and man; and that this Son of God, God and man, is to be believed in by them, and obeyed, that they [may] have eternal life.

What is farther added unto these express testimonies, and the full revelation of the truth contained in them in this matter, in way of explication educed from them, and suitable unto them, to the edification of the church, or information of the minds of believers in the right apprehension of this great mystery of God manifested in the flesh, may be reduced to these heads: —

1. That the person of the Son of God did not, in his assuming human nature to be his own, take an individual person of any one into a near conjunction with himself, but preventing the personal subsistence of human nature in that flesh which he assumed, he gave it its subsistence in his own person; whence it has its individuation and distinction from all other persons whatever. This is the personal union. The divine and human nature in Christ have but one personal subsistence; and so are but one Christ, one distinct personal principle of all operations, of all that he did or does as mediator. And this undeniably follows from what is declared in the testimonies mentioned. For the Word could not be made flesh, nor could he take on him the seed of Abraham, nor could the mighty God be a child born and given unto us, nor could God shed his blood for his church, but that the two natures so directly expressed must be united in one person; for otherwise, as they are two natures still, they would be two persons also.
2. Each nature thus united in Christ is entire, and preserves unto itself its own natural properties. For he is no less perfect God for being made man; nor no less a true, perfect man, consisting of soul and body, with all their essential parts, by that nature's being taken into subsistence with the Son of God. His divine nature still continues immense, omniscient, omnipotent, infinite in holiness, etc.; his human nature, finite, limited, and, before its glorification, subject to all infirmities of life and death that the same nature in others, absolutely considered, is obnoxious unto.

3. In each of these natures he acts suitably unto the essential properties and principles of that nature. As God, he made all things, upholds all things by the word of his power, fills heaven and earth, etc.; as man, he lived, hungered, suffered, died, rose, ascended into heaven: yet, by reason of the union of both these natures in the same person, not only his own person is said to do all these things, but the person expressed by the name which he has on the account of one nature, is said to do that which he did only in the other. So God is said to “redeem his church with his own blood,” and to “lay down his life for us,” and the Son of man to be in heaven when he was on the earth; all because of the unity of his person, as was declared. And these things do all of them directly and undeniably flow from what is revealed concerning his person, as before is declared.

## OF THE SATISFACTION OF CHRIST

The last thing to be inquired into, upon occasion of the late opposition to the great fundamental truths of the gospel, is the satisfaction of Christ. And the doctrine hereof is such as, I conceive, needs rather to be explained than vindicated. For it being the center wherein most, if not all, the lines of gospel promises and precepts do meet, and the great medium of all our communion with God in faith and obedience, the great distinction between the religion of Christians and that of all others in the world, it will easily, on a due proposal, be assented unto by all who would be esteemed disciples of Jesus Christ. And whether a parcel of insipid cavils may be thought sufficient to obliterate the revelation of it, men of sober minds will judge and discern.

For the term of satisfaction, we contend not about it. It does, indeed, properly express and connote that great effect of the death of Christ which, in the cause before us, we plead for. But yet, because it belongs rather to the explanation of the truth contended for, than is used expressly in the revelation of it, and because the right understanding of the word itself depends on some notions of law that as yet we need not take into consideration, I shall not, in this entrance of our discourse, insist precisely upon it, but leave it as the natural conclusion of what we shall find expressly declared in the Scripture. Neither do I say this as though I did decline the word, or the right use of it, or what is properly signified by it, but do only cast it into its proper place, answerable unto our method and design in the whole of this brief discourse.

I know some have taken a new way of expressing and declaring the doctrine concerning the mediation of Christ, with the causes and ends of his death, which they think more rational than that usually insisted on: but, as what I have yet heard of or seen in that kind, has been not only unscriptural, but also very irrational, and most remote from that accuracy whereunto they pretend who make use of it; so, if they should publish their conceptions, it is not improbable but that they may meet with a scholastic examination by some hand or other.



Our present work, as has been often declared, is for the establishment of the faith of them who may be attempted, if not brought into danger, to be seducers by the sleights of some who lie in wait to deceive, and the glamors of others who openly drive the same design. What, therefore, the Scripture plainly and clearly reveals in this matter, is the subject of our present inquiry. And either in so doing, as occasion shall be offered, we shall obviate, or, in the close of it remove, those sophisms that the sacred truth now proposed to consideration has been attempted withal.

The sum of what the Scripture reveals about this great truth, commonly called the “satisfaction of Christ,” may be reduced unto these ensuing heads: —

**First.** That Adam, being made upright, sinned against God; and all mankind, all his posterity, in him: — Genesis 1:27, “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.” Chap. 3:11, “And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?” Ecclesiastes 7:29, “Lo, this only have I found, that God made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions.” Romans 5:12, “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.” Verse 18, “Therefore, as by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation.” Verse 19, “By one man’s disobedience many were made sinners.”

**Secondly.** That, by this sin of our first parents, all men are brought into an estate of sin and apostasy from God, and of enmity unto him: — Genesis 6:5, “God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.” Psalm 51:5, “Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.” Romans 3:23, “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” Chap. 8:7, “The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” Ephesians 4:18, “Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from

the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart,” Chap. 2: 1; Colossians 2:13.

**Thirdly.** That in this state all men continue in sin against God, nor of themselves can do otherwise: — Romans 3:10-12, “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.”

**Fourthly.** That the justice and holiness of God, as he is the supreme governor and judge of all the world, require that sin be punished: — Exodus 34:7, “That will by no means clear the guilty.” Josh. 24:19, “He is a holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins.” Psalm 5:4-6, “For thou art not a God that has pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee. The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity. Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing.” Habakkuk 1:13, “Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look upon iniquity.” Isaiah 33:14, “Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?” Romans 1:32, “Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death.” Chap. 3:5, 6, “Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? (I speak as a man) God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world?” 2 Thessalonians 1:6, “It is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you.” Hebrews 12:29, “For our God is a consuming fire;” from Deuteronomy . 4:24.

**Fifthly.** That God, has also engaged his veracity and faithfulness in the sanction of the law, not to leave sin unpunished: — Genesis 2:17, “In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” Deuteronomy . 27:26, “Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them.” In this state and condition, mankind, had they been left without divine aid and help, must have perished eternally.

**Sixthly.** That God out of his infinite goodness, grace, and love to mankind, sent his only Son to save and deliver them out of this condition. — Matthew 1:21, “Thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shalt save his

people from their sins.” John 3:16, 17, “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.” Romans 5:8, “God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” 1 John 4:9, “In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.” Verse 10, “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” 1 Thessalonians 1:10, “Even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.”

**Seventhly.** That this love was the same in Father and Son, acted distinctly in the manner that shall be afterward declared; so, vain are the pretences of men, who, from the love of the Father in this matter, would argue against the love of the Son, or on the contrary.

**Eighthly.** That the way, in general, whereby the Son of God, being incarnate, was to save lost sinners, was by a substitution of himself, according to the design and appointment of God, in the room of those whom he was to save: — 2 Corinthians 5:21, “He has made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might become the righteousness of God in him.” Galatians 3:13, “Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us” Romans 5:7, 8, “For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet per adventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” Chap. 8:3, “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us” 1 Peter 2:24, “Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree.” Chap. 3:18, “For Christ also has once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.” All these expressions undeniably evince a substitution of Christ as to suffering in the stead of them whom he was to save; which, in general, is all that we intend by his satisfaction, namely, that he was made “sin for us,” a “curse for us,” “died for us,” that is, in our stead, that we

might be saved from the wrath to come. And all these expressions, as to their true, genuine importance, shall be vindicated as occasion shall require.

**Ninthly.** This way of his saving sinners is, in particular, several ways expressed in the Scriptures.

1. That he offered himself a sacrifice to God, to make atonement for our sins; and that in his death and sufferings: — Isaiah 53:10, “When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin.” John 1:29, “Behold the lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world.” Ephesians 5:2, “Christ hath loved us, and has given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor.” Hebrews 2:17, Was “a merciful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.” Chap. 9:11-14, “But Christ being come a high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls,” etc., “how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your consciences from dead works?”
2. That he redeemed us by paying a price, a ransom, for our redemption: — Mark 10:45, “The Son of man came to give his life a ransom for many.” 1 Corinthians 6:20, 7:23, “For ye are bought with a price.” 1 Timothy 2:6, “Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.” Titus 2:14, “Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity.” 1 Peter 1:18, 19, “For ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”
3. That he bare our sins, or the punishment due unto them: -Isaiah 53:5, 6, “He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray;

we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.” Verse 11, “For he shall bear their iniquities.” 1 Peter 2:24, “Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree.”

4. That he answered the law and the penalty of it: — Romans 8:3, 4, “God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us.” Galatians 3:13, “Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.” Chap. 4:4, 5, “God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law”
5. That he died for sin, and sinners, to expiate the one, and in the stead of the other: — Romans 4:25, “He was delivered for our offenses.” Chap. 5:10, “When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son.” 1 Corinthians 15:3, “Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.” 2 Corinthians 5:14, “For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead,” 1 Thessalonians 5:9, 10.
6. Hence, on the part of God it is affirmed, that “he spared him not, but delivered him up for us all,” Romans 8:32; and caused “all our iniquities to meet upon him,” Isaiah 53:6.
7. The effect hereof was, —
  - (1.) That the righteousness of God was glorified. Romans 3:25, 26, “Whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins.”
  - (2.) The law fulfilled and satisfied, as in the places before quoted, chap. 8:3, 4; Galatians 3:13, 4:4, 5.

- (3.) God reconciled. 2 Corinthians 5:18, 19, “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.” Hebrews 2:17, “he made reconciliation for the sins of the people.”
- (4.) Atonement was made for sin. Romans 5:11, “By whom we have now received the atonement;” and peace was made with God. Ephesians 2:14, 16, “For he is our peace, who has made both one,... that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby.”
- (5.) He made an end of sin. Daniel 9:24, “To finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness.” The glory of God in all these things being exalted, himself was well pleased, righteousness and everlasting redemption, or salvation, purchased for sinners. Hebrews 9:14, For in that “the chastisement of our peace was upon him,” and that “by his stripes we are healed,” he being punished that we might go free, himself became a captain of salvation unto all that do obey him.

I have fixed on these particulars, to give every ordinary reader an instance how fully and plainly what he is to believe in this matter is revealed in the Scripture. And should I produce all the testimonies which expressly give witness unto these positions, it is known how great a part of the Bible must be transcribed. And these are the things which are indispensably required of us to believe, that we may be able to direct and regulate our obedience according to the mind and will of God. In the explanation of this doctrine unto farther edification, sundry things are usually insisted on, which necessarily and infallibly ensue upon the propositions of Scripture before laid down, and serve to beget in the minds of believers a due apprehension and right understanding of them; as, —

1. That God in this matter is to be considered as the chief, supreme, absolute rector and governor of all, — as the Lord of the law, and of sinners; but yet so as an offended ruler: not as an offended person,

but as an offended ruler, who has right to exact punishment upon transgressions, and whose righteousness of rule requires that he should so do.

2. That because he is righteous and holy, as he is the supreme Judge of all the world, it is necessary that he do right in the punishing of sin; without which the order of the creation cannot be preserved. For sin being the creature's deduction of itself from the order of its dependence upon, and obediences unto, the Creator and supreme Lord of all, without a reduction of it by punishment, confusion would be brought into the whole creation.
3. That whereas the law, and the sanction of it, is the moral or declarative cause of the punishment of sin, and it directly obliges the sinner himself unto punishment; God, as the supreme ruler, dispenses, not with the act of the law, but the immediate object, and substitutes another sufferer in the room of them who are principally liable unto the sentence of it, and are now to be acquitted or freed; — that so the law may be satisfied, requiring the punishment of sin; justice exalted, whereof the law is an effect; and yet the sinner saved.
4. That the person thus substituted was the Son of God incarnate, who had power so to dispose of himself, with will and readiness for it; and was, upon the account of the dignity of his person, able to answer the penalty which all others had incurred and deserved.
5. That God, upon his voluntary susception of this office, and condescension to this work, did so lay our sins, in and by the sentence of the law, upon him, that he made therein full satisfaction for what ever legally could be charged on them for whom he died or suffered.
6. That the special way, terms, and conditions, whereby and wherein sinners may be interested in this satisfaction made by Christ, are determined by the will of God, and declared in the scripture.

These, and the like things, are usually insisted on in the explication or declaration of this head of our confession; and there is not any of them but may be sufficiently confirmed by divine testimonies. It may also be farther evinced, that there is nothing asserted in them, but what is excellently suited unto the common notions which mankind has of God and his righteousness; and that in their practice they answer the light of nature and common reason, exemplified in sundry instances among the nations of the world.

I shall therefore take one argument from some of the testimonies before produced in the confirmation of this sacred truth, and proceed to remove the objections that are commonly bandied against it.

If the Lord Christ, according to the will of the Father, and by his own counsel and choice, was substituted, and did substitute himself, as the mediator of the covenant, in the room and in the stead of sinners, that they might be saved, and therein bare their sins, or the punishment due unto their sins, by undergoing the curse and penalty of the law, and therein also, according to the will of God, offered up himself for a propitiatory, expiatory sacrifice, to make atonement for sin, and reconciliation for sinners, that the justice of God being appeased, and the law fulfilled, their might go free, or be delivered from the wrath to come; and if therein, also, he paid a real satisfactory price for their redemption; then he made satisfaction to God for sin: for these are the things that we intend by that expression of satisfaction. But now all these things are openly and fully witnessed unto in the testimonies before produced, as may be observed by suiting some of them unto the several particulars here asserted: —

Ans.:

1. What was done in this matter, was from the will, purpose, and love of God the Father, Psalm 40:6-8; Hebrews 10:5-7; Acts 4:28; John 3:16; Romans 8:3.
2. It was also done by his own voluntary consent, Philippians 2:6-8.



3. He was substituted, and did substitute himself, as the mediator of the covenant, in the room and stead of sinners, that they may be saved, Hebrews 10:5-7, 12:22; Romans 3:25, 26, 5:7, 8.
4. And he did therein bear their sins, or the punishment due to their sins, Isaiah 53:6, 11; 1 Peter 2:24. And this, —
5. By undergoing the curse and penalty of the law, Galatians 3:13; or the punishment of sin required by the law, 2 Corinthians 5:21; Romans 8:3.
6. Herein, also, according to the will of God, he offered up himself a propitiatory and expiatory sacrifice, to make atonement for sin and reconciliation for sinners, Ephesians 5:6; Romans 5:6; Hebrews 9:11-14; — which he did, that the justice of God being satisfied, and the law fulfilled, sinners might be freed from the wrath to come, Romans 3:25; 1 Thessalonians 1:10.
7. And hereby also he paid a real price of redemption for sin and sinners, 1 Peter 1:18, 19; 1 Corinthians 6:20. These are the things which we are to believe concerning the satisfaction of Christ. And our explication of this doctrine we are ready to defend when called whereunto.

The consideration of the objections which are raised against this great fundamental truth shall close this discourse. And they are of two sorts: — First, In general, to the whole doctrine, as declared, or some of the more signal heads or parts of it. Secondly, Particular instances in this or that supposal, as consequences of the doctrine asserted. And, in general, —

**First**, they say “This is contrary to, and inconsistent with, the love, grace, mercy, and goodness of God, which are so celebrated in the Scripture as the principal properties of his nature and acts of his will wherein he will be glorified; -especially contrary to the freedom of forgiveness, which we are encouraged to expect, and commanded to believe.” And this exception they endeavor to firm by testimonies that the Lord is good and gracious and that he does freely forgive us our sins and trespasses.

Ans.:

1. I readily grant that whatever is really contrary to the grace, goodness, and mercy of God, whatever is inconsistent with the free forgiveness of sin, is not to be admitted; for these things are fully revealed in the Scripture, and must have a consistency with whatever else is therein revealed of God or his will.
2. As God is good, and gracious, and merciful, so also he is holy, righteous, true, and faithful. And these things are no less revealed concerning him than the others; and are no less essential properties of his nature than his goodness and grace. And as they are all essentially the same in him, and considered only under a different habitue or respect, as they are exerted by acts of his will; so it belongs to his infinite wisdom, that the effects of them, though divers, and produced by divers ways and means, may no way be contrary one to the other, but that mercy be exercised without the prejudice of justice or holiness, and justice be preserved entire, without any obstruction to the exercise of mercy.
3. The grace and love of God, that in this matter the Scripture reveals to be exercised in order unto the forgiveness of sinners, consists principally in two things: —
  - (1.) In his holy eternal purpose of providing a relief for lost sinners. He has done it, “to the praise of the glory of his grace,” Ephesians 1:6.
  - (2.) In the sending his Son in the pursuit and for the accomplishment of the holy purpose of his will and grace.

Herein most eminently does the Scripture celebrate the love, goodness, and kindness of God, as that whereby, in infinite and for ever to be adored wisdom and grace, he made way for the forgiveness of our sins. John 3:16, “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son.” Romans 3:25, “Whom God has set

forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood.” Romans 5:8, “God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” Titus 3:4; 1 John 4:9, 10. Herein consists that ever to be adored love, goodness, grace, mercy, and condescension of God. Add hereunto, that, in the act of causing our iniquities to meet on Christ, wherein he immediately intended the declaration of his justice, Romans 3:25, — “not sparing him, in delivering him up to death for us all,” Romans 8:32, — there was a blessed harmony in the highest Justice and most excellent grace and mercy. This grace, this goodness, this love of God towards mankind, towards sinners, our adversaries in this matter neither know nor understand; and so, indeed, what lies in them, remove the foundation of the whole gospel, and of all that faith and obedience which God requires at our hands.

4. Forgiveness, or the actual condonation of sinners, the pardon and forgiveness of sins, is free; but yet so as it is everywhere restrained unto a respect unto Christ, unto his death and blood- shedding. Ephesians 1:7, “We have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins.” Chap. 4:32. “God for Christ’s sake has forgiven you.” Romans 3:25, 26, “God has set him forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins.” It is absolutely free in respect of all immediate transactions between God and sinners.

(1.) Free on the part of God.

[1.] In the eternal purpose of it, when he might justly have suffered all men to have perished under the guilt of their sins.

[2.] Free in the means that he used to effect it, unto his glory.

1st. In the sending of his Son; and,

2ndly. In laying the punishment of our sin upon him.

3rdly. In his covenant with him, that it should be accepted on our behalf.

4thly. In his tender and proposal of it by the gospel unto sinners, to be received without money or without price.

5thly. In the actual condonation and pardon of them that do believe.

(2.) It is free on the part of the persons that are forgiven; in that,

- [1.] It is given and granted to them, without any satisfaction made by them for their former transgressions.
- [2.] Without any merit to purchase or procure it.
- [3.] Without any penal, satisfactory suffering here, or in a purgatory hereafter.
- [4.] Without any expectation of future recompense; or that, being pardoned, they should then make or give any satisfaction for what they had done before.

And as any of these things would, so nothing else can, impeach the freedom of pardon and forgiveness. Whether, then, we respect the pardoner or the pardoned, pardon is every way free, — namely, on the part of God who forgives, and on the part of sinners that are forgiven. If God now has, besides all this, provided himself a lamb for a sacrifice; if he has, in infinite wisdom and grace, found out a way thus freely to forgive us our sins, to the praise and glory of his own holiness, righteousness, and severity against sin, as well as unto the unspeakable advancement of that grace, goodness, and bounty which he immediately exercises in the pardon of sin; are these men's eyes evil, because he is good? Will they not be contented to be pardoned, unless they may have it at the rate of despoiling God of his holiness, truth, righteousness, and faithfulness? And as this is certainly done by that way of pardon which these men propose, no

reserve in the least being made for the glory of God in those holy properties of his nature which are immediately injured and opposed by sin; so that pardon itself, which they pretend so to magnify, having nothing to influence it but a mere arbitrary act of God's will, is utterly debased from its own proper worth and excellency. And I shall willingly undertake to manifest that they derogate no less from grace and mercy in pardon, than they do from the righteousness and holiness of God, by the forgiveness which they have feigned; and that in it both of them are perverted and despoiled of all their glory.

But they yet say, "If God can freely pardon sin, why does he not do it without satisfaction? If he cannot, he is weaker and more imperfect than man, who can do so."

Ans.:

1. God cannot do many things that men can do, — not that he is more imperfect than they, but he cannot do them on the account of his perfection. He cannot lie, he cannot deny himself, he cannot change; which men can do, and do every day.
2. To pardon sin without satisfaction, in him who is absolutely holy, righteous, true, and faithful, — the absolute, necessary, supreme Governor of all sinners, — the author of the law, and sanction of it, wherein punishment is threatened and declared, — is to deny himself, and to do what one infinitely perfect cannot do.
3. I ask of these men, why God does not pardon sins freely, without requiring faiths repentance, and obedience in them that are pardoned; yea, as the conditions on which they may be pardoned? For, seeing he is so infinitely good and gracious, cannot he pardon men without prescribing such terms and conditions unto them as he knows that men, and that incomparably the greatest number of them, will never come up unto, and so must of necessity perish for ever?

Yea, but they say, “This cannot be: neither does this impeach the freedom of pardon; for it is certain that God does prescribe these things, and yet he pardons freely; and it would altogether unbecome the holy God to pardon sinners that continue so to live and die in their sins” But do not these men see that they have hereby given away their cause which they contend for? For, if a prescription of sundry things to the sinner himself, without which he shall not be pardoned, do not at all impeach, as they say, the freedom of pardon, but God may be said freely to pardon sin notwithstanding it; how shall the receiving of satisfaction by another, nothing at all being required of the sinner, have the least appearance of any such thing? If the freedom of forgiveness consists in such a boundless notion as these men imagine, it is certain that the prescribing of faith and repentance in and unto sinners, antecedently to their participation of it, is much more evidently contrary unto it, than the receiving of satisfaction from another who is not to be pardoned can to any appear to be. Secondly, if it be contrary to the holiness of God to pardon any without requiring faith, repentance, and obedience in them (as it is indeed), let not these persons be offended if we believe him when he so frequently declares it, that it was so to remit sin, without the fulfilling of his law and satisfaction of his justice.

**Secondly**, they say, “There is no such thing as justice in God requiring the punishment of sin; but that that which in him requires and calls for the punishment of sin is his anger and wrath; which expressions denote free acts of his will, and not any essential properties of his nature.” So that God may punish sin or not punish it, at his pleasure; therefore there is no reason that he should require any satisfaction for sin, seeing he may pass it by absolutely as he pleases.

Ans.:

1. Is it not strange, that the great Governor, the Judge of all the world, which, on the supposition of the creation of it, God is naturally and necessarily, should not also naturally be so righteous as to do right, in rendering unto every one according to his works?

2. The sanction and penalty of the law, which is the rule of punishment, was, I suppose, an effect of justice, — of God's natural and essential justice, and not of his anger or wrath. Certainly, never did any man make a law for the government of a people in anger. Draco's laws were not made in wrath, but according to the best apprehension of right and justice that he had, though said to be written in blood; and shall we think otherwise of the law of God?
  
3. Anger and wrath in God express the effects of justice, and so are not merely free acts of his will. This, therefore, is a tottering cause, that is built on the denial of God's essential righteousness. But it was proved before, and it is so elsewhere.

**Thirdly**, they say, "That the sacrifice of Christ was only metaphorically so," — that he was a metaphorical priest, not one properly so called; and, therefore, that his sacrifice did not consist in his death and blood-shedding, but in his appearing in heaven upon his ascension, presenting himself unto God in the most holy place not made with hands as the mediator of the new covenant.

Ans.:

1. When once these men come to this evasion, they think themselves safe, and that they may go whither they will without control. For they say it is true, Christ was a priest; but only he was a metaphorical one. He offered sacrifice; but it was a metaphorical one. He redeemed us; but with a metaphorical redemption. And so we are justified thereon; but with a metaphorical justification. And so, for aught I know, they are like to be saved with a metaphorical salvation. This is the substance of their plea in this matter: — Christ was not really a priest; but did somewhat like a priest. He offered not sacrifice really; but did somewhat that was like a sacrifice. He redeemed us not really; but did somewhat that looked like redemption. And what these things are, wherein their analogy consists, what proportion the things that Christ has done bear to the things that are really so, from whence they receive their

denomination, it is meet it should be wholly in the power of these persons to declare. But, —

2. What should hinder the death of Christ to be a sacrifice, a proper sacrifice, and, according to the nature, end, and use of sacrifices, to have made atonement and satisfaction for sin?
  - (1.) It is expressly called so in the Scripture; wherein he is said to “offer himself, to make his soul an offering, to offer himself a sacrifice,” Ephesians 5:2; Hebrews 1:3, 9:14, 25, 26, 7:27. And he is himself directly said to be a “priest,” or a sacrificer, Hebrews 2:17. And it is nowhere intimated, much less expressed, that these things are not spoken properly, but metaphorically only.
  - (2.) The legal sacrifices of the old law were instituted on purpose to represent and prepare the way for the bringing in of the sacrifice of the Lamb of God, so to take away the sin of the world; and is it not strange, that true and real sacrifices should be types and representations of that which was not so? On this supposition, all those sacrifices are but so many seductions from the right understanding of things between God and sinners.
  - (3.) Nothing is wanting to render it a proper propitiatory sacrifice. For, —

[1.] There was the person offering, and that was Christ himself, Hebrews 9 14, “He offered himself unto God.” “He,” that is, the sacrificer, denotes the person of Christ, God and man; and “himself,” as the sacrifice, denotes his human nature whence God is said to “purchase his church with his own blood,” Acts 20:28; for he offered himself through the eternal Spirit: so that, —

[2.] There was the matter of the sacrifice, which was the human nature of Christ, soul and body. “His soul was



made an offering for sin," Isaiah 53:10; and his body, "The offering of the body of Jesus Christ," Hebrews 10:10, — his blood especially, which is often synecdochically mentioned for the whole.

(4.) His death had the nature of a sacrifice: for, —

[1.] Therein were the sins of men laid upon him, and not in his entrance into heaven; for "he bare our sins in his own body on the tree," 1 Peter 2:24. God made our sins then "to meet upon him," Isaiah 53:6; which gives the formality unto any sacrifices. "Quad in ejus caput sit," is the formal reason of all propitiatory sacrifices, and ever was so, as is expressly declared, Leviticus 16:21, 22; and the phrase of "bearing sin," of "bearing iniquity," is constantly used for the undergoing of the punishment due to sin.

[2.] It had the end of a proper sacrifice; it made expiation of sin, propitiation and atonement for sin, with reconciliation with God; and so took away that enmity that was between God and sinners, Hebrews 1:3; Romans 3:25, 26; Hebrews 2:17, 18, 5:10; Romans 8:3; 2 Corinthians 5:18, 19. And although God himself designed, appointed, and contrived, in wisdom, this way of reconciliation, as he did the means for the atoning of his own anger towards the friends of Job, commanding them to go unto him, and with him offer sacrifices for themselves, which he would accept, chap. 42:7, 8; yet, as he was the supreme Governor, the Lord of all, attended with infinite justice and holiness, atonement was made with him, and satisfaction to him thereby.

What has been spoken may suffice to discover the emptiness and weakness of those exceptions which in general these men make against the truth before laid down from the Scripture. A brief examination of some particular instances, wherein they seek not so much to oppose as to

reproach the revelation of this mystery of the gospel, shall put a close to this discourse. It is said, then, —

**First**, “That if this be so, then it will follow that God is gracious to forgive, and yet it is impossible for him, unless the debt be fully satisfied.”

Ans.:

1. I suppose the confused and abrupt expression of things here, in words scarcely affording a tolerable sense, is rather from weakness than captiousness; and so I shall let the manner of the proposal pass.
2. What if this should follow, that God is gracious to forgive sinners, and yet will not, cannot, on the account of his own holiness and righteousness, actually forgive any, without satisfaction and atonement made for sin? The worst that can be hence concluded is, that the Scripture is true, which affirms both these in many places.
3. This sets out the exceeding greatness of the grace of God in forgiveness, that when sin could not be forgiven without satisfaction, and the sinner himself could no way make any such satisfaction, he provided himself a sacrifice of atonement, that the sinner might be discharged and pardoned.
4. Sin is not properly a debt, for then it might be paid in kind, by sin itself; but is called so only because it binds over the sinner to punishment, which is the satisfaction to be made for that which is properly a transgression, and improperly only a debt. It is added,  
—

**Secondly**, “Hence it follows, that the unite and impotent creature more capable of extending mercy and forgiveness than the infinite and omnipotent Creator.”

Ans.:

1. God being essentially holy and righteous, having engaged his faithfulness in the sanction of the law, and being naturally and necessarily the governor and ruler of the world, the forgiving of sin without satisfaction would be no perfection in him, but an effect of impotency and imperfection, — a thing which God cannot do, as he cannot lie, nor deny himself.
2. The direct contrary of what is insinuated is asserted by this doctrine; for, on the supposition of the satisfaction and atonement insisted on, not only does God freely forgive, but that in such a way of righteousness and goodness, as no creature is able to conceive or express the glory and excellency of it. And to speak of the poor having pardons of private men, upon particular offenses against themselves, who are commanded so to do, and have no right nor authority to require or exact punishment, nor is any due upon the mere account of their own concernment, in comparison with the forgiveness of God, arises out of a deep ignorance of the whole matter under consideration.

**Thirdly.** It is added by them, that hence it follows, “That God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son to save it; and yet that God stood off in high displeasure, and Christ gave himself as a complete satisfaction to offended justice.”

Ans. Something these men would say, if they knew what or how; for, —

1. That God so loved the world as to give his only Son to save it, is the expression of the Scripture, and the foundation of the doctrine whose truth we contend for.
2. That Christ offered himself to make atonement for sinners, and therein made satisfaction to the justice of God, is the doctrine itself which these men oppose, and not any consequent of it.
3. That God stood off in high displeasure, is an expression which neither the Scripture uses, nor those who declare this doctrine from thence, nor is suited unto divine perfections, or the manner of

divine operations. That intended seems to be, that the righteousness and law of God required the punishment due to sin to be undergone, and thereby satisfaction to be made unto God; which is no consequent of the doctrine, but the doctrine itself.

**Fourthly.** It is yet farther objected, “That if Christ made satisfaction for sin, then he did it either as God or as man, or as God and man.”

Ans.:

1. As God and man. Acts 20:28, “God redeemed his church with his own blood.” 1 John 3:16, “Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us.” Hebrews 9:14.
2. This dilemma is proposed, as that which proceeds on a supposition of our own principles, that Christ is God and man in one person: which, indeed, makes the pretended difficulty to be vain, and a mere effect of ignorance; for all the mediatory acts of Christ being the acts of his person, must of necessity be the acts of him as God and man.
3. There is yet another mistake in this inquiry; for satisfaction is in it looked on as a real act or operation of one or the other nature in Christ, when it is the apotelesma or effect of the actings, the doing and suffering of Christ — the dignity of what he did in reference unto the end for which he did it. For the two natures are so united in Christ as not to have a third compound principle of physical acts and operations thence arising; but each nature acts distinctly according to its own being and properties, yet so as what is the immediate act of either nature is the act of him who is one in both; from whence it has its dignity.
4. The sum is, that in all the mediatory actions of Christ we are to consider, —
  - (1.) The agent; and that is the person of Christ.

- (2.) The immediate principle by which and from which the agent works; and that is the nature in the person.
- (3.) The actions; which are the effectual operations of either nature.
- (4.) The effect or work with respect to God and us; and this relates unto the person of the agent, the Lord Christ, God and man. A blending of the natures into one common principle of operation, as the compounding of mediums unto one end, is ridiculously supposed in this matter.

But yet, again; it is pretended that sundry consequences, irreligious and irrational, do ensue upon a supposition of the satisfaction pleaded for. What, then, are they?

**First.** “That it is unlawful and impossible for God Almighty to be gracious and merciful, or to pardon transgressors.”

Ans. The miserable, confused misapprehension of things which the proposal of this and the like consequences does evidence, manifests sufficiently how unfit the makers of them are to manage controversies of this nature. For, —

1. It is supposed that for God to be gracious and merciful, or to pardon sinners, are the same; which is to confound the essential properties of his nature with the free acts of his will.
2. Lawful or unlawful, are terms that can with no tolerable sense be used concerning any properties of God, all which are natural and necessary unto his being; as goodness, grace, and mercy, in particular, are.
3. That it is impossible for God to pardon transgressors, according to this doctrine, is a fond imagination; for it is only a declaration of the manner how he does it.

4. As God is gracious and merciful, so also he is holy, and righteous, and true; and it became him, or was every way meet for him, in his way of exercising grace and mercy towards sinners, to order all things so, as that it might be done without the impeachment of his holiness, righteousness, and truth. It is said, again, —

**Secondly**, “That God was inevitably compelled to this way of saving men; — the highest affront to his uncontrollable nature.”

Ans.:

1. Were the authors of these exceptions put to declare what they mean by God’s “uncontrollable nature,” they would hardly disentangle themselves with common sense; such masters of reason are they, indeed, whatever they would fain pretend to be. Controllable or uncontrollable, respects acting and operations, not beings or natures.
2. That, upon the principle opposed by these men, God was inevitably compelled to this way of saving men, is a fond and childish imagination. The whole business of the salvation of men, according unto this doctrine, depends on a mere free, sovereign act of God’s will, exerting itself in a way of infinite wisdom, holiness, and grace.
3. The meaning of this objection (if it has either sense or meaning in it) is, that God, freely purposing to save lost sinners, did it in a way becoming his holy nature and righteous law. What other course Infinite Wisdom could have taken for the satisfaction of his justice we know not; — that justice was to be satisfied, and that this way it is done we know and believe.

**Thirdly**. They say it hence follows, “That it is unworthy of God to pardon, but not to inflict punishment on the innocent, or require a satisfaction where there was nothing due.”

Ans.:

1. What is worthy or unworthy of God, himself alone knows, and of men not any, but according to what he is pleased to declare and reveal; but, certainly, it is unworthy any person, pretending to the least interest in ingenuity or use of reason, to use such frivolous instances in any case of importance, which have not the least pretence of argument in them, but what arises from a gross misapprehension or misrepresentation of a doctrine designed to opposition.
2. To pardon sinners, is a thing becoming the goodness and grace of God; to do it by Christ, that which becomes them, and his holiness and righteousness also, Ephesians 1:6, 7; Romans 3:25. 3. The Lord Christ was personally innocent; but “he who knew no sin was made sin for us,” 2 Corinthians 5:21. And as the mediator and surety of the covenant, he was to answer for the sins of them whom he undertook to save from the wrath to come, by giving himself a ransom for them, and making his soul an offering for their sin.
3. That nothing is due to the justice of God for sin, — that is, that sin does not in the justice of God deserve punishment, — is a good, comfortable doctrine for men that are resolved to continue in their sins whilst they live in this world. The Scripture tells us that Christ paid what he took not; that all our iniquities were caused to meet upon him; that he bare them in his own body on the tree; that his soul was made an offering for sin, and thereby made reconciliation or atonement for the sins of the people. If these persons be otherwise minded, we cannot help it.

**Fourthly.** It is added, that “This doctrine does not only disadvantage the true virtue and real intent of Christ’s life and death, but entirely deprives God of that praise which is owing to his greatest love and goodness.”

Ans.:

1. I suppose that this is the first time that this doctrine fell under this imputation; nor could it possibly be liable unto this charge from any who did either understand it or the grounds on which it is commonly opposed. For there is no end of the life or death of Christ which the Socinians themselves admit of, but it is also allowed and asserted in the doctrine now called in question. Do they say, that he taught the truth, or revealed the whole mind and will of God concerning his worship and our obedience? We say the same. Do they say, that by his death he bare testimony unto and confirmed the truth which he had taught? It is also owned by us. Do they say, that in what he did and suffered he set us an example that we should labor after conformity unto? It is what we acknowledge and teach: only, we say that all these things belong principally to his prophetic office. But we, moreover, affirm and believe, that as a priest, or in the discharge of his sacerdotal office, he did, in his death and sufferings, offer himself a sacrifice to God, to make atonement for our sins, — which they deny; and that he died for us, or in our stead, that we might go free: without the faith and acknowledgment whereof no part of the gospel can be rightly understood. All the ends, then, which they themselves assign of the life and death of Christ are by us granted; and the principal one, which gives life and efficacy to the rest, is by them denied. Neither, —
  
2. Does it fall under any possible imagination, that the praise due unto God should be eclipsed hereby. The love and kindness of God towards us is in the Scripture fixed principally and fundamentally on his “sending of his only begotten Son to die for us.” And, certainly, the greater the work was that he had to do, the greater ought our acknowledgment of his love and kindness to be. But it is said, —

**Fifthly.** “That it represents the Son as more kind and compassionate than the Father; whereas if both be the same God, then either the Father is as loving as the Son, or the Son as angry as the Father.”

Ans.:



1. The Scripture refers the love of the Father unto two heads: —
  - (1.) The sending of his Son to die for us, John 3:16; Romans 5:8; 1 John 4:9, 10.
  - (2.) In choosing sinners unto a participation of the fruits of his love, Ephesians 1:3-6. The love of the Son is fixed signally on his actual giving himself to die for us, Galatians 2:20; Ephesians 5:25; Revelation 1:5. What balances these persons have got to weigh these loves in, and to conclude which is the greatest or most weighty, I know not.
2. Although only the actual discharge of his office be directly assigned to the love of Christ, yet his condescension in taking our nature upon him, — expressed by his mind, Philippians 2:5-8, and the readiness of his will, Psalm 40:8, — does eminently comprise love in it so.
3. The love of the Father in sending of the Son was an act of his will; which being a natural and essential property of God, it was so far the act of the Son also, as he is partaker of the same nature, though eminently, and in respect of order, it was peculiarly the act of the Father.
4. The anger of God against sin is an effect of his essential righteousness and holiness, which belong to him as God; which yet hinders not but that both Father, and Son, and Spirit, acted love towards sinners. They say again, —

**Sixthly**, “It robs God of the gift of his Son for our redemption, which the Scriptures attribute to the unmerited love he had for the world, in affirming the Son purchased that redemption from the Father, by the gift of himself to God as our complete satisfaction.”

Ans.:

1. It were endless to consider the improper and absurd expressions which are made use of in these exceptions, as here; the last words have no tolerable sense in them, according to any principles whatever.
2. If the Son's purchasing redemption for us, procuring, obtaining it, do rob God of the gift of his Son for our redemption, the Holy Ghost must answer for it; for, having "obtained" for us, or procured, or purchased, "eternal redemption," is the word used by himself, Hebrews 9:12; and to deny that he has laid down his life a "ransom" for us, and has "bought us with a price," is openly to deny the gospel.
3. In a word, the great gift of God consisted in giving his Son to obtain redemption for us.
4. Herein he "offered himself unto God," and "gave himself for us;" and if these persons are offended herewithal, what are we, that we should withstand God? They say, —

**Seventhly**, "Since Christ could not pay what was not his own, it follows, that in the payment of his own the case still remains equally grievous; since the debt is not hereby absolved or forgiven, but transferred only; and, by consequence, we are no better provided for salvation than before, owing that now to the Son which was once owing to the Father."

Ans. The looseness and dubiousness of the expressions here used makes an appearance that there is something in them, when indeed there is not. There is an allusion in them to a debt and a payment, which is the most improper expression that is used in this matter; and the interpretation thereof is to be regulated by other proper expressions of the same thing. But to keep to the allusion: —

1. Christ paid his own, but not for himself, Daniel 9:26.

2. Paying it for us, the debt is discharged; and our actual discharge is to be given out according to the ways and means, and upon the conditions, appointed and constituted by the Father and Son.
3. When a debt is so transferred as that one is accepted in the room and obliged to payment in the stead of another, and that payment is made and accepted accordingly, all law and reason require that the original debtor be discharged.
4. What on this account we owe to the Son, is praise, thankfulness, and obedience, and not the debt which he took upon himself and discharged for us, when we were nonsolvent, by his love. So that this matter is plain enough, and not to be involved by such cloudy expressions and incoherent discourse, following the metaphor of a debt. For if God be considered as the creditor, we all as debtors, and being insolvent, Christ undertook, out of his love, to pay the debt for us, and did so accordingly, which was accepted with God; it follows that we are to be discharged upon God's terms, and under a new obligation unto his love who has made this satisfaction for us: which we shall eternally acknowledge. It is said, —

**Eighthly**, “It no way renders men beholden or in the least obliged to God, since by their doctrine he would not have abated us, nor did he Christ, the least farthing; so that the acknowledgments are peculiarly the Son's: which destroys the whole current of Scripture testimony for his goodwill towards men. O the infamous portraiture this doctrine draws of the infinite goodness! Is this your retribution, O injurious satisfactionists?”

Ans. This is but a bold repetition of what, in other words, was mentioned before over and over. Wherein the love of God in this matter consisted, and what is the obligation on us unto thankfulness and obedience, has been before also declared; and we are not to be moved in fundamental truths by vain exclamations of weak and unstable men. It is said, —

**Ninthly**, “That God's justice is satisfied for sins past, present, and to come, whereby God and Christ have lost both their power of enjoining godliness and prerogative of punishing disobedience; for what is once paid,

is not revocable, and if punishment should arrest any for their debts, it argues a breach on God or Christ's part, or else that it has not been sufficiently solved, and the penalty complete sustained by another."

Ans. The intention of this pretended consequence of our doctrine is that, upon a supposition of satisfaction made by Christ, there is no solid foundation remaining for the prescription of faith, repentance, and obedience, on the one hand; or of punishing them who refuse so to obey, believe, or repent, on the other. The reason of this inference insinuated seems to be this, — that sin being satisfied for, cannot be called again to an account. For the former part of the pretended consequence, — namely, that on this supposition there is no foundation left for the prescription of godliness, — I cannot discern any thing in the least looking towards the confirmation of it in the words of the objection laid down. But these things are quite otherwise; as is manifest unto them that read and obey the gospel. For, —

1. Christ's satisfaction for sins acquits not the creature of that dependence on God, and duty which he owes to God, which (notwithstanding that) God may justly, and does prescribe unto him, suitable to his own nature, holiness, and will. The whole of our regard unto God does not lie in an acquitment from sin. It is, moreover, required of us, as a necessary and indispensable consequence of the relation wherein we stand unto him, that we live to him and obey him, whether sin be satisfied for or no. The manner and measure hereof are to be regulated by his prescriptions, which are suited to his own wisdom and our condition; and they are now referred to the heads mentioned, of faith, repentance, and new obedience.
2. The satisfaction made for sin being not made by the sinner himself, there must of necessity be a rule, order, and law-constitution, how the sinner may come to be interested in it, and made partaker of it. For the consequent of the freedom of one by the suffering of another is not natural or necessary, but must proceed and arise from a law-constitution, compact, and agreement. Now, the way constituted and appointed is that of faith, or believing, as explained

in the Scripture. If men believe not, they are no less liable to the punishment due to their sins than if no satisfaction at all were made for sinners. And whereas it is added, “Forgetting that every one en must appear before the judgement-seat of Christ, to receive according to the things done in the body, yea, and every one must give an account of himself to God;” Closing all with this, “But many more are the gross absurdities and blasphemies that are the genuine fruits of this so confidently-believed doctrine of satisfaction:” I say it is, —

3. Certain that we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, to receive according to the things done in the body; and therefore, woe will be unto them at the great day who are not able to plead the atonement made for their sins by the blood of Christ, and an evidence of their interest therein by their faith and obedience, or the things done and wrought in them and by them whilst they were in the body here in this world. And this it would better become these persons to retake themselves unto the consideration of, than to exercise themselves unto an unparalleled confidence in reproaching those with absurdities and blasphemies who believe the Deity and satisfaction of Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, who died for us; which is the ground and bottom of all our expectation of a blessed life and immortality to come.

The removal of these objections against the truth, scattered of late up and down in the hands of all sorts of men, may suffice for our present purpose. If any amongst these men judge that they have an ability to manage the opposition against the truth as declared by us, with such pleas, arguments, and exceptions, as may pretend an interest in appearing reason, they shall, God assisting, be attended unto. With men given up to a spirit of railing or reviling, — though it be no small honor to be reproached by them who reject with scorn the eternal Deity of the Son of God, and the satisfactory atonement that he made for the sins of men, — no person of sobriety will contend. And I shall farther only desire the reader to take notice, that though these few sheets were written in a few hours, upon the desire and for the satisfaction of some private friends, and therefore contain merely an expression of present thoughts, without the least design

or diversion of mind towards accuracy or ornament; yet the author is so far confident that the truth, and nothing else, is proposed and confirmed in them, that he fears not but that an opposition to what is here declared will be removed, and the truth reinforced in such a way and manner as may not be to its disadvantage.

## APPENDIX

The preceding discourse, as has been declared, was written for the use of ordinary Christians, or such as might be in danger to be seduced, or any way entangled in their minds, by the late attempts against the truths pleaded for: for those to whom the dispensation of the gospel is committed, are “debtors both to the Greeks and to the Barbarians; both to the wise and to the unwise,” Romans 1:14. It was therefore thought meet to insist only on things necessary, and such as their faith is immediately concerned in; and not to immix therewithal any such arguments or considerations as might not, by reason of the terms wherein they are expressed, be obvious to their capacity and understanding. Unto plainness and perspicuity, brevity was also required, by such as judged this work necessary. That design, we hope, is answered, and now discharged in some useful measure. But yet, because many of our arguments on the head of the satisfaction of Christ depend upon the genuine signification and notion of the words and terms wherein the doctrine of it is delivered, — which, for the reasons before mentioned, could not conveniently be discussed in the foregoing discourse, — I shall here, in some few instances, give an account of what farther confirmation the truth might receive by a due explanation of them. And I shall mention here but few of them, because a large dissertation concerning them all is intended in another way.

**First.** For the term of satisfaction itself, it is granted that in this matter it is not found in the Scripture, — that is, it is not so *retoos*, or syllabically, — but it is *kata* to *pragma anantirretoos*; the thing itself intended is asserted in it, beyond all modest contradiction. Neither, indeed, is there in the Hebrew language any word that does adequately answer unto it; no, nor yet in the Greek. As it is used in this cause, *engue*, which is properly “sponsio,” or “fide-jussio,” in its actual discharge, makes the nearest approach unto it: *hikanon poiein* is used to the same purpose. But there are words and phrases, both in the Old Testament and in the New, that are equipollent unto it, and express the matter or thing intended by it: as in the Old are, *pidjon padah* (Psalm 49:9), and *kofer*. This last word we render “satisfaction,” Numbers 35:32, 33, where God denies that any compensation, sacred or civil, shall be received to free a murderer from the

punishment due unto him; which properly expresses what we intend: “Thou shalt admit of no satisfaction for the life of a murderer.”

In the New Testament: *lutron*, *antilutron*, *apolutroosis*, *time*, *hilasmos*, and the verbs, *lutroun*, *apolutroun*, *exagapozein*, *hilaskesthai*, are of the same importance, and some of them accommodated to express the thing intended, beyond that which has obtained in vulgar use. For that which we intended hereby is, the voluntary obedience unto death, and the passion or suffering, of our Lord Jesus Christ, God and man, whereby and wherein he offered himself through the eternal Spirit, for a propitiatory sacrifice, that he might fulfill the law, or answer all its universal postulate; and as our sponsor, undertaking our cause, when we were under the sentence of condemnation, underwent the punishment due to us from the justice of God, being transferred on him; whereby having made a perfect and absolute propitiation or atonement for our sins, he procured for us deliverance from death and the curse, and a right unto life everlasting. Now, this is more properly expressed by some of the words before mentioned than by that of satisfaction; which yet, nevertheless, as usually explained, is comprehensive, and no way unsuited to the matter intended by it.

In general, men by this word understand either “*reparationem offensae*” or “*solutionem debiti*,” — either “reparation made for offense given unto any,” or “the payment of a debt. “*debitum*” is either “*criminale*” or “*pecuniarium*,” that is, either the obnoxiousness of a man to punishment for crimes or the guilt of them, in answer to that justice and law which he is necessarily liable and subject unto; or unto a payment or compensation by and of money, or what is valued by it; — which last consideration, neither in itself nor in any seasonings from an analogy unto it, can in this matter have any proper place. Satisfaction is the effect of the doing or suffering what is required for the answering of his charge against faults or sins, who has right, authority, and power to require, exact, and inflict punishment for them. Some of the schoolmen define it by “*Voluntaria redditio aequivalentis indebiti*,” of which more elsewhere. The true meaning of, “to satisfy, or make satisfaction,” is “*tantum facere aut pati, quantum quantum satis sit juste irato ad vindictam*.” This satisfaction is impleaded as inconsistent with free remission of sins, — how causelessly



we have seen. It is so far from it, that it is necessary to make way for it, in case of a righteous law transgressed, and the public order of the universal Governor and government of all disturbed. And this God directs unto, Leviticus 4:31, “The priest shall make an atonement for him, and it shall be forgiven him.” This atonement was a legal satisfaction, and it is by God himself premised to remission or pardon. And Paul prays Philemon to forgive Onesimus, though he took upon himself to make satisfaction for all the wrong or damage that he had sustained, Epist. verses 18, 19. And when God was displeased with the friends of Job, he prescribes a way to them, or what they shall do, and what they shall get done for them, that they might be accepted and pardoned, Job 42:7, 8, “The LORD said unto Eliphaz, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: therefore take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt-offering; and my servant Job shall pray for you: for him will I accept: lest I deal with you after your folly.” He plainly enjoins an atonement, that he might freely pardon them. And both these, — namely, satisfaction and pardon, with their order and consistency, — were solemnly represented by the great institution of the sacrifice of the scapegoat. For after all the sins of the people were put upon him, or the punishment of them transferred unto him in a type and representation, with “*Quod in ejus caput sit,*” the formal reason of all sacrifices propitiatory, he was sent away with them; denoting the oblation or forgiveness of sin, after a translation made of its punishment, Leviticus 16:21, 22. And whereas it is not expressly said that that goat suffered, or was slain, but was either *azazel* “hircus,” *apopompaios*, “a goat sent away,” or was sent to a rock called Azazel, in the wilderness, as Vatablus so and Oleaster, with some others, think (which is not probable, seeing, though it might then be done whilst the people were in the wilderness of Sinai, yet could not, by reason of its distance, when the people were settled in Canaan, be annually observed), it was from the poverty of the types, whereof no one could fully represent that grace which it had particular respect unto. What, therefore, was wanting in that goat was supplied in the other, which was slain as a sin-offering, verses 15, 16. Neither does it follow, that, on the supposition of the satisfaction pleaded for, the freedom, pardon, or acquitment of the person originally guilty and liable to punishment must immediately and “*ipso facto*” ensue. It is not of the nature of every solution or satisfaction, that deliverance must “*ipso*

facto” follow. And the reason of it is, because this satisfaction, by a succedaneous substitution of one to undergo punishment for another, must be founded in a voluntary compact and agreement. For there is required unto it a relaxation of the law, though not as unto the punishment to be inflicted, yet as unto the person to be punished. And it is otherwise in personal guilt than in pecuniary debts. In these, the debt itself is solely intended, the person only obliged with reference whereunto. In the other, the person is firstly and principally under the obligation. And therefore, when a pecuniary debt is paid, by whomsoever it be paid, the obligation of the person himself unto payment ceases “ipso facto.” But in things criminal, the guilty person himself being firstly, immediately, and intentionally under the obligation unto punishment, when there is introduced by compact a vicarious solution, in the substitution of another to suffer, though he suffer the same absolutely which those should have done for whom he suffers, yet, because of the acceptation of his person to suffer, which might have been refused, and could not be admitted without some relaxation of the law, deliverance of the guilty persons cannot ensue “ipso facto,” but by the intervention of the terms fixed on in the covenant or agreement for an admittance of the substitution.

It appears, from what has been spoken, that, in this matter of satisfaction, God is not considered as a creditor, and sin as a debt; and the law as an obligation to the payment of that debt, and the Lord Christ as paying it; — though these notions may have been used by some for the illustration of the whole matter, and that not without countenance from sundry expressions in the Scripture to the same purpose. But God is considered as the infinitely holy and righteous author of the law, and supreme governor of all mankind, according to the tenor and sanction of it. Man is considered as a sinner, a transgressor of that law, and thereby obnoxious and liable to the punishment constituted in it and by it, — answerably unto the justice and holiness of its author. The substitution of Christ was merely voluntary on the part of God, and of himself, undertaking to be a sponsor, to answer for the sins of men by undergoing the punishment due unto them. To this end there was a relaxation of the law as to the persons that were to suffer, though not as to what was to be suffered. Without the former, the substitution mentioned could not have been admitted; and on supposition of the latter, the suffering of Christ could not have had the

nature of punishment, properly so called: for punishment relates to the justice and righteousness in government of him that exacts it and inflicts it; and this the justice of God does not but by the law. Nor could the law be any way satisfied or fulfilled by the suffering of Christ, if, antecedently thereunto, its obligation, or power of obliging unto the penalty constituted in its sanction unto sin, was relaxed, dissolved, or dispensed withal. Nor was it agreeable to justice, nor would the nature of the things themselves admit of it, that another punishment should be inflicted on Christ than what we had deserved; nor could our sin be the impulsive cause of his death; nor could we have had any benefit thereby. And this may suffice to be added unto what was spoken before as to the nature of satisfaction, so far as the brevity of the discourse whereunto we are confined will bear, or the use whereunto it is designed does require.

**Secondly.** The nature of the doctrine contended for being declared and cleared, we may, in one or two instances, manifest how evidently it is revealed, and how fully it may be confirmed or vindicated. It is, then, in the Scripture declared, that “Christ died for us,” that he “died for our sins;” and that we are thereby delivered. This is the foundation of Christian religion as such. Without the faith and acknowledgment of it, we are not Christians. Neither is it, in these general terms, at all denied by the Socinians. It remains, therefore, that we consider, —

1. How this is revealed and affirmed in the Scripture; and,
  2. What is the true meaning of the expressions: and propositions wherein it is revealed and affirmed; — for in them, as in sundry others, we affirm that the satisfaction pleaded for is contained.
1. Christ is said to die, to give himself, to be delivered, *huper hemoon*, etc., for us, for his sheep, for the life of the world, for sinners, John 6:51, 10:15; Romans 5:6; 2 Corinthians 5:14, 15; Galatians 2:20; Hebrews 2:9. Moreover, he is said to die *huper hamartioon*, for sins, 1 Corinthians 15:3; Galatians 1:4. The end whereof, everywhere expressed in the gospel, is, that we might be freed, delivered, and saved. These things, as was said, are agreed unto and acknowledged.

2. The meaning and importance, we say, of these expressions is, that Christ died in our room, place, or stead, undergoing the death or punishment which we should have undergone in the way and manner before declared. And this is the satisfaction we plead for. It remains, therefore, that from the Scripture, the nature of the things treated of, the proper signification and constant use of the expressions mentioned, the exemplification of them in the customs and usages of the nations of the world, we do evince and manifest that what we have laid down is the true and proper sense of the words wherein this revelation of Christ's dying for us is expressed; so that they who deny Christ to have died for us in this sense do indeed deny that he properly died for us at all, — whatever benefits they grant that by his death we may obtain.

**First.** We may consider the use of this expression in the Scripture either indefinitely or in particular instances.

Only we must take this along with us, that dying for sins and transgressions, being added unto dying for sinners or persons, makes the substitution of one in the room and stead of another more evident than when the dying of one for another only is mentioned. For whereas all predicates are regulated by their subjects, and it is ridiculous to say that one dies in the stead of sins, the meaning can be no other but the bearing or answering of the sins of the sinner in whose stead any one dies. And this is, in the Scripture, declared to be the sense of that expression, as we shall see afterward. Let us, therefore, consider some instances: —

John 11:50, The words of Caiaphas' counsel are, *Sumferei hemin, hina heis anthroopos apothanei huper tou laou, kai me holon to ethnos apoletai* — "It is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not:" which is expressed again, chap. 18:14, *apolesthai huper tou laou*, "perish for the people." Caiaphas feared that if Christ were spared, the people would be destroyed by the Romans. The way to free them, he thought, was by the destruction of Christ; him, therefore, he devoted to death, in lieu of the people. As he, —

"Unum pro multi dabitur caput;" —

“One head shall be given for many.”

Not unlike the speech of Otho the emperor in Xiphilin, when he slew himself to preserve his army; for when they would have persuaded him to renew the war after the defeat of some of his forces, and offered to lay down their lives to secure him, he replied, that he would not, adding this reason, *Polu gar pou kai kreitton, kai dikaioteron estin, hena huper pantoon e pollous huper henos apoletai* — “It is far better, and more just, that one should perish or die for all, than that many should perish for one;” that is, one in the stead of many, that they may go free; or as another speaks, —

“*Exon pro pahtoon mian huperdounai thanein*”

— Eurip. Frag. Erec.

“Let one be given up to die in the stead of all.”

John 13:37, *ten psuchen mou huper sou thesoo*. They are the words of St. Peter unto Christ, “I will lay down my life for thee;” — “To free thee, I will expose my own head to danger, my life to death, — that thou mayest live, and I die.” It is plain that he intended the same thing with the celebrated *antipsuchoi* of old, who exposed their own lives *psuchen anti psuches* for one another. Such were Damon and Pythias, Orestes and Pylades, Nisus and Euryalus. Whence is that saying of Seneca, “*Succurram perituro, set ut ipse non peream; nisi si futures era magni hominis, aut magnae rei merces;*” — “I will relieve or succor one that is ready to perish; yet so as that I perish not myself, — unless thereby I be taken in lieu of some great man, or great matter;” — “For a great man, a man of great worth and usefulness, I could perish or die in his stead, that he might live and go free.”

We have a great example, also, of the importance of this expression in these words of David concerning Absalom, 2 Samuel 18:33, *mi-yiten muti ani tachteicha* — “Who will grant me to die, I for thee,” or in thy stead, “my son Absalom?” [Literal rendering of the Hebrew.] It was never doubted but that David wished that he had died in the stead of his son, and

to have undergone the death which he did, to have preserved him alive. As to the same purpose, though in another sense, Mezentius in Virgil expresses himself, when his son Lausus, interposing between him and danger in battle, was slain Aeneas: —

“Tantane me tenuit vivendi, nate, voluptas,  
 Ut pro me hostile paterer succedere dextrae  
 Quem genui? tuane haec genitor per vulnera servor,  
 Morte tua vivens?”

— Aen. 10. 846.

“Hast thou, O son,  
 fallen under the enemies’ hand in my stead?  
 Am I saved by thy wounds?  
 Do I live by thy death?”

And the word *tachat*, used by David, does signify, when applied unto persons, either a succession or a substitution; still the coming of one into the place and room of another. When one succeeded to another in government, it is expressed by that word, 2 Samuel 10:1; 1 Kings 1:35, 19:16. In other cases it denotes a substitution. So Jehu tells his guard, that if any one of them let any of Baal’s priests escape, *nafsho tachat nafsho* — his life should go in the stead of the life that he had suffered to escape. And this answers unto *anti* in the Greek; which is also used in this matter, and ever denotes either equality, contrariety, or substitution. The two former senses can here have no place; the latter alone has. So it is said, that Archelaus reigned *anti Herodou tou patros outou*, Matthew 2:22, — “in the room” or stead “of his father Herod.” So *ofthalmos anti ofthalmou, hodous anti hodontos*, Matthew 5:38, is “an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.” And this word also is used in expressing the death of Christ for us. He came *dounai ten psuchen hautou lutron anti polloon*, Matthew 20:28, — “to give his life a ransom for many;” that is, in their stead to die. So the words are used again, Mark 10:45. And both these notes of a succedaneous substitution are joined together, 1 Timothy 2:6, *Ho dous heauton antilutron huper pantoon*. And this the Greeks call *tes psuchen priasthai*, — to buy any thing, to purchase or procure any thing, with the price of one’s life. So Tigranes in Xenophon, when Cyrus asked him what he would give or do for the liberty of his wife, whom he had taken

prisoner, answered, *Kan tes psuches priaimen hooste latreusai tauten* — “I will purchase her liberty with my life,” or “the price of my soul.” Whereon the woman being freed, affirmed afterward, that she considered none in the company, but him who said, *hoos tes psuches an priaito hooste me me douleuein*, “that he would purchase my liberty with his own life,” [Cyrop. lib. iii.]

And these things are added on the occasion of the instances mentioned in the Scripture; whence it appears, that this expression of “dying for another” has no other sense or meaning, but only dying instead of another, undergoing the death that he should undergo, that he might go free. And in this matter of Christ’s dying for us, add that he so died for us as that he also died for our sins; that is, either to bear their punishment or to expiate their guilt (for other sense the words cannot admit); and he that pretends to give any other sense of them than that contended for, which implies the whole of what lies in the doctrine of satisfaction, “erit mihi magnus Apollo,” even he who was the author of all ambiguous oracles of old.

And this is the common sense of “mori pro alio,” and “pati pro aito,” or “pro alio discrimen capitis subire;” a substitution is still denoted by that expression: which suffices us in this whole cause, for we know both into whose room he came, and what they were to suffer. Thus Entellus, killing and sacrificing an ox to Eryx in the stead of Dares, whom he was ready to have slain, when he was taken from him, expresses himself, —

“Hanc tibia, Eryx, meliorem animam pro morte Daretis Persolvo.”

— Aen. v. 483.

He offered the ox, a better sacrifice, in the stead of Dares, taken from him. So, —

“Fratrem Pollux alterna morte redemit.”

— Aen. vi. 121.

And they speak so not only with respect unto death, but wherever any thing of durance or suffering is intended. So the angry master in the comedian: —

“Verberibus caesum te in pistrinum, Dave, dedam usque ad necem;  
Ea lege atque omine, ut, si te inde exemerim, ego pro te molam.”

— Ter. And., i. 2, 28.

He threatened his servant, to cast him into prison, to be macerated to death with labor; and that with this engagement, that if he ever let him out, he would grind for him; — that is, in his stead. Wherefore, without offering violence to the common means of understanding things amongst men, another sense cannot be affixed to these words.

The nature of the thing itself will admit of no other exposition than that given unto it; and it has been manifoldly exemplified among the nations of the world. For suppose a man guilty of any crime, and on the account thereof to be exposed unto danger from God or man, in a way of justice, wrath, or vengeance, and when he is ready to be given up unto suffering according unto his demerit, another should tender himself to die for him, that he might be freed; let an appeal be made to the common reason and understandings of all men, whether the intention of this his dying for another be not, that he substitutes himself in his stead, to undergo what he should have done, however the translation of punishment from one to another may be brought about and asserted; for at present we treat not of the right, but of the fact, or the thing itself. And to deny this to be the case as to the sufferings of Christ, is, as far as I can understand, to subvert the whole gospel.

Moreover, as was said, this has been variously exemplified among the nations of the world; whose acting in such cases, because they excellently shadow out the general notion of the death of Christ for others, for sinners, and are appealed unto directly by the apostle to this purpose, Romans 5:7, 8, I shall in a few instances reflect upon.

Not to insist on the voluntary surrogations of private persons, one into the room of another, mutually to undergo dangers and death for one



another, as before mentioned, I shall only remember some public transactions, in reference unto communities, in nations, cities, or armies. Nothing is more celebrated amongst the ancients than this, that when they supposed themselves in danger, from the anger and displeasure of their gods, by reason of any guilt or crimes among them, some one person should either devote himself or be devoted by the people, to die for them; and therein to be made, as it wets, an expiatory sacrifice. For where sin is the cause, and God is the object respected; the making of satisfaction by undergoing punishment, and expiating of sin by a propitiatory sacrifice, are but various expressions of the same thing. Now, those who so devoted themselves, as was said, to die in the stead of others, or to expiate their sins, and turn away the anger of God they feared, by their death, designed two things in what they did. First, That the evils which were impendent on the people, and feared, might fall on themselves, so that the people might go free. Secondly, That all good things which themselves desired, might be conferred on the people. Which things have a notable shadow in them of the great expiatory sacrifice, concerning which we treat, and expound the expressions wherein it is declared. The instance of the Decii is known; of whom the poet, —

“Plebeiae Deciornm animae, plebeian fuerunt  
Nomina; pro totis legionibus Hi tamen, et pro  
Omnibus auxiliis, atque omni plebe Latina,  
Sufficiunt Diis infernis.”

The two Decii, father and son, in imminent dangers of the people, devoted themselves, at several times, unto death and destruction. And says he, “Sufficiunt Diis infernis, — “they satisfied for the whole people; adding the reason whence so it might be: —

“Pluris denim Decii quam qui servntur ab illis.”

Juv., Sat. vii. 254-8

They were more to be valued than all that were saved by them. And the great historian does excellently describe both the actions and expectations of the one and the other in what they did. The father, when the Roman army, commanded by himself and Titus Manlius, was near a total ruin by the Latins, called for the public priest, and caused him, with the usual

solemn ceremonies, to devote him to death for the deliverance and safety of the army; after which, making his requests to his gods, (“*dii quorum est potestas nostrorum hostiumque,*”) “the gods that had power over them and their adversaries,” as he supposed, he cast himself into death by the swords of the enemy. “*Conspectus ab utraque acie aliquanto augustior humano visu, sicut coelo missus piaculum omnis deorum irae, qui pestam ab suis aversam in hostes ferret;*” — “He was looked on by both armies as one more august than a man, as one sent from heaven, to be a piacular sacrifice, to appease the anger of the gods, and to transfer destruction from their own army to the enemies,” Liv., Hist. viii. 9. His son, in like manner, in a great and dangerous battle against the Gauls and Samnites, wherein he commanded in chief, devoting himself, as his father had done, added unto the former solemn deprecations’: — “*Prae se agere sese formidinem ac fugam, caedemque ac cruorem, coelestum, inferorum iras,*” lib. x. 28; — “That he carried away before him, from those for whom he devoted himself, ‘fear and flight, slaughter and blood, the anger of the celestial and infernal gods.’” And as they did, in this devoting of themselves, design “*averruncare malum, deum iras, lustrare populum, aut exercitum, piaculum fieri,*” or *peripsema, anathema, apokatharma*, — “expiare crimina, scelus, raetum,” “or to remove all evil from others, by taking it on themselves in their stead; so also they thought they might, and intended in what they did, to covenant and contract for the good things they desired. So did these Decii; and so is Menoeceus reported to have done, when he devoted himself for the city of Thebes, in danger to be destroyed by the Argives. So Papinius Staius introduces him treating with his gods: —

“*Armorum superi, tuque o qui funere tanto  
Indulges mihi, Phoebe, mori, date gaudia Thebis,  
Quae pepigi, et toto quae sanguine prodigus emi.*”

— [Theb. x. 757.]

He reckoned that he had not only repelled all death and danger from Thebes, by his own, but that he had purchased joy, in peace and liberty, for the people.

And where there was none in public calamities that did voluntarily devote themselves, the people were wont to take some obnoxious person, to

make him execrable, and to lay on him, according to their superstition, all the wrath of their gods, and so give him up to destruction. Such the apostle alludes unto, Romans 9:3; 1 Corinthians 4:9, 13. So the Massilians were wont to expiate their city by taking a person devoted, imprecating on his head all the evil that the city was obnoxious unto, casting him into the sea with these words, *Peripsema hemoon genou* — “Be thou our expiatory sacrifice.” To which purpose were the solemn words that many used in their expiatory sacrifices, as Herodotus [lib ii. 39] testifies of the Egyptians, bringing their offerings. Says he, *Katapeontai de, tade legontes, teisi kefaleisin, ei ti melloi e sfisi toisi thuousi, e Aiguptooi tei sunapasei kakon genesthai es kefalen tauten trapesthai* — “They laid these imprecations on their heads, that if any evil were happening towards the sacrificer, or all Egypt, let it be all turned and laid on this devoted head.”

And the persons whom they thus dealt withal, and made execrate, were commonly of the vilest of the people, or such as had rendered themselves detestable by their own crimes; whence was the complaint of the mother of Menaeeus upon her son’s devoting himself: —

“Lustralemne feris, ego te puer inclyte Thebis,  
Devotumque caput, ilis seu mater alebam?”

— [Statius, Theb. x. 788, 789.]

I have recounted these instances to evince the common intention, sense, and understanding of that expression, of one dying for another, and to manifest by examples what is the sense of mankind about any one’s being devoted and substituted in the room of others, to deliver them from death and danger; the consideration whereof, added to the constant use of the words mentioned in the Scripture, is sufficient to found and confirm this conclusion: —

“That whereas it is frequently affirmed in the Scripture, that ‘Christ died for us, and for our sins,’ etc., to deny that he died and suffered in our stead, undergoing the death whereunto we were obnoxious, and the punishment due to our sins, is, — if we respect in what we say or believe the constant use of those words in the Scripture, the nature of the thing itself concerning which they are used, the uncontrolled use of that

expression in all sorts of writers in expressing the same thing, with the instances and examples of its meaning and intention among the nations of the world, — to deny that he died for us at all.”

Neither will his dying for our good or advantage only, in what way or sense soever, answer or make good or true the assertion of his dying for us and our sins. And this is evident in the death of the apostles and martyrs. They all died for our good; our advantage and benefit was one end of their sufferings, in the will and appointment of God: and yet it cannot be said that they died for us, or our sins.

And if Christ died only for our good, though in a more effectual manner than they did, yet this alters not the kind of his dying for us; nor can he thence be said, properly, according to the only due sense of that expression, so to do.

I shall, in this brief and hasty discourse, add only one consideration more about the death of Christ, to confirm the truth pleaded for; it and that is, that he is said, in dying for sinners, “to bear their sins.”. Isaiah 53:11, “He shall bear their iniquities;” verse 12, “He bare the sin of many;” explained, verse 5, “He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him.” 1 Peter 2:24, “Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree,” etc.

This expression is purely sacred. It occurs not directly in other authors, though the sense of it in other words do frequently. They call it “*luere peccata*,” that is, “*delictorum supplicium ferre*,” — “to bear the punishment of sins.” The meaning, therefore, of this phrase of speech is to be taken from the Scripture alone, and principally from the Old Testament, where it is originally used; and from whence it is transferred into the New Testament, in the same sense, and no other. Let us consider some of the places: —

Isaiah 53:11, *awonotam hu yisbol*. The same word, *saval*, is used verse 4, *umach’oveinu svalam*, — “And our griefs, he has borne them.” The word signifies, properly, to bear a weight or a burden, as a man bears it on his shoulders, — “*bajulo, porto*.” And it is never used with respect unto sin,

but openly and plainly it signifies the undergoing of the punishment due unto it. So it occurs directly to our purpose, Lamentations 5:7 *avoteinu chat'u einam anachnu awonoteihem savalnu* — “Our fathers have sinned, and are not; and we have borne their iniquities;” the punishment due to their sins. And why a new sense should be forged for these words when they are spoken concerning Christ, who can give a just reason?

Again; *nasa* is used to the same purpose, *wehu chet-rabim nasa* Isaiah 53:12, “And he bare the sin of many. *nasa* is often used with respect unto sin; sometimes with reference unto God’s acting about it, and sometimes with reference unto men’s concerns in it. In the first way, or when it denotes an act of God, it signifies to lift up, to take away or pardon sin; and leaves the word *awon*, wherewith it is joined under its first signification, of iniquity, or the guilt of sin, with respect unto punishment ensuing as its consequent; for God pardoning the guilt of sin, the removal of the punishment does necessarily ensue, guilt containing an obligation unto punishment. In the latter way, as it respects men or sinners, it constantly denotes the bearing of the punishment of sin, and gives that sense unto *awon*, with respect unto the guilt of sin as its cause. And hence arises the ambiguity of these words of Cain, Genesis 4:13, *gadol awoni minso*. If *nasa* denotes an act of God, if the words be spoken with reference, in the first place, to any acting of his towards Cain, *awon* retains the sense of iniquity, and the words are rightly rendered, “My sin is greater than to be forgiven.” If it respect Cain himself firstly, *awon* assumes the signification of punishment, and the words are to be rendered, “My punishment is greater than I can bear,” or “is to be borne by me.”

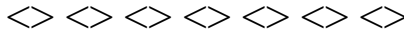
This, I say, is the constant sense of this expression, nor can any instance to the contrary be produced. Some may be mentioned in the confirmation of it. Numbers 19:33, “Your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years,” *wenasu et-znuteichem* “and shall bear your whoredoms.” Verse 34, *tisu et-awonoteichem arba'im shanah* — “Ye shall bear your iniquities forty years;” that is, the punishment due to your whoredoms and iniquities, according to God’s providential dealings with them at that time. Leviticus 19:8, “He that eateth it *awono yisa* shall bear his iniquity. How? *nichretah hanefesh hahi* — “That soul shall be cut off.” To be cut off for sin by the punishment of it, and for its guilt, is to bear iniquity. So chap.

20:16-18, for a man to bear his iniquity, and to be killed, slain, or put to death for it, are the same.

Ezekiel 18:20, *hanefesh hachotet hi tamoet ben lo-yisa ba'awon ha'av* — “The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the sin of the father.” To bear sin, and to die for sin, are the same. More instances might be added, all uniformly speaking the same sense of the words.

And as this sense is sufficiently, indeed invincibly, established by the invariable use of that expression in the Scripture so the manner whereby it is affirmed that the Lord Christ bare our iniquities, sets it absolutely free from all danger by opposition. For he bare our iniquities when *wa'adonai hifnia bo et awon kulanu* — “the LORD made to meet on him, or laid on him; the iniquity of us all,” Isaiah 53:6; which words the LXX render, *Kai Kurios paredookon auton tais hamartiais hemoon* — “The LORD gave him up, or delivered him unto our sins;” that is, to be punished for them, for other sense the words can have none. “He made him in sin for us,” 2 Corinthians 5:21. So “he bare our sins,” Isaiah 53:12. How? “In his own body on the tree,” 1 Peter 2:24; that when he was, and in his being stricken, smitten, afflicted, wounded bruised, slain, so was the chastisement of our peace upon him.

Wherefore, to deny that the Lord Christ, in his death and suffering for us, underwent the punishment due to our sins, what we had deserved, that we might be delivered, as it everts the great foundation of the gospel, so, by an open perverting of the plain words of the scripture, because not suited in their sense and importance to the sin imaginations of men, it gives no small countenance to infidelity and atheism.



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**GOSPEL GROUNDS  
AND EVIDENCES OF THE  
FAITH OF GOD'S ELECT**

*by John Owen*

**Books For The Ages**

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# GOSPEL GROUNDS AND EVIDENCES

## OF THE

# FAITH OF GOD'S ELECT

showing

- I. The nature of true saving faith in securing of the spiritual comfort of believers in this life, is of the highest importance.
- II. The way wherein true faith does evidence itself in the souls and consciences of believers, unto their supportment and comfort, under all their conflicts with sin, in all their trials and temptations.
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- IV. A peculiar way whereby true faith will evidence itself, by bringing the soul into a state of repentance.

by

John Owen

*“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?”*

— 2 Corinthians 13:5

## PREFATORY NOTE

This treatise, entitled *Gospel Grounds and Evidences of the Faith of God's Elect*," was given to the world in 1695. The remainder of the title is scarcely applicable as a correct designation of the leading divisions of the work. and may, perhaps, have been added by those who had the charge of publishing it. In the preface by Isaac Chauncey, the reader is assured that the treatise is the production of Dr. Owen. It bears internal evidence of the fact, and that he wrote it, with a view to publication. When he waives the formal discussion of some topics connected with his subject, on the ground that he had attempted the discussion of them "in other writings," it seems a just inference that it had been his intention to publish the treatise, though no explanation has transpired why it was withheld from the press for a period of twelve years after his death. The circumstance is of some moment, as showing that the work, though posthumous, may be held to contain the deliberate and matured judgment of the author on the question of which it treats.

His object is not to illustrate the common evidences of genuine religion, or the grounds on which we may conclude a man to be sincere in his religious profession. It is an inquiry rather into the evidences on which the elect of God, in any process of self-scrutiny, may ascertain the reality of their own faith. Ascribing to faith all the importance which is due to it as the instrumental cause of justification, the author suspends the entire question of the genuineness of conversion upon the existence of a fourfold development or operation of that gracious principle in the hearts of all who may be anxious to discover whether they have been really quickened and born of God.

After stating the nature of saving faith, and after a brief exhibition of the gospel as the divine method for the salvation of sinners through the merits of Christ, he proceeds to "the trial of faith," as the main object of the treatise. In the first place, he shows that faith, if genuine, includes or denotes implicit approbation of "God's way of saving sinners," in opposition to all schemes of merely human invention for our spiritual

deliverance. This approbation of the divine plan for our redemption, in which he holds that the very essence and life of faith consist, is founded on the conviction; first, That the salvation revealed in the gospel is in harmony with the perfections and majesty of the divine character; secondly, That it is suited to the views, desires, and aspirations of a soul enlightened by grace; and, thirdly, That it as effectually honors the moral law as if it had been completely fulfilled in the personal obedience of the saints.

Secondly, Faith is shown to imply an approbation of the will of God in requiring of us holiness and obedience, to the full measure of the perfection and spirituality demanded of us in the moral law. He appeals, in illustration of the obedience required, to the light of nature, and to the knowledge of good and evil which men enjoy through the law; but proves that without the light of saving faith there can be no adequate conception of the holiness required by the divine will, urging an acute distinction, which might rank as a separate contribution to the doctrine of conscience, and according to which its authority in determining the moral character of an action by no means implies the love of what is good, and the hatred of what is evil. The function of conscience he views is exclusively judicial, and shows that the motive which prompts to action must spring from other considerations. Two grounds are assigned on which faith approves of the holiness required of us: — the consistency of such a demand with the perfection of the divine nature; and its fitness, when full compliance is yielded with it, to advance us to the utmost perfection of which our own nature is capable.

Thirdly, Evidence of genuine faith is also afforded when the mind endeavors to keep itself in the due exercise of the grace of faith, in the public and private ordinances of divine worship. If faith is not cultivated in the worship of God, all devotion is corrupted into the empty forms of superstition, as in the ritual of Popery; or becomes the mere wildfire of fanaticism, or degenerates into the rationalism which ignores all worship instituted by the authority of revelation. Judicious directions follow as to the best method of preserving faith in vivid exercise while we are engaged in the various acts of devotion. Fourthly, The last evidence specified of true faith is the evangelical repentance which it produces. Weanedness

from the world, the lively remembrance of sin, a becoming intensity of godly sorrow on account of it, and other spiritual duties, are described as essential elements in the penitential feelings and exercises of those who really believe unto salvation.

The treatise indicates an acquaintance with the true philosophy of human nature, thorough knowledge of the world, and of man individually, as he takes the hue of his character from surrounding objects and social influences, and that depth of Christian experience in which our author has perhaps been rarely excelled. He shines in the anatomy of human motives; and while he goes deeply into the subjective workings of faith, he is always keenly alive to the objective realities of evangelical truth. The Christian reader will find this treatise an admirable manual for self-examination. — Ed.

## TO THE READER

As faith is the first vital act that every true Christian puts Forth, and the life which he lives is by the faith of the Son of God, so it is his next and great concern to know that he does believe, and that believing he has eternal life; that his faith is the faith of God's elect, and of the operation of God: without some distinct believing knowledge of which he cannot so comfortably assure his heart before God concerning his calling and election, so far as to carry him forth in all the ways of holiness, in doing and suffering the will of God with necessary resolution and cheerfulness; the doing of which in a right manner, according to the tenor of the gospel, is no small part of spiritual skill; whereunto two things are highly requisite: first, That he be well acquainted with the doctrine of Christ, and know how to distinguish the gospel from the law; and, secondly, That he be very conversant with his own heart, that so by comparing his faith, and the fruits thereof, with the said doctrine of Christ, he may come to see that, as he has received Christ, so he walks in him: all his reasonings concerning himself being taken up from the word of God, so that what judgment he passes upon himself may be a judgment of faith, and answer of a good conscience towards God; for all the trials of faith must at last be resolved into a judgment of faith, before which is made, the soul still labors under staggerings and uncertainties.

The design of this ensuing treatise is to resolve this great question, whether the faith we profess unto be true or no? — The resolution of which, upon an impartial inquiry, must needs be very grateful and advantageous to every one that has but tasted that the Lord is gracious. That the late reverend, learned, and pious Dr. Owen was the author there needs be no doubt; not only because good assurance is given by such as were intrusted with his writings, but also in that the style and spirit running through the other of his practical writings is here very manifest; and, accordingly, with them is recommended to the serious perusal of every diligent inquirer into the truth of his spiritual estate and condition.

*Isaac Chauncey*

## EVIDENCES OF THE FAITH OF GOD'S ELECT

The securing of the spiritual comforts of believers in this life is a matter of the highest importance unto the glory of God, and their own advantage by the gospel. For God is abundantly willing that all the heirs of promise should receive strong consolation, and he has provided ways and means for the communication of it to them; and their participation of it is their principal interest in this world, and is so esteemed by them. But their effectual refreshing enjoyment of these comforts is variously opposed by the power of the remainders of sin, in conjunction with other temptations. Hence, notwithstanding their right and title unto them by the gospel, they are oftentimes actually destitute of a gracious sense of them, and, consequently, of that relief which they are suited to afford in all their duties, trials, and afflictions. Now, the root whereon all real comforts do grow, whence they spring and arise, is true and saving faith, — the faith of God's elect. Wherefore they do ordinarily answer unto, and hold proportion with, the evidences which any have of that faith in themselves; at least, they cannot be maintained without such evidences. Wherefore, that we may be a little useful unto the establishment or recovery of that consolation which God is so abundantly willing that all the heirs of promise should enjoy, I shall inquire,

What are the principal acts and operations of faith, whereby it will evidence its truth and sincerity in the midst of all temptations and storms that may befall believers in this world?

And I shall insist on such alone as will bear the severest scrutiny by Scripture and experience. And, — The principal genuine acting of saving faith in us, inseparable from it, yea, essential to such acting, consists in the:

choosing, embracing, and approbation of God's way of saving sinners, by the mediation of Jesus Christ, relying thereon, with a renunciation of all other ways and means pretending unto the same end of salvation.

This is that which we are to explain and prove.

Saving faith is our “believing the record that God has given us of his Son,” 1 John 5:10, “And this is the record, that God has given to us eternal life; and this life is in his Son,” verse 11. This is the testimony which God gives, that great and sacred truth which he himself bears witness unto, — namely, that he has freely prepared eternal life for them that believe, or provided a way of salvation for them. And what God so prepares he is said to give, because of the certainty of its communication. So grace was promised and given to the elect in Christ Jesus before the world began, 2 Timothy 1:9; Titus 1:2. And that is so to be communicated unto them, in and by the mediation of his Son Jesus Christ, that it is the only way whereby God will give eternal life unto any; which is therefore wholly in him, and by him to be obtained, and from him to be received. Upon our acquiescence in this testimony, on our approbation of this way of saving sinners, or our refusal of it, our eternal safety or ruin does absolutely depend. And it is reasonable that it should be so: for, in our receiving of this testimony of God, we “set to our seal that God is true,” John 3:33; we ascribe unto him the glory of his truth, and therein of all the other holy properties of his nature, — the most eminent duty whereof we are capable in this world; and by a refusal of it, what lies in us, we make him a liar, as in this place, 1 John 5:10, which is virtually to renounce his being. And the solemnity wherewith this testimony is entered is very remarkable, verse 7, “There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one.” The trinity of divine persons, acting distinctly in the unity of the same divine nature, do give this testimony: and they do so by those distinct operations whereby they act in this way and work of God’s saving sinners by Jesus Christ; which are at large declared in the gospel. And there is added hereunto a testimony that is immediately applicatory unto the souls of believers, of this sovereign testimony of the holy Trinity; and this is the witness of grace and all sacred ordinances: “There are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one,” verse 8. They are not at essentially the same in one and the same nature, as are the Father, Word, and Holy Ghost, yet they all absolutely agree in the same testimony; and they do it by that especial efficacy which they have on the souls of believers to assure them of this truth. In this record, so solemnly,

so gloriously given and proposed, life and death are set before us. The receiving and embracing of this testimony, with an approbation of the way of salvation testified unto, is that work of faith which secures us of eternal life. On these terms there is reconciliation and agreement made and established between God and men; without which men must perish for ever. So our blessed Savior affirms, “This is life eternal, that they may know thee” (the Father) “the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent,” John 17:3. To know the Father as the only true God, to know him as he has sent Jesus Christ to be the only way and means of the salvation of sinners, and to know Jesus Christ as sent by him for that end, is that grace and duty which instates us in a right to eternal life, and initiates us in the possession of it: and this includes that choice and approbation of the way of God for the saving of sinners whereof we speak.

But these things must be more distinctly opened: —

1. The great fundamental difference in religion is concerning the way and means whereby sinners may be saved. From men’s different apprehensions hereof arise all other differences about religion; and the first thing that engages men really into any concernment in religion, is an inquiry in their minds how sinners may be saved, or what they shall do themselves to be saved: “What shall we do? what shall we do to be saved?” “What is the way of acceptance with God?” is that inquiry which gives men their first initiation into religion. See Acts 2:37; 16:30; Micah 6:6-8. This question being once raised in the conscience, an answer must be returned unto it. “I will consider,” says the prophet, “what I shall answer when I am reproved,” Habakkuk 2:1. And there is all the reason in the world that men consider well of a good answer hereunto, without which they must perish for ever; for if they cannot answer themselves here, how do they hope to answer God hereafter? Wherefore, without a sufficient answer always in readiness unto this inquiry, no man can have any hopes of a blessed eternity.

Now, the real answer which men return unto themselves is according to the influence which their minds are under from one or



other of the two divine covenants, — that of works or that of grace. And these two covenants, taken absolutely, are inconsistent, and give answers in this case that are directly contradictory to one another: so the apostle declares, Romans 10:5-9. The one says, “The man that does the works of the law shall live by them; this is the only way whereby you may be saved:” the other wholly waives this return, and puts it all on faith in Christ Jesus. Hence there is great difference and great variety in the answers which men return to themselves on this inquiry; for their consciences will neither hear nor speak any thing but what complies with the covenant whereunto they do belong. These things are reconciled only in the blood of Christ; and how, the apostle declared, Romans 8:3. The greatest part of convinced sinners seem to adhere to the testimony of the covenant of works; and so perish for ever. Nothing will stand us in stead in this matter, nothing will save us, “but the answer of a good conscience towards God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ,” 1 Peter 3:21.

2. The way that God has prepared for the saving of sinners is a fruit and product of infinite wisdom, and powerfully efficacious unto its end. As such it is to be received, or it is rejected. It is not enough that we admit of the notions of it as declared, unless we are sensible of divine wisdom and power in it, so as that it may be safely trusted unto. Hereon, upon the proposal of it, falls out the eternally distinguishing difference among men. Some look upon it and embrace it as the power and wisdom of God; others really reject it as a thing foolish and weak, not meet to be trusted unto. Hereof the apostle gives an account at large, 1 Corinthians 1:18-24. And this is mysterious in religion: — the same divine truth is by the same way and means, at the same time, proposed unto sundry persons, all in the same condition, under the same circumstances, all equally concerned in that which is proposed therein: some of them hereon do receive it, embrace it, approve of it, and trust unto it for life and salvation; others despise it, reject it, value it not, trust not unto it. To the one it is the wisdom of God, and the power of God; to the other, weakness and foolishness: as it must of necessity be the one or the other, — it is not capable of a middle

state or consideration. It is not a good way unless it be the only way; it is not a safe, it is not the best way, if there be any other; for it is eternally inconsistent with any other. It is the wisdom of God, or it is downright folly. And here, after all our disputes, we must resort unto eternal sovereign grace, making a distinction among them unto whom the gospel is proposed, and the almighty power of actual grace in curing that unbelief which blinds the minds of men, that they can see nothing but folly and weakness in God's way of the saving of sinners. And this unbelief works yet in the most of them unto whom this way of God is proposed in the gospel; they receive it not as an effect of infinite wisdom, and as powerfully efficacious unto its proper end. Some are profligate in the service of their lusts, and regard it not; unto whom may be applied that [saying] of the prophet, "Hear, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish." Some are under the power of darkness and ignorance, so as that they apprehend not, they understand not the mystery of it; for "the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not." Some are blinded by Satan, as he is the God of this world, by filling their minds with prejudice, and their hearts with the love of present things, that the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, cannot shine into them. Some would mix with it their own works, ways, and duties, as they belong unto the first covenant; which are eternally irreconcilable unto this way of God, as the apostle teaches, Romans 10:3, 4. Hereby does unbelief eternally ruin the souls of men. They do not, they cannot, approve of the way of God for saving sinners proposed in the gospel, as an effect of infinite wisdom and power, which they may safely trust unto, in opposition unto all other ways and means, pretending to be useful unto the same end; and this will give us light into the nature and acting of saving faith, which we inquire after.

3. The whole Scripture, and all divine institutions from the beginning, do testify, in general, that this way of God for the saving of sinners is by commutation, substitution, atonement, satisfaction, and imputation. This is the language of the first promise, and all the sacrifices of the law founded thereon; this is the language of the

Scripture: “There is a way whereby sinners may be saved, — a way that God has found out and appointed.” Now, it being the law wherein sinners are concerned, the rule of all things between God and them should seem to be by what they can do or suffer with respect unto that law. “No,” says the Scripture, “it cannot be so; ‘for by the deeds of the law no man living shall be justified in the sight of God.’” Psalm 143:2; Romans 3:20; Galatians 2:16. Neither shall it be by their personal answering of the penalty of the law which they have broken; for they cannot do so, but they must perish eternally: for, “If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?” Psalm 130:3. There must therefore be, there is another way, of a different nature and kind from these, for the saving of sinners, or there is no due revelation made of the mind of God in the Scripture. But that there is so, and what it is, is the main design of it to declare: and this is by the substitution of a mediator instead of the sinners that shall be saved, who shall both bear the penalty of the law which they had incurred and fulfill that righteousness which they could not attain unto.

This in general is God’s way of saving sinners, whether men like it or no: “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us,” Romans 8:3, 4. See also Hebrews 10:5-10. “He made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him,” 2 Corinthians 5:21.

Here unbelief has prevailed with many in this latter age to reject the glory of God herein; but we have vindicated the truth against them sufficiently elsewhere.

4. There are sundry things previously required to give us a clear view of the glory of God in this way of saving sinners: such are, a due consideration of the nature of the fall of our first parents, and of our apostasy from God thereby. I may not stay here to show the nature or aggravations of them; neither can we conceive them

aright, much less express them. I only say, that unless we have due apprehensions of the dread and terror of them, of the invasion made on the glory of God, and the confusion brought on the creation by them, we can never discern the reason and glory of rejecting the way of personal righteousness, and the establishing this way of a mediator for the saving of sinners. A due sense of our present infinite distance from God, and the impossibility that there is in ourselves of making any approaches unto him, is of the same consideration; so likewise is that of our utter disability to do any thing that may answer the law, or the holiness and righteousness of God therein, — of our universal unconformity in our natures, hearts, and their acting, unto the nature, holiness, and will of God. Unless, I say, we have a sense of these things in our minds and upon our consciences, we cannot believe aright, we cannot comprehend the glory of this new way of salvation. And whereas mankind has had a general notion, though no distinct apprehension, of these things, or of some of them, many amongst them have apprehended that there is a necessity of some kind of satisfaction or atonement to be made, that sinners may be freed from the displeasure of God; but when God's way of it was proposed unto them, it was, and is, generally rejected, because "the carnal mind is enmity against God." But when these things are fixed on the soul by sharp and durable convictions, they will enlighten it with due apprehensions of the glory and beauty of God's way of saving sinners.

5. This is the gospel, this is the work of it, — namely, a divine declaration of the way of God for the saving of sinners, through the person, mediation, blood, righteousness, and intercession of Christ. This is that which it reveals, declares, proposes, and tenders unto sinners, — there is a way for their salvation. As this is contained in the first promise, so the truth of every word in the Scripture depends on the supposition of it. Without this, there could be no more intercourse between God and us than is between him and devils. Again, it declares that this way is not by the law or its works, — by the first covenant, or its conditions, — by our own doing or suffering; but it is a new way, found out in and proceeding

from infinite wisdom, love, grace, and goodness, — namely, by the incarnation of the eternal Son of God, his susception of the office of a mediator, doing and suffering in the discharge of it whatever was needful for the justification and salvation of sinners, unto his own eternal glory. See Romans 3:24-27; 8:3, 4; 2 Corinthians 5:19-21, etc.

Moreover, the gospel adds, that the only way of obtaining an interest in this blessed contrivance of saving sinners by the substitution of Christ, as the surety of the covenant, and thereon the imputation of our sins to him, and of his righteousness unto us, is by faith in him. Here comes in that trial of faith which we inquire after. This way of saving sinners being proposed, offered, and tendered unto us in the gospel, true and saving faith receives it, approves of it, rests in it, renounces all other hopes and expectations, reposing its whole confidence therein.

For it is not proposed unto us merely as a notion of truth, to be assented to or denied, in which sense all believe the gospel that are called Christians, — they do not esteem it a fable; but it is proposed unto us as that which we ought practically to close withal, for ourselves to trust alone unto it for life and salvation.

And I shall speak briefly unto two things:

- I. How does saving faith approve of this way? on what accounts, and unto what ends?
- II. How it does evidence and manifest itself hereby unto the comfort of believers.

## I

How does saving faith approve of this way?  
On what accounts, and unto what ends?

First, It approves of it, as that which every way becomes God to find out, to grant, and propose: so speaks the apostle, Hebrews 2:10, “It became him, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.” That becomes God, is worthy of him, is to be owned concerning him, which answers unto his infinite wisdom, goodness, grace, holiness, and righteousness, and nothing else. This faith discerns, judges, and determines concerning this way, — namely, that it is every way worthy of God, and answers all the holy properties of his nature. This is called “The light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ,” 2 Corinthians 4:6.

This discovery of the glory of God in this way is made unto faith alone, and by it alone it is embraced. The not discerning of it, and thereon the want of an acquiescence in it, is that unbelief which ruins the souls of men. The reason why men do not embrace the way of salvation tendered in the gospel, is because they do not see nor understand how full it is of divine glory, how it becomes God, is worthy of him, and answers all the perfections of his nature. Their minds are blinded, that the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, does not shine unto them, 2 Corinthians 4:4. And so they deal with this way of God as if it were weakness and folly.

Herein consists the essence and life of faith: — It sees, discerns, and determines, that the way of salvation of sinners by Jesus Christ proposed in the gospel, is such as becomes God and all his divine excellencies to find out, appoint, and propose unto us. And herein does it properly give glory to God, which is its peculiar work and excellency, Romans 4:20; herein it rests and refreshes itself.

In particular, faith herein rejoices in the manifestation of the infinite wisdom of God. A view of the wisdom of God acting itself by his power

in the works of creation (for in wisdom he made them all), is the sole reason of ascribing glory unto him in all natural worship, whereby we glorify him as God; and a due apprehension of the infinite wisdom of God in the new creation, in the way of saving sinners by Jesus Christ, is the foundation of all spiritual, evangelical ascription of glory to God.

It was the design of God, in a peculiar way, to manifest and glorify his wisdom in this work. Christ crucified is the “power of God, and the wisdom of God,” 1 Corinthians 1:24; and “all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid in him,” Colossians 2:3. All the treasures of divine wisdom are laid up in Christ, and laid out about him, as to be manifested unto faith in and by the gospels He designed herein to make known his “manifold wisdom,” Ephesians 3:9, 10.

Wherefore, according to our apprehension and admiration of the wisdom of God in the constitution of this way of salvation is our faith, and no otherwise; where that does not appear unto us, where our minds are not affected with it, there is no faith at all.

I cannot stay here to reckon up the especial instances of divine wisdom herein. Somewhat I have attempted towards it in other writings; and I shall only say at present, that the foundation of this whole work and way, in the incarnation of the eternal Son of God, is so glorious an effect of infinite wisdom, as the whole blessed creation will admire to eternity. This of itself bespeaks this way and work divine. Herein the glory of God shines in the face of Jesus Christ. This is of God alone; this is that which becomes him; that which nothing but infinite wisdom could extend unto. Whilst faith lives in a due apprehension of the wisdom of God in this, and the whole superstruction of this way, on this foundation it is safe.

Goodness, love, grace, and mercy, are other properties of the divine nature, wherein it is gloriously amiable. “God is love;” there is none God but he. Grace and mercy are among the principal titles which he everywhere assumes to himself; and it was his design to manifest them all to the utmost in this work and way of saving sinners by Christ, as is everywhere declared in the Scripture. And all these lie open to the eye of faith herein: it sees infinite goodness, love, and grace, in this way, such as

becomes God, such as can reside in none but him; which it therefore rests and rejoices in, 1 Peter 1:8. In adherence unto, and approbation of, this way of salvation, as expressive of these perfections of the divine nature, does faith act itself continually.

Where unbelief prevails, the mind has no view of the glory that is in this way of salvation, in that it is so becoming of God and all his holy properties, as the apostle declares, 2 Corinthians 4:4. And where it is so, whatever is pretended, men cannot cordially receive it and embrace it; for they know not the reason for which it ought to be so embraced: they see no form nor comeliness in Christ, who is the life and center of this way, “no beauty for which he should be desired,” Isaiah 53:2. Hence, in the first preaching of it, it was “unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness;” for by reason of their unbelief they could not see it to be, what it is, “the power of God, and the wisdom of God;” and so it must be esteemed, or be accounted folly.

Yea, from the same unbelief it is that at this day the very notion of the truth herein is rejected by many, even all those who are called Socinians, and all that adhere unto them in the disbelief of supernatural mysteries. They cannot see a suitableness in this way of salvation unto the glory of God, — as no unbeliever can; and therefore those of them who do not oppose directly the doctrine of it, yet do make no use of it unto its proper end. Very few of them, comparatively, who profess the truth of the gospel, have an experience of the power of it unto their own salvation.

But here true faith stands invincibly, — hereby it will evidence its truth and sincerity in the midst of all temptations, and the most dismal conflicts it has with them; yea, against the perplexing power and charge of sin thence arising. From this stronghold it will not be driven; whilst the soul can exercise faith herein, — namely, in steadily choosing, embracing, and approving of God’s way of saving sinners by Jesus Christ, as that wherein he will be eternally glorified, because it is suited unto, and answers all the perfections of, his nature, is that which every way becomes him, — it will have wherewith to relieve itself in all its trials. For this is faith, this is saving faith, which will not fail us. That faith which works in the soul a gracious persuasion of the excellency of this way, by a sight of the glory



of the wisdom, power, grace, love, and goodness of God in it, so as to be satisfied with it, as the best, the only way of coming unto God, with a renunciation of all other ways and means unto that end, will at all times evidence its nature and sincerity.

And this is that which gives the soul rest and satisfaction, as unto its entrance into glory, upon its departure out of this world. It is a great thing, to apprehend in a due manner that a poor soul that has been guilty of many sins, leaving the body, it may be, under great pain, distress, and anguish, it may be by outward violence, should be immediately admitted and received into the glorious presence of God, with all the holy attendants of his throne, there to enjoy rest and blessedness for evermore. But here also faith discerns and approves of this great, of this ineffable, divine operation, as that which becomes the infinite greatness of that wisdom and grace which first designed it, the glorious efficacy of the mediation of Christ, and the excellency of the sanctification of the Holy Spirit, without any expectation from any thing in itself, as a cause meritorious of an admission into this glory. Neither did ever any man know what it is, or desire it in a due manner, who looked for any desert of it in himself, or conceived any proportion between it and what he is or has done in this world. Hence some of those who have not this faith have invented another state, after men are gone out of this world, to make them meet for heaven, which they call purgatory; for on what grounds a man should expect an entrance into glory, on his departure out of this world, they understand not.

Let them who are exercised with temptations and dejections bring their faith unto this trial; and this is the case, in various degrees, of us all: — First, then, examine strictly by the word whether this be a true description of the nature and acting of saving faith. Sundry things are supposed or asserted in it; as, —

1. That the way of saving sinners by Jesus Christ is the principal effect of divine wisdom, power, goodness, love, and grace.
2. That the design of the gospel is to manifest, declare, and testify that so it is, and so to make known the glory of God therein.

3. That saving faith is that act, duty, and work of the soul, whereby we receive the record of God concerning these things, [and] do ascribe the glory of them all unto him, as discovering it in the way of life proposed unto us.
4. That hereon it proceeds unto a renunciation of all other ways, means, hopes, reliefs, in opposition unto this way, or in conjunction with it, as unto acceptance with God in life and salvation.

I say, in the first place, examine these things strictly by the word; and if they appear to be (as they are) sacred, evangelical, fundamental truths, be not moved from them, be not shaken in them, by any temptation whatever.

And, in the next place, bring your faith to the trial on these principles: What do you judge concerning God's way of saving sinners by Jesus Christ, as proposed in the gospel? Are you satisfied in it, that it is such as becomes God, and answers all the glorious attributes of his nature? Would you have any other way proposed in the room of it? Can you, will you, commit the eternal welfare of your souls unto the grace and faithfulness of God in this way, so as that you have no desire to be saved any other way? Does the glory of God in any measure shine forth unto you in the face of Jesus Christ? Do you find a secret joy in your hearts upon the satisfaction you take in the proposal of this way unto you by the gospel? Do you, in all your fears and temptations, in all approaches of death, renounce all other reserves and reliefs, and retake your whole confidence unto this way alone, and the representation of God made therein? Herein lies that faith, and its exercise, which will be an anchor unto your souls in all their trials.

And this is the first and principal ground, or reason, whereon faith, divine and saving, does accept, embrace, and approve of the way of God's saving sinners by Jesus Christ, — namely, because it is such as does become him, and every way answer unto all the holy properties of his nature, which are manifested and glorified therein. And where faith does approve of it on

this ground and reason, it does evidence itself to be truly evangelical, unto the supportment and comfort of them in whom it is.

Secondly, It does so approve of this way as that which it finds suited unto the whole design and all the desires of an enlightened soul. So when our Lord Jesus Christ compares the kingdom of God (which is this way of salvation) unto a treasure and a precious pearl, he affirms that those who found them had great joy and the highest satisfaction, as having attained that which suited their desires, and gave rest unto their minds.

A soul enlightened with the knowledge of the truth, and made sensible of its own condition by spiritual conviction, has two predominant desires and aims, whereby it is wholly regulated, — the one is, that God may be gloried; and the other, that itself may be eternally saved. Nor can it forego either of these desires, nor are they separable in any enlightened soul. It can never cease in either of these desires, and that to the highest degree. The whole world cannot dispossess an enlightened mind of either of them. Profligate sinners have no concernment in the former; no, nor yet those who are under legal convictions, if they have wherewithal received no spiritual light. They would be saved; but for the glory of God therein, he may look to that himself, — they are not concerned in it: for that which they mean by salvation is nothing but a freedom from external misery. This they would have, whether God be [glorified] or no; of what is salvation truly they have no desire.

But the first beam of spiritual light and grace instates an indefatigable desire of the glory of God in the minds and souls of them in whom it is. Without this the soul knows not how to desire its own salvation. I may say, it would not be saved in a way wherein God should not be glorified; for without that, whatever its state should be, it would not be that which we call salvation. The exaltation of the glory of God belongs essentially thereunto; it consists in the beholding and enjoyment of that glory. This desire, therefore, is immovably fixed in the mind and soul of every enlightened person; he can admit of no proposal of eternal things that is inconsistent with it.

But, moreover, in every such person there is a ruling desire of his own salvation. It is natural unto him, as a creature made for eternity; it is inseparable from him, as he is a convinced sinner. And the clearer the light of any one is in the nature of this salvation, the more is this desire heightened and confirmed in him.

Here, then, lies the inquiry, — namely, how these two prevalent desires may be reconciled and satisfied in the same mind? For, as we are sinners, there seems to be an inconsistency between them. The glory of God, in his justice and holiness, requires that sinners should die and perish eternally. So speaks the law; this is the language of conscience, and the voice of all our fears: wherefore, for a sinner to desire, in the first place, that God may be glorified is to desire that himself may be damned.

Which of these desires shall the sinner cleave unto? Unto whether of them shall he give the preeminence? Shall he cast off all hopes and desires of his own salvation, and be content to perish forever? This he cannot do; God does not require it of him, — he has given him the contrary in charge whilst he is in this world. Shall he, then, desire that God may part with and lose his glory, so as that, one way or other, he may be saved? Bring himself unto an unconcernment what becomes of it? This can be no more in an enlightened mind than it can cease to desire its own salvation. But how to reconcile these things in himself a sinner finds not.

Here, therefore, the glory of this way represents itself unto the faith of every believer. It not only brings these desires into a perfect consistency and harmony, but makes them to increase and promote one another. The desire of God's glory increases the desire of our own salvation; and the desire of our own salvation enlarges and inflames the desire of glorifying God therein and thereby. These things are brought into a perfect consistency and mutual subserviency in the blood of Christ, Romans 3:24-26; for this way is that which God has found out, in infinite wisdom, to glorify himself in the salvation of sinners. There is not any thing wherein the glory of God does or may consist, but in this way is reconciled unto, and consistent with, the salvation of the chiefest of sinners. There is no property of his nature but is gloriously exalted in and by it. An answer is given in it unto all the objections of the law against the

consistency of the glory of God and the salvation of sinners. It pleads his truth in his threatening, in the sanction of the law, with the curse annexed; — it pleads his righteousness, holiness, and severity, all engaged to destroy sinners; — it pleads the instance of God’s dealing with the angels that sinned, and calls in the witness of conscience to testify the truth of all its allegations: but there is a full and satisfactory answer given unto this whole plea of the law in this way of salvation. God declares in it, and by it, how he has provided for the satisfaction of all these things, and the exaltation of his glory in them; as we shall see immediately.

Here true faith will fix itself in all its distresses. “Whatever,” says the soul, “be my state and condition, whatever be my fears and perplexities, whatever oppositions I meet withal, yet I see in Jesus Christ, in the glass of the gospel, that there is no inconsistency between the glory of God and my salvation. That otherwise insuperable difficulty laid by the law in the way of my life and comfort, is utterly removed.” Whilst faith keeps this hold in the soul, with a constant approbation of this way of salvation by Christ, as that which gives [such] a consistency unto both its governing desires, that it shall not need forego either of them, — so as to be contented to be damned that God may be glorified, as some have spoken, or to desire salvation without a due regard unto the glory of God, — it will be an anchor to stay the soul in all its storms and distresses. Some benefit which will certainly ensue hereon we may briefly mention.

1. The soul will be hereby preserved from ruining despair, in all the distresses that may befall it. Despair is nothing but a prevalent apprehension of [the] mind that the glory of God and a man’s salvation are inconsistent; — that God cannot be just, true, holy, or righteous, if he in whom that apprehension is may be saved. Such a person does conclude that his salvation is impossible, because, one way or other, it is inconsistent with the glory of God; for nothing else can render it impossible. Hence arises in the mind an utter dislike of God, with revengeful thoughts against him for being what he is. This cuts off all endeavors of reconciliation, yea, begets an abhorrence of all the means of it, as those which are weak, foolish, and insufficient. Such are Christ and his cross unto men under such apprehensions; they judge them unable to

reconcile the glory of God and their salvation. Then is a soul in an open entrance into hell. From this cursed frame and ruin the soul is safely preserved by faith's maintaining in the mind and heart a due persuasion of the consistency and harmony that is between the glory of God and its own salvation. Whilst this persuasion is prevalent in it, although it cannot attain any comfortable assurance of an especial interest in it, yet it cannot but love, honor, value, and cleave unto this way, adoring the wisdom and grace of God in it; which is an act and evidence of saving faith. See Psalm 130:3, 4. Yea, —

2. It will preserve the soul from heartless despondencies. Many in their temptations, darknesses, fears, surprisals by sin, although they fall [not] into ruining desperation, yet they fall under such desponding fears and various discouragements, as keep them off from a vigorous endeavor after a recovery: and hereon, for want of the due exercise of grace, they grow weaker and darker every day, and are in danger to pine away in their sins. But where faith keeps the soul constant unto the approbation of God's way of saving sinners, as that wherein the glory of God and its own salvation are not only fully reconciled but made inseparable, it will stir up all graces unto a due exercise, and the diligent performance of all duties, whereby it may obtain a refreshing sense of a personal interest in it.
3. It will keep the heart full of kindness towards God; whence love and gracious hope will spring. It is impossible but that a soul overwhelmed with a sense of sin, and thereon filled with self-condemnation, but if it has a view of the consistency of the glory of God with its deliverance and salvation, through a free contrivance of infinite wisdom and grace, it must have such kindness for him, such gracious thoughts of him, as will beget and kindle in it both love and hope, as Micah 7:18-20; Psalm 85:8; 1 Timothy 1:15.
4. A steady continuance in the approbation of God's way of salvation, on the reason mentioned, will lead the mind into that

exercise of faith which both declares its nature and is the spring of all the saving benefits which we receive by it. Now, this is such a spiritual light into, and discovery of, the revelation and declaration made in the gospel of the wisdom, love, grace, and mercy of God in Christ Jesus, and the way of the communication of the effect of them unto sinners by him, as that the soul finds them suited unto and able for the pardon of its own sins, its righteousness and salvation; so as that it places its whole trust and confidence for these ends therein.

This being the very life of faith, that act and exercise of it whereby we are justified and saved, and whereby it evidences its truth and sincerity against all temptations, I shall insist a little on the explanation of the description of it now given. And there are three things in it, or required unto it: —

- (1.) A spiritual light into, and discovery of, the revelation and declaration made in the gospel of the wisdom, love, grace, and mercy of God in Christ Jesus. It is not a mere assent unto the truth of the revelation or authority of the revealer; — this, indeed, is supposed and included in it; but it adds thereunto a spiritual discerning, perception, and understanding of the things themselves revealed and declared; without which, a bare assent unto the truth of the revelation is of no advantage. This is called “The light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ,” 2 Corinthians 4:6; the increase whereof in all believers the apostle does earnestly pray for, Ephesians 1:15-20. So we discern spiritual things in a spiritual manner; and hence arises “the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ,” Colossians 2:2; or a spiritual sense of the power, glory, and beauty of the things contained in this mystery: so to know Christ as to know “the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings,” Philippians 3:10.

Faith affects the mind with an ineffable sense, taste, experience, and acknowledgment of the greatness, the glory, the power, the beauty of the things revealed and proposed in this way of salvation. The soul in it is enabled to see and understand that all the things belonging unto it are such as become God, his wisdom, goodness, and love; as was before declared. And a spiritual light enabling hereunto is of the essence of saving faith; unless this be in us, we do not, we cannot, give glory to God in any assent unto the truth. And faith is that grace which God has prepared, fitted, and suited, to give unto him the glory that is his due in the work of our redemption and salvation.

- (2.) Upon this spiritual light into this revelation of God and his glory, in this way of saving sinners, the mind by faith finds and sees that all things in it are suited unto its own justification and salvation in particular, and that the power of God is in them to make them effectual unto that end. This is that act and work of faith whereon the whole blessed event does depend. It will not avail a man to see all sorts of viands and provisions, if they be no way suited unto his appetite, nor meet for his nourishment; nor will it be unto a man's spiritual advantage to take a view of the excellencies of the gospel, unless he find them suited unto his condition. And this is the hardest task and work that faith has to go through with.

Faith is not an especial assurance of a man's own justification and salvation by Christ; that it will produce, but not until another step or two in its progress be over: but faith is a satisfactory persuasion that the way of God proposed in the gospel is fitted, suited, and able to save the soul in particular that does believe, — not only that it is a blessed way to save sinners in general, but that it is such a way to save him in particular. So is this matter stated by the apostle, 1 Timothy 1:15, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance," or approbation, "that Christ Jesus came into



the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.” His faith does not abide here, nor confine itself unto this, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, that this is the holy and blessed way of God for the salvation of sinners in general; but he puts in for his own particular interest in that way: “It is God’s way, fitted, and suited, and able to save me, who am the chiefest of sinners.”

And this, as was said, is the greatest and the most difficult work of faith; for we suppose, concerning the person who is to believe, —

- [1.] That he is really and effectually convinced of the sin of [our] nature, of our apostasy from God therein, the loss of his image, and the direful effects that ensue thereon.
- [2.] That he has due apprehensions of the holiness and severity of God, of the sanction and curse of the law, with a right understanding of the nature of sin and its demerit.
- [3.] That he have a full conviction of his own actual sins, with all their aggravations, from their greatness, their number, and all sorts of circumstances.
- [4.] That he has a sense of the guilt of secret or unknown sins, which have been multiplied by that continual proneness unto sin which he finds working in him.
- [5.] That he seriously consider what it is to appear before the judgment-seat of God, to receive a sentence for eternity, with all other things of the like nature, inseparable from him as a sinner.

When it is really thus with any man, he shall find it the hardest thing in the world, and clogged with the most difficulties, for him to believe that the way of salvation

proposed unto him is suited, fitted, and every way able to save him in particular, — to apprehend it such as none of his objections can rise up against, or stand before. But this is that, in the second place, that the faith of God's elect will do: it will enable the soul to discern and satisfy itself that there is in this way of God every thing that is needful unto its own salvation. And this it will do on a spiritual understanding and due consideration of, —

- [1.] The infiniteness of that wisdom, love, grace, and mercy, which is the original or sovereign cause of the whole way, with the ample declaration and confirmation made of them in the gospel.
  - [2.] Of the unspeakably glorious way and means for the procuring and communicating unto us of all the effects of that wisdom, grace, and mercy, — namely, the incarnation and mediation of the Son of God, in his oblation and intercession.
  - [3.] Of the great multitude and variety of precious promises, engaging the truth, faithfulness, and power of God, for the communication of righteousness and salvation from those springs, by that means. I say, on the just consideration of these things, with all other encouragements wherewith they are accompanied, the soul concludes by faith that there is salvation for itself in particular, to be attained in that way.
- (3.) The last act of faith, in the order of nature, is the soul's acquiescence in, and trust unto, this way of salvation for itself and its own eternal condition, with a renunciation of all other ways and means for that end. And because Jesus Christ, in his person, mediation, and righteousness, is the life and center of this way, as he in whom alone God will glorify his wisdom, love, grace, and mercy, — as he who has purchased, procured, and wrought all this salvation for us, —

whose righteousness is imputed unto us for our justification, and who in the discharge of his office does actually bestow it upon us, — he is the proper and immediate object of faith, in this act of trust and affiance. This is that which is called in the Scripture believing in Christ, — namely, the trusting unto him alone for life and salvation, as the whole of divine wisdom and grace is administered by him unto these ends. For this we come unto him, we receive him, we believe in him, we trust him, we abide in him; with all those other ways whereby our faith in him is expressed.

And this is the second ground or reason whereon faith does close with, embrace, and approve of God's way of saving sinners; whereby it will evidence itself, unto the comfort of them in whom it is, in the midst of all their trials and temptations.

Thirdly, Faith approves of this way, as that which makes the glory of God, in the giving and the sanction of the law, to be as eminently conspicuous as if it had been perfectly fulfilled by every one of us in our own persons. The law was a just representation of the righteousness and holiness of God; and the end for which it was given was, that it might be the means and instrument of the eternal exaltation of his glory in these holy properties of his nature.

Let no man imagine that God has laid aside this law, as a thing of no more use; or that he will bear a diminution of that glory, or any part of it, which he designed in the giving of it. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but no jot or little of the law shall do so. No believer can desire, or be pleased with, his own salvation, unless the glory of God designed by the law be secured. He cannot desire that God should forego any part of his glory that he might be saved. Yea, this is that on the account whereof he principally rejoices in his own salvation, — namely, that it is that wherein God will be absolutely, universally, and eternally glorified.

Now, in this way of saving sinners by Jesus Christ, by mercy, pardon, and the righteousness of another (of all which the law knows nothing), faith does see and understand how all that glory which God designed in the giving of the law is eternally secured and preserved entire, without eclipse or diminution. The way whereby this is done is declared in the gospel. See Romans 3:24-26 | 8:2-4; 10:3, 4. Hereby faith is enabled to answer all the challenges and charges of the law, with all its pleas for the vindication of divine justice, truth and holiness; it has that to offer which gives it the utmost satisfaction in all its pleas for God: so is this answer managed, Romans 8:32-34.

And this is the first way whereby the faith of God's elect does evidence itself in the minds and consciences of them that do believe, in the midst of all their contests with sin, their trials and temptations, to their relief and comfort, — namely, the closing with, and approbation of, God's way of saving sinners by Jesus Christ, on the grounds and reasons which have been declared.

## II

### The second evidence of the faith of God's elect

The second way whereby true faith does evidence itself in the souls and consciences of believers, unto their supportment and comfort under all their conflicts with sin, in all their trials and temptations, is by a constant approbation of the revelation of the will of God in the Scripture concerning our holiness, and the obedience unto himself which he requires of us. This faith will never forego, whatever trials it may undergo, whatever darkness the mind may fall into; this it will abide by in all extremities. And that it may appear to be a peculiar effect or work of saving faith, some things are to be premised and considered: —

1. There is in all men by nature a light enabling them to judge of the difference that is between what is morally good and what is evil, especially in things of more than ordinary importance. This light is not attained or acquired by us; we are not taught it, we do not learn it: it is born with us, and inseparable from us; it prevents [exists previously to] consideration and reflection, working naturally, and in a sort necessarily, in the first acting of our souls.

And the discerning power of this light, as to the moral nature of men's actions, is accompanied inseparably with a judgment that they make concerning themselves as unto what they do of the one kind or other, and that with respect unto the superior judgment of God about the same things. This the apostle expressly ascribes unto the Gentiles, who had not the law, Romans 2:14, 15: "The Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another." This is a most exact description of a natural conscience, in both the powers of it; it discerns that good and evil which is commanded and

forbidden in the law, and it passes an acquitting or condemning judgment and sentence, according to what men have done.

Wherefore, this approbation of duties in things moral is common unto all men. The light whereby it is guided may be variously improved, as it was in some of the Gentiles; and it may be stifled in some, until it seem to be quite extinguished, until they become like the beasts that perish. And where the discerning power of this light remains, yet, through a continual practice of sin and obduracy therein, the judging power of it as unto all its efficacy may be lost: so the apostle declares concerning them who are judicially hardened and given up unto sin, Romans 1:32, “These, knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.” They still discern what is evil and sinful, and know what is the judgment of God conceding such things; but yet the love of sin and custom in sinning do so far prevail in them, as to contemn both their own light and God’s judgment, so as to delight in what is contrary unto them. These the apostle describes, Ephesians 4:19, “Being past feeling” (all sense of convictions), “they have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness;” such as the world is filled withal at this day.

This is not that approbation of obedience which we inquire after; it is, in some measure, in the worst of men, nor has it any likeness unto that duty of faith which we treat of, as will immediately appear.

2. There is a farther knowledge of good and evil by the law, and this is also accompanied with a judgment acquitting or condemning; for the law has the same judging power and authority over men that their own consciences have, — namely, the authority of God himself. The law is to sinners as the tree of knowledge of good and evil, — it opens their eyes to see the nature of what they have done; for “by the law is the knowledge of sin,” Romans 3:20: and so is the knowledge of duty also; for it is the adequate rule of

all duty. There is, I say, a knowledge and conviction of duty and sin communicated unto men by the law, and those far more clear and distinct than what is or can be found in men from the mere light of nature; for it extends to more instances, that being generally lost where it is alone, as unto many important duties and sins; and it declares the nature of every sin and duty far more clearly than natural light of itself can do.

And this knowledge of good and evil by the law may be so improved in the minds of men as to press them unto a performance of all known duties, and an abstinence from all known sins, with a judgment on them all. But yet herein does not consist that approbation of holiness and obedience which faith will produce; for, —

- (1.) As unto approbation or condemnation of good or evil: that which is by the law is particular, or has respect unto particular duties and sins, according as occasion does present them; and extends not unto the whole law absolutely, and all that is required in it. I do not say it is always partial; there is a legal sincerity that may have respect unto all known duties and sins, though it be very rare. Hardly shall we find a person merely under the power of the law, who does not evidence an indulgence unto some sin, and a neglect of some duties: but such a thing there may be; it was in Paul, in his pharisaism, — he was, “touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless,” Philippians 3:6. He allowed not himself in any known sin, nor in the neglect of any known duty; nor could others charge him with any defect therein, — he was blameless. But where this is, still this approbation or condemnation is particular, — that is, they do respect particular duties and sins as they do occur; there is not a respect in them unto the whole righteousness and holiness of the law, as we shall see. Wherefore, a man may approve of every duty in its season as it is offered unto him, or when at any time he thinks of it by an act of his fixed judgment; and so, on the contrary, as unto sin; and yet come short of that

approbation of holiness and righteousness which we inquire after.

- (2.) It is not accompanied with a love of the things themselves that are good, as they are so, and a hatred of the contrary; for the persons in whom it is do not, cannot, “delight in the law of God after the inward man,” as Romans 7:22, so as to approve of it, and all that is contained in it, cleaving to them with love and delight. They may have a love for this or that duty, and a hatred of the contrary, but it is on various considerations, suited unto their convictions and circumstances; but it is not on the account of its formal nature, as good or evil. Wherefore, —
- (3.) No man, without the light of saving faith, can constantly and universally approve of the revelation of the will of God, as unto our holiness and obedience.

To make this evident, which is the foundation of our present discovery of the acting of saving faith, we must consider, —

[1.] What it is that is to be approved.

[2.] What this approbation is, or wherein it does consist: —

[1.] That which is to be approved is the holiness and obedience which God requires in us, our natures, and actions, and accepts from us, or accepts in us. It is not particular duties as they occur unto us, taken alone and by themselves, but the universal correspondence of our natures and actions unto the will of God. The Scripture gives us various descriptions of it, because of the variety of graces and gracious operations which concur therein. We may here mention some of its principal concerns, having handled the nature of it at large elsewhere; for it may be considered, —



- 1st. As unto its foundation, spring, and causes: and this is the universal renovation of our natures into the image of God, Ephesians 4:24; or the change of our whole souls, in all their faculties and powers, into his likeness, whereby we become new creatures, or the workmanship of God created in Christ Jesus unto good works, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Ephesians 2:10; wherein we are originally and formally sanctified throughout, in our “whole spirit, and soul, and body,” 1 Thessalonians 5:23. It is the whole law of God written in our hearts, transforming them into the image of the divine holiness, represented therein. And this, next unto the blood of Christ and his righteousness, is the principal spring of peace, rest, and complacency, in and unto the souls of believers: it is their joy and satisfaction to find themselves restored unto a likeness and conformity unto God, as we shall see farther immediately. And where there is not some gracious sense and experience hereof, there is nothing but disorder and confusion in the soul; nothing can give it a sweet composure, a satisfaction in itself, a complacency with what it is, but a spiritual sense of this renovation of the image of God in it.
  
- 2ndly. It may be considered as unto its permanent principle in the mind and affections; and this, because of its near relation unto Christ, its conjunction with him, and derivation from him, is sometimes said to be Christ himself. Hence we live, yet not so much we as Christ lives in us, Galatians 2:20; for “without him we can do nothing,” John 15:5; for “he is our life,” Colossians 3:4. As it resides in believers, it is a permanent principle of spiritual life, light, love,

and power, acting in the whole soul and all the faculties of the mind, enabling them to cleave unto God with purpose of heart, and to live unto him in all the acts and duties of spiritual life: this is that whereby the Holy Ghost is “in them a well of water, springing up into everlasting life,” John 4:14. It is the spirit that is born of the Spirit; it is the divine nature, whereof we are made partakers by the promises; it is a principle of victorious faith and love, with all graces any way requisite unto duties of holy obedience; as to the matter or manner of their performance, enabling the soul unto all the acts of the life of God, with delight, joy, and complacency.

This it is in its nature. However, as unto degrees of its operation and manifestation, it may be very low and weak in some true believers, at least for a season; but there are none who are really so, but there is in them a spiritually vital principle of obedience, or of living unto God, that is participant of the nature of that which we have described; and if it be attended unto, it will evidence itself in its power and operations unto the gracious refreshment and satisfaction of the soul wherein it is. And there are few who are so destitute of those evidences but that they are able to say, “Whereas I was blind, now I see, though I know not how my eyes were opened; whereas I was dead, I find motions of a new life in me, in breathing after grace, in hungering and thirsting after righteousness, though I know not how I was quickened.”

3rdly. It may be considered as unto its disposition, inclinations, and motions. These are the first acting of a vital principle; as the first acting of sin

are called “the motions of sin” working in our members, Romans 7:5. Such motions and inclinations unto obedience do work in the minds of believers, from this principle of holiness; it produces in them a constant, invariable disposition unto all duties of the life of God. It is a new nature, and a nature cannot be without suitable inclinations and motions; and this new spiritual disposition consists in a constant complacency of mind in that which is good and according to the will of God, in an adherence by love unto it, in a readiness and fixedness of mind with respect unto particular duties. In brief, it is that which David describes in the 119th Psalm throughout, and that which is figuratively foretold concerning the efficacy of the grace of the gospel in changing the natures and dispositions of those that are partakers of it, Isaiah 11:6-8.

This every believer may ordinarily find in himself; for although this disposition may be variously weakened, opposed, interrupted by indwelling sin, and the power of temptation; though it may be impaired by a neglect of the stirring up and exercise of the principle of spiritual life, in all requisite graces, on all occasions; yet it will still be working in them, and will fill the mind with a constant displicency with itself, when it is not observed, followed, improved. No believer shall ever have peace in his own mind, who has not some experience of a universal disposition unto all holiness and godliness in his mind and soul: herein consists that love of the law, of which it is said those in whom it is have “great peace, and nothing shall

offend them,” Psalm 119:165; it is that wherein their souls find much complacency.

4thly. It may be considered with respect unto all the acts, duties, and works, internal and external, wherein our actual obedience does consist. Being, on the principles mentioned, made free from sin, and becoming the servants of God, believers herein have their “fruit unto holiness,” whereof “the end is everlasting life,” Romans 6:22. This I need not stay to describe. Sincerity in every duty, and universality with respect unto all duties, are the properties of it.

“This is the will of God, even your sanctification,” 1 Thessalonians 4:3; that “holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord,” Hebrews 12:14; “that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God” which we are to approve, Romans 12:2.

[2.] Our next inquiry is, what is that approbation of this way of holiness which we place as an evidence of saving faith? And I say, it is such as arises from experience, and is accompanied with choice, delight, and acquiescence; it is the acting of the soul in a delightful adherence unto the whole will of God; it is a resolved judgment of the beauty and excellency of that holiness and obedience which the gospel reveals and requires, and that on the grounds which shall be immediately declared, and the nature thereof therein more fully opened.

This approbation cannot be in any unregenerate person, who is not under the conduct of saving faith, who is destitute of the light of it. So the apostle assures us, Romans 8:7, “The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can

be.” Whatever work it may have wrought in it, or upon it, yet, whilst it is carnal or unrenewed, it has a radical enmity unto the law of God; which is the frame of heart which stands in direct opposition unto this approbation. It may think well of this or that duty, from its convictions and other considerations, and so attend unto their performance; but the law itself, in the universal holiness which it requires, it does utterly dislike: those in whom it is are “alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them,” Ephesians 4:18. This life of God is that holiness and obedience which he requires of us in their principles and duties; and to be alienated from it is to dislike and disapprove of it: and such is the frame of mind in all unregenerate persons.

Having thus prepared the way, I return unto the declaration and confirmation of the assertion, namely, —

Treat true and saving faith, in all storms and temptations, in all darkneses and distresses, will evidence itself unto the comfort and supportment of them in whom it is, by a constant, universal approbation of the whole will of God, concerning our holiness and obedience, both in general and in every particular instance of it.

We may a little explain it: —

1. Faith will not suffer the mind, on any occasion or temptation, to entertain the least dislike of this way of holiness, or of any thing that belongs unto it. The mind may sometimes, through temptations, fall under apprehensions that one shall be eternally ruined for want of a due compliance with it; this makes it displeased with itself, but not with the obedience required. Romans 7:10, 12, “The commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death; but the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.” “However it be with me, whatever becomes of me, though I die and perish, yet the law is holy, just, and good.” It dislikes nothing in the will of God, though it cannot attain unto a

compliance with it. Sometimes the conscience is under perplexities and rebukes for sin; sometimes the mind is burdened by the tergiversation of the flesh unto duties that are cross unto its inclinations and interests; sometimes the world threatens the utmost dangers unto the performance of some duties of religion: but none of these are able to provoke the soul that is under the conduct of faith to dislike, to think hard of, any of those ways and duties whence these difficulties arise. And, —

2. As it will not dislike any thing in this way of holiness, so it will not desire on any occasion that there should be any alteration in it, or any abatement of it, or of any thing required in it. Naaman the Syrian liked well of the worship of the true God in general; but he would have an abatement of duty as to one instance, in compliance with his earthly interest, which discovered his hypocrisy. Such imaginations may befall the minds of men, that if they might be excused, in this or that instance, unto duties that are dangerous and troublesome (like profession in the times of persecution), or might be indulged in this or that sin, which either their inclinations are very prone unto, or their secular interest do call for, they should do well enough with all other things. Accordingly, the practice of many does answer their inclination and desire. They will profess religion and obedience unto God, but will keep back part of the price; — will hide a wedge in their tents, through indulgence unto some corruption, or dislike of some duties in their circumstances: they would give unto themselves the measure of their obedience. And according as men's practice is, so do they desire that things indeed should be, that that practice should please God which pleased them. This faith abhors; the soul that is under the conduct of it is not capable of any one desire that any thing were otherwise than it is in the will of God concerning our holiness and obedience, no more than it can desire that God should not be what he is. No; though any imagination should arise in it, that by some change and abatement in some instances it might be saved, which now is uncertain whether that be so or no, it will admit of no such composition, but will choose to stand or fall unto the entire will of God.

We shall therefore, in the next place, proceed to inquire on what grounds it is that faith does thus approve of the whole will of God, as unto our holiness and obedience; as also, how it evidences itself so to do. And these grounds are two: — the one respecting God; the other, our own souls.

First, Faith looks on the holiness required of us as that which is suited unto the holiness of God himself, — as that which it is meet for him to require, on the account of his own nature, and the infinite perfections thereof. The rule is, “Be ye holy, for I the LORD your God am holy;” — “I require that of you which becomes and answers my own holiness; because I am holy, it is necessary that you should be so; if you are mine in a peculiar manner, your holiness is that which becomes my holiness to require.”

We have before declared what this gospel holiness is, wherein it does consist, and what is required thereunto; — and they may be all considered either as they are in us, inherent in us, and performed by us; or as they are in themselves, in their own nature, and in the will of God. In the first way, I acknowledge that, by reason of our weaknesses, imperfections, and partial renovation only, as to degrees, in this life, with our manifold defects and sins, they make not a clear representation of the holiness of God; however, they are the best image of it, even as in the meanest of believers, that this world can afford. But in themselves, and their own nature, as it lies in the will of God, they make up the most glorious representation of himself that God ever did or will grant in this world; especially if we comprise therein the exemplification of it in the human nature of Christ himself: for the holiness that is in believers is of the same nature and kind with that which was and is in Jesus Christ, though his exceed theirs inconceivably in degrees of perfection.

Wherefore we are required to be holy, as the Lord our God is holy; and perfect, as our heavenly Father is perfect: which we could not be, but that in our holiness and perfection there is a resemblance and answerableness unto the holiness and perfection of God. And if a due sense hereof were continually upon our hearts, it would influence us unto greater care and diligence in all instances of duty and sin than, for the most part, we do

attain unto and preserve. If we did on all occasions sincerely and severely call ourselves to an account whether our frames, ways, and actions bear a due resemblance unto the holiness and perfections of God, it would be a spiritual preservative on all occasions.

Faith, I say, then, discerns the likeness of God in this holiness, and every part of it, — sees it as that which becomes him to require; and thereon approves of it, reverencing God in it all: and it does so in all the parts of it, in all that belongs unto it.

1. It does so principally in the inward form of it, which we before described, — in the new creature, the new nature, the reparation of the image of God that is in it: in the beauty hereof it continually beholds the likeness and glory of God. For it is created “kata Theon”, — according unto God, after him, or in his image, — “in righteousness and true holiness,” Ephesians 4:24. “The new man is renewed after the image of him that created him,” Colossians 3:10.

When God first created all things, the heavens and the earth, with all that is contained in them, he left such footsteps and impressions of his infinite wisdom, goodness, and power, on them, that they might signify and declare his perfection, — his eternal power and Godhead; yet did he not, he is not said to have created them in his own image. And this was because they were only a passive representation of him in the light of others, and not in themselves; nor did they represent at all that wherein God will be principally glorified among his creatures, — namely, the universal rectitude of his nature in righteousness and holiness. But of man it is said, peculiarly and only, that he was made in the image and likeness of God: and this was because, in the rectitude of his nature, he represented the holiness and righteousness of God; which is the only use of an image. This was lost by sin. Man in his fallen condition does no more represent God; there is nothing in him that has any thing of the likeness or image of God in it; all is dead, dark, perverse, and confused. This new nature, whereof we speak, is created of God for this very end, that it may



be a blessed image and representation of the holiness and righteousness of God. Hence it is called the “divine nature,” whereof we are partakers, 2 Peter 1:4. And he that cannot see a representation of God in it, has not the light of faith and life in him.

Hereon, I say, faith does approve of the form and principle of this holiness, as the renovation of the image of God in us; it looks upon it as that which becomes God to bestow and require, and therefore that which has an incomparable excellency and desirableness in it. Yea, when the soul is ready to faint under an apprehension that it is not partaker of this holy nature, because of the power of sin in it and temptations on it, it knows not whether itself be born of God or no (as is the case with many); — yet where this faith is, it will discern the beauty and glory of the new creation in some measure, as that which bears the image of God; and thereon does it preserve in the soul a longing after it, or a farther participation of it.

By this work or act of it does faith discover its sincerity; which is that which we inquire after. Whilst it has an eye open to behold the glory of God in the new creature, whilst it looks on it as that wherein there is a representation made of the holiness of God himself, as that which becomes him to require in us, and thereon approves of it as excellent and desirable, it will be an anchor unto the soul in its greatest storms; for this is a work beyond what a mere enlightened conscience can arise unto. That can approve or disapprove of all the acts and effects of obedience and disobedience, as unto their consequent; but to discern the spiritual nature of the new creature, as representing the holiness of God himself, and thereon constantly to approve of it, is the work [of faith] alone.

2. It does the same with respect unto the internal acts and effects of this new creature, or principle of new obedience. The first thing it produces in us is a frame of mind spiritual and heavenly; they that are after the Spirit are “spiritually-minded,” Romans 8:5, 6. It

looks on the opposite frame, namely, of being carnally-minded, as vile and loathsome; it consisting in a readiness and disposition of mind to actuate the lusts of the flesh. But this spiritual frame of mind, in a just constellation of all the graces of the Spirit, influencing, disposing, and making ready the soul for the exercise of them on all occasions, and in all duties of obedience, — this is the inward glory of the “King’s daughter,” which faith sees and approves of, as that which becomes God to require in us; whatever is contrary hereunto, as a sensual, carnal, worldly frame of mind, it looks on as vile and base, unworthy of God, or of those who design the enjoyment of him.

3. It does the same with respect unto all particular duties, internal and external, when they are enlivened and filled up with grace. In them consists our “walking worthy at God,” Colossians 1:10; 1 Thessalonians 2:12, such a walk as is meet for God to accept; that whereby and wherein he is glorified. The contrary hereunto, in the neglect of the duties of holiness, or the performance of them without the due exercise of grace, faith looks on as unworthy of God, unworthy of our high and holy calling, unworthy of our profession, and therefore does constantly condemn and abhor.

All this, as we observed before, faith will continue to do constantly, under temptations and desertions. There are seasons wherein the soul may be very weak, as unto the powers, effects, and duties of this spiritual life; such the psalmist oftentimes complains of in his own case, and it is evident in the experience of most. Few there are who have not found, at one time or another, great weakness, decays, and much deadness in their spiritual condition. And sometimes true believers may be at a loss as unto any refreshing experience of it in its operations. They may not be able to determine in the contest whether sin or grace have the dominion in them. Yet even in all these seasons faith will keep up the soul unto a constant high approbation of this way of holiness and obedience, in its root and fruits, in its principle and effects, in its nature, disposition, and duties. For when they cannot see the beauty of these things in themselves, they can see it in the

promises of the covenant, in the truth of the gospel, wherein it is declared, and in the effects of it in others.

And great advantage is to be obtained by the due exercise of faith herein. For, —

- (1.) It will never suffer the heart to be at rest in any sinful way, or under any such spiritual decays as shall estrange it from the pursuit of this holiness. The sight, the conviction of its excellency, the approbation of it, as that which in us and our measure answers the holiness of God, will keep up the mind unto endeavors after it, will rebuke the soul in all its neglects of it; nor will it allow any quiet or peace within, without an endeavor after a comfortable assurance of it. That soul is desperately sick which has lost an abiding sense of the excellency of this holiness, in its answerableness unto the holiness and will of God. Fears and checks of conscience are the whole of its security against the worst of sins; and they are a guard not to be trusted unto in the room of the peace of God. This is one great difference between believers and those that have not faith. Fear of the consequent of sin, with an apprehension of some advantages which are to be obtained by a sober life and the profession of religion, do steer and regulate the minds of unbelievers, in all they do towards God or for eternity; but the minds of believers are influenced by a view of the glory of the image and likeness of God in that holiness, and all the parts of it, which they are called unto. This gives them love unto it, delight and complacency in it, enabling them to look upon it as its own reward. And without these affections none will ever abide in the ways of obedience unto the end.
- (2.) Where faith is in this exercise, it will evidence itself, unto the relief of the soul, in all its darkness and temptations. The mind can never conclude that it wholly is without God and his grace, whilst it constantly approves of the holiness required of us. This is not of ourselves; by nature we are

ignorant of it. This “life is hid with Christ in God,” Colossians 3:3, where we can see nothing of it; hereon we are alienated from it, and do dislike it: “Alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in us,” Ephesians 4:18. And most men live all their days in a contempt of the principal evidences and duties of this life of God, and of the principle of it, which they look on as a fable. Wherefore, the mind may have great satisfaction in a sight of the beauty and approbation of this holiness, as that which nothing can produce but sincere and saving faith.

Secondly, Faith approves of this way of holiness and obedience, as that which gives that rectitude and perfection unto our nature whereof it is capable in this world. It is the only rule and measure of them; and whatever is contrary thereunto is perverse, crooked, vile, and base. Some men think that their nature is capable of no other perfection but what consists in the satisfaction of their lusts; they know no other blessedness, nothing that is suitable to their desires, but the saving of nature, in the pursuit of its corrupt lusts and pleasures. So are they described by the apostle, Ephesians 4:19. The business of their lives is to make provision for the flesh, to fulfill it in the lusts thereof; they walk in the lusts of the flesh, “fulfilling” (so far as they are able) “the desires of the flesh and of the mind,” Ephesians 2:3. They neither know nor understand what a hell of confusion, disorder, and base degeneracy from the original constitution, their minds are filled withal. This perfection is nothing but the next disposition unto hell; and it does manifest its own vileness unto every one who has the least ray of spiritual light.

Some among the heathen placed the rectitude of nature in moral virtues and operations, according unto them; and this was the utmost that natural light could ever rise up unto: but the uncertainty and weakness hereof are discovered by the light of the gospel.

It is faith alone that discovers what is good for us, in us, and unto us, whilst we are in this world. It is in the renovation of the image of God in us, — in the change and transformation of our nature into his likeness, — in acting from a gracious principle of a divine life, — in duties and

operations suited thereunto, — in the participation of the divine nature by the promises, — that the good, the perfection, the order, the present blessedness of our nature do consist.

Hereby are the faculties of our souls exalted, elevated, and enabled to act primigenial powers, with respect unto God and our enjoyment of him; which is our utmost end and blessedness. Hereby are our affections placed on their proper objects (such as they were created meet for, and in closing wherewith their satisfaction, order, and rest do consist), — namely, God and his goodness, or God as revealed in Jesus Christ by the gospel.

Hereby all the powers of our souls are brought into a blessed frame and harmony in all their operations, — whatever is dark, perverse, unquiet, vile, and base, being cast out of them. But these things must be a little more distinctly explained.

1. There is in this gospel holiness, as the spring and principle of it, a spiritual, saving light, enabling the mind and understanding to know God in Christ, and to discern spiritual things in a spiritual, saving manner; for herein “God shines into our hearts, to give us the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ,” 2 Corinthians 4:6. Without this, in some degree, whatever pretense there may be or appearance of holiness in any, there is nothing in them of what is really so, and thereon accepted with God. Blind devotion, — that is, an inclination of mind unto religious duties, destitute of this light, — will put men on a multiplication of duties, especially such as are of their own invention, in “a show of wisdom in will-worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body,” as the apostle speaks, Colossians 2:23; wherein there is nothing of gospel holiness.

“The new man is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him,” Colossians 3:10. That this saving light and knowledge is the spring and principle of all real evangelical holiness and obedience, the apostle declares in that description which he gives us of the whole of it, both in its beginning and progress, Colossians 1:9-11, “We desire that ye might be filled

with the knowledge of his will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long suffering with joyfulness.” It is a blessed account that is here given us of that gospel holiness which we inquire after, in its nature, original, spring, progress, fruits, and effects; and a serious consideration of it as here proposed, — a view of it in the light of faith, — will evidence how distant and different it is from those schemes of moral virtues which some would substitute in its room. It has a glory in it which no unenlightened mind can behold or comprehend; the foundation of it is laid in the knowledge of the will of God, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. This is that spiritual, saving light whereof we speak; the increase hereof is prayed for in believers by the apostle, Hebrews 1:17, 18, even “that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, would give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints;” which here is called “increasing in the knowledge of God,” verse 10. The singular glory of this saving light, in its original, its causes, use, and effects, is most illustriously here declared: and this light is in every true believer, and is the only immediate spring of all gospel holiness and obedience; for “the new man is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him,” Colossians 3:10.

This light, this wisdom, this spiritual understanding, thus communicated unto believers, is the rectitude and perfection of their minds in this world. It is that which gives them order, and peace, and power, enabling them to act all their faculties in a due manner, with respect unto their being and end. It is that which gives beauty and glory to the inward man, and which constitutes a believer an inhabitant of the kingdom of light, — whereby we are “delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the

kingdom of the Son of God's love," Colossians 1:13; or "out of darkness into his marvelous light," 1 Peter 2:9.

That which is contrary hereunto, is that ignorance, darkness, blindness, and vanity, which the Scripture declares to be in the minds of all unregenerate persons; and they are really so, where they are not cured by the glorious working of the power and grace of God before mentioned.

Now, faith discerns these things, as the spiritual man discerns all things, 1 Corinthians 2:15. It sees the beauty of this heavenly light, and judges that it is that which gives order and rectitude unto the mind; as also, that that which is contrary unto it is vile, base, horrid, and to be ashamed of. As for those who "love darkness more than light, because their deeds are evil," — it knows them to be strangers unto Christ and his gospel.

2. Again: there is required unto this holiness, a principle of spiritual life and love unto God. This guides, acts, and rules in the soul, in all its obedience; and it gives the soul its proper order in all its operations: that which is contrary hereunto is death, and enmity against God. Faith judges between these two principles and their operations: the former in all its acting it approves of as lovely, beautiful, desirable, as that which is the rectitude and perfection of the will: and the other it looks on as deformed, froward, and perverse.
3. The like may be said of its nature and operations in the affections, as also of all those duties of obedience which proceed from it, as it is described in the place before mentioned. It remains only that we show by what acts, ways, and means, faith does evidence this its approbation of gospel holiness, as that which is lovely and desirable in itself, and which gives all that rectitude and perfection unto our minds which they are capable of in this world. And it does so, —

1. By that self-displicity and abasement which it works in the mind on all instances and occasions where it comes short of this holiness. This is the chief principle and cause of that holy shame which befalls believers on every sin and miscarriage, wherein they come short of what is required in it: Romans 6:21, "Those things whereof ye are now ashamed." Now when, by the light of faith, you see how vile it is, and unworthy of you, what a debasement of your souls there is in it, you are ashamed of it. It is true, the principal cause of this holy shame is a sense of the unsuitableness that is in sin unto the holiness of God, and the horrible ingratitude and disingenuity that there is in sinning against him; but it is greatly promoted by this consideration, that it is a thing unworthy of us, and that wherein our natures are exceedingly debased. So it is said of provoking sinners, that they "debase themselves even unto hell," Isaiah 57:9; or make themselves as vile as hell itself, by ways unworthy the nature of men. And this is one ground of all those severe self reflections which accompany godly sorrow for sin, 2 Corinthians 7:11.

And hereby does faith evidence itself and its own sincerity, whilst a man is ashamed of, and abased in, himself for every sin, for every thing of sin, wherein it comes short of the holiness required of us, as that which is base and unworthy of our nature, in its present constitution and renovation; though it be that which no eye sees but God's and his own, he has that in him which will grow on no root but sincere believing. Wherefore, whatever may be the disquieting conflicts of sin in and against our souls, whatever decays we may fall into, — which be the two principles of darkness and fears in believers, whilst this inward holy shame and self-abasement, on account of the vileness of sin, is preserved, faith leaves not itself without an evidence in us.

2. It does the same by a spiritual satisfaction, which it gives the soul in every experience of the transforming power of this holiness, rendering it more and more like unto God. There is a secret joy and spiritual refreshment rising in the soul from a sense of its renovation into the image of God; and all the acting and increases



of the life of God in it augment this joy. Herein consists its gradual return unto its primitive order and rectitude, with a blessed addition of supernatural light and grace by Christ Jesus; it finds itself herein coming home to God from its old apostasy, in the way of approaching to eternal rest and blessedness: and there is no satisfaction like unto that which it receives therein.

This is the second way wherein faith will abide firm and constant, and does evidence itself in the soul of every believer. However low and mean its attainments be in this spiritual life and the fruits of it, though it be overwhelmed with darkness and a sense of the guilt of sin, though it be surprised and perplexed with the deceit and violence thereof, yet faith will continue here firm and unshaken. It sees that glory and excellency in the holiness and obedience that God requires of us, — as it is a representation of his own glorious excellencies, the renovation of his image, and the perfection of our natures thereby, — as that it constantly approves of it, even in the deepest trials which the soul can be exercised withal; and whilst this anchor holds firm and stable we are safe.

## III

### The third evidence of the faith of God's elect

Thirdly, Faith will evidence itself by a diligent, constant endeavor to keep itself and all grace in due exercise in all ordinances of divine worship, private and public.

This is the touchstone of faith and spiritual obedience, the most intimate and difficult part of this exercise; where this is not, there is no life in the soul. There are two things whereby men do or may deceive themselves herein: —

1. Abounding in the outward performance of duties or a multiplication of them. Hereby hypocrites have in all ages deceived themselves, Isaiah 58:2, 3. And it was the covering that the church of Rome provided for their apostasy from the gospel: an endless multiplication of religious duties was that which they trusted to and boasted in. And we may find those daily that pretend a conscience as unto the constant observation of outward duties, and yet will abstain from no sin that comes in the way of their lusts. And men may and do oftentimes abide constantly in them, especially in their families and in public, yea, multiply them beyond the ordinary measure, hoping to countenance themselves in other lusts and neglects thereby.
2. Assistance of gifts in the performance of them; but as this may be where there is not one dram of grace, saving grace, so when rested in, it is a most powerful engine to keep the soul in formality, to ruin all beginning of grace, and to bring an incurable hardness on the whole soul.

Wherever faith is in sincerity, it will constantly labor, endeavor, and strive to fill up all duties of divine worship with the living, real, heart acting of grace; and where it does not so, where this is not attained, it will never suffer the soul to take any rest or satisfaction in such duties, but will cast them away as a defiled garment. He that can pass through such duties

without a sensible endeavor for the real exercise of grace in them, and without self-abasement on the performance of them, will hardly find any other clear evidence of saving faith in himself.

There are three evils that have followed the ignorance, or neglect, or weariness of this exercise of faith, which have proved the ruin of multitudes: —

1. This has been the occasion and original of all false worship in the world, with the invention of those superstitious rites and ceremonies wherein it consists. For men having lost the exercise of faith in the ordinances of worship that are of divine institution, they found the whole of it to be useless and burdensome unto them; for without this constant exercise of faith there is no life in it, nor satisfaction to be obtained by it. They must, therefore, have something in it, or accompanying of it, which may entertain their minds, and engage their affections unto it. If this had not been done, it would have been utterly deserted by the most. Hereon were invented forms of prayer in great diversity, with continual diversions and avocations of the mind from what is proposed; because it cannot abide in the pursuit of any thing spiritual without the exercise of faith. This gives it some entertainment by the mere performance, and makes it think there is something where indeed is nothing. Hereunto are added outward ceremonies of vestments, postures, and gestures of veneration, unto the same end. There is no other design in them all but to entertain the mind and affections with some complacency and satisfaction in outward worship, upon the loss or want of that exercise of faith which is the life and soul of it in believers. And as any persons do decay herein, they shall find themselves insensibly sinking down into the use of these lifeless forms, or that exercise of their natural faculties and memory which is not one jot better; yea, by this means, some, from an eminency in spiritual gifts, and the performance of duties by virtue of them, have sunk into an Ave Maria or a Credo, as the best of their devotion.

2. This has caused many to turn aside, to fall off from and forsake the solemn ordinances of divine worship, and to retake themselves unto vain imaginations for relief, in trembling, enthusiastical singing and feigned raptures; from hence have so many forsaken their own mercies to follow after lying vanities. They kept for a while unto the observance of the divine institutions of worship; but not having faith to exercise in them, by which alone they are life and power, they became useless and burdensome unto them: they could find neither sweetness, satisfaction, nor benefit in them. It is not possible that so many in our days, if ever they had tasted of the old wine, should so go after new; — if ever they had experience of that savor, power, and life, which is in the ordinances of divine worship, when acted and enlivened by the exercise of faith, should forsake them for that which is nothing: “They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us.” “Had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.” This, therefore, is the true reason why so many in our days, after they have for a season abode under, and in the observation of, the gospel ordinances of worship, have fallen off from them, namely, not having faith to exercise in them, nor endeavoring after it, they did really find no life in them, nor benefit by them.
  
3. Some, on the same ground, fall into profaneness, pretending to take up with a natural religion, without any instituted worship at all. Of this sort of persons we have multitudes in the days wherein we live; having nothing of the light of faith, they can see no form or comeliness in Christ, nor in any thing that belongs unto him. By these means are souls every day precipitated into ruin.

Herein, therefore, I say, true faith will evidence itself in all darknesses and distress whatsoever: it will always endeavor to keep itself, and all other graces, in a due and constant exercise in all duties of worship, private and public. It may sometimes be weakened in its acting and operations, it may be under decays, it may be as a sleep, and that not only as unto particular duties and seasons, but as unto the inward habitual frame of the mind; but

where it is true and genuine, it will shake itself out of this dust, cast off the sin that does so easily beset us, and stir up itself, with all might and contention, unto its duty. And there is no more dangerous state for a soul than when it is sinking down into formality, and neglect of the exercise of faith, in a multitude of duties; then is it assuredly ready to die, if it be not dead already.

If we are wise, therefore, we will watch, and take care that we lose not this evidence of faith; it will stand us instead when, it may be, all other things seem to be against us. Some have been relieved by the remembrance of this exercise of faith, when they have been at the door of desperation: — such or such a season they had experience of the work of faith in prayer, has been their relief. An experience hereof is a jewel, which may be of no great use whilst it lies by you locked up in a cabinet, but which you will know the worth of if ever you come to need bread for your lives.

It is, therefore, worthwhile to inquire what we ought to do, or what means we ought to use, that we may keep up faith unto its due exercise in all the parts of divine worship, so as that it may give us a comforting evidence of itself in times of temptation and darkness? And unto this end the ensuing directions may be of use: —

1. Labor to have your hearts always affected with a due sense of the infinite perfections of the divine nature in all our approaches unto him, especially of his sovereign power, holiness, immensity, and omnipresence; and this will produce in us also a sense of infinite distance from him. As this is necessary, from the nature of the things themselves, so the Scripture gives us such descriptions of God as are suited to in generate this frame in us. This is that which Joshua aimed to bring the people unto, when he designed to engage them in the service of God in a due manner, Joshua 24:19-22; and that which the apostle requires in us, Hebrews 12:28, 29. And unto the same end glorious descriptions and appearances of God are multiplied in Scripture. If we fail herein, if we do not on all occasions fill our minds with reverential thoughts of God, his greatness and his holiness, faith has no foundation to stand upon in its exercise in the duties of worship. This is the

only inlet into the due exercise of grace: where it is wanting, all holy thoughts and affections are shut out of our minds; and where it is present, it is impossible but that there will be some gracious working of heart in all our duties. If we are empty hereof in our entrance of duties, we shall be sure to be filled with other things, which will be clogs and hindrances unto us; but reverential thoughts of God, in our approaches unto him, will cast out all superfluity of naughtiness, and dissipate all carnal, formal frames, which will vitiate all our duties. Keep your hearts, therefore, under this charge in all your accesses unto God, and it will constantly open a door unto that exercise of faith which we inquire after.

Hereon and herewith we shall be affected with a sense of our infinite distance from him; which is another means to stir up faith unto its due exercise in reverence and godly fear. So Abraham was affected, Genesis 18:27. [This is that] which the wise man directs us unto, Ecclesiastes 5:2.

Carnal boldness in the want of these things ruins the souls of men, rendering all their duties of worship unacceptable unto God, and unprofitable unto themselves.

2. Affect your hearts with a due sense of the unsuitableness of our best duties unto his holiness and majesty, and of his infinite condescension in the acceptance of them. Suppose there is in any of our duties the best and the most lively exercise of grace that we can attain unto, the most fervency in prayer, with the most diligent attendance of our minds the most humility and contrite trembling in hearing the word, the most devout affection of our minds in other parts of worship; alas! what is all this to God? How little does it answer his infinite holiness! See Job 4:18, 19; 15:15, 16. Our goodness extends not unto him, Psalm 16:2. There are no measures, there is no proportion, between the holiness of God and our best duties. There is iniquity in our holy things; they have need of mercy and pardon, of cleansing and justification, by the blood of Christ, no less than our persons: and an infinite

condescension it is in God to take any notice of us or them; yea, it is that which we must live in all holy admiration of all our days.

Now if it be thus with our best duties, in our best frames, what an outrage of sloth and negligence is it, if we bring the carcass of duties unto God, for want of stirring up faith unto its due exercise in them! How great is this folly, how unspeakable is the guilt of this negligence! Let us, therefore, keep a sense hereof upon our hearts, that we may always stir up ourselves unto our best in duties of religious worship. For, —

3. A negligence herein, or the want of stirring up faith unto a due exercise in all duties of worship, is the highest affront we can put upon God, arguing a great regardlessness of him. Whilst it is so with us, we have not, we cannot have, a due sense of any of the divine perfections, of the divine nature; we turn God what lies in us into an idol, supposing that he may be put off with the outside and appearance of things. This the apostle cautions us against, Hebrews 4:12, 13, and [is that] which God detests, Isaiah 29:13; and he pronounces him a deceiver, and cursed, who offers unto him the lame and blind while he has a male in the flock, Malachi 1:14. Yet thus is it with us, in some degree, whenever we are negligent in stirring up faith into its proper exercise in holy duties: that alone renders them the male of the flock; without it they are lame and blind, — a corrupt thing.

It is a sad thing for men to lose their duties, to be at charge and trouble in the multiplication of them, and attendance unto them to no purpose. Oh, how much more sad is it when they are all provocations of God's glory! when they tend to increase the formality and hardness of their hearts, towards the ruin of their souls!

“Stand in awe,” therefore, “and sin not; commune with your own hearts;” cease not, until on all occasions you bring them into that exercise of faith wherein you may glorify God as God, and not deal with him as an idol.

4. Unto the same end, keep your souls always deeply affected with a sense of the things about which you are to treat with God in all the duties of his worship. They are referred unto two heads: —

(1.) Those which concern his glory;

(2.) Those which concern our own souls.

Without a constant due sense of these things on our hearts, faith will not act itself aright in any of our duties. Without this intimate concern and deep sense, we know not whether we need faith in our prayers, or have an exercise of it; formality will drown all. The best of our prayers is but an expression unto God of what sense we have of these things. If we have none, we pray not at all, whatever we say or do; but when these things dwell in our minds, when we think on them continually, when our hearts cleave unto them, faith will be at work in all our approaches to God. Can you not pray? Charge your hearts with these things, and you will learn so to do.

5. Watch diligently against those things which ye find by experience are apt to obstruct your fervency in duties. Such are indispositions through the flesh, or weariness of the flesh, distracting, foolish imaginations, the occasions of life revolving in our minds, and the like. If such impediments as these be not removed, if they be not watched against, they will influence the mind, and suffocate the exercise of faith therein.
6. Above all, the principal rule herein is, that we would always carefully remember the concernment of Christ in these duties, with respect unto his office. He is the high priest over the house of God; through him, and under his conduct, are we always to draw nigh to God; and his work it is to present the prayers and supplications of the church to God. Now, we have no way to come unto Christ, for his assistance in the discharge of his office on our behalf, but by faith; and in all our duties of holy worship



we make a profession of our doing so, — of our coming unto God by him as our high priest. If we endeavor not therein to have faith in exercise, how do we mock, or make a show to him of doing that which indeed we endeavor not to do! There can be no greater contempt of Christ in his office, nor greater undervaluation of his love. But a due consideration hereof, namely, of the concernment of Christ in all our duties, with respect unto the office which he discharges for us in heaven, — is that which directly leads faith into its proper exercise. For through him, and that in discharge of his office, we believe in God. And when the mind is exercised with due thoughts of him, if there be any thing of true saving faith in the heart, it will act itself unto a blessed experience.

These things may be of use to stir us up, and guide us unto that exercise of faith in all holy duties, an experience whereof abiding in the soul will evidence the truth of it, unto our supportment and comfort in all temptations and distresses.

Some, it may be, will say that their gift in prayer is mean and weak, — that they cannot express themselves with earnestness and fervency; and so know not whether there be any faith in exercise in their prayers or no. I answer, There is nothing at all herein; for grace may be very high where gifts are very low, and that frequently.

And it may be others will complain of the meanness of their gifts on whom they attend in prayer, which is such as they cannot accompany them in the exercise of any grace. I answer, —

1. There is no doubt but that there is a great difference in the spiritual gifts of men in this matter, some being much more effectual unto edification than others.
2. Take care that you are called in providence and duty to join with them whom you intend; that you do not first voluntarily choose that which is unto your disadvantage, and then complain of it.

3. Be their gifts never so mean, if grace in their own hearts be exercised by it, so it may be in ours: where there is no evidence thereof, I confess the case is hard.
4. Let the mind be still fixed on the matter or things uttered in prayer, so as to close with, and act faith about, what is real object of it, and it will find its proper work in that duty.

## IV

### The fourth evidence of the faith of God's elect

I come, in the next place, to instance in a peculiar way whereby true faith will evidence itself, — not always, but on some occasions: and this is by bringing the soul into a state of repentance. And three things must be spoken unto, —

1. In general, what I intend by this state of repentance.
2. What are the times and occasions, or who are the persons, wherein faith will act itself unto this end.
3. What are the duties required unto such a state.
  1. By this state of repentance I do not understand merely the grace and duty of evangelical repentance; for this is absolutely inseparable from true faith, and no less necessary unto salvation than itself. He that does not truly and really repent of sin, whatever he profess himself to believe, he is no true believer. But I intend now somewhat that is peculiar, that is not common unto all, whereby on some occasions faith does evidence its power and sincerity.

Neither yet do I mean a grace, duty, or state, that is of another kind or nature from that of gospel repentance, which is common to all believers. There are not two kinds of true repentance, nor two different states of them that are truly penitent; all that I intend is an eminent degree of gospel repentance, in the habit or root, and in all the fruits and effects of it. There are various degrees in the power and exercise of gospel graces, and some may be more eminent in one, and some in another: as Abraham and Peter in faith, David and John in love. And there may be causes and occasions for the greater and higher exercise of some graces and duties at one time than at another; for we are to attend unto

duties according unto our circumstances, so as we may glorify God in them, and advantage our own souls. So the apostle James directs us, chap.5:13, “Is any afflicted? Let him pray. Is any merry? Let him sing psalms.” Several states, and various circumstances in them, call for the peculiar exercise of several graces, and the diligent performance of several duties. And this is that which is here intended, — namely, a peculiar, constant, prevalent exercise of the grace and duties of repentance in a singular manner. What is required hereunto shall be afterwards declared.

2. As unto the persons in whom this is required, and in whom faith will evidence itself by it, they are of various sorts: —
  - (1.) Such as have been, by the power of their corruptions and temptations, surprised into great sins. That some true believers may be so, we have precedents both in the Old Testament and in the New; — such, I mean, as uncleanness, drunkenness, gluttony, theft, premeditated lying, oppression in dealing, and failing in profession in the time of persecution; this latter in the primitive church was never thought recoverable but by faith acting itself in a state of repentance. Such sins will have great sorrows; as we see in Peter, and the incestuous Corinthian, who was in danger to be “swallowed up with overmuch sorrow,” 2 Corinthians 2:7. Where it has been thus with any, true faith will immediately work for a recovery, by a thorough humiliation and repentance, as it did in Peter; and in case that any of them shall lie longer under the power of sin, through want of effectual convictions, it will cost them dear in the issue, as it did David. But in this case, for the most part, faith will not rest in the mere jointing again the bone that was broken, or with such a recovery as gives them peace with God and their own consciences; but by a just and due remembrance of the nature of their sin, its circumstances and aggravations, the shameful unkindness towards God that was in it, the grief of the Holy Spirit, and dishonor of Christ by it, it will incline and dispose the soul to

a humble, contrite frame, to a mournful walking, and the universal exercise of repentance all its days.

And, indeed, where it does not so, men's recovery from great sins is justly to be questioned as unto their sincerity. For want hereof it is that we have so many palliated cures of great sins, followed with fearful and dangerous relapses. If a man subject to great corruptions and temptations, has by them been surprised into great actual sins, and been seemingly recovered through humiliation and repentance, if he again break the yoke of this stated repentance whereof we speak, he will quickly again be overcome, and perhaps irrecoverably. Herein, he alone that walks softly, walks safely.

- (2.) It is necessary for such as have given scandal and offense by their miscarriages; this will stick very close unto any who has the least spark of saving faith. It is that which God is in a peculiar manner provoked with in the sins of his people; as in the case of David, 2 Samuel 12:14. So also Ezekiel 36:20; Romans 2:24. This keeps alive the remembrance of sin, and sets it before men continually, and is a spring, in a gracious soul, of all acts and duties of repentance. It was so in David all his days; and probably in Mary Magdalene also. Where it has been thus with any, faith will keep the soul in an humble and contrite frame, watchful against pride, elation of mind, carelessness, and sloth: it will recover godly sorrow and shame, with revenge, or self-reflection, in great abasement of mind; all which things belong to the state of repentance intended. They that can easily shake off a sense of scandal given by them, have very little of Christian ingenuity in their minds.
- (3.) It is so unto such as have perplexing lusts and corruptions, which they cannot so subdue but that they will be perplexing and defiling of them; for where there are such, they will, in conjunction with temptations, frequently disquiet, wound,

and defile the soul. This brings upon it weariness and outcries for deliverance, Romans 7:24. In this state faith will put the soul on prayer, watchfulness, diligence, in opposition unto the deceit and violence of sin. But this is not all; it will not rest here, but it will give the mind such a sense of its distressed, dangerous condition, as shall fill it constantly with godly sorrow, self-abasement, and all duties of repentance. No man can hold out in such a conflict, nor maintain his peace on right grounds, who does not live in the constant exercise of repentance, — indeed, who does not endeavor in some measure to come up unto that state of it which we shall afterwards describe. For men who have unnameable corruptions working continually in their minds, by imaginations, thoughts, and affections, to think to carry it in a general way of duties and profession, they will be mistaken if they look either for victory or peace; this sort of men are, of all others, most peculiarly called unto this state and duty.

- (4.) Such as would be found mourners for the sins of the age, place, and time wherein they live, with the consequent of them, in the dishonor of God, and the judgments which will ensue thereon. There are times wherein this is an especial and eminent duty, which God does highly approve of. Such are they wherein the visible church is greatly corrupted, and open abominations are found amongst men of all sorts; even as it is at this day. Then does the Lord declare how much he values the performance of this duty, — as he testifies, Ezekiel 9:4, they alone shall be under his especial care in a day of public distress and calamity, — a duty wherein it is to be feared that we are most of us very defective. Now, the frame of heart required hereunto cannot be attained, nor the duty rightly performed, without that state of repentance and humiliation which we inquire into. Without it we may have transient thoughts of these things, but such as will very little affect our minds; but where the soul is kept in a constant spiritual frame, it will be ready for this duty on all occasions.

- (5.) It becomes them who, having passed through the greatest part of their lives, do find all outward things to issue in vanity and vexation of spirit, as it was with Solomon when he wrote his Ecclesiastes. When a man recounts the various scenes and appearances of things which he has passed through in his life, and the various conditions he has been in, he may possibly find that there is nothing steady but sorrow and trouble. It may be so with some, I say, with some good men, with some of the best men, as it was with Jacob. Others may have received more satisfaction in their course; but if they also will look back, they shall find how little there has been in the best of their transient comforts; they will see enough to make them say, "There is nothing in these things; it is high time to take off all expectations from them." Such persons seem to be called unto this especial exercise of repentance and mourning for the remainder of their lives.
- (6.) Such as whose hearts are really wounded and deeply affected with the love of Christ, so as that they can hardly bear any longer absence from him, nor delight in the things wherein they are detained and kept out of his presence. This frame the apostle describes, 2 Corinthians 5:2, 4, 6, 8. They live in a groaning condition, thoroughly sensible of all the evils that accompany them in this absence of the Bridegroom; and they cannot but continually reflect upon the sins and follies which their lives have been and are filled withal, in this their distance from Christ. Whereas, therefore, their hearts are filled with inflamed affections towards him, they cannot but walk humbly and mournfully until they come unto him. It may be said that those who have experience of such affection unto the Lord Jesus cannot but have continual matter of joy in themselves; and so of all men have least need of such a state of constant humiliation and repentance. I say it is so indeed, they have such matter of joy; and therewith Christ will be formed in them more and more every day. But I say also, there is no inconsistency between spiritual joy in Christ and godly sorrow for sin; yea, no man in this life shall ever be

able to maintain solid joy in his heart, without the continual working of godly sorrow also; yea, there is a secret joy and refreshment in godly sorrow, equal unto the chiefest of our joys, and a great spiritual satisfaction.

These several sorts of persons, I say, are peculiarly called unto that exercise of faith in repentance which we inquire after.

Before I proceed to show wherein this state I intend does consist, and what is required thereunto (which is the last thing proposed),

I shall premise some rules for the right judging of ourselves with respect unto them. As, —

1. Faith will evidence its truth (which is that we inquire after) in its sincere endeavor after the things intended, though its attainments as unto some of them be but mean and low; yea, a sense of its coming short in a full answering of them or compliance with them, is a great ingredient in that state called unto. If, therefore, faith keep up this design in the soul, with a sincere pursuit of it, though it fail in many things, and is not sensible of any great progress it makes, it will therein evidence its sincerity.
2. Whereas there are sundry things, as we shall see, required hereunto, it is not necessary that they should be found all equally in all who design this state and frame. Some may be more eminent in one of them, some in another; some may have great helps and furtherance unto some of them in a peculiar manner, and some great obstructions in the exercise of some of them. But it is required that they be all radically in the heart, and be put forth in exercise sometimes, on their proper occasions.
3. This state, in the description of it, will sufficiently distinguish itself from that discontent of mind whereon some withdraw themselves from the occasions of life, rather condemning others



than themselves, on mere weariness of the disappointments of the world, which has cast some into crooked paths.

1. The first thing required hereunto is weanedness from the world. The rule of most men is, that all things are well enough with them, with respect unto the world, whilst they keep themselves from known particular sins in the use of the things of it. Whilst they do so in their own apprehensions, they care not how much they cleave unto it, — are even swallowed up in the businesses and occasions of it. Yea, some will pretend unto and make an appearance of a course of life more than ordinarily strict, whilst their hearts and affections cleave visibly to this world and the things of it. But the foundation of the work of faith we inquire into must be laid in mortification and weanedness from the world.

In ancient times, sundry persons designed a strict course of mortification and penitence, and they always laid the foundation of it in a renunciation of the world; but they fell most of them into a threefold mistake, which ruined the whole undertaking. For, —

- (1.) They fell into a neglect of such natural and moral duties as were indispensably required of them: they forsook all care of duties belonging unto them in their relations as fathers, children, husbands, wives, and the like, retaking themselves into solitudes; and hereby also they lost all that political and Christian usefulness which the principles of human society and of our religion do oblige us unto. They took themselves unto a course of life rendering the most important Christian duties, such as respect other men of all sorts, in all fruits of love, utterly impossible unto them. They could be no more useful nor helpful in the places and circumstances wherein they were set by divine Providence: which was a way wherein they could not expect any blessing from God. No such thing is required unto that renunciation of the world which we design; with nothing that should render men useless unto all men do Christian duties interfere. We are still to use the world whilst we are in it, but not abuse it; as we have

opportunity, we must still do good unto all. Yea, none will be so ready to the duties of life as those who are most mortified to the world. Thoughts of retirement from usefulness, unless [under] a great decay of outward strength, are but temptations.

- (2.) They engaged themselves into a number of observances nowhere required of them: such were their outward austerities, fastings, choice of meats, times of prayer; whereunto, at length, self-maceration and disciplines were added. In a scrupulous, superstitious observance of these things their whole design at length issued, giving rise and occasion unto innumerable evils. Faith directs to no such thing; it guides to no duty but according to the rule of the word.
- (3.) At length they began to engage themselves by vow into such peculiar orders and rules of a pretended religious life as were by some of their leaders presented unto them; and this ruined the whole.

However, the original design was good, — namely, such a renunciation of the world as might keep it and all the things of it from being a hindrance unto us in an humble walk before God, or any thing that belongs thereunto. We are to be crucified unto the world, and the world unto us, by the cross of Christ; we are to be so in a peculiar manner, if we are under the conduct of faith, in a way of humiliation and repentance. And the things ensuing are required hereunto: —

- (1.) The mortification of our affections unto the desirable things of this life: they are naturally keen and sharp-set upon them, and do tenaciously adhere unto them; especially they are so when things have an inlet into them by nearness of relation, as husbands, wives, children, and the like. Persons are apt to think they can never love them enough, never do enough for them (and it is granted they are to be preferred above all other

earthly things); but where they fill and possess the heart, where they weaken and obtund the affections unto things spiritual, heavenly, and eternal, unless we are mortified unto them, the heart will never be in a good frame, nor is capable of that degree in the grace of repentance which we seek. It is so with the most, as unto all other useful things in this world, — as wealth, estates, and peace: whilst they are conversant about them, as they suppose in a lawful manner, they think they can never overvalue them, nor cleave too close unto them. But here we must begin, if we intend to take any one step into this holy retirement. The edge of our affections and desires must be taken off from these things: and hereunto three things are necessary: —

- [1.] A constant, clear view and judgment of their uncertainty, emptiness, and disability to give any rest or satisfaction. Uncertain riches, uncertain enjoyments, perishing things, passing away, yea, snares, burdens, hindrances, the Scripture represents them to be; — and so they are. If the mind were continually charged home with this consideration of them, it would daily abate its delight and satisfaction in them.
- [2.] A constant endeavor for conformity unto Christ crucified. It is the cross of Christ whereby we are crucified unto the world and all things in it. When the mind is much taken up with thoughts of Christ, as dying, how and for what he died, if it has any spark of saving faith in it, it will turn away the eyes from looking on the desirable things of this world with any delightful, friendly aspect. Things will appear unto it as dead and discolored.
- [3.] The fixing of them steadily on things spiritual and eternal; whereof I have discoursed at large elsewhere. The whole of this advice is given us by the apostle, Colossians 3:1-5. Herein faith begins its work, this is the

first lesson it takes out of the gospel, — namely, that of self-denial, whereof this mortification is a principal part. Herein it labors to cast off every burden, and the sin that does so easily beset us. Unless some good degree be attained here, all farther attempts in this great duty will be fruitless. Do you, then, any of you, judge yourselves under any of those qualifications before mentioned, which render this duty and work of faith necessary unto you? Sit down here at the threshold, and reckon with yourselves that unless you can take your hearts more off from the world, — unless your affections and desires be mortified and crucified, and dead in you, in a sensible degree and measure, — unless you endeavor every day to promote the same frame in your minds, — you will live and die strangers to this duty.

- (2.) This mortification of our affections towards these things, our love, desire, and delight, will produce a moderation of passions about them, as fear, anger, sorrow, and the like; such will men be stirred up unto in those changes, losses, crosses, which these things are subject unto. They are apt to be tender and soft in those things; they take every thing to heart; every affliction and disappointment is aggravated, as if none almost had such things befall them as themselves; every thing puts them into a commotion. Hence are they often surprised with anger about trifles, influenced by fear in all changes, with other turbulent passions. Hence are men morose, peevish, froward, apt to be displeased and take offense on all occasions. The subduing of this frame, the casting out of these dispositions and perverse inclinations, is part of the work of faith. When the mind is weaned from the world and the things of it, it will be sedate, quiet, composed, not easily moved with the occurrences and occasions of life: it is dead unto them, and in a great measure unconcerned in them. This is that “moderation” of mind wherein the apostle would have us excel, Philippians 4:5; for he would have it so eminent as that it might appear unto “all men,” that is, who are

concerned in us, as relations, families, and other societies. This is that which principally renders us useful and exemplary in this world; and for the want whereof many professors fill themselves and others with disquietments, and give offense unto the world itself. This is required of all believers; but they will be eminent in it in whom faith works this weanedness from the world, in order unto a peculiar exercise of repentance.

- (3.) There is required hereunto an unsolicitousness about present affairs and future events. There is nothing given us in more strict charge in the Scripture, than that we should be careful in nothing, solicitous about nothing, take no thought for tomorrow, but to commit all things unto the sovereign disposal of our God and Father, who has taken all these things into his own care. But so it is come to pass, through the vanity of the minds of men, that what should be nothing unto them is almost their all. Care about things present, and solicitousness about things to come, in private and public concerns, take up most of their thoughts and contrivances. But this also will faith subdue on this occasion, where it tends unto the promotion of repentance, by weanedness from the world. It will bring the soul into a constant, steady, universal resignation of itself unto the pleasure of God, and satisfaction in his will. Hereon it will use the world as if it used it not, with an absolute unconcernment in it as unto what shall fall out. This is that which our Savior presses so at large, and with so many divine seasonings, Matthew 6:25-34.
- (4.) A constant preference of the duties of religion before and above the duties and occasions of life. These things will continually interfere if a diligent watch be not kept over them, and they will contend for preference; and their success is according to the interest and estimation which the things themselves have in our minds. If the interest of the world be there prevalent, the occasions of it will be preferred before religious duties; and they shall, for the most part, be put off

unto such seasons wherein we have nothing else to do, and it may be fit for little else. But where the interest of spiritual things prevail it will be otherwise, according to the rule given us by our blessed Savior, “Seek first the kingdom of God and the righteousness thereof,” etc., Matthew 6:33. I confess this rule is not absolute as unto all seasons and occasions: there may be a time wherein the observation of the Sabbath must give place to the pulling an ox or an ass out of a pit; and on all such occasions the rule is, that mercy is to be preferred before sacrifice. But, in the ordinary course of our walking before God, faith will take care that a due attendance unto all duties of religion be preferred to all the occasions of this life; they shall not be shuffled off on trifling pretenses, nor cast into such unseasonable seasons as otherwise they will be. There also belongs unto that weanedness from this world, which is necessary unto an eminency in degrees of humiliation and repentance, watching unto prayer.

- (5.) Willingness and readiness to part with all for Christ and the gospel. This is the animating principle of the great duty of taking up the cross, and self-denial therein. Without some measure of it in sincerity, we cannot be Christ’s disciples; but in the present case there is an eminent degree, which Christ calls the hating of all things in comparison of him, that is required, — such a readiness as rejects with contempt all arguing against it, — such as renders the world no burden unto it in any part of our race, — such as establishes a determinate resolution in the mind, that as God calls, the world and all the concerns of it should be forsaken for Christ and the gospel. Our countenances and discourses in difficulties do not argue that this resolution is prevalent in us; but so it is required in that work of faith which we are in the consideration of.
2. A second thing that belongs hereunto is a peculiar remembrance of sin, and converse about it in our minds, with self-displicity and abhorrence. God has promised in his covenant that he “will

remember our sins no more,” that is, to punish them; but it does not thence follow that we should no more remember them, to be humbled for them. Repentance respects sin always; wherever, therefore, that is, there will be a continual calling sin to remembrance. Says the psalmist, “My sin is ever before me.”

There is a threefold calling our past sins unto remembrance: —

- (1.) With delight and contentment. Thus is it with profligate sinners, whose bodies are grown unserviceable unto their youthful lusts. They call over their former sins, roll them over in their minds, express their delight in them by their words, and have no greater trouble but that, for the want of strength or opportunity, they cannot still live in the practice of them: this is to be old in wickedness, and to have their bones filled with the sins of their youth. So do many in this age delight in filthy communication, unclean society, and all incentives of lust, — a fearful sign of being given over unto a reprobate mind, a heart that cannot repent.
- (2.) There is a remembrance of sin unto disquietment, terror, and despair. Where men’s consciences are not seared with a hot iron, sin will visit their minds ever and anon with a troublesome remembrance of itself, with its aggravating circumstances. For the most part men hide themselves from this visitor, — they are not at home, not at leisure to converse with it, but shift it off, like insolvent debtors, from day to day, with a few transient thoughts and words. But sometimes it will not be so put off, — it will come with an arrest or a warrant from the law of God, that shall make them stand and give an account of themselves. Hereon they are filled with disquietments, and some with horror and despair; which they seek to pacify and divert themselves from by farther emerging [immersing?] themselves in the pursuit of their lusts. The case of Cain, Genesis 4:13, 16, 17.

(3.) There is a calling former sins to remembrance as a furtherance of repentance; and so they are a threefold glass unto the souls wherein it has a treble object: —

- [1.] It sees in them the depravation of its nature, the evil quality of that root which has brought forth such fruit; and they see in it their own folly, how they were cheated by sin and Satan; they see the unthankfulness and unkindness towards God wherewith they were accompanied. This fills them with holy shame, Romans 6:21. This is useful and necessary unto repentance. Perhaps if men did more call over their former sins and miscarriages than they do, they would walk more humbly and warily than they do for the most part. So David in his age prays for a renewed sense of the pardon of the sins of his youth, Psalm 25:7.
- [2.] The soul sees in them a representation of the grace, patience, and pardoning mercy of God. “Thus and thus was it with me: God might justly have cast me off for ever; he might have cut me off in the midst of these sins, so as that I should have had no leisure to have cried for mercy; and perhaps some of them were sins long continued in. O the infinite patience of God, that spared me! The infinite grace and mercy of God, that forgave unto me these provoking iniquities!” This frame is expressed, Psalm 103:3, 4.
- [3.] The soul sees herein the efficacy of the mediation and blood of Christ, 1 John 2:2. “Whence is it that I have deliverance from the guilt of these sins that way was made for the advancing of grace in the pardon of them? Whence is it that my soul and conscience are purged from the stain and filth of them?” Here the whole glory of the love and grace of Christ in his mediation, with the worth of the atonement that he made, and the ransom that he paid, with the efficacy of his blood to purge us



from all our sins, is represented unto the mind of the believer. So “out of the eater comes forth meat;” and thereby a reconciliation is made between the deepest humiliation and a refreshing sense of the love of God and peace with him.

This, therefore, a soul which is engaged into the paths of repentance will constantly apply itself unto; and it is faith alone whereunto we are beholding for the views of these things in sin. In no other light will they be seen therein. Their aspect in any other is horrid and terrifying, suited only to fill the soul with dread and horror, and thoughts of fleeing from God. But this view of them is suited to stir up all graces unto a holy exercise.

3. Hereon godly sorrow will ensue: this, indeed, is the very life and soul of repentance; so the apostle declares it, 2 Corinthians 7:9-11. And it comprises all that is spoken in the Scripture about a broken heart and a contrite spirit, which expresses itself by sighs, tears, mourning, yea, watering our beds with tears, and the like. David gives so great an instance in himself hereof, and that so frequently repeated, as that we need no other exemplification of it. I shall not at large insist upon it, but only show, —

(1.) What it does respect; and,

(2.) Wherein it does consist, — how faith works it in the soul.

(1.) What it does respect; and it has a twofold object: —

[1.] Such past sins as, by reason of their own nature or their aggravations, have left the greatest impression on the conscience. It respects, indeed, in general, all past and known sins that can be called to remembrance; but usually, in the course of men’s lives, there have been some sins whose wounds, on various accounts, have

been most deep and sensible: these are the especial objects of this godly sorrow. So was it with David; in the whole course of his life, after his great fall, he still bewailed his miscarriage therein; the like respect he had unto the other sins of his youth. And none have been so preserved but they may fix on some such provocation as may be a just cause of this sorrow all their days.

[2.] It respects the daily incursions of infirmities, in failings, negligence in our frames or actions, — such as the best are subject to. These are a matter of continual sorrow and mourning to a gracious soul that is engaged in this duty and way of repentance.

(2.) Wherein it does consist; and the things following do concur therein: —

[1.] Self judging. This is the ground and spring of all godly sorrow, and thereon of repentance, turning away the displeasure of God, 1 Corinthians 11:31. This the soul does continually with reference unto the sins mentioned; it passes sentence on itself every day. This cannot be done without grief and sorrow; for although the soul finds it a necessary duty, and is thereon well pleased with it, yet all such self-reflections are like afflictions, not joyous, but grievous.

[2.] The immediate effect hereof is constant humiliation. He that so judges himself knows what frame of mind and spirit becomes him thereon. This takes away the ground from all pride, elation of mind, self-pleasing: where this self judging is constant they can have no place. This is that frame of mind which God approves so highly, and has made such promises unto; the humble are everywhere proposed as the especial object of his own care; his respect is to them that are of a broken heart, and of a contrite spirit: and this will grow on no other

root. No man, by his utmost diligence, on any argument or consideration, shall be able to bring himself into that humble frame wherein God is delighted, unless he lay the foundation of it in continual self-judging on the account of former and present sins. Men may put on a fashion, frame, and garb of humility; but really humble they are not. Where this is wanting, pride is in the throne, in the heart, though humility be in the countenance and deportment. And herein does this godly sorrow much consist.

[3.] There is in it a real trouble and disquietment of mind: for sorrow is an afflictive passion; it is contrary to that composure which the mind would constantly be at. Howbeit, this trouble is not such as is opposed unto spiritual peace and refreshment; for it is an effect of faith, and faith will produce nothing that is really inconsistent with peace with God, or that shall impeach it: but it is opposite unto other comforts. It is a trouble that all earthly things cannot take off and remove. This trouble of his mind, in his sorrow for sin, David on all occasions expresses unto God; and sometimes it rises to a great and dreadful height, as it is expressed, Psalm 88 throughout. Hereby the soul is sometimes overwhelmed; yet so as to relieve itself by pouring out its complaint before the Lord, Psalm 102:1.

[4.] This inward frame of trouble, mourning, and contriteness, will express itself on all just occasions by the outward signs of sighs, tears, and mournful complaints, Psalm 31:10. So David continually mentions his tears on the like account; and Peter, on the review of his sin, wept bitterly; and Mary washed the feet of Christ with her tears; — as we should all do. A soul filled with sorrow will run over and express its inward frame by these outward signs. I speak not of those self-whole, jolly professors which these days abound

with; but such as faith engages in this duty will on all occasions abound in these things. I fear there is amongst us too great a pretense that men's natural tempers and constitutions are uncompliant with these things. Where God makes the heart soft, and godly sorrow does not only sometimes visit it, but dwell in it, it will not be wholly wanting in these expressions of it; and what it comes short of one way it may make up in another. Whatever the case be as to tears, it is certain that to multiply sighs and groans for sin is contrary to no man's constitution, but only to sin ingrafted in his constitution.

[5.] This godly sorrow will constantly incite the mind unto all duties, acts, and fruits of repentance whatever; it is never barren nor heartless, but being both a grace and a duty, it will stir up the soul unto the exercise of all graces, and the performance of all duties that are of the same kind. This the apostle declares fully, 2 Corinthians 7:11. This, therefore, is another thing which belongs unto that state of repentance which faith will bring the soul unto, and whereby it will evidence itself on the occasions before mentioned; and indeed, if this sorrow be constant and operative, there is no clearer evidence in us of saving faith. They are blessed who thus mourn. I had almost said, it is worth all other evidences, as that without which they are none at all; where this frame is not in some good measure, the soul can have no pregnant evidence of its good estate.

4. Another thing that belongs to this state, is outward observances becoming it; such as abstinence, unto the due mortification of the flesh, — not in such things or ways as are hurtful unto nature, and really obstructive of greater duties. There have been great mistakes in this matter; most men have fallen into extremes about it, as is usual with the most in like cases. They did retain in the Papacy, from the beginning of the apostasy of the church from the rule of the Scripture, an opinion of the necessity of

mortification unto a penitent state; but they mistook the nature of it, and placed it for the most part in that which the apostle calls the “doctrine of devils,” when he foretold believers of that hypocritical apostasy, 1 Timothy 4:1-3. Forbidding to marry, engaging one sort of men by vows against the use of that ordinance of God for all men, and enjoining abstinence from meats in various laws and rules, under pretense of great austerity, was the substance of their mortification. Hereunto they added habits, fasting disciplines, rough garments, and the like pretended self-macerations innumerable. But the vanity of this hypocrisy has been long since detected. But therewithal most men are fallen into the other extreme. Men do generally judge that they are at their full liberty in and for the use of the things esteemed refreshments of nature; yea, they judge themselves not to be obliged unto any retrenchment in garments, diet, with the free use of all things in themselves lawful, when they are under the greatest necessity of godly sorrow and express repentance. But there is here a no less pernicious mistake than in the former excess; and it is that which our Lord Jesus Christ gives us in charge to watch against, Luke 21:34-36.

This, therefore, I say, is required unto the state we inquire after: Those things which restrain the satisfaction of the appetite, with an aversion of the joyous enticements of the world, walking heavily and mournfully, expressing an humble and afflicted frame of spirit, are necessary in such a season. The mourners in Zion are not to be ashamed of their lot and state, but to profess it in all suitable outward demonstration of it; — not in fantastical habits and gestures, like sundry orders of the monks; not in affected forms of speech, and uncouth deportments, like some among ourselves; but in such ways as naturally express the inward frame of mind inquired after.

5. There is required hereunto a firm watch over solitudes and retirements of the night and day, with a continual readiness to conflict temptations in their first appearance, that the soul be not surprised by them. The great design, in the exercise of this grace,

is to keep and preserve the soul constantly in an humble and contrite frame; if that be lost at any time, the whole design is for that season disappointed. Wherefore, faith engages the mind to watch against two things: —

(1.) The times wherein we may lose this frame;

(2.) The means whereby. And, —

(1.) For the times. There are none to be so diligently watched over as our solitudes and retirements by night or by day. What we are in them, that we are indeed, and no more. They are either the best or the worst of our times, wherein the principle that is predominant in us will show and act itself. Hence some are said “to devise evil on their beds, and when the morning is light they practice it,” Micah 2:1. Their solitude in the night serves them to think on, contrive, and delight in, all that iniquity which they intend by day to practice, according to their power. And on the other side, the work of a gracious soul in such seasons is to be seeking after Christ, Cant. iii.1, — to be meditating of God, as the psalmist often expresses it. This, therefore, the humble soul is diligently watchful in, that at such seasons vain imaginations, which are apt to obtrude themselves on the mind, do not carry it away, and cause it to lose its frame, though but for a season; yea, these are the times which it principally lays hold on for its improvement: then does it call over all those considerations of sin and grace, which are meet to affect it and abase it.

(2.) For the means of the loss of an humble frame. They are temptations; these labor to possess the mind either by sudden surprisals or continued solicitations. A soul engaged by faith in this duty is aware always of their deceit and violence; it knows that if they enter into it, and do entangle it, though but for a season, they will quite cast out or deface that humble, contrite, broken frame, which it is its duty to

preserve. And there is none who has the least grain of spiritual wisdom, but may understand of what sort these temptations are which he is obnoxious unto. Here, then, faith sets the soul on its watch and guard continually, and makes it ready to combat every temptation on its first appearance, for then it is weakest and most easily to be subdued; it will suffer them to get neither time, nor ground, nor strength: so it preserves an humble frame, — delivers it frequently from the jaws of this devourer.

6. Although the soul finds satisfaction in this condition, though it be never sinfully weary of it, nor impatient under it, yea, though it labor to grow and thrive in the spirit and power of it, yet it is constantly accompanied with deep sighs and groanings for its deliverance. And these groanings respect both what it would be delivered from and what it would attain unto; between which there is an interposition of some sighs and groans of nature, for a continuance in its present state.

- (1.) That which this groaning respects deliverance from is the remaining power of sin; this is that which gives the soul its distress and disquietment. Occasionally, indeed, its humility, mourning, and self-abasement are increased by it; but this is through the efficacy of the grace of Christ Jesus, — in its own nature it tends to hurt and ruin. This the apostle emphatically expresses in his own person, as bearing the place and state of other believers, Romans 7:24.

And this constant groaning for deliverance from the power of sin excites the soul to pursue it unto its destruction. No effect of faith, such as this is, is heartless or fruitless; it will be operative towards what it aims at, — and that in this case is the not-being of sin: this the soul groans after, and therefore contends for. This is the work of faith, and “faith without works is dead:” wherefore it will continually pursue sin unto all its retirements and reserves. As it can have no rest from it, so it will give neither rest nor peace unto it; yea,

a constant design after the not-being of sin, is a blessed evidence of a saving faith.

- (2.) That which it looks after is the full enjoyment of glory, Romans 8:23. This, indeed, is the grace and duty of all believers, of all who have received the first-fruits of the Spirit; they all in their measure groan that their very bodies may be delivered from being the subject and seat of sin, — that they may be redeemed out of that bondage. It is a bondage to the very body of a believer, to be instrumental unto sin. This we long for its perfect deliverance from, which shall complete the grace of adoption in the whole person. But it is most eminent in those who excel in a state of humiliation and repentance. They, if any, groan earnestly, — this they sigh, breathe, and pant after continually; and their views of the glory that shall be revealed give them refreshment in their deepest sorrows; they wait for the Lord herein more than they that wait for the morning. Do not blame a truly penitent soul if he longs to be dissolved; the greatness and excellency of the change which he shall have thereby is his present life and relief.
- (3.) But there is a weight on this desire, by the interposition of nature for the continuation of its present being, which is inseparable from it. But faith makes a reconciliation of these repugnant inclinations, keeping the soul from weariness and impatience. And this it does by reducing the mind unto its proper rock: it lets it know that it ought not absolutely to be under the conduct of either of these desires. First, it keeps them from excess, by teaching the soul to regulate them both by the word of God: this it makes the rule of such desires and inclinations; which whilst they are regulated by, we shall not offend in them. And it mixes a grace with them both that makes them useful, — namely, constant submission to the will of God. “This grace would have, and this nature would have; but,” says the soul, “the will and sovereign pleasure of



God is my rule: ‘Not my will, holy Father, but thy will be done.’” We have the example of Christ himself in this matter.

7. The last thing I shall mention, as that which completes the state described, is abounding in contemplations of things heavenly, invisible, and sternal. None have more holy and humble thoughts than truly penitent souls, none more high and heavenly contemplations. You would take them to be all sighs, all mourning, all dejection of spirit; but none are more above, — none more near the high and lofty One. As he dwells with them, Isaiah 57:15, so they dwell with him in a peculiar manner, by these heavenly contemplations. Those who have lowest thoughts of themselves, and are most filled with self-abasement, have the clearest views of divine glory. The bottom of a pit or well gives the best prospect of the heavenly luminaries; and the soul in its deepest humiliations has for the most part the clearest views of things within the veil.

