

# The Application of Redemption



Thomas Watson

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by Thomas Watson

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## FAITH

"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." Galatians 2:20

The Spirit applies to us the redemption purchased by Christ, by working faith in us.

Christ is the glory of the gospel, and faith in Christ the comfort of the gospel.

**What are the kinds of faith?** Fourfold:

(1.) A **historical** or **dogmatic** faith, which is believing the truths revealed in the Word, because of divine authority.

(2.) There is a **temporary** faith, which lasts for a time, and then vanishes. "Yet has he no root in himself—but endures for a while." A temporary faith is like Jonah's gourd, which came up in a night and withered.

(3.) A **miraculous** faith, which was granted to the apostles, to work miracles for the confirmation of the gospel. This Judas had; he cast out devils—yet was cast out to the devil.

(4.) A true **justifying** faith, which is called "A faith of the operation of God," and is a jewel hung only upon the elect. Col 2:12.

**What is justifying faith?** I shall show,

(1.) **What it is not.** It is not a bare acknowledgment that Christ is a Savior. There must be this acknowledgment, but that is not sufficient to justify. The devils acknowledged Christ's Godhead. "Jesus the Son of God." There may be an assent to divine truth, and yet no work of grace on the heart. Many assent in their judgements, that sin is an evil thing—but they go on in sin, whose corruptions are stronger than their convictions. Many assent that Christ is excellent; they cheapen the pearl—but do not buy.

(2.) **What justifying faith is.** True justifying faith consists in three things:

(1:) **Self-renunciation.** Faith is going out of one's self, being taken off from our own merits, and seeing we have no righteousness of our own.

"Not having my own righteousness." Self-righteousness is a broken reed, which the soul dares not lean on. Repentance and faith are both humbling graces; by *repentance* a man abhors himself; by *faith* he goes out of himself. As Israel in their wilderness march, behind them saw Pharaoh and his chariots pursuing, before them the Red Sea ready to devour; so the sinner behind sees God's justice pursuing him for sin, before, hell ready to devour him; and in this forlorn condition, he sees nothing in himself to help—but he must perish unless he can find help in another.

**(2:) Reliance.** The soul casts itself upon Jesus Christ; faith rests on Christ's person. Faith believes the promise; but that which faith rests upon in the promise—is the person of Christ: therefore the spouse is said to "lean upon her Beloved." Faith is described to be "believing on the name of the Son of God," namely, on his person. The *promise* is but the cabinet, *Christ* is the jewel in it which faith embraces. The promise is but the dish, Christ is the food in it which faith feeds on. Faith rests on Christ's person, "as he was crucified." It glories in the cross of Christ. Gal 6:14. To consider Christ crowned with all manner of excellencies, stirs up admiration and wonder; but Christ looked upon as bleeding and dying, is the proper object of our faith; it is called therefore "faith in his blood." Rom 3:25.

**(3:) Appropriation, or applying Christ to ourselves.** A medicine, though it be ever so sovereign, if not applied, will do no good. Though the plaster is made of Christ's own blood, it will not heal, unless applied by faith; the blood of God, without faith in God, will not save. This applying of Christ is called receiving him. John 1:12. The hand receiving gold, enriches. Just so, the hand of faith, receiving Christ's golden merits with salvation, enriches us.

### **How is faith wrought?**

By the blessed Spirit; who is called the "Spirit of grace," because he is the spring of all grace. Zech 12:10. Faith is the chief work which the Spirit of God works in a man's heart. In making the world God did but *speak* a word—but in working faith he puts forth his *arm*. Luke 1:51. The Spirit's working faith is called, "The exceeding greatness of God's power." Eph

1:19. What a power was put forth in raising Christ from the grave when such a tombstone lay upon him as the sins of all the world—yet he was raised up by the Spirit. The same power is put forth by the Spirit of God, in working faith. The Spirit irradiates the mind, and subdues the will. The will is like a garrison, which holds out against God: the Spirit with sweet violence conquers, or rather changes it; making the sinner willing to have Christ upon any terms; to be ruled by him as well as saved by him.

### **Wherein lies the preciousness of faith?**

**(1.) In its being the chief gospel-grace, the head of the graces.** As gold among the metals, so is faith among the graces. Clement calls the other graces, *the daughters of faith*. In heaven, love will be the chief grace; but, while we are here, love must give place to faith. Love takes possession of glory—but faith gives a title to it. Love is the crowning grace in heaven—but faith is the conquering grace upon earth. "This is the victory which overcomes the world, even our faith."

**(2.) In its having influence upon all the graces, and setting them to work.** Not a grace stirs—until faith sets it to work. Faith sets **hope** to work. The heir must believe his title to the glories of heaven, before he can hope for it; faith believes its title to glory, and then hope waits for it. If faith did not feed the lamp of hope with oil, it would soon die. Faith sets **love** to work. "Faith which works by love." Believing the mercy and merit of Christ, causes a flame of love to ascend. Faith sets **patience** to work. "Be followers of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises." Faith believes the glorious rewards given to suffering. This makes the soul patient in suffering. Thus faith is the master-wheel, it sets all the other graces running.

**(3.) Faith is the grace which God honors—to justify and save.** Thus indeed it is "precious faith," as the apostle calls it. The other graces help to sanctify—but it is faith that justifies. "Being justified by faith." Repentance or love do not justify—but faith does.

### **How does faith justify?**

(1.) Faith does not justify as it is a work, which would make a *savior* of

our faith; but faith justifies, as it lays hold of the object, namely, Christ's merits. If a man had a precious stone in a ring that could heal, we should say the ring heals; but properly it is not the ring—but the precious stone in the ring that heals. Thus faith saves and justifies—but it is not any inherent virtue in faith—but only as faith lays hold on Christ, that it justifies.

(2.) Faith does not justify as it exercises grace. It cannot be denied, that faith invigorates all the graces, puts strength and liveliness into them—but it does not justify under this notion. Faith works by love—but it does not justify as it works by love—but as it applies Christ's merits.

### **Why should faith save and justify more than any other grace?**

**(1.) Because of God's purpose.** He has appointed this grace to be justifying; and he does it, because faith is a grace that takes a man off himself, and gives all the honor to Christ and free grace. "Strong in faith, giving glory to God." Therefore God has put this honor on faith—to make it saving and justifying. The king's stamp makes the coin pass for current. Just so, God having put his sanction, the stamp of his authority and institution upon faith, makes it to be justifying and saving.

**(2.) Because faith makes us one with Christ.** Eph 3:17. Faith is the espousing, incorporating grace, it gives us coalition and union with Christ's person. Other graces make us like Christ; faith makes us members of Christ.

**Use one: Of EXHORTATION.** Let us above all things labor for faith. "Above all, taking the shield of faith." Faith will be of more use to us than any grace; as an eye, though dim, was of more use to an Israelite than all the other members of his body, a strong arm, or a nimble foot. It was his eye looking on the brazen serpent, which cured him. It is not knowledge, though angelic, not repentance, though we could shed rivers of tears which can justify us; only faith, whereby we look on Christ. "Without faith it is impossible to please God." If we do not please him by believing, he will not please us in saving. Faith is the condition of the covenant of grace; without faith—without covenant; and without covenant—without any hope of salvation. Eph 2:12.

**Use two: Of TRIAL.** Let us try whether we have faith. There is something that looks like faith, and is not, as a Bristol-stone looks like a diamond. Some plants have the same leaf with others—but the herbalist can distinguish them by the root and taste. Some faith may look like true faith—but it may be distinguished by the fruits. Let us be serious in the trial of our faith. Much depends upon our faith; for if our faith is not good, nothing good comes from us—even our duties and graces are adulterated.

**How shall we know if we have true saving faith?** By the noble **fruits** and **effects** of saving faith.

**(1.) Faith is a Christ-prizing grace—it puts a high valuation upon Christ.** "To you that believe, he is precious." Paul best knew Christ. "Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?" He saw Christ with his bodily eyes in a vision, when he was caught up into the third heaven; and with the eye of his faith in the Holy Supper; therefore he best knew Christ. And see how he styles all things in comparison of him. "I count all things but dung, that I may win Christ." Do we set a high estimate upon Christ? Could we be willing to part with the wedge of gold—for the pearl of great price?

**(2.) Faith is a refining grace.** Faith is in the soul as fire among metals; it refines and purifies. Morality may wash the outside, faith washes the inside. "Having purified their hearts by faith." Faith makes the heart a holy of holies. Faith is a virgin-grace: though it does not take away the *life* of sin—yet it takes away the *love* of sin. Examine if your hearts are an unclean fountain, sending out the mud and mire of pride and envy. If there are legions of lusts in your soul, there is no faith. Faith is a heavenly plant, which will not grow in an impure soil.

**(3.) Faith is an obediential grace.** "The obedience of faith." Faith melts our will into God's. It runs at God's call. If God commands duty (though cross to flesh and blood) faith obeys. "By faith Abraham obeyed." Heb 11:1. Faith is not an idle grace; as it has an eye to see Christ, so it has a hand to work for him. It not only believes God's promise—but obeys his command. It is not having knowledge that will evidence you to be believers; the devil has knowledge—but lacks obedience, and that makes

him a devil. The true obedience of faith, is a cheerful obedience. God's commands do not seem grievous. Have you obedience, and obey cheerfully? Do you look upon God's command as your burden—or privilege; as an iron fetter about your leg—or as a gold chain about your neck.

**(4.) Faith is an assimilating grace.** It changes the soul into the image of the object; it makes it like Christ. Never did any look upon Christ with a believing eye—but he was made like Christ. A deformed person may look on a beautiful object, and not be made beautiful; but faith looking on Christ transforms a man, and turns him into his similitude. Looking on a bleeding Christ, causes a soft bleeding heart. Looking on a holy Christ causes sanctity of heart. Looking on a humble Christ makes the soul humble. As the chameleon is changed into the color of that which it looks upon, so faith, looking on Christ, changes the Christian into the similitude of Christ.

**(5.) True faith grows.** All living things grow. "From faith to faith." How may we judge of the growth of faith?

Growth of faith is judged by strength. We can do that now, which we could not do before. When one is man-grown, he can do that which he could not do when he was a child; he can carry a heavier burden; so you can bear crosses with more patience.

Growth of faith is seen by doing duties in a more spiritual manner, with more fervency; we put coals to the incense, from a principle of love to God. When an apple has done growing in bigness, it grows in sweetness; so you perform duties in love and are sweeter, and come off with a better relish.

**But I fear I have no faith.**

We must distinguish between *weakness* of faith—and *no* faith. A weak faith is true. The bruised reed is but weak—yet it is such as Christ will not break. Though your faith is weak, be not discouraged.

**(1.) A weak faith may receive a strong Christ.** A weak *hand* can tie

the knot in marriage, as well as a strong one. A weak *eye* might have seen the brazen serpent. The woman in the gospel did but *touch* Christ's garment, and received virtue from him. It was the touch of faith.

**(2.) The promise is not made to strong faith—but to true faith.**

The promise does not say—whoever has a *giant*-faith, which can remove mountains, which can stop the mouths of lions—shall be saved. But the promise is made to *whoever* believes, be his faith ever so small. Though Christ sometimes chides a weak faith—yet that it may not be discouraged, he makes it a promise. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 5:3.

**(3.) A weak faith may be fruitful.** Weakest things multiply most; the vine is a weak plant—but it is fruitful. Weak Christians may have strong affections. How strong is the first love, which is after the first planting of faith!

**(4.) Weak faith may be growing.** Seeds spring up by degrees; first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear. Therefore, be not discouraged. God, who would have *us* receive those who are weak in faith, will not *himself* refuse them. Rom 14:1. A weak believer is a member of Christ; and though Christ will cut off *rotten* members from his body, he will not cut off *weak* members.

## EFFECTUAL CALLING

"And those he predestined, he also **called**; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified." Romans 8:30

**Question 31: What is the NATURE Effectual Calling?**

Answer: It is a gracious work of the Spirit, whereby he causes us to embrace Christ freely, as he is offered to us in the gospel.

In this verse is the golden chain of salvation, made up of four links, of

which one is effectual calling. This calling is *nova creatio*—"a new creation," the first resurrection. There is a two-fold call:

(1.) An outward call.

(2.) An inward call.

**(1.) An OUTWARD call**, which is God's offer of grace to sinners, inviting them to come and accept of Christ and salvation. "Many are called—but few chosen." This call shows men what they ought to do in order to salvation, and renders them inexcusable in case of disobedience.

**(2.) There is an INWARD call**, when God with the offer of grace, works grace. By this call the heart is renewed, and the will is effectually drawn to embrace Christ. The outward call brings men to a *profession* of Christ, the inward to a *possession* of Christ.

### **What are the MEANS of this effectual call?**

Every creature has a voice to call us. The *heavens* call to us to behold God's glory. Psalm 19:1. *Conscience* calls to us. God's *judgments* call us to repent. "Hear the rod." But every voice does not convert. There are two means of our effectual call:

(1.) The *preaching of the word*, which is the sounding of God's silver trumpet in men's ears. God speaks not by an oracle, he calls by his ministers. Samuel thought it had been the voice of Eli which called him; but it was God's voice. So, perhaps, you think it is only the minister that speaks to you in the word—but it is God himself who speaks. Therefore Christ is said to speak to us from heaven. Heb 12:25. How does he speak but by his ministers? as a king speaks by his ambassadors. Know, that in every sermon preached, God calls to you; and to refuse the message we bring, is to refuse God himself.

(2.) The other means of our effectual call is the *Holy Spirit*. The ministry of the word is the pipe or organ; the Spirit of God blowing in it, effectually changes men's hearts. "While Peter spoke, the Holy Spirit fell on all those who heard the word of God." Ministers knock at the door of men's hearts,

the Spirit comes with a key and opens the door. "A certain woman named Lydia, whose heart the Lord opened."

### **FROM what does God call men?**

(1.) God calls men from **sin**. He calls them from their ignorance and unbelief. I Pet 1:14. By nature the understanding is enveloped with darkness. God calls men "from darkness to light," as if one should be called out of a dungeon to behold the light of the sun. Eph 5:8.

(2.) God calls men from **danger**. As the angels called Lot out of Sodom, when it was ready to rain fire; so God calls his people from the fire and brimstone of hell, and from all those curses to which they were exposed.

(3.) God calls men **out of the world**; as Christ called Matthew from the collection of taxes. "They are not of the world." Such as are divinely called, are not natives in this world—but pilgrims; they do not conform to the world, or follow its sinful fashions; they are not of the world. Though they live here—yet they trade in the heavenly country. The world is a place where Satan's throne is. Rev 2:13. It is a stage on which sin every day acts its part. Now such as are called—are *in* the world but not *of* it.

### **TO what does God call men?**

(1.) He calls them to **holiness**. "For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life." 1 Thess 4:7. Holiness is the silver star which the godly wear. "The people of your holiness." The called of God, are anointed with the consecrating oil of the Spirit. "You have an anointing from the Holy One."

(2.) God calls them to **glory**—as if a man were called out of a prison to sit upon a throne. "Who has called you to his kingdom and glory." Whom God *calls*, he *crowns* with a weight of glory. 2 Cor 4:17. The Hebrew word for glory signifies *pondus*—a weight. The weight of glory adds to the worth, the weightier gold is, the more it is worth. This glory is not transient—but permanent, an *eternal* weight. This glory will be better *felt*—than *expressed*.

## What is the CAUSE of the effectual call?

God's electing love. "And those he *predestined*, he also *called*." Romans 8:30. Election is the fountain-cause of our effectual calling. It is not because some are more *worthy* to partake of the heavenly calling than others—for we were "all in our blood." What worthiness is in us? What worthiness was there in *Mary Magdalene*, out of whom seven devils were cast? What worthiness in the *Corinthians*, before God called them by his gospel? They were "idol worshipers, adulterers, male prostitutes, homosexuals, thieves, greedy people, drunkards, abusers, and swindlers." "And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God." 1 Cor 6:9-11. Before effectual calling, we are not only "without strength," but "enemies to God." So that the foundation of effectual calling is *election*, and not *merit*.

## What are the CHARACTERISTICS of this call?

**(1.) It is a POWERFUL call.** "The *words* of God are *works*," Luther. God puts forth infinite power in calling home a sinner to himself; he not only puts forth his *voice*—but his *arm*. The apostle speaks of the exceeding greatness of his power, which he exercises towards those who believe. Eph 1:19. God rides forth conquering in the chariot of his gospel; he conquers the pride of the heart, and makes the will, which stood out as a fort-royal, to yield and stoop to his grace; he makes the stony heart bleed. Oh, it is a mighty call! Why then do the Arminians seem to talk of a *moral persuasion*, that God in the conversion of a sinner only morally persuades and no more; sets his promises before men to allure them to good, and his threatenings to deter them from evil; and that is all he does? But surely moral persuasions alone are insufficient to the effectual call. How can the bare proposal of promises and threatenings convert a soul? This amounts not to a new creation, or that power which raised Christ from the dead. God not only persuades—but enables. Ezek 36:27. If God, in conversion, should only morally persuade, that is, set good and evil before men—then he does not put forth so much power in saving men as the devil does in destroying them. Satan not only propounds tempting objects to men—but *incites* with his temptations: therefore he is said to "*work* in the children of disobedience." The Greek word, to *work*,

signifies the power Satan has in carrying men to sin. And shall not God's power in *converting*, be greater than Satan's power in *seducing*? The effectual call is mighty and powerful. God puts forth a divine energy, nay, a kind of omnipotence; it is such a powerful call, that the will of man has no power effectually to resist.

**(2.) It is a HIGH calling.** "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God." It is a high calling,

(1.) Because we are called to high exercises of piety—to be crucified to the world, to live by faith, to love God, to be living organs of his praise, to hold communion with the Father and the Son.

(2:) It is a high calling, because we are called to high privileges; to justification and adoption, to be kings and priests unto God. We are called to be co-heirs with Christ. Heb 12:22. Rom 8:17. Those who are effectually called, are heirs for heaven—they are princes in all lands, though princes in disguise. Psalm 45:16.

**(3.) It is an IMMUTABLE call.** "God's gracious gifts and *calling* are irrevocable;" Rom 11:29. That is, those gifts that flow from election (as effectual calling and justification) are irrevocable. God never repents of calling a sinner to be a saint.

**Use one: See the NECESSITY of the effectual call.** A man cannot go to heaven without it. We must be called before we are glorified. Rom 8:30. A man uncalled can lay claim to nothing in the Bible but threatening! A man in the state of nature is not fit for heaven, no more than a man in his filth and his rags is fit to come into a king's presence. A man in his natural state is a God-hater, and is he fit for heaven? Rom 1:30. Will God lay his enemy in his bosom?

**Use two: Of TRIAL whether we are effectually called.** This we may know by its *antecedent*, and its *results*.

(1.) By the **antecedent**. Before this effectual call, a humbling work passes upon the soul. A man is convinced of sin, he sees he is a sinner and nothing but a sinner; the fallow ground of his heart is broken up. Jer 4:3.

As the farmer breaks up the clods, then casts in the seed; so God, by the convincing work of the law, breaks a sinner's heart, and makes it fit to receive the seeds of grace. Such as were never convinced of sin—are never called. "He shall convince the world of sin." John 16:8. *Conviction* of sin is the first step in *conversion* from sin.

(2.) By the **results**, which are two.

(1.) He who is savingly called, answers to God's call. When God called Samuel, he answered, "Speak, Lord, your servant hears." When God calls you to an act of piety—do you run at God's call? "I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision." If God calls to duties contrary to flesh and blood, we obey his voice in everything; true obedience is like the needle, which points that way which the magnet draws. Such as are deaf to God's call, show they are not called by grace.

(2) He who is effectually called stops his ears to all other calls which would call him off from God. As God has his call, so there are other contrary calls. *Satan* calls by a temptation, *lust* calls, *evil company* calls; but as the adder stops its ear against the voice of the charmer, so he who is effectually called stops his ear against all the charms of the flesh and the devil.

**Use three: Of COMFORT to those who are the called of God.** This call evidences election. "Those He predestined, He also called." Election is the *cause* of our effectually calling; and effectually calling is the *sign* of our election. Election is the first link of the golden chain of salvation, effectually calling is the second. He who has the second link of the chain—is sure of the first link! As by the *stream* we are led to the *fountain*, so by effectually calling we ascend to election. Effectually calling is the pledge of glory. "God has chosen you to salvation, through sanctification." We may read God's predestinating love—in the work of grace in our heart.

**Use four: Let such as are called be THANKFUL to God for that unspeakable blessing.** Be thankful to all the persons in the Trinity, to the *Father's* mercy, to the *Son's* merit, to the Spirit's efficacy. To make you thankful, consider, when you had *offended* God—he called you.

Consider that when God had no need of you—but had millions of glorified saints and angels to praise him, he called you. Consider what you were *before* God called you! "You were dead, doomed forever because of your many sins!" When God called Paul, he found him persecuting; when he called Zacchaeus, he found him using extortion. When God calls a man by his grace, he finds him seeking after his lusts; as when Saul was called to the kingdom, he was seeking the donkeys. Admire his love, exalt his praise—that He should call you when you were in the hot pursuit of sin! What mercy is this—that God should call you, and pass by others! "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in your sight!" That God should pass by wise and noble people, people of sweeter disposition, greater abilities, guilty of less vice, and that the lot of free grace should fall upon you—oh, the astonishing love of God!

It was a great favor to Samuel that God called to him, and revealed his mind to him, and passed by Eli, though a priest and a judge in Israel. Just so, that God should call to you, a monstrous sinner, and pass by others of better morals—calls aloud for praise. As God so governs the clouds, that he makes them rain upon one place, and not upon another—just so, at a sermon the Lord opens the heart of one, and another is no more affected with it than a deaf man with the sound of music. Here is the banner of free grace displayed, and here should the trophies of praise be erected. Elijah and Elisha were walking together; when suddenly there came a chariot of fire, and carried Elijah up to heaven—but left Elisha behind; just so, when two are living together, husband and wife, father and child, that God should call one by his grace—but leave the other in his sins; carry up one in a triumphant chariot to heaven—but let the other perish eternally—oh infinite rich grace! How should they that are called be affected with God's sovereign love! How should the vessels of mercy run over with thankfulness! How should they stand upon Mount Gerizim, blessing and praising God! Oh begin the work of heaven here! Such as are trophies of mercy, should be trumpeters of praise. Thus Paul, being effectually called by God, and seeing what a debtor he was to free grace, breaks forth into admiration and gratitude, "Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!" 2 Corinthians 9:15.

**Use five: To the called. Walk worthy of your high calling.** "I urge

you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received." Ephesians 4:1; in two things.

(1.) Walk **compassionately**. Pity such as are yet uncalled. Have you a child, or a wife, or a friend—whom God has not yet called? Weep over their dying souls; they are "dead, doomed forever because of their many sins," and "under the power of Satan." Oh pity them! Let their sins more trouble you—than your own sufferings. If you pity an ox or donkey going astray, will you not pity a soul going astray? Show your *piety*, by your *pity*.

(2.) Walk **holily**. Yours is a holy calling. 2 Tim 1:9. You are called to be saints, Rom 1:7. Show your effectual calling by a Bible life. Shall not flowers smell sweeter than weeds? Shall not those who are ennobled with grace, have more fragrance in their lives than uncalled sinners? "As the One who called you is holy, you also are to be holy in all your conduct." 1 Peter 1:15. Oh dishonor not your high calling by any sordid life! When Antigonus was going to defile himself with women, one told him, "You are a king's son!" Oh remember your dignity; "called of God!" of the royal blood of heaven. Do nothing unworthy of your honorable calling. Scipio refused the embraces of an harlot, because he was general of an army. Abhor all motions to sin, because of your high calling. It is not fit for those who are the called of God, to do as others. Though other *Jews* drank wine, it was not fit for the *Nazarite*, because he had a vow of separation upon him, and had promised abstinence. Though Pagans and nominal Christians take liberty to sin—yet it is not fit for those who are called out of the world, and have the mark of election upon them, to do so. You are consecrated people, your bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit, and your bodies must be a *holy of holies*.

## JUSTIFICATION

"Being justified freely by his grace." Romans 3:24

**Question 23. What is Justification?**

Answer: Justification is an act of God's free grace, whereby he pardons all our sins, and accepts us as righteous in his sight—only for the righteousness of Christ, imputed to us, and received by faith alone.

Justification is the very hinge and pillar of Christianity. An error about justification is dangerous, like a defect in a foundation. Justification by Christ is a spring of the water of life. To have the poison of corrupt doctrine cast into this spring is damnable. It was a saying of Luther, "that after his death, the doctrine of justification would be corrupted." In these latter times, the Arminians and Socinians have cast a dead fly into this box of precious ointment.

I shall endeavor to follow the star of Scripture, to light me through this mysterious point.

### **What is MEANT by justification?**

It is a word borrowed from law-courts, wherein a person arraigned is *pronounced righteous*, and is openly absolved. God, in justifying a person, pronounces him to be righteous, and looks upon him as if he had not sinned.

### **What is the SOURCE of justification?**

The cause, the inward impellant motive or ground of justification, is the free grace of God: "being justified freely by his grace." Ambrose expounds this, as "not of the grace wrought within us—but the free grace of God." The first wheel that sets all the rest running is the love and favor of God; as a king freely pardons a delinquent. Justification is a mercy spun out of the affections of free grace. God does not justify us because we are worthy—but by justifying us makes us worthy.

### **What is the GROUND, or that by which a sinner is justified?**

The ground of our justification is Christ's satisfaction made to his Father. If it be asked, how can it stand with God's justice and holiness to pronounce us innocent—when we are guilty? The answer is, that Christ having made satisfaction for our sins, God may, in equity and justice,

pronounce us righteous. It is a just thing for a creditor to discharge a debtor of the debt, when a satisfaction is made by the surety.

### **But how was Christ's satisfaction meritorious, and so sufficient to justify?**

In respect of the divine nature. As he was man he suffered, as God he satisfied. By Christ's death and merits, God's justice is more abundantly satisfied than if we had suffered the pains of hell forever.

### **Wherein lies the METHOD of our justification?**

In the imputation of Christ's righteousness to us. "This is the name whereby he shall be called, *Jehovah Tzidkennu*, the Lord our righteousness." "He is made to us righteousness." This righteousness of Christ, which justifies us, is a better righteousness than the angels; for theirs is the righteousness of creatures, this righteousness is of God.

### **What is the MEANS or instrument of our justification?**

Faith. "Being justified by faith." The dignity is not in faith as a grace—but relatively, as faith lays hold on Christ's merits.

### **What is the efficient CAUSE of our justification?**

The whole Trinity. All the persons in the blessed Trinity have a hand in the justification of a sinner. God the *Father* is said to justify. "It is God who justifies." God the *Son* is said to justify. "By him all who believe are justified." God the *Holy Spirit* is said to justify. "But you are justified by the Spirit of our God." God the Father justifies, as he pronounces us righteous; God the Son justifies, as he imputes his righteousness to us; and God the Holy Spirit justifies, as he clears up our justification, and seals us up to the day of redemption.

### **What is the END of our justification?** The end is,

(1.) That God may inherit praise. "To the praise of the glory of his grace." Hereby God raises the everlasting trophies of his own honor. How will the justified sinner proclaim the love of God, and make heaven ring with his

praises!

(2.) That the justified person may inherit glory. "Whom he justified, those he also glorified." God in justifying, not only absolves a soul from guilt—but advances him to dignity. Just as Joseph was not only loosed from prison—but made Lord of the kingdom. *Justification* is crowned with *glorification!*

**Are we justified from eternity?** No, for,

(1.) By nature we are under a sentence of condemnation. John 3:18. We could never have been condemned, if we were justified from eternity.

(2.) The Scripture confines justification to those who believe and repent. "Repent, that your sins may be blotted out." Acts 3:19. Therefore their sins were uncanceled, and their persons unjustified, until they did repent. Though God does not justify us for our repentance—yet not without it. The Antinomians erroneously hold, that we are justified from eternity. This doctrine is a key which opens the door to all licentiousness; for what sins do they not commit, so long as they hold they are justified whether they repent or not?

Before I come to the uses, I shall lay down **four maxims or positions about justification.**

**[1] That justification confers a real benefit upon the person justified.** The acquitting and discharging of the debtor, by virtue of the satisfaction made by the surety, is a real benefit to the debtor. A robe of righteousness, and a crown of righteousness, are real benefits.

**[2] All believers are alike justified.** Justification does not apply to some more than to others. Though there are degrees in grace—yet not in justification; one is not justified more than another. The weakest believer is as perfectly justified as the strongest. Mary Magdalene is as much justified as the Virgin Mary. This may be a cordial to a weak believer. Though you have but a grain of faith, you are as truly justified, as he who is of the highest stature in Christ.

**[3] Whoever God justifies, he sanctifies.** "But you are sanctified—but you are justified." 1 Cor. 6:2. The Papists calumniate Protestants; they report them to hold that men continuing in sin are justified; whereas all our Protestant writers affirm, that righteousness imputed, for justification, and righteousness inherent, for sanctification, must be inseparably united. Holiness indeed is not the cause of our justification—but it is the attendant; as the heat in the sun is not the cause of its light—but it is the attendant. It is absurd to imagine that God should justify a people, and they should still go on in sin. If God should *justify* a people and not *sanctify* them—he would justify a people whom he could not glorify. A holy God cannot lay a sinner in his bosom. The metal is first refined, before the king's stamp is put upon it. Just so, the soul is first refined with holiness, before God puts the royal stamp of justification upon it.

**[4] Justification is a fixed permanent thing, it can never be lost.** The Arminians hold an apostasy from justification; today justified, tomorrow unjustified; today a Peter, tomorrow a Judas; today a member of Christ, tomorrow a child of Satan. This is a most uncomfortable doctrine. Justified people may fall from degrees of grace, they may leave their first love, they may lose God's favor for a time—but not lose their justification. If they are justified they are elected; and they can no more fall from their justification than from their election. If they are justified they have union with Christ, and can a member of Christ be broken off? If one justified person may fall away from Christ, all may; and so Christ would be a head without a body.

**Use one:** See from hence, that there is nothing *within* us that could justify us—but something *without* us; not any righteousness *inherent*—but righteousness *imputed*. We may as well look for a star in the earth, as for justification in our own righteousness. The Papists say we are justified by works; but the apostle confutes it, for he says, "not of works, lest any man should boast." The Papists say, "the works done by an unregenerate man indeed cannot justify him—but works done by a regenerate man may justify." This is most false, as may be proved both by example and reason.

(1.) By example. Abraham was a regenerate man; but Abraham was not justified by works—but by faith. Abraham "believed God, and it was

counted to him for righteousness."

(2.) By reason. How can those works justify us—which defile us? "Our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." Good works are not an usher to go before justification—but a handmaid to follow it.

But does not the apostle James say that Abraham was justified by works?

The answer is easy. Works manifest us to be righteous before men—but they do not make us righteous before God. Works are *evidences* of our justification, not causes. The only name engraved upon the golden plate of Christ our High Priest must be, *the Lord Our Righteousness*.

**Use two:** Of exhortation.

**(1.) Adore the infinite wisdom and goodness of God that found out a way to justify us by "rich grace and precious blood."** We were all involved in guilt; none of us could plead *not-guilty*; and being guilty, we lay under a sentence of death. Now that the judge himself should find out a way to justify us, and the creditor himself contrive a way to have the debt paid, and not distress the debtor—should fill us with wonder and love! The angels admire the mystery of free grace in this new way of justifying and saving lost man, I Pet 1:12, and should not we, who are nearly concerned in it, and on whom the benefit is devolved, cry out with the apostle, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!"

**(2.) Labor for this high privilege of justification.** There is balm in Gilead; Christ has laid down his blood as the price of our justification; and he offers himself and all his merits to us, to justify. He invites us to come to him; he has promised to give his Spirit, to enable us to do what is required. Why then, sinners, will you not look after this great privilege of justification? *Why starve in the midst of plenty?* Why perish, when there is a remedy to save you? Would not he be thought to be deranged, who having a pardon offered him, only upon the acknowledgment of his fault, and promising amendment, should bid the prince keep his pardon to himself; for his part, he was in love with his chains and fetters, and would die? You who neglect justification offered you freely by Christ in the

gospel, are this deranged person. Is the love of Christ to be slighted? Is your soul, is heaven worth nothing? Oh then look after justification through Christ's blood!

Consider—

(1:) The **necessity** of being justified. If we are not justified, we cannot be glorified. "Whom he justified, them he also glorified." Rom 8:30. He who is outlawed, and all his goods confiscated, must be brought into favor with his prince before he can be restored to his former rights and liberties. Just so, we must have our sins forgiven, and be brought into God's favor by justification, before we can be restored to the liberty of the sons of God, and have a right to that happiness we forfeited in Adam.

(2:) The utility and **benefit**. By justification we enjoy peace in our conscience; a richer jewel than any prince wears in his crown. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God." Peace can sweeten all our afflictions; it turns our water into wine. How happy is a justified person who has the power of God to guard him, and the peace of God to comfort him! Peace flowing from justification is an antidote against the fear of death and hell. "It is God who justifies, who is he that condemns?" Rom 8:33, 34. Therefore labor for this justification by Christ. This privilege is obtained by believing in Christ. "By him all who believe are justified." "Whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood." Faith unites us to Christ; and having union with his person—we partake of his merits, and the glorious salvation which comes by him.

**Use three:** Comfort to the justified.

(1.) It is comfort in case of failings. Alas! how defective are the godly! they come short in every duty; but though believers should be humbled under their defects, they should not despond. They are not to be justified by their duties or graces—but by the righteousness of Christ. Their duties are mixed with sin—but that righteousness which justifies them is a perfect righteousness.

(2.) Comfort in case of hard censures. The world censures the people of God as proud and hypocritical, and the troublers of Israel. But though

men censure and condemn the godly—yet God has justified them, and as he has now justified them, so at the day of judgement he will openly justify them, and pronounce them righteous before men and angels. God is so just and holy a judge, that having once justified his people he will never condemn them. Pilate justified Christ, saying, "I find no fault in him;" yet after this he condemned him; but God having publicly justified his saints, he will never condemn them; for "whom he *justified*, them he also *glorified*."

# ADOPTION

"As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to those who believe on his name." John 1:12.

Having spoken of the great points of faith and justification, we come next to adoption.

The qualification of the people is, "As many as received him." Receiving is put for believing, as is clear by the last words, "to those who believe in his name." The specification of the privilege is, "to them gave he power to become the sons of God." The Greek word for power, *exousia*, signifies dignity and prerogative: he dignified them to become the sons of God.

Our sonship differs from Christ's. He was the Son of God by eternal generation, a son before time; but our sonship is,

(1.) By creation. "We are his offspring." This is no privilege; for men may have God for their Father by creation, and yet have the devil for their father.

(2.) Our sonship is by adoption. "He gave them power to become the sons of God." Adoption is twofold.

**External and federal:** as those who live in a visible church, and make a *profession* of God, are sons. "The children of the kingdom shall be cast out."

**Real and gracious:** as they are sons who are God's favorites, and are heirs of glory. Before I proceed to the questions, I shall lay down three positions.

**I. Adoption takes in all nations.** A first adoption was confined to the people of the Jews, who alone were grafted into the true olive tree, and were dignified with glorious privileges. "Who are Israelites, to whom pertains the adoption and the glory." But now, in the time of the gospel, the charter is enlarged, and the believing Gentiles are within the line of

communication, and have a right to the privileges of adoption as well as the Jews. "In every nation he who fears God and works righteousness is accepted with him."

**II. Adoption takes in both sexes, females as well as males.** "I will be a father unto you, and you shall be my sons and daughters." I have read, that in some countries, females are excluded from the supreme dignity, as by the Salique law in France, no woman can inherit a crown; but of spiritual privileges, females are as capable as males. Every gracious soul (of whatever gender) lays claim to adoption, and has an interest in God as a father. "You shall be my *sons* and *daughters*, says the Lord Almighty."

**III. Adoption is an act of pure grace.** "He predestined us to be adopted as His sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with His pleasure and will." Ephesians 1:5. Adoption is a mercy spun out of the affections of free grace. All by nature are strangers to God, therefore have no right to sonship. God is pleased to adopt one, and not another; to make one a vessel of glory, another a vessel of wrath. The adopted heir may cry out, "Lord, how is it, that you will show yourself to me, and not unto the world?"

What is this filiation or adoption?

It is taking a stranger into the relation of a son and heir; as Moses was the adopted son of King Pharaoh's daughter, Exod 2:10, and Esther was the adopted child of her cousin Mordecai. Esth 2:7. Thus God adopts us into the family of heaven, and God in adopting us does two things:

(1.) He ennobles us with his name. He who is adopted bears the name of him who adopts him. "I will write on him the name of my God.

(2.) God consecrates us with his Spirit. All whom he adopts—he anoints. All whom he makes sons, he makes saints. When a man adopts another for his son and heir, he may put his name upon him—but he cannot put his disposition into him; if he is of a morose rugged nature, he cannot alter it. But those whom God *adopts*, he *sanctifies*; he not only gives a new name but a new nature. 2 Pet 1:4. He turns the wolf into a lamb; he

makes the heart humble and gracious; he works such a change—as if another soul dwelt in the same body.

From what state does God take us when he adopts us?

From a state of sin and misery. Pharaoh's daughter took Moses out of the ark of bulrushes in the water, and adopted him for her son. God did not take us out of the water—but out of our blood, and adopted us. Ezek 16:6. He adopted us from slavery; it is a mercy to *redeem* a slave—but it is more to *adopt* him!

### **To what does God adopt us?**

**(1.) God adopts us to a state of excellence.** It would be much for God to take a clod of dust, and make it a star. But it is more for him to take *a piece of clay and sin*, and adopt it for his heir!

**(2.) God adopts us to a state of liberty.** Adoption is a state of freedom; a slave being adopted, is made a free man. "You are no more a servant, but a son." How is an adopted son free? Not to do what he wants; but he is free from the dominion of sin, the tyranny of Satan, and the curse of the law. He is free in the manner of worship. He has God's free Spirit, which makes him free and cheerful in the service of God; he is "joyful in the house of prayer."

**(3.) God adopts us to a state of dignity.** He makes us heirs of promise, he installs us into honor. "Since you were precious in my sight, you have been honorable." The adopted are God's **treasure**; Exod 19:5; his **jewels**; Mal 3:17; his **first-born**; Heb 12:23. They have angels for their life-guards. Heb 1:14. They are of the royal blood of heaven. I John 3:9. The Scripture has set forth their spiritual heraldry; they have their escutcheon or coat-armor; sometimes the *lion* for courage; Prov 28:1; sometimes the *dove* for meekness; Cant 2:14; sometimes the *eagle* for flight; Isa 40:31. Thus you see their coat of arms displayed.

**(4.) God adopts us to a glorious inheritance.** God adopts all his sons to an inheritance. "It is your *father's* good pleasure to give you the kingdom!" Luke 12:32. It is no disparagement to be the sons of God. To

reproach the saints, is like when Shimei had reproached David when he was going to be made king. *Adoption* ends in *coronation*. The kingdom God gives to his adopted sons and heirs, excels all earthly monarchies.

(1:) In **riches**. "The gates are of pearl, and the streets of pure gold, as it were transparent glass."

(2:) In **tranquility**. It is peaceable, and the white lily of peace is the best flower in a prince's crown. One peace is better than innumerable triumphs. No divisions at home, or invasions abroad; no more the noise of the drum or cannon; but the voice of harpers harping is the emblem of peace. Rev 14:2.

(3:) In **stability**. Other kingdoms are corruptible; though they have heads of gold, they have feet of clay; but the kingdom into which the saints are adopted runs parallel with eternity, it is a kingdom that cannot be shaken. Heb 12:28. The heirs of heaven reign forever and ever. Rev 22:5.

### **What is the organic or instrumental cause of adoption?**

Faith interests us in the privilege of adoption. "You are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." Before faith is wrought, we are spiritually illegitimate, we have no relation to God as a father. An unbeliever may call God *judge*—but not *father*. Faith is the affiliating grace; it confers upon us the title of sonship, and gives us right to inherit.

Why is faith the instrument of adoption more than any other grace?

Faith is a quickening grace, the vital artery of the soul. "The just shall live by faith." Life makes us capable of adoption; dead children are never adopted. It makes us Christ's brethren, and so God comes to be our Father. "How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him." 1 John 3:1. "He predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will." Ephesians 1:5

**Use one: (1.) See the amazing love of God, in making us his sons.** Plato gave God thanks that he had made him a man, and not only a man but a philosopher; but it is infinitely more, that he should invest us with the prerogative of his sons! It is love in God to *feed* us—but more to *adopt* us. "Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!" Behold the wonder! The wonder of God's love in adopting us will appear the more if we consider these six things:

**(1:) That God should adopt us, when he had a Son of his own.** Men adopt because they have no children, and desire to have some to bear their name; but that God should adopt us when he had a Son of his own, the Lord Jesus—is a wonder of love. Christ is called "God's dear Son." A Son more worthy than the angels. "Being made so much better than the angels." Now, since God had a Son of his own, and such a Son—how wonderful God's love in adopting us! We needed a Father—but he did not need sons!

**(2:) Consider what we were before God adopted us.** We were very deformed; and a man will scarcely adopt one for his heir—who is crooked and ill-favored. He will rather one who has some beauty. Mordecai adopted Esther, because she was fair. When we were in our blood, God adopted us. "When I saw you polluted in your blood, it was the time of love." God did not adopt us when we were bespangled with the jewels of holiness—but when we were black as Ethiopians, diseased as lepers—it was the time of his love.

**(3:) That God should be at so great expense in adopting us.** When men adopt, they have only some deed sealed, and the thing is effected; but when God adopts, it puts him to a far greater expense; it sets his wisdom to work to find out a way to adopt us. It was no easy thing to make heirs of wrath, into heirs of the promise and of glory. When God had found out a way to adopt, it was no easy way. Our adoption was purchased at a dear rate; for when God was about to make us sons and heirs, he could not seal the deed but by the blood of his own Son. Here is the wonder of God's love in adopting us, that he should be at all this expense to accomplish it.

**(4:) That God should adopt his enemies.** If a man adopts another for his heir, he will not adopt his mortal enemy; but that God should adopt us, when we were not only strangers—but enemies, is the wonder of his love! For God to have *pardoned* his enemies would have been much; but to adopt them for his heirs, astonishes the angels in heaven!

**(5:) That God should take great numbers out of the devil's family, and adopt them into the family of heaven.** Christ is said to "bring *many* sons to glory." Men usually adopt but *one* heir—but God is resolved to increase his family, he brings *many* sons to glory. God's adopting of millions—is the wonder of love. Had but *one* been adopted, all of us might have despaired; but he brings many sons to glory, which opens a door of hope to us.

**(6:) That God should confer so great honor upon us, in adopting us.** David thought it no small honor that he should be a king's son-in-law. But what honor to be the sons of the high God! The more honor God has put upon us in adopting us, the more he has magnified his love towards us. What honor—that God has made us so near in alliance to him, sons of God the Father, members of God the Son, temples of God the Holy Spirit! that he has made us as the angels; nay, in some sense, superior to the angels! All this proclaims the wonder of God's love in adopting us.

**(7:) See the dreadful condition of such as live and die in unbelief.** They are not the sons of God. "To as many as received him, he gave power to become the sons of God, even to those who believe on his name." No faith—no sonship. Unbelievers have no sign of sonship—they know not God. All God's children know their Father—but the wicked do not know him. "They proceed from evil to evil, and know not me, says the Lord." Unbelievers are "dead in trespasses and sins." *God has no dead children*; and not being children, they have no right to inherit the glories of heaven.

**Use two: Try whether you are adopted.** The whole world is divided into two classes—the sons of God, and the heirs of hell. "To them he gave power to become the sons of God." Let us put ourselves on a trial. It is no sign we are adopted sons, because we are sons of godly parents. The Jews

boasted that they were of Abraham's seed, and thought they must needs be good, because they came of such a holy line. But adoption does not come by blood. Many godly parents have wicked sons; Abraham had an Ishmael; Isaac had an Esau. The corn that is sown pure, brings forth grain with a *husk*. Just so, from him who is holy, an unholy child springs. We are only God's sons by adoption and grace—not as we are born of godly parents. Well, then, let us **test** ourselves, to see if we are the adopted sons and daughters of God.

**1. The first sign of adoption is obedience.** A son *obeys* his father. "I set cups and jugs of wine before them and invited them to have a drink, but they refused. "No," they said. "We don't drink wine, because Jehonadab son of Recab, our ancestor, gave us this command: You and your descendants must never drink wine." Jeremiah 35:5-6. So, when God says "drink not in sin's enchanted cup," an adopted child says, "my heavenly Father has commanded me, and I dare not drink." A gracious soul not only **believes** God's promise—but **obeys** his command. True child-like obedience must be regular, which implies five things:

**(1.) It must be done by a right RULE.** Obedience must have the Word of God for its rule. This is the touchstone. "To the law and to the testimony!" If our obedience is not according to the Word, it is offering up strange fire; it is will worship; and God will say, "Who has required this at your hand?" The apostle condemns worshiping of angels, which had a show of humility. Col 2:18. The Jews might say that they were reluctant to be so bold as to go to God in their own persons; they would be more humble, and prostrate themselves before the *angels*, desiring them to be their mediators to God. Here was a show of humility in their angel worship; but it was abominable, because they had no word of God to warrant it; it was not obedience—but idolatry. Child-like obedience is that which is consistent with to our Father's revealed will.

**(2.) It must be done from a right PRINCIPLE, from the noble principle of faith.** "The obedience of faith." "All acceptable works proceed from faith," Augustine. A crab-tree may bear fruit fair to the eye—but it is sour because it does not come from a good root. A moral person may give God outward obedience, which to the eyes of others may seem glorious; but his obedience is sour because it comes not from the sweet

and pleasant root of faith. A child of God gives him the obedience of faith, and that meliorates and sweetens his services, and makes them come off with a better relish. "By faith Abel offered a better sacrifice than Cain."

**(3.) It must be done to a right END.** The end determines the value of the deed; the end of obedience is glorifying God. That which has spoiled many splendid services, is, that the end has been wrong. "Be careful not to do your 'acts of righteousness' before men, *to be seen by them*. So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, *to be honored by men*. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full." Matthew 6:1-2. Good works should shine—but not blaze. "If I give my body to be burnt, and have not love, it profits me nothing." The same I must say of a sincere aim; if I obey ever so much, and have not a sincere aim, it profits me nothing. True obedience looks at God in all things. "That Christ may be magnified." Though a child of God shoots short—yet he takes a right aim.

**(4.) True child-like obedience must be UNIFORM.** A child of God makes conscience of one command, as well as another. All things done for God, are done with equal zeal. All God's commands have the same stamp of divine authority upon them; and if I obey one precept because my heavenly Father commands me, by the same rule I must obey all. As the blood runs through all the veins of the body—just so, true child-like obedience runs through the first and second table. "I have respect unto all your commandments." Psalm 119:6. To obey God in some things—and not in others, shows an unsound heart; like Esau, who obeyed his father in bringing him venison—but not in a greater matter, as the choice of his wife. Child-like obedience moves towards every command of God, as the needle points that way which the loadstone draws. If God call to duties which are cross to flesh and blood, if we are children, we shall still obey our Father. "I have kept my feet from every evil path so that I might obey your word." Psalm 119:101.

But who can obey God in all things?

Though an adopted heir of heaven cannot obey every precept perfectly—yet he does evangelically. He approves of every command. "I consent to

the law, that it is good." Rom 7:16. He delights in every command. "O how love I your law!" Psalm 119:97. His desire is to obey every command. "Oh, that my ways were steadfast in obeying your decrees!" Psalm 119:5. Wherein he comes short, he looks up to Christ's blood to supply his defects. This is evangelical obedience; which, though we are not satisfied with it, God accepts it.

**(5.) True childlike obedience is constant.** "Blessed is he who does righteousness at all times." Child-like obedience is not fitful—but abides; and like the fire on the altar, which was kept always burning. Lev 6:13.

**2. The second sign of adoption is to love to be in our Father's presence.** The child who loves his father is never so well as when he is near him. Are we children? We love the presence of God in his ordinances. In *prayer* we speak to God, in the *preaching* of his word he speaks to us; and how does every child of God delight to hear his Father's voice! "O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water." Psalm 63:1, 2. Such as disregard ordinances are not God's children, because they care not to be in God's presence. "Cain went out from the presence of the Lord." Gen 4:16. Not that he could go out of God's sight—but the meaning is, "Cain went out from the church and people of God, where the Lord gave visible tokens of his presence."

**3. The third sign of adoption is to have the guidance of God's Spirit.** "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." Rom 8:14. It is not enough that the child have life—but it must be led every step by the nurse. Just so, the adopted child must not only be born of God—but have the anointing of the Spirit to lead him in a course of holiness. "I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms." As Israel was led by the pillar of fire, so God's children are led by the Spirit. The adopted ones need God's Spirit to lead them, since they are apt to go wrong. The fleshy part inclines to sin; the understanding and conscience are to guide the will—but the will is imperious and rebels; therefore, God's children need the Spirit to check corruption and lead them in the right way. As wicked men are led by the *evil* spirit—the spirit of Satan led *Herod* to incest, *Ahab* to murder, *Judas* to treason; just so, the *good* Spirit leads God's children into virtuous actions.

But enthusiasts pretend to be led by the Spirit, when it is a delusion.

The Spirit's guidance is agreeable to the Word; enthusiasts leave the Word. "Your Word is truth." "The Spirit guides into all truth." The *Word's teaching* and the *Spirit's leading* agree together.

**4. The fourth sign is, that if we are adopted we have an entire love to all God's children.** "Love the brotherhood." We bear affection to God's children, though they have some infirmities. There are spots in God's children; Deut 32:5; but we must love the beautiful face of holiness, though it has a scar in it. If we are adopted, we love the good we see in God's children—we admire their *graces*, we pass by their *imprudences*. If we cannot love them because they have some failings, how do we think God can love us? Can we plead exemption? By these signs we know our adoption.

**Use three: Rejoice in the BENEFITS of adoption.**

What are the benefits which accrue to God's children?

**(1.) They have great privileges.** King's children have great privileges and freedoms. They do not pay custom. Matt 17:25. God's children are privileged people, they are privileged from the hurt of everything. "Nothing shall by any means hurt you." Luke 10:19. *Hit* you it may—but not *hurt* you. "There shall no *evil* befall you." Psalm 91:10. God does not promise that no *affliction* shall befall his children—but no *evil*; the hurt and poison of affliction is taken away. Affliction to a wicked man has evil in it, it makes him worse; it makes him curse and blaspheme. "Men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God." But no evil befalls a child of God; he is bettered by affliction. Heb 12:10. The furnace makes gold purer.

Again, no evil befalls the adopted, because no condemnation. "It is God who justifies; who is he who condemns?" What a blessed privilege is this, to be freed from the *sting* of affliction, and the curse of the law! to be in such a condition that nothing can hurt us! It is fabled—when the dragon has poisoned the water, the unicorn with his horn extracts and draws out

the poison. Just so, Jesus Christ has drawn out the poison of every affliction, that it cannot injure the saints.

**(2.) The second benefit, if we are adopted, is that we have an interest in all the promises.** The promises are children's bread. "Believers are heirs of the promises." The promises are *sure*. God's truth, which is the brightest pearl in his crown, is pawned in a promise. The promises are *suitable*, like a medical garden, in which there is no disease but there is some herb to cure it. In the dark night of desertion, God has promised to be a sun; in temptation, to tread down Satan. Rom 16:20. Does sin prevail? He has promised to take away its kingly power. Rom 6:14. Oh the heavenly comforts which are distilled from the promises! But who has a right to these? Believers alone, are heirs of the promise. There is not a promise in the Bible but a believer may say, "This is mine!"

**Use four: Extol and magnify God's mercy, who has adopted you into his family!** They were slaves of Satan—but God has made them his sons! They were heirs of hell—but God has made them heirs of the kingdom! Adoption is a free gift. He gave them power, or dignity, to become the sons of God. As a thread of silver runs through a whole piece of work, so free grace runs through the whole privilege of adoption. Adoption is a greater mercy than Adam had in paradise; he was a son by *creation*—but here is a further sonship by *adoption*. To make us thankful consider, in civil adoption there is some worth and excellence in the person to be adopted; but there was no worth in us, neither beauty, nor parentage, nor virtue; nothing in us to move God to bestow the prerogative of sonship upon us. We have enough in us to move God to *correct* us—but nothing to move him to *adopt* us, therefore exalt free grace; begin the work of angels here; bless him with your praises, who has blessed you in making you his sons and daughters.

## SANCTIFICATION

### OUTLINE:

### **What is the NATURE of sanctification?**

- (1.) Sanctification is a SUPERNATURAL thing; it is divinely infused.
- (2.) Sanctification is an INTERNAL thing; it lies chiefly in the heart.
- (3.) Sanctification is an EXTENSIVE thing: it spreads into the whole man.
- (4.) Sanctification is an intense and ARDENT thing.
- (5.) Sanctification is a BEAUTIFUL thing.
- (6.) Sanctification is an ABIDING thing.
- (7.) Sanctification is a PROGRESSIVE thing.

### **What are the COUNTERFEITS of sanctification?**

- (1.) The first counterfeit of sanctification is MORAL VIRTUE.
- (2.) The second counterfeit of sanctification is SUPERSTITIOUS DEVOTION.
- (3.) The third counterfeit of sanctification is HYPOCRISY; when men make a *pretense* of that holiness which they have not.
- (4.) The fourth counterfeit of sanctification is RESTRAINING grace—when men forbear vice, though they do not hate it.
- (5.) The fifth counterfeit of sanctification is COMMON grace—which is a slight, transient work of the Spirit—but does not amount to conversion.

### **Wherein appears the NECESSITY of sanctification?**

- (1.) God has called us to it.
- (2.) Without sanctification, there is no evidencing our justification.
- (3.) Without sanctification we have no title to the new covenant.
- (4.) There is no going to heaven without sanctification.
- (5.) Without sanctification all our holy things are defiled.
- (6.) Without sanctification we can show no sign of our election.

### **What are the SIGNS of sanctification?**

First, such as are sanctified, can remember a time when they were unsanctified

A second sign of sanctification is the indwelling of the *Holy Spirit*.

A third sign of sanctification is an antipathy against sin.

A fourth sign of sanctification is the spiritual performance of duties, with the *heart*, and from a principle of *love*.

A fifth sign is a holy life.

A sixth sign is steadfast resolution.

**Use one: The main thing a Christian should look after, is sanctification.**

**Use two: What are the chief INDUCEMENTS to sanctification?**

- (1.) It is the will of God that we should be holy.
- (2.) Jesus Christ has died for our sanctification.
- (3.) Sanctification makes us resemble God.
- (4.) Sanctification is that which God bears a great love to.
- (5.) Sanctification is the only thing which makes us differ from the wicked.
- (6.) It is as great a shame to have the *name* of a Christian—yet lack.
- (7.) Sanctification fits for heaven.

**How may sanctification be ATTAINED?**

- (1.) Be conversant in the Word of God.
- (2.) Get faith in Christ's blood.
- (3.) Breathe after the Spirit.
- (4.) Associate with sanctified people.
- (5.) Pray for sanctification.

**Use three: Wear this jewel of sanctification with THANKFULNESS.**

"For this is the will of God, even your sanctification." I Thess 4:3.

The word *sanctification* signifies to *consecrate* and *set apart* to a holy use: thus they are sanctified people who are separated from the world, and set apart for God's service. Sanctification has a *privative* and a *positive* part.

I. A **privative** part, which lies in the *purging out of sin*. Sin is compared to leaven, which sours; and to leprosy, which defiles. Sanctification purges out "the old leaven." Though it does not take away the *life* of sin—yet it takes away the *love* of sin.

II. A **positive** part, which is the spiritual *refining of the soul*; which in

Scripture is called a "renewing of our mind," and a "partaking of the divine nature." The priests in the law were not only *washed* in the great laver—but *adorned* with glorious apparel. Exod 28:2. Just so, sanctification not only *washes* from sin—but *adorns* with purity.

### **What is the NATURE of sanctification?**

It is a principle of grace savingly wrought, whereby the heart becomes holy, and is made after God's own heart. A sanctified person bears not only God's *name*—but his *image*. In opening the nature of sanctification, I shall lay down these seven positions:

**(1.) Sanctification is a SUPERNATURAL thing; it is divinely infused.** We are naturally polluted, and to cleanse, God takes to be his prerogative. "I am the Lord, who sanctifies you." Weeds grow by themselves. Flowers must be planted and cultivated. Sanctification is a flower of the Spirit's planting, therefore it is called, "The sanctification of the Spirit." 1 Pet 1:2.

**(2.) Sanctification is an INTERNAL thing; it lies chiefly in the heart.** It is called "the adorning the hidden man of the heart." 1 Pet 3:4. The dew wets the *leaf*—but the *sap* is hidden in the root. Just so, the religion of some consists only in externals—but sanctification is deeply rooted in the soul. "In the hidden part you shall make me to know wisdom." Psalm 51:6.

**(3.) Sanctification is an EXTENSIVE thing: it spreads into the whole man.** "May the God of peace sanctify you wholly." As original corruption has depraved all the faculties—"the whole head is sick, the whole heart faint," no part sound, as if the whole volume of blood were corrupted; just so, sanctification goes over the whole soul. After the fall, there was ignorance in the *mind*; but in sanctification, we are "light in the Lord." After the fall, the *will* was depraved; there was not only impotence to good—but obstinacy. In sanctification, there is a blessed pliability in the will, with the will of God. After the fall, the *affections* were misplaced on wrong objects; in sanctification, they are turned into a sweet order and harmony—the *grief* placed on sin, the *love* on God, the *joy* on heaven. Thus sanctification spreads itself as far as original corruption; it goes over

the whole soul. "May God of peace sanctify you wholly." He is not a sanctified person who is good only in some part—but who is all over sanctified; therefore, in Scripture, grace is called a "new *man*," not a new *eye* or a new *tongue*—but a "new *man*." Col 3:10. A good Christian, though he is sanctified but in part—yet in every part.

**(4.) Sanctification is an intense and ARDENT thing.** Its properties burn within the believer. "Fervent in spirit." Rom 12:2. Sanctification is not a dead form—but it is inflamed into zeal. We call water hot, when it is so in the third or fourth degree. Just so, he is holy whose true religion is heated to some degree, and his heart boils over in love to God.

**(5.) Sanctification is a BEAUTIFUL thing.** It makes God and angels fall in love with us. "The beauties of holiness." Psalm 110:3. As the sun is to the world, so is sanctification to the soul, beautifying and bespangling it in God's eyes. That which makes God glorious must needs make us so. *Holiness is the most sparkling jewel in the Godhead.* "Glorious in holiness." Sanctification is the first fruit of the Spirit; it is heaven begun in the soul. *Sanctification* and *glory* differ only in degree. *Sanctification* is glory in the seed; and *glory* is sanctification in the flower. Holiness is the quintessence of happiness.

**(6.) Sanctification is an ABIDING thing.** "His seed remains in him." He who is truly sanctified, cannot fall from that state. Indeed, mere *seeming* holiness may be lost—*colors* may wash off. Sanctification may suffer an *eclipse*. "You have left your first love." True sanctification is a blossom of eternity. "The anointing which you have received, abides in you." He who is truly sanctified can no more fall away, than the angels which are fixed in their heavenly orbs.

**(7.) Sanctification is a PROGRESSIVE thing.** It is growing; it is compared to seed which grows: first the blade springs up, then the ear, then the ripe corn in the ear. Such as are already sanctified may be more sanctified. *Justification* does not admit of degrees; a believer cannot be more elected or justified than he is—but he may be more sanctified than he is. Sanctification is still increasing, like the morning sun, which grows brighter to the full meridian. *Knowledge* is said to increase, and *faith* to

increase. Col 1:10; 2 Cor 10:5. A Christian is continually *adding an inch* to his spiritual stature. It is not with us as it was with Christ, who received the Spirit *without measure*; for Christ could not be more holy than he was. We have the Spirit only *in measure*, and may be still augmenting our grace; as Apelles, when he had drawn a picture, would be still mending it with his pencil. The image of God is drawn but imperfectly in us, therefore we must be still mending it, and drawing it in more lively colors. Sanctification is progressive; if it does not *grow*—it is because it does not *live*. Thus you see the nature of sanctification.

### **What are the COUNTERFEITS of sanctification?**

There are things which look like sanctification—but are not.

**(1.) The first counterfeit of sanctification is MORAL VIRTUE.** To be *just*, to be *temperate*, to have a *kind* demeanor; not to have one's escutcheon blotted with ignominious scandal, is good—but not enough; it is not sanctification. A *field*-flower differs from a *garden*-flower. Many heathen have attained to morality; as Cato, Socrates, and Aristides have. *Civility* is but nature refined; there is nothing of Christ there, and the *heart* may be foul and impure. Under these *beautiful leaves of civility* the *worm of unbelief* may be hidden! A moral person has a secret antipathy against grace: he hates vice, and he hates grace as much as vice. The snake has a beautiful *color*—but a *sting*. A person adorned and cultivated with moral virtue, has a secret spleen against sanctity. The *Stoics* who were the chief of the moralized heathens, were the bitterest enemies Paul had. Acts 17:18.

**(2.) The second counterfeit of sanctification is SUPERSTITIOUS DEVOTION.** This abounds in Popery; adorations, images, altars, vestments, and holy water—are far from sanctification. This *religious frenzy* does not put any intrinsic goodness into a man, it does not make a man better. If the *legal* purifications and washings, which were of God's own appointing, did not make those who used them more holy; and the priests, who wore holy garments, and had holy oil poured on them—were not more holy without the anointing of the Spirit; then surely those *superstitious innovations* in religion, which God never appointed, cannot contribute any holiness to men. A *superstitious*

*holiness* costs no great labor; there is nothing of the heart in it. If to count over a few beads, or bow to an idol, or sprinkle themselves with holy water were sanctification, and all that is required of those who should be saved—then hell would be empty, none would go there!

**(3.) The third counterfeit of sanctification is HYPOCRISY; when men make a *pretense* of that holiness which they have not.** As a comet may shine like a star—a luster may shine from their profession, which dazzles the eyes of the beholders. "Having a form of godliness—but denying the power." These are lamps without oil; whited sepulchers, like the Egyptian temples, which had beautiful outsides—but within were filled with spiders and vermin. The apostle speaks of *true holiness*, Eph 4:24; implying that there is holiness which is *spurious* and *sham*. "You have a *name* to live—but are dead;" like *pictures* and *statues* which are destitute of a vital principle. "Clouds without water." They pretend to be full of the Spirit—but are empty clouds.

This *show of sanctification* is a self-delusion. He who takes copper instead of gold, wrongs himself; the most counterfeit professor deceives others while he *lives*—but deceives himself when he *dies!* To pretend to holiness when there is none, is a vain thing. What were the foolish virgins the better, for their fine *lamps*, when they lacked *oil*? What is the lamp of profession, without the oil of saving grace? What comfort will a *show of holiness* yield at last? Will *painted* gold enrich? Will *painted wine* refresh him who is thirsty? Will *painted holiness* be a cordial at the hour of death? A pretense of sanctification is not to be rested in. Many ships, that have had the *name* of 'the Hope', 'the Safeguard', 'the Triumph', have been dashed and destroyed upon rocks. Just so, many who have had the *name* of saints—have been cast into hell.

**(4.) The fourth counterfeit of sanctification is RESTRAINING grace—when men forbear vice, though they do not hate it.** This may be the sinner's motto, "Gladly I would—but I dare not." The dog has a mind to the bone—but is afraid of the cudgel. Just so, men have a mind to lust—but conscience stands as the angel, with a flaming sword, and affrights them. They have a mind to revenge—but the fear of hell is a curb-bit to check them. There is no change of heart; sin is *curbed*—but not *cured*. A *lion* may be in chains—but is a lion still.

**(5.) The fifth counterfeit of sanctification is COMMON grace—which is a slight, transient work of the Spirit—but does not amount to conversion.** There is some light in the judgement—but it is not humbling. There are some checks in the conscience—but they are not awakening. This looks like sanctification—but is not. Men have *convictions* wrought in them—but they break loose from them again, like the deer, which, being shot, shakes out the arrow. After conviction, men go into the house of mirth, and take the harp to drive away the spirit of sadness—and so all dies and comes to nothing.

**Wherein appears the NECESSITY of sanctification?** In six things:

**(1.) God has called us to it.** "His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who *called* us by his own *glory* and *goodness*." 2 Peter 1:3. We are called to *goodness*, as well as *glory*. "God has not called us to uncleanness—but unto holiness." We have no call to sin; we may have a temptation—but no call to sin; no call to be proud, or unclean; but we have a call to be holy.

**(2.) Without sanctification, there is no evidencing our justification.** Justification and sanctification go together. "But you are sanctified—but you are justified." "Pardoning iniquity," Micah 7:18; there is justification. "He will subdue our iniquities," 5:19; there is sanctification. "Out of Christ's side came blood and water;" *blood* for justification; *water* for sanctification. Such as have not the water out of Christ's side to *cleanse* them, shall never have the blood out of his side to *save* them.

**(3.) Without sanctification we have no title to the new covenant.** The covenant of grace is our charter for heaven. The condition of the covenant is, "That God will be our God." But who are savingly interested in the covenant, and may plead the benefit of it? Sanctified people only. "A new heart will I give you, and I will put my Spirit within you, and I will be your God." If a man makes a *will*, none but such people as are named in the will, can lay claim to the will. Just so, God makes a will and testament—but it is limited to such as are sanctified; and it is high presumption for anyone else to lay claim to the

will.

**(4.) There is no going to heaven without sanctification.** "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." God is a holy God, and he will allow no unholy creature to come near him. A king will not allow a man with plague-sores to approach into his presence. Heaven is not like Noah's ark—where the *clean* beasts and the *unclean* entered. No unclean beasts come into the *heavenly* ark; for though God allows the wicked to live awhile on the earth, he will never allow heaven to be pestered with such vermin! Are they fit to see God—who wallow in wickedness? Will God ever lay such *vipers* in his bosom? "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." It must be a clear eye that sees a bright object: only a holy heart can see God in his glory. Sinners may see God as an enemy—but not as a friend! They will have an affrighting vision of him—but not a beatific vision! They will see the flaming sword—but not the mercy-seat! Oh then, what need is there of sanctification!

**(5.) Without sanctification all our holy things are defiled.** "Unto those who are defiled, is nothing pure." Under the law, "If one of you is carrying a holy sacrifice in his robes and happens to brush against some bread or stew, wine or oil, or any other kind of food—will it also become holy?" No, the holy sacrifice would not purify the other things—but it would be polluted by those things. Hag 2:12, 13. This is an emblem of a sinner's polluting his holy offering. A foul stomach turns the best food into ill humours. Just so, an unsanctified heart pollutes prayers, alms, and sacraments. This evinces the necessity of sanctification. Sanctification makes our holy things accepted. A holy heart is the altar, which sanctifies the offering; if not to our satisfaction, yet to God's acceptance.

**(6.) Without sanctification we can show no sign of our election.** 2 Thess 2:13. Election is the *cause* of our salvation, sanctification is our *evidence*. Sanctification is the ear-mark of Christ's elect sheep.

**What are the SIGNS of sanctification?**

**First, such as are sanctified, can remember a time when they were unsanctified.** "Once we too were foolish and disobedient. We

were misled by others and became slaves to many wicked desires and evil pleasures. Our lives were full of evil and envy. We hated others, and they hated us. But then God our Savior showed us his kindness and love. He saved us, not because of the good things we did, but because of his mercy. He washed away our sins and gave us a new life through the Holy Spirit." Titus 3:3-5. We were in our blood, and then God washed us with water, and anointed us with oil. Ezek 16:9. Those trees of righteousness which blossom and bear almonds, can remember when they were like Aaron's dry rod—not one blossom of holiness growing. A sanctified soul can remember when it was estranged from God through ignorance and vanity—and when free grace planted this flower of holiness in it.

**A second sign of sanctification is the indwelling of the *Holy Spirit*.** "The Holy Spirit which dwells in us." An *unclean* spirit dwells in the wicked and carries them to pride, lust, revenge; the devil enters into these swine! But the Spirit of God dwells in the elect, as their guide and comforter. The Spirit possesses the saints. God's Spirit sanctifies the *imagination*, causing it to mint holy thoughts; and sanctifies the *will* by putting a new bias upon it, whereby it is inclined to godliness. He who is sanctified, has the *influence* of the Spirit, though not the *essence* of the Spirit.

**A third sign of sanctification is an antipathy against sin.** "I hate every wrong path." Psalm 119:104. A hypocrite may *leave* sin—yet *love* it; as a serpent casts its coat—but keeps its sting! But a sanctified person can say he not only *leaves* sin—but *loathes* it. In a sanctified soul, there is a holy antipathy against sin; and antipathies can never be reconciled. Because a man has an antipathy against sin—he cannot but oppose it, and seek the destruction of it.

**A fourth sign of sanctification is the spiritual performance of duties, with the *heart*, and from a principle of *love*.** The sanctified soul prays out of a love to prayer. A man may have *gifts* to admiration; he may speak as an angel dropped out of heaven—yet he may be carnal in spiritual things; his services may not come from a renewed principle, nor be carried upon the wings of *delight* in duty. A sanctified soul worships God in the Spirit. "You also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering *spiritual*

*sacrifices* acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." 1 Peter 2:5. God judges not of our duties by their *length*—but by the *love* from which they spring.

**A fifth sign is a holy life.** "But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do." 1 Peter 1:15. Where the *heart* is sanctified, the *life* will be holy. The temple had gold *without*, as well as *within*. A coin has the king's image and superscription stamped on it. Just so, where there is sanctification, there is not only God's image in the *heart*—but a superscription of holiness written in the *life*. Some say they have *good hearts*—but their *lives* are *wicked*. "There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness." If the water is foul in the *bucket*, it cannot be clean in the *well*. "The king's daughter is all glorious *within*." Psalm 45:13. There is holiness of heart. "Her *clothing* is of wrought gold." There is holiness of life. Grace is most beautiful, when its light so shines that others may see it; this adorns true religion, and makes proselytes to the faith.

**A sixth sign is steadfast resolution.** He is resolved never to part with his holiness. Let others reproach it—he loves it the more. Let water be sprinkled on the fire—it burns the more. He says, as David, when Michal reproached him for dancing before the ark, "If this is to be vile—I will yet be more vile!" Let others persecute him for his holiness, he says as Paul, "None of these things move me!" He prefers *sanctity* before *safety*; and had rather keep his *conscience pure* than his *skin whole*. He says as Job, "My integrity I will hold fast, and not let it go!" He will rather part with his *life*, than his *conscience*.

**Use one: The main thing a Christian should look after, is sanctification.** This is "the one thing needful." Sanctification gives us a pure complexion, it makes us as the heavens, bespangled with stars. Sanctification is our nobility, by it we are born of God, and partake of the divine nature. Sanctification is our riches, therefore compared to rows of jewels, and chains of gold. Canticles 1:10. Sanctification is our best certificate for heaven. What *evidence* have we else to show? Have we *knowledge*? So has the devil. Do we *profess* religion? Satan often appears in Samuel's mantle, and transforms himself into an angel of light. But our certificate for heaven is sanctification. Sanctification is the first fruits of

the Spirit; the only coin that will pass current in the other world. Sanctification is the evidence of God's love. We cannot know God's saving love by his giving us health, riches, or success; but only by the drawing his image of sanctification on us, by the pencil of the Holy Spirit—it is known.

Oh the *misery* of such as are *destitute* of a principle of sanctification! They are spiritually dead. Eph 2:1. Though they *breathe*—yet they do not *live*. The greatest part of the world remains unsanctified. "The world lies in wickedness." That is, the major part of the world. Many *call* themselves Christians—but blot out the word 'saints'. You may as well call him a *man*—who lacks reason; as him a *Christian*—who lacks grace.

Some are buoyed up to such a height of wickedness, that they hate and deride sanctification. They hate it. It is bad to *lack* holiness—it is worse to *hate* it. They embrace the *form* of religion—but hate the *power*. As the vulture hates sweet smells—so they hate the the *perfume of holiness*. They say in derision, 'These are your holy ones!' To deride sanctification argues a high degree of atheism, and is a black brand of reprobation. *Scoffing Ishmael* was cast out of Abraham's family; and such as scoff at holiness shall be cast out of heaven!

**Use two: Above all things pursue after sanctification.** Seek grace more than gold. "Keep her, for she is your life!"

### **What are the chief INDUCEMENTS to sanctification?**

**(1.) It is the will of God that we should be holy.** "This is the will of God—your sanctification." As God's *Word* must be the rule, so his *will* must be the reason of our actions. This is the will of God—our sanctification. Perhaps it is not the will of God we should be *rich*—but it is his will that we should be *holy*. God's will is our warrant.

**(2.) Jesus Christ has died for our sanctification.** Christ shed his blood to wash off our impurity. The cross was both an *altar* and a *laver*. "Our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good." Titus 2:13-14. If we could be

saved without holiness, Christ needed not have died. Christ died, not only to save us from *wrath*—but from *sin*!

**(3.) Sanctification makes us resemble God.** It was Adam's sin—that he aspired to be like God in *omniscience*; but we must endeavor to be like him in *sanctity*. It is a clear glass—in which we can see a face; it is a holy heart—in which something of God can be seen. Nothing of God can be seen in an unsanctified man—but you may see *Satan's picture* in him. *Envy* is the devil's eye, *hypocrisy* his cloven foot; but nothing of God's image can be seen in him. "Just as He who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written--Be holy, because I am holy." 1 Peter 1:15-16.

**(4.) Sanctification is that which God bears a great love to.** God is not drawn to any person's outward beauty, great abilities, noble blood, or worldly grandeur. But he is drawn to a heart embellished with holiness! Christ never admired anything but the *beauty of holiness*. He slighted the glorious buildings of the temple—but admired the woman's faith, and said, "O woman, great is your faith." As a king delights to see *his image* upon a piece of coin; so where God sees his *likeness*—he gives his *love*. The Lord has *two heavens* to dwell in—and the holy heart is one of them!

**(5.) Sanctification is the only thing which makes us differ from the wicked.** God's people have his seal upon them. "The foundation of God stands sure, having this seal—The Lord knows those who are his. And, Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity." 2 Tim 2:19. The godly are sealed with a *double seal*—a seal of *election*, "The Lord knows who are his;" and a seal of *sanctification*, "Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity." This is the name by which God's people are known, "The people of your holiness." Isa 63:18. As *chastity* distinguishes a virtuous woman from a harlot, so *sanctification* distinguishes God's people from others. "You have received an anointing from the Holy One." I John 2:20.

**(6.) It is as great a shame to have the name of a Christian—yet lack sanctity**—as to have the name of a *steward* and lack fidelity; or the name of a *virgin*, and lack chastity. It exposes true religion to reproach—to be baptized into the name of Christ while unholy, and to have eyes full of tears on a sabbath, and on a week-day eyes full of adultery! To be so

*devout* at the Lord's table, as if they were stepping into heaven; and so *profane* the day after, as if they came out of hell! To have the name of 'Christian' while living unholy, is a scandal to true religion, and makes the ways of God to be evil spoken of.

**(7.) Sanctification fits for heaven.** "Who has called us to *glory* and *virtue*." *Glory* is the throne, and *sanctification* is the step by which we ascend to it. As you first *cleanse* the vessel, and then pour in the wine; just so, God first cleanses us by *sanctification*, and then pours in the wine of *glory*. Solomon was first anointed with *oil*, and then was a *king*. First God anoints us with the holy oil of his *Spirit*, and then sets the crown of *happiness* upon our head. *Pureness of heart* and *seeing God* are linked together. Matt 5:8.

### **How may sanctification be ATTAINED?**

**(1.) Be conversant in the word of God.** "Sanctify them through your truth." John 17:17. The Word is both a *mirror* to show us the spots of our soul, and a *laver* to wash them away. The Word has a *transforming* virtue in it; it irradiates the mind, and consecrates the heart.

**(2.) Get faith in Christ's blood.** "Having purified their hearts by faith." She in the gospel, who *touched* the hem of Christ's garment, was healed. A touch of faith purifies! Nothing can have a greater force upon the heart, to sanctify it, than faith. If I believe Christ and his merits are mine—how can I sin against him? *Justifying* faith does that in a spiritual sense, which *miraculous* faith does—it removes mountains, the mountains of pride, lust, envy. True faith, and the *love of sin*, are inconsistent.

**(3.) Breathe after the Spirit.** "The sanctification of the Spirit." The Spirit sanctifies the heart, as the storm purifies the air, and as fire refines metals. The Spirit at work, generates his own likeness. The Spirit stamps the impression of its own sanctity upon the heart, as the seal prints its likeness upon the wax. The Spirit of God in a man perfumes him with holiness, and makes his heart a picture of heaven.

**(4.) Associate with sanctified people.** They may, by their counsel,

prayers, and holy example, be a means to make you holy. As the *communion of saints* is in our creed, so it should be our company. "He who walks with the wise shall be wise." *Association begets assimilation.*

**(5.) Pray for sanctification.** Job propounds a question. "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" God can do it! Out of an unholy heart—he can produce grace! Oh! make David's prayer your own, "Create in me a clean heart, O God." Lay your heart before the Lord, and say, "Lord, my unsanctified heart pollutes all it touches. I am not fit to live with such a heart, for I cannot *honor* you; nor die with such a heart, for I cannot *see* you. Oh create in me a new heart! Lord, consecrate my heart, and make it your temple, and your praises shall be sung there forever!"

**Use three: Has God brought a clean thing out of an unclean? Has he sanctified you? Wear this jewel of sanctification with THANKFULNESS.** "Always thanking the Father, who has enabled you to share the inheritance that belongs to God's *holy* people, who live in the light." Colossians 1:12. Christian, you could *defile* yourself—but you could not *sanctify* yourself. But God has done it—he has not only chained up *sin*—but changed your *nature*—and made you as a king's daughter—all glorious within! He has put upon you the breastplate of holiness, which, though it may be shot *at*, can never be shot *through*.

Are there any here who are sanctified? God has done more for you than for millions, who may have many temporal blessings—but are not sanctified. He has done more for you than if he had made you an earthly king! Are you sanctified? Heaven is begun in you—for *happiness* is nothing but the quintessence of *holiness*. Oh, how thankful should you be to God! Do as that blind man in the gospel did after he had received his sight, who "followed Christ, glorifying God." Make heaven ring with God's praises!

## ASSURANCE

**Question 36: What are the BENEFITS which flow from**

## **Sanctification?**

Answer: Assurance of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Spirit, increase of grace, and perseverance therein to the end.

### **1. The first benefit flowing from sanctification, is assurance of God's love.**

"Give diligence to make your calling and election sure." Sanctification is the *seed*; assurance is the *flower* which grows out of it. Assurance is an outcome of sanctification. The saints of old had it. "We *know* that we know him." 1 John 2:3. "I *know* whom I have believed." 2 Tim 1:12. "Christ loved *me* and gave himself for *me*." Gal 2:20. Here is faith flourishing into assurance. Acolampadius, when sick, pointed to his heart, saying, "Here I have light enough," meaning comfort and assurance.

### **Have all sanctified people assurance?**

They have a *right* to it, and I incline to believe that all have it in some *degree*, before their last expiring; though their comfort may be so feeble, and their spiritual vitality so weak, that they cannot express what they feel. But I dare not positively affirm that all have assurance in the first moment of their sanctification. A letter may be written, when it is not sealed. Just so, grace may be written in the heart, and the Spirit may not set the seal of assurance to it. God is a free agent, and may give or suspend assurance *as he pleases*. Where there is the sanctifying work of the Spirit, he may withhold the *sealing* work, partly to keep the soul humble; partly to punish our careless walking. As when we neglect our spiritual watch, grow remiss in duty, and walk under a cloud—we quench the graces of the Spirit, and God withholds the comforts. And God may withhold assurance partly, to put a difference between earth and heaven. This I speak, to bear up the hearts of God's people, who are dejected because they have no assurance. You may have the water of the Spirit poured on you in sanctification, though not the oil of gladness in assurance. There may be the saving faith of reliance upon Christ—and not the strong faith of assurance. There may be life in the root—when there is no fruit in the branches to be seen. There may be faith in the heart, when

no fruit of assurance.

### **What is assurance?**

It is not any vocal or audible voice, or brought to us by the help of an angel or revelation. The Word of God is the major factor in assurance, conscience is the minor factor, and the Spirit of God, the moving cause. The Word says, "He who fears and loves God is loved of God;" there is the major proposition; then conscience makes the minor proposition, "I fear and love God;" then the Spirit makes the conclusion, "Therefore you are loved of God;" and this is what the apostle calls "The witnessing of the Spirit with our spirits, that we are his children."

### **Has a sanctified soul such an assurance as excludes all doubting?**

He has that which bears up his heart from sinking, he has such a pledge of the Spirit, that he would not part with it for the richest prize. But his assurance, though infallible, is not perfect. There will be sometimes a trepidation—but he is safe amidst fears and doubts; as a ship lies safe at anchor, though shaken by the wind. If a Christian had no doubts, there would be no unbelief in him; had he no doubts, there would be no difference between grace *militant* and grace *triumphant*. Had not David sometimes his *ebbings* as well as *flowings*? Like the mariner, who sometimes cries out, "I see a star," and then cries that the star is out of sight. Sometimes we hear David say, "Your loving-kindness is before my eyes." At another time he is at a loss: "Lord, where are your former lovingkindnesses?" An eclipse in a Christian's assurance may occur, to put him upon longing after *heaven*—where there shall not be the least doubting; where the banner of God's love shall be always displayed upon the soul; where the light of God's face shall be without clouds, and have no sun-setting; and where the saints shall have an uninterrupted assurance, and be forever with the Lord.

### **What are the differences between true *assurance* and *presumption*?**

**(1.) They differ in the method or manner of working.** Divine

assurance flows from *humiliation for sin*; I speak not of the measure of humiliation—but the truth. There are in Palermo, reeds growing, in which there is a sugared juice; a soul humbled for sin is the *bruised reed*, in which grows this sweet assurance. God's Spirit is a spirit of *bondage*, before it is a spirit of *adoption*. On the contrary, presumption arises without any humbling word of the Spirit. "How did you find it so quickly, my son?" Genesis 27:20, The *plough* goes before the *seed is sown*; the heart must be ploughed up by humiliation and *repentance*, before God sows the seed of *assurance*.

**(2.) He who has a real assurance will take heed of that which will weaken and darken his assurance.** He is fearful of the forbidden fruit. He knows, though he cannot sin away his soul—yet he may sin away his assurance. But he who has the false light of presumption, does not fear defiling his garments—he is bold in sin. "Yet you say to Me, 'Father, you have been my guide since the days of my youth. Surely you won't be angry about such a little thing! Surely you can forget it!' So you talk, and keep right on doing all the evil you can." Jeremiah 3:4-5. Balaam said, "My God," yet was a sorcerer. It is a sign he has no money with him, who fears not to travel all hours in the night. It is a sign he has not the jewel of assurance, who fears not the works of darkness.

**(3.) True assurance is built upon a Scripture basis.** The Word says, "The effect of righteousness shall be quietness and assurance forever." Isa 32:17. A Christian's assurance is built upon this Scripture. God has sown the *seed of righteousness* in his soul, and this seed has brought forth the *harvest of assurance*. But presumption is a spurious thing; it has not Scripture to show for its warrant; it is like a will without seal and witnesses, which is null and void in law. Presumption lacks both the witness of the Word, and the seal of the Spirit.

**(4.) Assurance flowing from sanctification, always keeps the heart in a lowly posture.** "Lord," says the soul, "what am *I*, that, passing by so many, the golden beams of your love should shine upon *me*?" Paul had assurance. Is he proud of this jewel? No! "To me who am less than the least of all saints." The more love a Christian receives from God, the more he sees himself a debtor to free grace, and the sense of his

debt keeps his heart humble; but presumption is bred of pride. He who presumes disdains; he thinks himself better than others. "The proud Pharisee stood by himself and prayed this prayer: I thank you, God, that I am not a sinner like everyone else, especially like that tax collector over there! For I never cheat, I don't sin, I don't commit adultery, I fast twice a week, and I give you a tenth of my income." Luke 18:11-12. *Feathers* fly up—but *gold* descends! Just so, the heart of him who has this golden assurance, descends in humility.

### **What may excite us to look after assurance?**

To consider how sweet it is, and the noble and excellent effects it produces.

**(1.) Consider how *sweet* it is.** Assurance is—the manna in the golden pot; the white stone, the wine of paradise which cheers the heart. How comfortable is God's smile! The sun is more refreshing when it shines, than when it is hidden in a cloud. Assurance is a foretaste of glory, it puts a man in heaven before he actually gets there. None can know how delicious and ravishing *assurance* is—but such as have felt it; as none can know how sweet *honey* is—but those who have tasted it.

### **(2.) Consider the noble and excellent *effects* it produces.**

**(1:) Assurance will make us love God, and praise him.** Love is the *soul* of true religion—the *fat* of the sacrifice; and who can love God as he who has assurance? The sun reflecting its beams on a magnifying-glass makes the glass burn that which is near it. Just so, assurance (which is the reflection of God's love upon the soul) makes it burn in love to God. Paul was assured of Christ's love to him, "Who has loved *me!*" And how was his heart fired with love! He valued and admired nothing but Christ. "Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the priceless gain of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I may have Christ!" Philippians 3:8. As Christ was fastened to the cross—so he was fastened to Paul's heart. Praise is the *rent* we pay to the crown of heaven. Who but he who has assurance of his justification, can bless God, and give him the glory of what he has done for him? Can a man in a swoon or asleep praise God

that he is alive? Can a Christian, staggering with fears about his spiritual condition, praise God that he is elected and justified? No! "The living, the living, he shall praise you." Such as are enlivened with assurance, are the fittest people to sound forth God's praise.

**(2:) Assurance will drop sweetness into all our creature enjoyments;** it will be as sugar to wine. *Guilt* embitters our comforts; it is like drinking out of a wormwood cup; but *assurance* sweetens all temporal blessings. The assurances of God's love are sweet riches, and with the assurance of an eternal kingdom, are delectable. A dinner of green herbs, with the assurance of God's love, is princely fare!

**(3:) Assurance will make us active and lively in God's service;** it will excite *prayer*, and quicken *obedience*. As *diligence* begets assurance, so *assurance* begets diligence. *Assurance* will not (as the Papists say) breed carnal-security—but will foster industry. *Doubting* discourages us in God's service—but the assurance of his favor breeds joy. "The *joy* of the Lord is our strength." Neh 8:10. Assurance makes us mount up to heaven, as eagles, in holy duties; it is like the Spirit in Ezekiel's wheels, that moved them, and lifted them up. *Faith* will make us walk—but *assurance* will make us run; we shall never think we can do enough for God. Assurance will be as *wings* to the bird, as *weights* to the clock—to set all the wheels of obedience running!

**(4:) Assurance will be a golden shield to beat back temptation, and will triumph over it.** There are two sorts of temptations which Satan uses.

(1.) *He tempts to draw us to sin.* But we being assured of our justification, will make this temptation vanish. "What, Satan! shall I sin against him who has loved me, and washed me in his blood? Shall I return to folly after God has spoken peace? Shall I weaken my assurance, wound my conscience, grieve my Comforter? Avaunt, Satan! Tempt no more!"

(2.) *Satan would make us question our interest in God,* by telling us we are hypocrites, and God does not love us. Now there is no such shield against this temptation as assurance. "What, Satan! have I a real work of

grace in my heart, and the seal of the Spirit to witness it, and do you tell me God does not love me? Now I know you are an impostor, who go about to disprove what I sensibly feel." If *faith* resists the devil, *assurance* will put him to flight!

**(5:) Assurance will make us contented, though we have but little in the world.** He who has *enough*. is content. He who has sunlight is content, though he is without torchlight. A man who has assurance has enough. He has the riches of Christ's merit, the experience of his love, a pledge of his glory; he is filled with the fullness of God. Here is enough, and having enough he is content. "The Lord is the portion of my inheritance; surely I have a delightful inheritance." Assurance will rock the heart quiet. The reason for discontent is either because men have no interest in God, or do not know their interest. Paul says, "I *know* whom I have believed." There was the assurance of his interest. And, "Sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything." There was his contentment.

Get but assurance, and you will be left off of the list of murmurers; you will be discontented no more. Nothing can come amiss to him who has assurance. God is his. Has he lost a friend? His Father lives. Has he lost his only child? God has given him his only Son. Has he scarcity of bread? God has given him the finest of the wheat, the bread of life. Are his comforts gone? He has the Comforter. Does he meet with storms on the sea? He knows where to put in for harbor; God is his portion, and heaven is his haven. This assurance gives sweet contentment in every condition.

**(6:) Assurance will bear up the heart in sufferings, it will make a Christian endure troubles with *patience* and *cheerfulness*.** "You have need of patience." There are some foods which are hard of digestion, and only a good stomach will digest them. Just so, affliction is a hard food to digest. But patience, like a good stomach, will be able to digest it. And whence comes patience, but from assurance? "Tribulation works patience, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts' with cheerfulness. Assurance is like the mariner's lantern on the deck, which gives light in a dark night. Assurance gives the light of comfort in affliction. "You joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you *knew* that you yourselves had better and lasting

possessions." There was assurance. He who has assurance, can rejoice in tribulation; he can gather grapes of thorns, and honey out of the lion's carcass. Latimer said, "When I sit alone, and can have a settled assurance of the state of my soul, and know that God is mine, I can laugh at all troubles, and nothing can daunt me."

**(7:) Assurance will pacify a troubled conscience.** He who has a disturbed vexatious conscience, carries a *little hell* about him! but assurance cures the *agony* of conscience, and allays the *fury* of conscience. Conscience, which before was turned into a serpent, is now like a bee that has honey in its mouth—it speaks peace. When God is pacified towards us, then conscience is pacified. If the heavens are quiet, and there are no winds stirring, the sea is quiet and calm. Just so, if there is no anger in God's heart, if the tempest of his wrath does not blow—conscience is quiet and serene.

**(8:) Assurance will strengthen us against the fears of death.** Such as lack assurance, cannot die with comfort; they hang in a doubtful suspense as to what shall become of them after death. But he who has assurance, has a happy and joyful passage out of the world; he knows he has passed from death to life; he is carried *full sail* to heaven! Though he cannot *resist* death, he *overcomes* it!

### **What those who do not have assurance, do to gain it?**

**(1.) Let such labor to find grace.** When the sun denies *light* to the earth, it may give forth its *influence*. Just so, when God denies the *light of his countenance*, he may give the *influence of his grace*.

How shall we know we have a real work of grace, and have a right to assurance? If we can resolve two queries:

**(1:) Have we high appreciations of Jesus Christ?** "To you who believe—he is precious." Christ is all made up of beauties and delights; our praises fall short of his worth, and is like spreading *canvas* upon a cloth of gold. How precious is his *blood* and *incense*! The one pacifies our *conscience*, the other perfumes our *prayers*. Can we say we have endearing thoughts of Christ? Do we esteem him our pearl of great price,

our bright morning-star? Do we count all our earthly enjoyments but as rubbish—in comparison of Christ? Do we prefer the worst things of Christ—before the best things of the world? Do we prefer the reproaches of Christ—before the world's embraces? Heb 11:26.

**(2:) Have we the indwelling of the Spirit?** "The Holy Spirit who lives in us." 2 Tim 1:14. How may we know that we have the indwelling presence of the Spirit?

Not by having sometimes good motions stirred up in us by the Spirit; for he may *work* in us—but not *dwell* in us. But by the sanctifying power of the Spirit in our heart, the Spirit infuses a divine nature! He stamps his own impress and image on the soul—making the constitution of it holy. The Spirit ennobles and raises the heart above the world. When Nebuchadnezzar had his understanding given him, he grazed no longer among the beasts—but returned to his throne, and minded the affairs of his kingdom. Just so, when the Spirit of God dwells in a man, it carries his heart above the visible orbs; it makes him pant after heavenly things, and thirst after Christ and glory. If we can find this, then we have grace, and so have a right to assurance.

**(2.) If you lack assurance, wait for it.** If the figures are engraved on the dial, it is but waiting a while, and the sun will shine on it. Just so, when grace is engraved in the heart, it is but waiting a while, and we shall have the sunshine of assurance. "The one who believes will not make haste." Isa 28:16. He will wait upon God's leisure. Say not, God has forsaken you, he will never lift up the light of his countenance; but rather say, as the church, "I will wait for the LORD, who is hiding his face. I will put my trust in him." Isa 8:17.

**(1.) Has God waited for your conversion—and will you not wait for his consolation?** How long did he come wooing you by his Spirit? He waited until his head was filled with dew; he cried, "How long will you be unclean?" Jer 13:27. Christian, did God wait for your love—and can you not wait for his?

**(2:) Assurance is so sweet and precious, that it is worth waiting for;** the price of it is above rubies, it cannot be valued with the gold of

Ophir. Assurance of God's love is a pledge of election, it is the angels' banquet: what other joy have they? When God assures the soul of his eternal purposes of love, what has he more to give? *Whom God kisses—he crowns!* Assurance is the first fruits of paradise. One smile of God's face, one glance of his eye, one crumb of the hidden manna is so sweet and delicious—that it deserves our waiting.

**(3.) God has given a promise that we shall not wait in vain.** "They shall not be ashamed, that wait for me." Perhaps God reserves this *cordial of assurance* for a *fainting* time. He sometimes keeps his best wine, until last. Assurance shall be reserved as a honeyed ingredient, to sweeten *the bitter cup of death*.

**How may deserted souls be comforted—who are cast down for lack of assurance?**

**(1.) Lack of assurance shall not hinder the success of the saint's prayers.** Sin lived in—makes a barricade to our prayer; but lack of assurance does not hinder prayer; we may go to God still in an humble, trustful manner. A Christian perhaps may think, because he does not see God's smiling face—that God will not hear him. This is a mistake. "In my alarm I said, 'I am cut off from your sight!' Yet you heard my cry for mercy when I called to you for help." Psalm 31:22. If we pour out sighs to heaven, God will hear every groan; and though he does not show us his *face*—he will lend us his *ear*.

**(2.) Faith may be strongest, when assurance is weakest.** The woman of Canaan had no assurance—but a glorious faith. "O woman, great is your faith." Rachel was more *lovely*—but Leah was more *fruitful*. Assurance is more fair and lovely to look upon—but a *fruitful faith*, God sees to be better for us. "Blessed are those who have not seen—and yet have believed."

**(3.) When God is out of sight, he is not out of covenant.** "My covenant shall stand fast." Though a wife does not see her husband's face for many years—yet the marriage-relation holds, and he will come again to her after a long voyage. God may be gone from the soul in desertion—but the covenant stands fast. "Though the mountains be shaken and the

hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed—says the Lord, who has compassion on you." Isaiah 54:10. But this promise was made to the Jews, and does not belong to us! Yes it does, for says ver 17, "These benefits are enjoyed by the servants of the Lord." This is true of all the servants of God, those who are now living, as well as those who lived in the time of the Jews.

### **What shall we do to get assurance?**

**(1.) Keep a pure conscience.** Let no unrepented guilt lie upon the conscience. God seals no pardon before repentance. He will not pour the wine of assurance, into a foul vessel. "Let us draw near in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience!" Guilt clips the wings of comfort! He who is conscious of secret sins, cannot draw near to God in full assurance; he cannot call God *father*—but *judge*. Guard your conscience as carefully as you guard your eye—that no *dust of sin* can fall into it!

**(2.) If you would have assurance, be much in the exercise of grace.** "Exercise yourself unto godliness." Men grow rich by trading; so by trading in grace—we grow rich in assurance. "Make your election sure." How? "*Add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge.*" Keep grace upon the wing; it is lively faith, which flourishes into assurance. No man will set up a great sail in a small boat—but in a large vessel. Just so, God sets up the sail of assurance, in a heart enlarged with grace.

**(3.) If you would have assurance, cherish the Holy Spirit of God.** When David would have assurance, he prayed, "Don't take your Holy Spirit from me!" Psalm 51:11. He knew that it was the Spirit alone, who could make him hear the voice of joy. The Spirit is the Comforter, that seals up assurance. 2 Cor 1:22. Therefore make much of the Spirit—do not grieve him. As Noah opened the ark to receive the dove—so should we open our hearts to receive the Spirit, which is the blessed dove who brings an olive branch of assurance in its mouth.

**(4.) Let us lie at the pool of the ordinances, and frequent the word and sacrament.** "He brought me to the banqueting-house, and his banner over me was love." The blessed ordinances are the

banqueting-house, where God displays the banner of assurance. The sacrament is a sealing ordinance. Christ made himself known to his disciples in the breaking of bread. In the holy supper, in the breaking of bread—God makes himself known to us, to be our God and portion.

### **How should they who have assurance conduct themselves?**

#### **(1.) If you have assurance of your justification—do not abuse it.**

It is abusing assurance when we grow more remiss in duty; as the musician, having money thrown him, leaves off playing. By remissness, or intermitting the exercises of piety, we grieve the Spirit—and that is the way to have an embargo laid upon our spiritual comforts. We abuse assurance when we grow presumptuous, and less fearful of sin. What! because a father gives his son an assurance of his love, and tells him he will bestow his land upon him—shall the son be wasteful and dissolute? This would be the way to lose his father's affection, and make him cut off the gift. It was an aggravation of Solomon's sin, that his heart was turned away from the Lord, after he had appeared to him twice. I Kings 11:9. It is bad to sin when one lacks assurance—but it is worse to sin when one has it. Has the Lord sealed his love with a kiss? Has he left a *pledge of heaven* in your hand—and do you thus requite the Lord? Will you sin with *manna* in your mouth? Does God give you the *sweet clusters of assurance* to feed on, and will you return wild grapes to him? It much pleases Satan, either to see us *lack* assurance, or *abuse* it. We abuse assurance when the pulse of our souls beats faster in sin, and slower in holy duties.

#### **(2.) If you have assurance—admire his stupendous mercy.** You deserved that God should give you gall and vinegar to drink—and has he made the honeycomb of his love to drop upon you? Oh, fall down and adore his goodness! Say, "Lord, how is it that you should manifest yourself to *me*, and not to other believers! for many whom you love as the apple of your eye, you hold in suspense, and give them no assurance of your love; though you have given them the *new name*—yet not the *white stone*; though they have the *seed of grace*—yet not the *oil of gladness*; though they have the Holy Spirit, the *Sanctifier*—yet not the Holy Spirit, the *Comforter*. Lord, why is it that you should manifest yourself to *me*—and make your golden beams of assurance to shine upon *my* soul? Oh,

adore God on this account! such will be the work of heaven.

**(3.) If you have assurance—let your hearts be endeared in love to God.** If God gives his people *correction*—they must love him. How much more, when he gives them *assurance*! "O love the Lord, all you his saints." Has God brought you to the borders of Canaan, given you the luscious grapes of Eschol, crowned you with loving-kindness, confirmed your pardon under the broad seal of heaven? How can you be frozen—at such a fire? How you should be turned into seraphim, burning in divine love! Say as Augustine, "I would hate my own soul, if I did not find it loving God." Give God the *cream* and *quintessence* of your love—and show your love by being willing to lose all for his sake.

**(4.) If you have assurance—improve it for God's glory.**

**(1:) Improve assurance—by encouraging such as are yet unconverted.** Tell them how sweet this *hidden manna* is; tell them what a good master you serve; what heavenly gales you have had; tell them God has carried you to the hill of myrrh, to the mountains of spices; he has given you not only a *sight* of heaven—but a *pledge* of heaven. Oh, persuade sinners, by all the love and mercy of God, that they would enroll their names in his family, and cast themselves upon him for salvation. Tell them God has met with you and unlocked the secrets of free grace, and assured you of a land flowing with those infinite delights, which eye has not seen. Thus, by telling others what God has done for your soul, you may make them fall in love with the ways of God, and cause them to turn proselytes to true religion.

**(2:) Improve assurance—by comforting such as lack it.** Be as the good Samaritan, and pour wine and oil into their wounds. You who have assurance, are arrived as it were at the haven—you are sure of your happiness; but do you not see others who are struggling with the waves of temptation and desertion, and are ready to sink? Oh, now sympathize with them, and do what you can to comfort them while they are in this deep ocean. "If we are comforted—it is for your consolation." The comfortable experience of one Christian being communicated to another, much revives and bears up his fainting heart. "*Our* comfort," says the apostle, "is for *your* consolation."

**(3.) Improve assurance—by walking more heavenly.** You should scorn the things below; you who have a pledge of heaven, should not be too earnest for the things of earth. You have angels' food; it does not befit you, with the serpent, to lick the dust. The wicked are all for corn, wine and oil; but you have that which is better. God has lifted up the light of his countenance upon you—and will you hanker after the world, when you have been feeding upon the grapes and pomegranates of the *holy* land? Do you now lust after the garlies and onions of Egypt? When you are clothed with the sun, will you set the moon and the stars above you? **Oh let them scramble for the world—who have nothing else but husks to feed on!** Have you assurance of heaven, and is not that enough? *Will not a kingdom satisfy you?* Such as are high in assurance, should live above the world!

**(4.) Improve assurance—by a cheerful walking.** It is for condemned people, to live with their heads hanging down. But have you your absolution? Does your God smile on you? Cheer up! "Why should the son of a king, look so dejected morning after morning?" 2 Sam 13:4. Are you the king's son? Has God assured you of your adoption—and are you sad? Assurance should be an antidote against all trouble. What though the *world* hates you? You are assured that you are one of *God's* favorites. What though there is but little oil in the cruse, and you are low in the world? You are high in assurance. Oh, then rejoice! How musical is the bird! How does it chirp and sing, though it knows not where to pick up the next crumb! And shall they be sad and discontented, who have God's bond to assure them of their *daily bread*, and his love to assure them of *heaven*? Certainly those who have assurance, should be of an optimistic disposition.

**(5.) If you have an assurance of salvation—let it make you long after a glorified state.** He who has a pledge in his hand—desires the whole sum to be paid. The soul that has tasted how sweet the Lord is—should long for a fuller enjoyment of him in heaven. Has Christ put the *ring of assurance* on your hand, and so espoused you to himself? How should you long for the marriage-supper of the Lamb! Rev 19:9. O Christian, think with yourself, "if a *glimpse* of heaven, if a *smile* of God's face is so sweet; what will it be—to be ever sunning yourself in the light of

God's countenance!" Certainly, you who have an assurance of your title to heaven, cannot but desire possession of heaven. Be content to *live*—but willing to *die*.

**(6.) If you have assurance—be careful that you do not lose it.** Keep it, for it is your life—the comfort of your life. Keep assurance.

First. By **prayer**. "O continue your loving-kindness." "Lord, continue assurance; do not take this special seal away from me!"

Secondly. Keep assurance by **humility**. Pride estranges God from the soul. When you are near in assurance, be low in humility. Paul had assurance, and he baptized himself with the name, "Chief of sinners." **The jewel of assurance is best kept—in the cabinet of an humble heart!**

## PEACE

"May grace and **peace** be multiplied to you." 1 Peter 1:2

Having spoken of the first fruit of sanctification, assurance, I proceed to the second, namely, Peace. "May **peace** be multiplied to you."

**What are the several KINDS of peace?**

**I. There is an external peace**, and that is,

(1.) Domestic—or peace in a family.

(2.) Political—or peace in the state. Peace is the nurse of plenty. How pleasant it is, when the waters of blood begin to assuage, and we can see the windows of our ark open, and the dove returning with an olive branch of peace!

(3.) Ecclesiastical—or peace in the church. Unity in truth, is the greatest mercy on earth. Ecclesiastical peace stands in opposition to schism and persecution.

**II. There is a spiritual peace**, which is twofold; peace *above* us, or peace with God; and peace *within* us, or peace with conscience, which is superlative: other peace may be lasting—but this is everlasting.

### **Where does this peace come from?**

It has the whole Trinity for its author. God the *Father* is "the God of peace." God the *Son* is the "Prince of peace." Peace is said to be the "fruit of the *Spirit*."

(1.) God the **Father** is the God of peace. As he is the God of order, so he is the God of peace. I Cor 14:33, and Phil 4:9. This was the form of the priest's blessing upon the people. "May the Lord show you his favor and give you his peace." Numbers 6:26.

(2.) God the **Son** is the purchaser of peace. He made peace by his blood. "Having made peace by the blood of his cross." The atonement which Aaron made for the people, when he entered into the holy of holies, with blood, was a type of Christ our high priest, who by his sacrifice pacified his angry Father, and made atonement for us. Christ purchased our peace upon hard terms; for his soul was in an agony, while he was travailing to bring forth peace to the world.

(3.) Peace is a fruit of the **Spirit**. He seals up peace to the conscience. The Spirit clears up the work of grace in the heart, from whence arises peace. There was a well of water near Hagar—but she did not see it, therefore she wept. A Christian has grace—but does not see it, therefore he weeps. Now the Spirit discovers this well of water; he enables conscience to witness to a man who has the real work of grace, and so peace flows into the soul.

Thus you see whence this peace comes—  
the Father decrees it,  
the Son purchases it,

the Holy Spirit applies it.

### **May such as are destitute of grace, have peace?**

No! Peace flows from sanctification—but they being unregenerate, have nothing to do with peace. "There is no peace," says my God, "for the wicked." Isaiah 57:21. They may have a *truce*—but no *peace*. God may forbear the wicked a while, and stop the roaring of his cannon; but though there be a truce—yet there is no peace. The wicked may have something which looks like peace—but it is not. They may be *fearless* and *stupid*; but there is a great difference between a *stupidified* conscience, and a *pacified* conscience. "When a strong man armed keeps his palace, his goods are in peace." This is the devil's peace; he rocks men to sleep in the cradle of carnal security; he cries, "Peace, peace!" when men are on the precipice of hell. The seeming peace, which a sinner has, is not from the knowledge of his eternal happiness—but the ignorance of his danger.

### **What are the signs of a false peace?**

**(1.) A false peace has much confidence in it—but this confidence is a false hope.** The sinner does not doubt of God's mercy; and from this *presumptuous confidence* arises some kind of quiet in the mind. The same word in the Hebrew, *cassal*, signifies both confidence and folly. Indeed a sinner's confidence is folly. How confident were the foolish virgins!

**(2.) False peace separates those things which God has joined together.** God joins holiness and peace—but he who has a false peace, separates the two. He lays claim to peace—but banishes holiness. "I shall have peace, even though I am walking in my own stubborn way." The wicked are loose and vain, and yet thank God that they have peace; what a delusion! *You may as well suck health out of poison—as peace out of sin!*

**(3.) False peace is not willing to be tried.** It is a sign they are bad wares—which will not endure the light. It is a sign a man has stolen goods—when he will not have his house searched. A false peace cannot endure to be tried by the word. The word speaks of a humbling and refining work

upon the soul, before peace; but false peace cannot endure to hear of this. The least trouble will shake this peace; it will end in despair. In a false peace, conscience is asleep; but when this *lion of conscience* shall be awakened at death, it will roar upon a man; he will be a terror to himself, and be ready to lay violent hands upon himself.

### **How shall we know that ours is a true peace?**

**(1.) True peace flows from union with Christ.** The branch must first be ingrafted into the tree, before it can receive sap or nourishment from it. Just so, we must first be ingrafted into Christ, before we can receive peace from him. Have we faith? By holiness we are made like Christ; by believing we are made one with Christ, and being in Christ we have peace. John 16:33.

**(2.) True peace flows from subjection to Christ.** Where Christ gives peace, there he sets up his government in the heart. "Of his government and peace, there shall be no end." Christ is called "a *priest* upon his *throne*." Christ as a priest makes peace; but he will be a priest upon his *throne*—he brings the heart in subjection to him. If Christ is our *peace* in salvation, he is our *prince* to rule us! Isa 9:6. Whenever Christ pacifies the conscience, he subdues the lust!

**(3.) True peace is after trouble.** First, God lets loose a spirit of bondage, he convinces and humbles the soul; then he speaks peace. Many say they have peace—but is this peace before a storm, or after it? True peace is after trouble. First there was the earthquake, and then the fire, and then the still small voice. I Kings 19:12. You who never had any legal bruising, may suspect your peace. God pours the *golden oil of peace*, into *broken* hearts.

### **Have all sanctified people this peace?**

They have a *title* to it; they have the *ground* of it. Grace is the seed of peace, and it will in time turn to peace; as the blossoms of a tree turn into fruit, or as milk turns to cream. They have a *promise* of it. "The Lord will bless his people with peace." They may have peace with *God*, though not peace in their own conscience; they have the principle and beginnings of

peace. There is a secret peace which the heart has in serving God; such meltings and enlargements in duty as revive the soul, and bear it up from sinking.

But why have not all believers the full enjoyment and possession of peace? Why is not this flower of peace, fully ripe and fruit-bearing?

Some of the godly may not have so full a degree of peace.

**(1.) Through the fury of temptation. Though the devil cannot *destroy us, he will disturb us.*** He disputes against our adoption; he would make us question the work of grace in our hearts, and so disturb the waters of our peace. He is like a subtle cheater, who, if he cannot make a man's title to his land void—yet will put him to many troublesome suits in law. If Satan cannot make us *ungodly*, he will make us *unquiet*. Violent winds make the sea rough and stormy. Just so, the winds of temptation blowing, disturb peace of spirit, and put the soul into a commotion.

**(2.) The godly may not enjoy peace—through mistake and misapprehension about sin.** They find so much corruption, that they think surely, if there were grace, there would not be such strong working of corruption. Whereas this should be so far from discouraging Christians, and hindering their peace, that it is an argument *for* them. Let me ask, Whence is it—that you feel sin? No man can feel sin—but by grace. A wicked man is insensible. Lay a hundred pound weight upon a dead man, he does not complain. Being *sensible* of corruption, argues a gracious principle. Rom 7:21. Again, Whence is it—that there is a combat with sin—but from the life of grace? Gal 5:17. Dead things cannot combat. Whence is it—that the saints weep for sin? What are these tears, but seeds of faith? The not understanding of this principle, hinders a Christian's peace.

**(3.) The godly may not enjoy peace—through remissness in duty; they may leave their first love.** When Christians abate their fervency—God abates their peace. If you slacken the strings of a violin—the music is spoiled. Just so, if Christians slacken in duty, they spoil the sweet music of peace in their souls. As the *fire* decays—the cold increases.

Just so, as fervency in duty abates—our peace cools.

**Use one: Labor for this blessed peace—peace with God and conscience.** Peace with neighbor-nations is sweet. One peace is better than innumerable triumphs. The Hebrew word *shalom*, peace, comprehends all blessings. Peace is the glory of a kingdom. A prince's crown is more beautiful, when it is hung with the white lily of peace, than when it is set with the red roses of a bloody war. Oh, then, how sweet is peace of conscience! It is a bulwark against the enemy. Phil 4:7. Peace shall keep you as in a garrison; you may throw down the gauntlet, and bid defiance to enemies. Peace is the golden pot and the manna. It is the first fruits of paradise. It is quiet music, for lack of which, a Christian is in continual fear, and does not take comfort in ordinances. Hannah went up to the feast at Jerusalem—but she wept and did not eat. I Sam 1:7; so, a poor dejected soul goes to an ordinance—but does not eat of the feast; he weeps and does not eat. He cannot take comfort in worldly blessings, health, estate, relations; he lacks that inward peace, which should be a sauce to sweeten his comforts. Oh, therefore, labor for this blessed peace. **Consider the noble and excellent EFFECTS of peace.**

**(1.) It gives boldness at the throne of grace.** Guilt of conscience clips the wings of prayer, it makes the face blush, and the heart faint! But when a Christian has some lively apprehensions of God's love, and the Spirit whispers 'peace,' he goes to God with boldness, as a child to his father. "Unto you, O Lord, do I lift up my soul." Time was, when David's soul was bowed down. "I am bowed down greatly." Psalm 38:8. Now the case is altered, and he will lift up his soul to God in a way of triumph. Whence was this? God has spoken peace to his soul. "Your loving-kindness is before my eyes."

**(2.) This divine peace fires the heart with love to Christ.** True peace, is the result of pardon. He who has a pardon sealed, cannot choose but love his prince. How endeared is Christ to the soul! Now Christ is precious indeed. "Oh," says the soul, "how sweet is this *Rose of Sharon*! Has Christ waded through a sea of blood and wrath, to purchase my peace? Has he not only made peace—but spoken peace to me? How should my heart ascend in a fiery chariot of love! How willing should I be to live and suffer for Christ!"

**(3.) This peace quiets the heart in trouble.** "This *man* shall be the peace, when the Assyrian shall come into our land, and when he shall tread in our palaces." The enemy may invade our palaces—but not our peace; this man Christ shall be the peace. When the head aches, the heart may be well; and when worldly troubles assault a Christian, his mind may be in peace and quiet. "I will lay me down in peace, and sleep." It was a sad time with David, he was fleeing for his life from Absalom; it was no small affliction to think that his own son should seek to take away his father's life and crown. David wept and covered his head. Yet at this time he says, "I will lay me down in peace, and sleep." He had trouble from his son—but peace from his conscience. David could sleep upon *the soft pillow of a good conscience*. This is a peace worth getting.

### **What shall we do to attain this blessed peace?**

**(1.) Let us ask it of God.** He is the God of peace; he beats back the roaring lion; he stills the raging of conscience. If we could call all the angels out of heaven, they could not speak peace without God. The stars cannot make day without the sun; none can make day in a dark deserted soul—but the Sun of Righteousness. As the wilderness cannot water itself—but remains dry and parched until the clouds drop their moisture; so our hearts cannot have peace, until God infuses it, and drops it upon us by his Spirit. Therefore pray, "Lord, you who are the God of peace, create peace; you who are the Prince of peace, command it. Give me that peace which may sweeten trouble, yes, even the bitter cup of death."

**(2.) If you would have peace, make war with sin.** Sin is the Achan which troubles us. Sin is the Trojan horse which brings trouble with it. "King Joram demanded, "Do you come in peace, Jehu?" Jehu replied, "How can there be peace as long as the idolatry and witchcraft of your mother, Jezebel, are all around us?" 2 Kings 9:22. What peace can there be—so long as sin remains unmortified? If you would have peace with God, break the league with sin; give battle to sin, for it is a most just war. God has proclaimed it: nay, he has promised us victory. "Sin shall not have dominion over you." No way to *peace*—but by maintaining a *war* with sin. "Our peace is a war against the Devil," Tertullian. When Samson had slain the lion—honey came out of the lion. Just so, by slaying sin—we

get the honey of peace.

**(3.) Go to Christ's blood for peace.** Some go to fetch their peace from their own righteousness—not Christ's righteousness. They go for peace to their holy life—not Christ's death. If conscience is troubled, they strive to quiet it with their duties. This is not the right way to peace. Duties must neither be *neglected*—nor *idolized*. Look to the blood of sprinkling. Heb 12:24. That blood of Christ which pacified God, must pacify conscience. Christ's blood being sucked in by faith, gives peace. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God." No balm to cure a wounded conscience—but the blood of Christ!

**(4.) Walk closely with God.** Peace flows from purity. "As many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them." In the text, grace and peace are put together; *grace* is the root—and *peace* is the flower. Divine peace is distilled out of a gracious heart. Walk very holily. God's Spirit is a *refiner*, before a *comforter*.

**Use two: You who have this peace, peace above, peace within—labor to keep it. Peace is a precious jewel—do not lose it.** It is dreadful to have the league of national peace broken—but it is worse to have the peace of conscience broken. Oh, preserve this peace!

**First, take heed of relapses.** Has God spoken peace? Do not turn again to folly. "I listen carefully to what God the Lord is saying, for he speaks peace to his people, his faithful ones. But *let them not return to their foolish ways.*" Psalm 85:8. Besides *ingratitude*, there is *folly* in relapses. It was long before God was reconciled and the breach made up—and will you again eclipse and forfeit your peace? Has God healed the wound of conscience—and will you tear it open again? Will you cut a new artery? This is returning indeed to folly. *What madness is it to meddle again with that sin—which will breed the worm of conscience!*

**Secondly, make up your spiritual accounts daily; see how matters stand between God and your souls.** "I commune with my own heart." *Frequent reckonings* keep God and conscience friends. Do with your hearts as you do with your watches—wind them up every morning by prayer, and at night examine whether your hearts have gone

true all that day, whether the wheels of your affections have moved swiftly towards heaven. Oh, call yourselves often to account! Keep your reckonings even—for that is the way to keep your peace.

## JOY

"The fruit of the Spirit is **joy**." Gal 5:22.

The third fruit of justification, adoption, and sanctification—is **joy in the Holy Spirit**. Joy is setting the soul upon the top of a pinnacle—it is the cream of the sincere milk of the word. Spiritual joy is a sweet and delightful passion, arising from the apprehension and feeling of some good, whereby the soul is supported under present troubles, and fenced against future fear.

**I. Joy is a delightful passion.** It is contrary to sorrow, which is a perturbation of mind, whereby the heart is perplexed and cast down. Joy is a sweet and pleasant affection—which eases the mind, and exhilarates and comforts the spirits.

**II. Joy arises from the feeling of some good.** Joy is not a mere imagination; but is rational, and arises from the feeling of some good, as the sense of God's love and favor. Joy is so real a thing, that it makes a sudden change in a person; and turns mourning into melody. As in the spring-time, when the sun comes to our horizon, it makes a sudden alteration in the face of the universe—the birds sing, the flowers appear, the fig-tree puts forth her green figs; everything seems to rejoice and put off its mourning, as being revived with the sweet influence of the sun. Just so, when the Sun of Righteousness arises on the soul, it makes a sudden alteration, and the soul is infinitely rejoiced with the golden beams of God's love.

**III. By joy, the soul is supported under present troubles.** Joy stupefies and swallows up troubles; it carries the heart above them, as the oil swims above the water.

**IV. By joy, the heart is fenced against future fear.** Joy is both a *cordial* and an *antidote*. It is a cordial which gives present relief to the spirits when they are sad; and an antidote, which fences off the fear of approaching danger. "I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff they comfort me."

### **How is this joy wrought?**

**(1.) It arises partly from the promise.** As the bee lies at the breast of the flower, and sucks out its sweetness; just so, faith lies at the breast of a promise, and sucks out the quintessence of joy. "Your comforts delight my soul;" that is, the comforts which distill from the promises.

**(2.) The Spirit of God who is called the 'Comforter', sometimes drops this golden oil of joy into the soul.** John 14:26. The Spirit whispers the remission of his sin to a believer—and sheds God's love abroad in the heart, whence flows infinite joy and delight. Rom 5:5.

**What are the SEASONS in which God usually gives his people divine joys?** There are five Seasons.

**(1.) Sometimes at the blessed Supper.** The soul comes *weeping after Christ* in the Lord's Supper, and God sends it away *weeping for joy*. The Jews had a custom at their feasts, of pouring ointment on their guests and kissing them; in the Lord's Supper, God often pours the oil of gladness on the saints, and kisses them with the kisses of his lips. There are two grand ends of the Lord's Supper—the strengthening of faith, and the flourishing of joy. Here, in this ordinance, God displays the banner of his love; here believers taste not only sacramental bread—but hidden manna. Not that God always meets the soul with joy. He may give increase of *grace*, when not increase of *joy*. But oftentimes he pours in the *oil of gladness*, and gives the soul a secret seal of his love; as Christ made himself known in the breaking of bread to the two disciples.

**(2.) Before God calls his people to suffering.** "Be of good cheer, Paul." Acts 23:11. When God was about to give Paul a cup of *blood* to drink—he spiced it with *joy*. "As the *sufferings* of Christ abound in us, so our *consolation* also abounds." 2 Cor 1:5. This made the martyrs' flames,

to be beds of roses to them. When Stephen was being stoned he saw heaven open, and the Sun of Righteousness shone upon his face. God candies our wormwood, with sugar.

**(3.) After sore conflicts with Satan.** He is the red dragon who troubles the waters; he puts the soul into frights, makes it believe that it has no grace, and that God does not love it. Though he cannot blot out a Christian's evidence for heaven—yet he may cast such a mist before his eyes, that he cannot read it. When the soul has been bruised with temptations, God will comfort the bruised reed by giving joy—to confirm a Christian's title to heaven. After Satan's *fiery darts*, comes the *white stone*. No better balm to heal a tempted soul, than the oil of gladness! After Christ was tempted, an angel came to comfort him.

**(4.) After spiritual desertion.** Desertion is a poisoned arrow which shoots to the heart. "For the Almighty has struck me down with his arrows. He has sent his poisoned arrows deep within my spirit. All God's terrors are arrayed against me!" Job 6:4. God is called a fire and a light: the deserted soul feels the fire—but does not see the light; it cries out, as Asaph, "Has the Lord rejected me forever? Will he never again show me favor? Is his unfailing love gone forever? Have his promises permanently failed? Has God forgotten to be kind? Has he slammed the door on his compassion?" Psalms 77:7-9. When the soul is in this case, and ready to faint away in despair, God shines upon it, and gives it some apprehension of his favor, and turns the *shadow of death* into the *light of the morning*. God keeps his cordials for a time of fainting. Joy after a time of desertion, is like a resurrection from the dead.

**(5.) At the hour of death.** Of those even who have had no joy in their lifetime. God puts this *sugar* in the *bottom* of the cup—to make their death sweet. At the last hour, when all other comforts are gone, God sends the Comforter; and when their appetite to food fails, he feeds them with hidden manna. As the wicked before they die, have some apprehensions of hell and wrath in their conscience; so the godly have some foretastes of God's everlasting favor, though sometimes their diseases may be such, and their bodies so oppressed, that they cannot express what they feel. Jacob laid himself to sleep on a stone and saw a vision of a ladder, and the angels ascending and descending upon it. Just

so, when saints lay themselves down to sleep the sleep of death, they have often a vision—they see the light of God's face, and have the evidences of his love sealed up to them forever.

**What are the differences between *worldly* joys and *spiritual* joys?** The  *gleanings* of spiritual joys, are better than the *vintage* of the worldly joys.

**(1.) Spiritual joys help to make us BETTER, worldly joys often make us worse.** "I spoke unto you in your prosperity—but you said, I will not hear." Jer 22:21. *Pride* and *luxury* are the two worms which are bred from worldly pleasures. Wine is the inflamer of lust. As Satan entered in the *sop*, so often in the *cup*. But spiritual joy makes one better; it is like cordial medicine, which, as physicians say, not only cheers the heart—but purges out the noxious humours. Just so, divine joy is cordial medicine, which not only comforts but purifies; it makes a Christian more holy; it causes an antipathy against sin; it infuses strength to live and suffer for Christ. "The joy of the Lord is your strength." Some colors not only *delight* the eye—but *strengthen* the sight. Just so, the joys of God not only *refresh* the soul—but *strengthen* it.

**(2.) Spiritual joys are INWARD, they are heart joys.** "Your heart shall rejoice." John 16:22. True joy is hidden within, worldly joy lies on the outside, like the dew which wets the leaf. We read of those who "rejoice in appearance," in the Greek, in the face. 2 Cor 5:12. It goes no farther than the face, it is not within. "Laughter can conceal a heavy heart; when the laughter ends, the grief remains." Proverbs 14:13. Like a house which has a gilded frontispiece—but all the rooms within are hung in mourning. But spiritual joy lies most *within*. "Your *heart* shall rejoice." Divine joy is like a spring of water which runs underground! Others can see the sufferings of a Christian—but they see not his joy. "Each heart knows its own bitterness, and no one else can fully share its joy." Prov 14:10. His joy is hidden manna—hidden from the eye of the world; he has joyful music which others cannot hear. The marrow lies *within*, the best joy is within the heart.

**(3.) Spiritual joys are SWEETER than worldly joys.** "Your love is sweeter than wine!" Song of Songs 1:2. Spiritual joys are a Christian's

festival; they are the golden pot and the sweet manna, they are so sweet, that they make everything else sweet! Spiritual joys sweeten health and estate, as sweet water poured on flowers makes them more fragrant and aromatic. Divine joys are so delicious and ravishing, that they put our mouth out of taste for earthly delights; just as he who has been drinking cordials tastes little sweetness in water. Paul had so tasted these divine joys, that his mouth was out of taste for worldly things; the world was crucified to him, it was like a dead thing, he could find no sweetness in it. Gal 6:14.

**(4.) Spiritual joys are more PURE, they are not tempered with any bitter ingredients.** A sinner's joy is mixed with dregs, it is embittered with fear and guilt—he drinks wormwood wine. But spiritual joy is not muddied with guilt—but like a crystal stream, it runs pure. It is a rose without prickles; it is honey without wax.

**(5.) Spiritual joys are SATISFYING joys.** "Ask, that your joy may be full." Worldly joys can no more fill the heart than a drop can fill an ocean; they may please the palate or imagination—but cannot satisfy the soul. "No matter how much we *see*—we are never satisfied. No matter how much we *hear*—we are not content." Ecclesiastes 1:8. But the joys of God satisfy. "Your comforts delight my soul." Psalm 94:19. There is as much difference between spiritual joys and earthly joys—as between a banquet which is *eaten*—and one which is *painted* on the wall!

**(6.) Spiritual joys are STRONGER joys than worldly joys.** "Strong consolation." Heb 6:18. They are strong joys indeed, which can bear up a Christian's heart in trials and afflictions. "Having received the word in much affliction, with joy." These joys are *roses which grow in winter!* These joys can sweeten the bitter waters of Marah! He who has these joys, can gather grapes from thorns, and fetch honey out of the carcass of a lion! "As sorrowing—yet always rejoicing." 2 Cor 6: 10. At the end of the *rod*—a Christian tastes *honey!*

**(7.) Spiritual joys are UNWEARIED joys.** Other joys, when in excess, often cause loathing; too much honey nauseates. One may be tired of *pleasure*, as well as *labor*. King Xerxes offered a reward to him who could find out a *new* pleasure! But the joys of God, though they satisfy—

yet they never glut. A *drop* of joy is sweet—but the more of this wine the better! Such as drink of the joys of heaven—are never glutted. Their satiety is without loathing, because they still desire more of the joy with which they are satiated.

**(8.) Spiritual joys are ABIDING joys.** Worldly joys are soon gone. Such as crown themselves with rosebuds, and bathe in the perfumed waters of pleasure—may have joys which seem to be *sweet*—but they are *swift*. They are like meteors, which give a bright and sudden flash, and then disappear. But the joys which believers have are abiding; they are a blossom of eternity—a pledge of those *rivers of pleasure* which run at God's right hand! "In Your presence is abundant joy; in Your right hand are eternal pleasures!" Psalm 16:11

### **Why is this joy to be labored for?**

**(1.) Because it is self-existent.** Spiritual joy can exist in the absence of all other carnal joy. This joy does not depend upon outward things. As the philosophers said, when the musicians came to them, "Philosophers can be merry without music;" so he who has this spiritual joy can be cheerful in the deficiency of carnal joys; he can rejoice in God, in sure hope of glory! "Even though the fig trees have no blossoms, and there are no grapes on the vine; even though the olive crop fails, and the fields lie empty and barren; even though the flocks die in the fields, and the cattle barns are empty, yet I will *rejoice* in the Lord! I will be *joyful* in the God of my salvation!" Habakkuk 3:17-18. Spiritual joy can go without *silver crutches* to support it. Spiritual joy is built higher, than upon creatures, for it is built on the love of God, on the promises of Scripture, and on the blood of Christ.

**(2.) Because spiritual joy carries the soul through duty cheerfully.** Religion becomes a recreation. Fear and sorrow hinder us in the discharge of duty; but a Christian serves God with activity, when he serves him with joy. The *oil of joy* makes the *wheels of obedience* move faster. How fervently did they pray, whom God made joyful in the house of prayer! "I will bring them also to my holy mountain of Jerusalem and will fill them with joy in my house of prayer." Isaiah 56:7.

**(3.) It is called the kingdom of God, because it is a *taste* of that which the saints have in the kingdom of God.** "For the Kingdom of God is not a matter of what we eat or drink, but of living a life of goodness and peace and *joy in the Holy Spirit*." Romans 14:17. What is the heaven of the angels—but the smiles of God's face, the sensible perception and feeling of those joys which are infinitely ravishing and full of glory!

To encourage and quicken us in seeking after them, consider, that Christ died to purchase this joy for his saints. He was a man of sorrows—that we might be full of joy; he prayed that the saints might have this divine joy. "And now I am coming to you. I have told them many things while I was with them so they would be *filled with my joy*." John 17:13. Christ knows we never love him so much—as when we *feel* his love; which may encourage us to seek after this joy. We pray for that which Christ himself is praying for, when we pray that his joy may be fulfilled in us.

### **What shall we do to obtain this spiritual joy?**

Walk consistently and spiritually. God gives joy after long and close walking with him.

(1.) Observe your hours. Set time every day apart for God.

(2.) Mourn for sin. "Mourning is the seed," as Basil says, "out of which the flower of spiritual joy grows." "I will comfort those who mourn." Isa 57:18.

(3.) Keep the *book of conscience* fair written. Do not by presumptuous sins, blur your evidences. A good conscience is the *ark* in which God puts the hidden manna!

(4.) Be often upon your knees—pray with life and fervency. The same Spirit who fills the heart with sighs—fills it with joys. The same Spirit who inspires the prayer—seals it. When Hannah had prayed, her countenance was no longer sad. I Sam 1:18. Praying Christians have much fellowship with God; and none are so likely to have the secrets of his love imparted, as those who hold correspondence with him. By close walking with God, we get clusters of Eshcol's grapes along the way, which are the pledge of

future happiness.

### **How shall we comfort those who lack joy?**

Such as walk in close communion with God, have more joy than others.

(1.) Initial joy, joy in the seed. "Light is shed upon the righteous, and joy on the upright in heart." Psalm 97:11. Grace in the heart, is a seed of joy. Though a Christian lacks the *sun*, he has a day-star in his heart.

(2.) A believer has *real* joy—though not *royal* comforts. He has, as Aquinas says, "joy *in* God, though not *from* God." Joy in God, is the delight and pleasure the soul takes in God. "My soul shall be glad in the Lord." He who is truly gracious, is so far joyful as to take comfort in God. Though he cannot say that God rejoices in him; he can say that he rejoices in God.

(3.) He has supporting joy—though not transporting comforts. He has as much as keeps him from sinking. "You strengthen me with strength in my soul." Psalm 138:3. If a Christian has not God's arm to *embrace* him—yet he has it to *uphold* him. Thus a Christian who walks with God has something which bears up his heart from sinking; and it is but waiting awhile, and he is sure of those eternal joys which are unspeakable and full of glory!

**Use one: See that true religion is no melancholy thing—it brings joy.** The fruit of the Spirit is joy. Joy may vary—but it is never totally destroyed. A poor Christian who exists on bread and water, may have purer joy than the greatest monarch. Though he *fares* hard—he *feeds* high. He has a table spread from heaven—angels' food, and the hidden manna. He has sometimes sweet raptures of joy—which cause jubilation of spirit; he has that which is better *felt*—than can be *expressed*. "But I do know that I was caught up into paradise and heard things so astounding that they cannot be told." 2 Corinthians 12:4.

**Use two: If God gives his people such joy in this life, oh! then, what glorious joy will he give them in heaven!** "Enter into the joy of your Lord!" Matt 25:21. Here on earth—joy begins to enter into us;

there in heaven—we shall enter into joy. God keeps his best wine until last. Heliogabalus bathed himself in sweet perfumed waters. What joy will that be—when the soul shall forever bathe itself in the pure and pleasant fountain of God's love! What joy will that be—to see the orient brightness of Christ's face, and have the kisses of those lips which drop sweet-smelling myrrh! "The Bride will rejoice in the embrace of her Lord," Augustine. Oh! if a cluster of grapes here is so sweet, what will the *full vintage* be! How may this set us all longing for that place where sorrow cannot live—and where joy cannot die!

## Growth in Grace

"But grow in grace." 2 Peter 3:18

True grace is progressive—of a spreading and growing nature. It is with grace as with light; first, there is the daybreak; then it shines brighter to the full meridian. A good Christian is like the crocodile—which continues to grow as long as it lives. The saints are not only compared to *stars* for their light—but to *trees* for their growth. Isa 61:3, and Hos 14:5. A good Christian is not like Hezekiah's sun, which went *backwards*, nor Joshua's sun that *stood still*—but is always advancing in holiness, and increasing with the increase of God.

### **In how many ways may a Christian be said to grow in grace?**

(1.) *He grows in the **exercise** of grace.* His lamp is burning and shining; therefore we read of a living hope. I Pet 1:1. Here is the activity of grace. The church prays for the blowing of the Spirit, that her spices (that is—her graces) might flow forth. Cant 4:16.

(2.) *A Christian grows in the **degree** of grace.* He goes from strength to strength, from one degree of grace to another. Psalm 84:7. A saint goes from faith to faith. Rom 1:17. His love abounds more and more. Phil 1:9.

### **What is the right manner of a Christian's growth?**

**(1.) It is to grow less in one's own eyes.** "I am a worm, and no man." Psalm 22:6. The sight of his corruption and ignorance, makes a Christian grow into a dislike of himself; he vanishes in his own eyes. Job abhorred himself in the dust. Job 42:6. It is good to grow out of conceit with one's self.

**(2.) The right manner of growth is to grow proportionately, to grow in one grace as well as another.** 2 Pet 1:5. To grow in knowledge—but not meekness, brotherly love, or good works—is not the right growth. A thing may *swell* and not *grow*; a man may be swelled with knowledge—yet may have no spiritual growth. The right manner of growth is uniform, growing in one grace as well as another. As the beauty of the body consists in a *symmetry* of parts, in which not only the head grows—but the arms and legs. Just so, spiritual growth is most beautiful, when there is *symmetry* and *proportion*, and every grace thrives.

**(3.) The right manner of growth is, when a Christian has grace suitable to his several employments and occasions.** When corruptions are strong—and he has grace able to give check to them. When burdens are heavy—and he has patience able to bear them. When temptations are fierce—and he has faith able to resist them. Then grace grows in the right manner.

### **Whence is it, that true grace *must* grow?**

(1.) It is proper for grace to grow; it is an enduring seed, the seed of God. I John 3:9. It is the nature of seed to grow: grace does not lie in the heart, as a *stone* in the earth—but as *seed* in the earth, which will spring up, first the blade, then the ear, and then the full corn in the ear.

(2.) Grace *must* grow—from its sweetness and excellence. He who has grace is never weary of it—but would have more. The delight he has in it causes thirst. Grace is the image of God, and a Christian thinks he can never be enough like God. Grace instills peace; a Christian, therefore, strives to grow in grace, that he may grow in peace.

(3.) Grace *must* grow—from a believer's ingrafting into Christ. He who is a scion, ingrafted into this noble, generous stock, cannot but grow. Christ

is so full of sap, and vivifying influence, that he makes all who are grafted into him, grow fruitful. "From me is your fruit found."

### **What MOTIVES or INCENTIVES are there to make us grow in grace?**

**(1.) Growth is the end of the ordinances.** Why does a man lay out cost on ground, fertilize and water it—but that it may grow? The sincere milk of the word is given, that we may grow thereby. 1 Pet 2:2. The table of the Lord is on purpose for our spiritual nourishment and increase of grace.

**(2.) The *growth* of grace—is the best evidence of the *truth* of it.** Things that have no life will not grow: a picture will not grow, a stake in the hedge will not grow; but a plant that has a vegetative life grows. The growing of grace shows it to be alive in the soul.

**(3.) Growth in grace is the beauty of a Christian.** The more a child grows, the more it comes to its maturity, and looks more ruddy. Just so, the more a Christian grows in grace, the more he comes to his spiritual maturity, and looks fairer. Abraham's faith was beautiful when in its infancy—but at last it grew so vigorous and eminent, that God himself was in love with it, and crowned Abraham with this honor, to be the "father of the faithful."

**(4.) The more we grow in grace—the more glory we bring to God.** God's glory is more worth than the salvation of all men's souls. This should be our design—to raise the trophies of God's glory; and how can we better do it, than by growing in grace? "Hereby is my Father glorified—if you bring forth *much fruit*." Though the least grain of grace will bring salvation to us—yet it will not bring so much glory to God. "*Filled* with the fruits of righteousness, which are to the praise of his glory." It commends the skill of the farmer—when his plants grow and thrive; it is a praise and honor to God—when we thrive in grace.

**(5.) The more we grow in grace—the more will God love us.** Is it not that which we pray for? The more growth, the more God will love us. The farmer loves his thriving plants; the thriving Christian is God's

*Hephzibah*, or chief delight. Christ loves to see the vine flourishing, and the pomegranates budding. Cant 6:11: He accepts the *truth* of grace—but commends the *growth* of grace. "I have not found so *great* faith, no, not in Israel." Would you be as the beloved disciple, who lay in Christ's bosom? Would you have much love from Christ? Labor for much growth, let faith flourish with good works, and love increase into zeal.

**(6.) We need to grow in grace.** There is still something lacking in our faith. 1 Thess 3:10. Grace is but in its infancy and minority, and we must still be adding an inch to our spiritual stature. The apostles said, "Lord, increase our faith." Luke 17:5. Grace is but weak. "I am this day weak, though anointed king." So, though we are anointed with grace—yet we are but weak, and had need arrive at further degrees of sanctity.

**(7.) The growth of grace—will hinder the growth of corruption.** The more health grows, the more the distempers of the body abate. Just so, in spirituals—the more humility grows, the more the swelling of pride is assuaged. The more purity of heart grows—the more the fire of lust is abated. The growth of flowers in the garden does not hinder the growing of weeds—but the growing of the flower of grace does hinder the sprouting of corruption. As some plants have an antipathy, and will not thrive if they grow near together, as the vine and the bay tree; just so, where grace grows, sin will not thrive so fast.

**(8.) We cannot grow too much in grace;** there is no excess there. The body may grow too great, as in the dropsy; but faith cannot grow too great. "Your faith grows exceedingly." Here was exceeding—yet not excess. As a man cannot have too much *health*; just so—he cannot have not too much *grace*. Grace is the beauty of holiness. Ps 110:3. We cannot have too much spiritual beauty; it will be the only trouble at death, that we have grown no more in grace.

**(9.) Such as do not grow in grace—decay in grace.** "Not to go forward in the Christian life is to turn back," Bernard. There is no standing still in piety—either we go forward or backward. If faith does not grow, unbelief will. If heavenly-mindedness does not grow, covetousness will. A man who does not increase his stock, diminishes it. Just so, if you do not improve your stock of grace, your stock will decay. The angels on

Jacob's ladder were either *ascending* or *descending*. Just so, if you do not *ascend* in true religion, you *descend*.

**(10.) The more we grow in grace—the more we shall flourish in glory.** Though every vessel of glory shall be full—yet some vessels hold more than others. He whose pound gained ten, was made ruler over ten cities. Luke 19:17. Such as do not grow much, though they lose not their glory, they lessen it. If any shall follow the Lamb in whiter and larger robes of glory than others, they shall be such as have shone most in grace here.

**Use: Lament the lack of growth.** Religion in many, has grown into a *form* and *profession* only; this is to grow in *leaves*—not in *fruit*. Many Christians are like a body in an atrophy, which does not thrive. They are not nourished by the sermons they hear. Like the angels who assumed bodies, they ate—but did not grow. It is to be suspected where there is no growth—that a vital principle is lacking. Some instead of growing better, grow worse; they grow more earthly, more profane. "Evil men and impostors will go from bad to worse." 2 Tim 3:13. Many grow hell-ward; they grow past shame. Zeph 3:5. They grow more rotten.

**How shall we know whether we grow in grace?** For deciding this question, I shall show:

1. The signs of our not growing;
2. The signs of our growing.

**I. The signs of our NOT growing in grace—but rather falling into a spiritual decline.**

[1] We are a spiritual decline—**when we have lost our spiritual appetite.** A consumptive person does not have that appetite for his food, as formerly. Perhaps, Christian, you can remember the time when you hungered and thirsted after righteousness, you came to the ordinances with such an appetite, as to a feast; but now it is otherwise, Christ is not so prized, nor his ordinances so loved. This is a dreadful presage that grace is on the decline; and you are in a deep decline. It was a sign that

David was near his grave when they covered him with clothes, and he got no warmth, 1 Kings 1:1. Just so, when a person is covered with the warm clothes of ordinances, and yet has no warmth of affection to spiritual things, it is a sign that he is declining in grace.

**[2]** We are a spiritual decline—**when we grow more worldly.** Perhaps we once mounted into higher orbs, we set our hearts on things above, and spoke the language of Canaan; but now our minds are taken off from heaven, we dig our comfort out of the lower mines, and like Satan, we *compass the earth*. This is a sign we are going down the hill apace, and our grace is in a decline. It is observable when nature decays, and people are near dying, they grow more *stooping*; and truly, when men's hearts grow more *stooping* to the earth, and they can hardly lift up themselves to a heavenly thought, if grace is not dead—yet it is ready to die. Rev 3:2.

**[3]** We are a spiritual decline—**when we are less troubled about sin.** Time was, when the least sin grieved us, as the least hair makes the eye weep; but now we can commit sin without remorse. Time was, when we were troubled if we neglected closet prayer; now we can omit family-prayer. Time was, when vain *thoughts* troubled us; now we are not troubled for loose *practices*. Here is a sad declension in piety; and truly grace is so far from growing, that we can hardly perceive its pulse to beat!

## II. The SIGNS of our growing in grace.

**[1]** **When we have got beyond our former measures of grace.** It is a sign a child thrives, when he has outgrown his clothes. That knowledge which would serve us before, will not serve us now; we have a deeper insight into Scripture, our *light* is clearer, our spark of *love* is increased into a flame; there is a sign of growth. That competency of grace we once had, is too scanty for us now; we have outgrown ourselves!

**[2]** **When we are more firmly rooted in piety.** "Rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith." Col 2:7. The spreading of the root, shows the growth of the tree. When we are so strongly fastened on Christ, that we cannot be blown down with the breath of heretics, it is a blessed sign of growth. Athanasius was called *Adamas ecclesiae* [the Adamant of

the Church,] an adamant that could not be removed from the love of the truth.

### **[3] When we have a more spiritual frame of heart.**

(1.) When we are more spiritual in our **principles**; when we oppose sin out of love to God, and because it strikes at his holiness.

(2.) When we are more spiritual in our **affections**. We grieve for the first rising of corruption, for the bubbling up of vain thoughts, and for the hidden spring which runs underground. We mourn not only for the *penalty* of sin—but for its *pollution*. Sin is a coal which not only *burns*—but which *blackens*.

(3.) When we are spiritual in the performance of **duty**. We are more serious, reverent, fervent; we have more *life* in prayer, we put *fire* to the sacrifice. "Fervent in spirit." We serve God with more *love*, which ripens and mellows our duty, and makes it come off with a better relish.

**[4] When grace gains ground by opposition.** The fire burns hottest, in the coldest season. Peter's courage increased, by the opposition of the high priest and the rulers. Acts 4:8, 11. The martyr's zeal was increased by persecution. Here was grace of the first magnitude.

### **What shall we do to grow in grace?**

**(1.) Take heed of that which will hinder growth,** as the love of any sin. The body may as well thrive in a fever, as grace can where any sin is cherished.

**(2.) Use all means for growth in grace.**

First. "*Exercise yourselves unto godliness.*" The body grows stronger by exercise. Trading of money makes men grow rich. Just so, the more we trade our faith in the promises, the richer in faith we grow.

Secondly. If you would be growing Christians, be *humble* Christians. It is observed in some countries, as in France, the best and largest grapes, which make wine, grow on the *lower* sort of vines. Just so, the humble

saints grow most in grace. "God gives grace to the *humble*."

Thirdly. *Pray* to God for spiritual growth. Some pray that they may grow in gifts. It is better to grow in *grace*, than *gifts*. Gifts are for *ornament*, grace is for *nourishment*. Gifts edify others; grace saves ourselves. Some pray that they may grow rich; but a fruitful heart is better than a full purse. Pray that God would make you grow in grace, though it be by affliction. Heb 12:10. The vine grows by *pruning*. God's pruning-knife is to make us grow more in grace!

### **How may we comfort such as complain that they do not grow in grace?**

They make mistake; for they may grow, when they think they do not. "There is that makes himself poor—yet has great riches." Prov 13:7. The sight Christians have of their defects in grace, and their thirst after greater measures of grace—make them think they do not grow, when they actually are growing. He who covets a great estate, because he has not so much as he desires, thinks himself to be poor. Indeed Christians should seek after the grace they *lack*—but they must not therefore overlook the grace they *have*. Let Christians be thankful for the least growth. If you do not grow so much in *assurance*, bless God if you grow in *sincerity*; if you do not grow so much in *knowledge*, bless God if you grow in *humility*. If a tree grows in the *root*, it is a true growth. Just so, if you grow in the root-grace of humility—that is as needful for you as any other growth.

## **PERSEVERANCE**

"Who are **kept** by the power of God through faith unto salvation." I Peter 1:5.

The fifth and last fruit of sanctification, is *perseverance in grace*. The heavenly inheritance is kept for the saints—and they are kept for the inheritance. The apostle asserts a saint's stability and permanence in grace. The saint's perseverance is much opposed by Papists and

Arminians; but it is not the less true because it is opposed. A Christian's main comfort, depends upon this doctrine of perseverance. Take this away, and you harm piety, and cut the sinews of all cheerful endeavors. Before I come to the full handling and discussing of this great point, let me first clear the sense of it.

## **I. The NATURE of perseverance.**

**[1] I grant, that such as are so only in mere profession, may fall away.** "Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world." Blazing *comets* soon evaporate. A building on *sand* will fall. Matt 7:26. *Seeming* grace may be lost. It is no wonder to see a branch fall from a tree, which has only been *tied* on. Hypocrites are only *tied on* Christ by an external profession, they are not *ingrafted*. Who ever thought artificial motions would hold long? The hypocrite's motion is only artificial, not vital. All *blossoms* do not ripen into fruit.

**[2] I grant that if believers were left to stand on their own legs, they might fall finally.** Some of the *angels*, who were stars full of light and glory, actually lost their grace! And if those pure angels fell from grace, much more would the godly, who have so much sin to betray them —*if they were not upheld by a superior power!*

**[3] I grant that, although true believers do not fall away actually, and lose all their grace—yet their grace may fail in degree,** and they may make a great breach upon their sanctification. Grace may be dying—but not dead. "Strengthen the things which are ready to die." Grace may be like fire in the embers; though not quenched —yet the flame has gone out. This **decay of grace** I shall show in two particulars.

**(1.) The lively actings of grace may be suspended.** "You have left your first love." Grace may be like a sleepy habit; the godly may act faintly in piety, the pulse of their affections may beat low. The *wise* virgins *slumbered*. Matt 25:5. The *exercise* of grace may be hindered; as when the course of water is stopped.

**(2.) Instead of grace working in the godly, corruption may**

**work**; instead of patience, murmuring; instead of heavenliness, earthliness. How did *pride* put forth itself in the disciples, when they strove who should be the greatest! How did *lust* put forth itself in David! Corruption may be so lively and vigorous in the regenerate, that they may fall into enormous sins! But though all this is granted—yet they do not *finally* fall away from grace. David did not quite lose his grace: for then, why did he pray, "Do not take your Holy Spirit from me." He had not quite lost the Spirit. As Eutychus, when he fell from a window (Acts 20) and all thought he was dead—"No, says Paul, there is life in him!" So David fell foully—but there was the life of grace in him. Though the saints may come to that point where they have but *little* faith—yet cannot come to that point where have *no* faith. Though their grace may be drawn *low*—yet it is not drawn *dry*; though grace may be *abated*, it is not *abolished*; though the wise virgins *slumbered*—yet their lamps were not quite gone out. Grace, when at the lowest, shall revive and flourish; just as when Samson had lost his strength—his hair grew again, and his strength was renewed. Having thus explained the proposition, I come now to amplify this great doctrine of the saint's perseverance.

## II. By what MEANS do Christians come to persevere?

**[1] We persevere by the help of ORDINANCES, as of prayer, the word, and the sacraments.** Christians do not arrive at perseverance when they sit still and do nothing. It is not with us as with passengers in a ship, who are carried to the end of their voyage while they sit still in the ship; or, as it is with noblemen, who have their rents brought in without their toil or labor. But we arrive at salvation in the use of means; as a man comes to the end of a race by *running*; or to a victory by *fighting*. "Watch and pray." As Paul said, "unless you remain in the ship, you cannot be saved." Acts 27:31. Believers shall come to shore at last, arrive at heaven; but "unless they remain in the ship," namely, "in the use of ordinances, "they cannot be saved." The ordinances nourish grace; as they beget grace, so they are the breast-milk by which grace is *nourished* and *preserved* to eternity.

**[2] We persevere by the sacred influence and concurrence of the SPIRIT.** The Spirit of God is continually at work in the heart of a believer, to carry on grace to perfection. He drops in *fresh oil*, to keep the

*lamp of grace* burning. The Spirit excites, strengthens, increases grace—and makes a Christian go from one step of faith to another, until he comes to the end of his faith, which is salvation. I Pet 1:9. It is a fine expression of the apostle, "The Holy Spirit who dwells in us." He who dwells in a house, keeps the house in repair. Just so, the Spirit dwelling in a believer, keeps grace in repair. Grace is compared to a river of the water of life. John 7:38. This river can never be dried up, because God's Spirit is the spring that continually feeds it.

**[3] Grace is carried on to perfection by Christ's daily INTERCESSION.** As the Spirit is at work in the *heart*, so is Christ at work in *heaven*. Christ is ever praying that the saint's grace may hold out. "Father, keep those whom you have given me." Keep them as the stars in their orbs: keep them as jewels, that they may not be lost. "Father keep them." John 17:2. That prayer which Christ made for Peter, was the copy of the prayer he now makes for believers. "I have prayed for you, that your faith fail not," that it be not totally eclipsed. How can the children of such prayers perish?

### **III. Arguments to prove the saint's perseverance.**

**[1] From the TRUTH of God.** God has both asserted it, and promised it.

(1.) God has **asserted** it. "His seed *remains* in him." "The anointing you have received from him *abides* in you."

(2.) As God has asserted it, so he has **promised** it. The *truth* of God, the most orient pearl of his crown, is laid as a pawn in the promise. "I will give unto them eternal life, and *they shall never perish!*" "I will make with them an everlasting covenant: I will never turn away from doing good to them, and I will put fear of Me in their hearts so they will never again turn away from Me." Jeremiah 32:40. God will so love his people, that *he* will not forsake them; and they shall so fear him, that *they* shall not forsake him. If a believer should not persevere, God would break his promise. "I will betroth you unto me *forever*, in righteousness and loving-kindness." God does not marry his people unto himself, and then divorce them; he hates divorce. Mal 2:16. God's love ties the marriage-knot so

fast, that neither death nor hell can break it asunder!

**[2] The second argument is from the POWER of God.** The text says, we "are kept by the *power* of God unto salvation." Each Person in the Trinity has a hand in making a believer persevere. God the *Father* establishes salvation, 2 Cor 1:21. God the *Son* confirms salvation, 1 Cor 1:8. God the *Holy Spirit* seals salvation, Eph 1:13. So it is the power of God which keeps us. We are not kept by our own power. The Pelagians held that man by his own power might overcome temptation and persevere. Augustine confutes them. "Man," says he, "prays unto God for perseverance, which would be absurd, if he had power of himself to persevere." "And," says Augustine, "if all the power is inherent in a man's self, then why should not one persevere as well as another? Why not Judas as well as Peter?" So that it is not by any other than the power of God, that we are kept. The Lord preserved Israel from perishing in the *wilderness*, until he brought them to *Canaan*; and the same care will he take, if not in a miraculous manner—yet in a spiritual invisible manner—in preserving his people in a state of grace, until he brings them to the celestial *Canaan*. As the heathens feigned of Atlas—that he bears up the heavens from falling; so the power of God is that Atlas which bears up the saints from falling. It is disputed, whether grace of itself may not perish, as Adam's; yet I am sure that *grace kept by the power of God cannot perish*.

**[3] The third argument is taken from God's ELECTING LOVE.** Such as God has from all eternity elected to glory, cannot fall away finally! Every true believer is elected to glory, therefore he cannot fall away. What can frustrate election, or make God's decree void? This argument stands like Mount Zion, which cannot be moved. "The foundation of God stands sure, having this seal, the Lord knows those who are his." The foundation of God is nothing else but God's decree in election; and this stands sure; God *will* not alter it, and others *can* not.

**[4] The fourth argument is taken from believers' UNION WITH CHRIST.** They are knit to Christ as the members to the head, by the nerves and ligaments of faith, so that they cannot be broken off. Eph 5:23. What was once said of Christ's natural body is true of his mystical body—"A bone of it shall not be broken." As it is not possible to sever the

*leaven* and the *dough* when they are once mingled and kneaded together; so it is impossible for Christ and believers, when once united, ever to be separated. Christ and his members make one body. Now, is it possible that any part of Christ should perish? How can Christ lose any member of his mystic body, and remain perfect? If one believer may be broken off from Christ, then, by the same rule—why not another? Why not all? And so Christ would be a head without a body!

**[5] The fifth argument is taken from the nature of a PURCHASE.** A man will not lay down his money for a purchase which will be lost. Christ died that he might purchase us as a people to himself forever. "Having obtained eternal redemption for us." Would Christ have shed his blood, that we might believe in him for a while, and then fall away? Do we think Christ will lose his purchase?

**[6] The sixth argument is from a believer's victory over the WORLD.** The argument stands thus: He who overcomes the world perseveres in grace; a believer overcomes the world; therefore a believer perseveres in grace. "This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith." A man may lose a *single battle* in the field—yet win the *victory* at last. A child of God may be foiled in a single battle against temptation, as Peter was—but he is victorious at last. Now, if a saint is crowned victor, if the world is conquered by him—he must needs persevere.

#### **IV. I come next to answer some OBJECTIONS of the Arminians.**

[1] The **first** objection of Arminians is—If a believer shall persevere in grace, to what purpose are admonitions in Scripture, such as "Let him take heed lest he fall;" and, "Let us fear, lest any of you seem to come short." Such admonitions seem to be superfluous, if a saint shall certainly persevere.

These admonitions are necessary to caution believers against carelessness; they are as goads and spurs to quicken them to greater diligence in working out their salvation. They do not imply the saints *can* fall away—but are preservatives to keep them *from* falling away. Christ told some of his disciples they would abide in him—yet he exhorts them

to abide in him. John 15:4. His exhorting them was not in the least to question their abiding in him—but to awaken their diligence, and make them pray the harder, that they might abide in him.

[2] The **second** objection is—"It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age, *if they fall away*, to be brought back to repentance, because to their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace." Hebrews 6:4-6.

This place of Scripture has no force in it, for the apostle here speaks of hypocrites; he shows how far they may go, and yet fall away.

(1.) They who were once enlightened. Men may have great illuminations—yet fall away. Was not Judas enlightened?

(2.) They have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit; the *common gifts* of the Spirit, not the *special grace*.

(3.) They have tasted the good word of God. *Tasting* here is opposed to *eating*: the hypocrite may have a kind of taste of the sweetness of religion—but his taste does not nourish. There is a great deal of difference between one who takes a *gargle*, and a one who takes a *cordial*. The *gargle* only washes his mouth—he tastes it, and spits it out again; but a *cordial* is drunk down, which nourishes and cherishes the spirits. The hypocrite, who has only some smack or taste of true religion—as one tastes a gargle—may fall away.

(4.) And have felt the powers of the world to come; that is, they may have such apprehensions of the glory of heaven as to be affected with it, and seem to have some joy in the thoughts of it—yet fall away; as in the parable of the stony ground. Matt 13:20.

All this is spoken of the *hypocrite*; but it does not therefore prove that the true believer, who is effectually wrought upon, can fall away. Though comets fall, it does not follow that true stars fall. That this Scripture does not speak of sound believers, is clear from verse 9: "But we are persuaded

better things of *you*—and things which accompany salvation."

**Use one: For INSTRUCTION.**

**(1.) See the excellence of grace.** It perseveres. Other things are but for a season; health and riches are sweet—but they are but for a season. But grace is the blossom of eternity. The seed of God remains. I John 3:9. Grace may suffer an *eclipse*, not a *dissolution*. It is called substance, for its solidity, Prov 8:21; and durable riches, for its permanence. Prov 8:18. It lasts as long as the soul. It lasts as long as heaven lasts. Grace is not like a lease which soon expires—but it runs parallel with eternity.

**(2.) See here that which may excite everlasting love and gratitude to God in the saints.** What can make us love God more than the fixedness of his love to us? He is not only the *author* of grace—but *finisher*; his love is perpetual and carried on to our salvation. "My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish." John 10:27-28. "*My sheep*"—there is election; "*hear my voice*"—there is effectual calling; "*I know them*"—there is justification; "*and they follow me*"—there is sanctification; "*I give them eternal life*"—there is glorification; "*they shall never perish*"—there is preservation. How may this make us love God, and set up the monuments and trophies of his praise! How much have we done to cause God to withdraw his Spirit, and allow us to fall finally! Yet that he should keep us—let his name be blessed, and his memorial eternalized, who keeps the feet of his saints. I Sam 2:9.

**(3.) See whence it is, that saints persevere in holiness.** It is to be ascribed solely to the power of God; we are kept by his power, kept as in a garrison. It is a wonder that any Christian perseveres, if you consider:

**(1:) Corruption within.** The *tares* are mingled with the *wheat*; there is more *sin* than *grace*—yet grace is habitually predominant. Grace is like a spark in the sea—it is a wonder that it is not quenched! It is a wonder that sin does not destroy grace.

**(2:) Temptations without.** Satan envies us happiness, and he raises his militia, and stirs up persecution. He shoots his fiery darts of

temptations, which are called *darts* for their swiftness, *fiery* for their terribleness. We are every day beset with devils. As it was a wonder that Daniel was kept alive in the midst of the roaring lions, so there are many roaring devils around us, and yet we are not torn in pieces. Now, whence is it that we stand against these powerful temptations? We are kept by the power of God!

**(3:) The world's old snares—riches and pleasure.** "How hard it is for rich people to get into the Kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of God!" Luke 18:24-25. How many have been shipwrecked upon these golden rocks! "Demas has deserted me, because he loved this present world." 2 Timothy 4:10. What a wonder any soul perseveres in holiness—that the *earth* does not choke the fire of all holy affections! Whence is this—but from the power of God? We are kept by his power.

**Use two: For CONSOLATION.** This doctrine of perseverance is as a magic stone; it is a sovereign cordial to keep up the spirits of the godly from fainting.

**(1.) There is nothing that more troubles a child of God, than that he fears he shall never hold out.** "These weak legs of mine," he says, "will never carry me to heaven." But perseverance is an inseparable fruit of sanctification. Once in Christ—forever in Christ. A believer may fall from some *degrees* of grace—but not from the *state* of grace. An Israelite could never wholly sell or alienate his inheritance. Lev 25:23. So our heavenly inheritance cannot be wholly alienated from us. How despairing is the Arminian doctrine of falling from grace! Today a saint—tomorrow a reprobate; today a Peter—tomorrow a Judas. This must needs cut the sinews of a Christian's endeavor, and be like boring a hole in a vessel—to make all the wine of his joy run out. Were the Arminian doctrine true, how could the apostle say that the seed of God remains in him, and the anointing of God abides? I John 3:9; I John 2:27. What comfort would it be—to have one's name written in the book of life—if it might be blotted out again? But be assured, for your comfort—that grace, if it is true, though ever so weak, shall persevere. Though a Christian has but little grace to trade with—yet he need not fear breaking, because God not only gives him a stock of grace—but will keep his stock for him.

Augustine, "Grace may be shaken with fears and doubts—but it cannot be plucked up by the roots."

Do not fear of finally falling away. If anything should hinder the saints' perseverance, it must be either *sin* or *temptation*; but neither of these can.

(1:) Not the **sin** of believers. Their sins humble them. That which humbles them shall not damn them. They gather grapes off *thorns*; from the *thorn of sin* they gather the *grape of humility*.

(2:) Not **temptation**. The devil lays his temptation to blow up the fort of a saint's grace; but he cannot do it. Temptation is a *medicine* for security; the more Satan tempts—the more the saints pray! When Paul had the messenger of Satan to buffet him, he said, "Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me." 2 Corinthians 12:8. Thus nothing can break off a believer from Christ, or hinder his perseverance. Let this wine be given to such as are of a heavy heart.

## **(2.) This perseverance is comfort:**

**(1:) In the loss of worldly comforts.** While our *goods* may be taken away—our *grace* cannot. "Mary has chosen the better part, which cannot be taken from her."

**(2:) In the hour of death.** When all things fail, and friends take their farewell of us—yet still grace remains. Death may separate all things from us—except for grace. A Christian may say on his death-bed, "Sight is gone, speech and hearing are departing—but the loving-kindness of God will never depart."

**Use three: For EXHORTATION. What MOTIVES and incentives are there to make Christians persevere?**

**(1.) It is the crown and glory of a Christian to persevere.** It is not the *beginning* of the Christian life which gets glory, but the *end* of it. "Gray hair is a crown of glory; it is gained by living a godly life." Prov 16:31. When *grey hairs* shine with *golden virtues*, it is a crown of glory!

The church of Thyatira was best at *last*. "I know your works—your love, faithfulness, service, and endurance. Your last works are greater than the first." Rev 2:19. The excellence of a building is not in having the *first* stone laid—but when it is *finished*. Just so, the glory and excellence of a Christian is when he has finished the work of faith.

**(2.) You are within a few days' march of heaven.** Salvation is near to you. "Our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed." Romans 13:11. Christians, it is but a little while, and you will have done *weeping* and *praying*—and be *triumphing!* You shall put off your mourning garments, and put on white robes! You shall put off your battle armor, and put on a victorious crown! You who have made a good progress in piety, you are almost ready to commence and take your degree of glory! "Our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed." When a man is almost at the *end* of a race, will he tire, or faint away? O labor to persevere, your salvation is now nearer; you have but a little way to go—and you will set your foot in heaven! Though the way is up-hill and full of thorns—yet you have gone the greatest part of your way, and shortly shall rest from your labors! "Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom!" Luke 12:32.

**(3.) How sad is it not to persevere in holiness!** You expose yourself to the reproaches of men, and the rebukes of God.

First, to **the reproaches of men**. They will deride both you and your profession. "This man began to build, and was not able to finish." Such is he who begins in religion, and does not persevere: he is the ridicule and derision of all.

Secondly, to **the rebukes of God**. God is most severe against such as fall away, because they bring an evil report upon true religion. Apostasy breeds a bitter worm in the conscience; and it brings swift damnation; it is a drawing back to perdition. "You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised." Hebrews 10:36. God will make his sword drunk with the blood of apostates.

**(4.) The promises of mercy are annexed only to perseverance.**

"He who *overcomes* will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out his name from the book of life, but will acknowledge his name before my Father and his angels." Revelation 3:5. The promise is not to him who *fights*—but who *overcomes*. "You are those who have *continued* with me in my trials. And I confer on you a kingdom." Luke 22:28, 29. "The promise of a kingdom," says Chrysostom, "is not made to those who merely *heard* Christ—but to those who *continued* with him. Perseverance carries away the garland! No man has the crown set upon his head—but he who holds out to the *end* of the race. O therefore, be persuaded by all this, to persevere. God does not receive those who do not persevere. Who values *corn* which withers before harvest; or *fruit* which falls from the tree before it is ripe?"

**What expedients or MEANS may be used for a Christian's perseverance?**

**(1.) Take heed of those things which will make you stumble and fall away.**

**First. Take heed of PRESUMPTION.** Do not presume upon your own strength; exercise a holy fear and jealousy over your own hearts. "Be not high-minded—but fear." "Let him that thinks he stands take heed, lest he fall." It was Peter's sin that *he leaned more upon his grace*, than upon Christ—and then he fell. A Christian has cause to fear lest the lust and deceit of his heart betray him. Take heed of presuming. **Fear** begets prayer, **prayer** begets strength, and strength begets **steadfastness**.

**Secondly. Take heed of HYPOCRISY.** Judas was first a sly hypocrite—and then a traitor. "Their heart was not right with God, neither were they steadfast in his covenant." If there is any venom or malignity in the *blood*—it will break forth into a *plague-sore*. The venom of *hypocrisy* is in danger of breaking out into the plague-sore of *scandal*.

**Thirdly. Beware of a vile heart of UNBELIEF.** "Take heed lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God." Whence is *apostasy*—but from *unbelief*? Men do not *believe* the truth, and therefore they *fall* from the truth. *Unbelieving* and *unstable*, go together. "They *believed* not in God." "They *turned back*."

**(2.) If you would be pillars in the temple of God, and persevere in sanctity:**

**(1) See that you enter into religion upon a right ground;** be well grounded in the foundational truths of Scripture. You must know the love of the Father, the merit of the Son, and the efficacy of the Holy Spirit. Such as know not God aright will by degrees fall away. The Samaritans sided with the deus when they were in favor—but disclaimed all kindred with them when Antiochus persecuted the Jews. No wonder they were no more fixed in true religion, if you consider what Christ says of them: "You worship, you know not what." They were ignorant of the true God. Let your knowledge of God be clear, and serve him purely out of choice, and then you will persevere. "I have chosen the way of truth. I have stuck unto your testimonies."

**(2) Get a real work of grace in your heart.** "It is a good thing that the heart be established with grace." Nothing will hold out, but true grace; it is only this *anointing* which abides; *paint* will fall off. Get a heart-changing work. "But you are *washed*—but you are *sanctified*." Do not be content with baptism of *water*, without baptism of the *Spirit*. The reason men persevere not in true religion, is for lack of a vital principle; that branch must wither, which has no root to grow upon.

**(3) If you would persevere, be very SINCERE.** Perseverance grows only upon the root of sincerity. "Let integrity and uprightness preserve me.". The breastplate of sincerity can never be shot through. How many storms was Job in! The *devil* set against him; his *wife* tempted him to curse God; his *friends* accused him of being a hypocrite. Here was enough, one would think, to have made him desist from piety! But for all this, he perseveres. What preserved him? It was his sincerity. "I will not deny my integrity. I will maintain my righteousness and never let go of it; my *conscience* will not reproach me as long as I live." Job 27:5-6.

**(4) If you would persevere, be HUMBLE.** Chrysostom calls humility the mother of all the graces. God lets a poor, humble Christian stand, when others of higher abilities, and who have higher thoughts of themselves, fall off by apostasy. They are most likely to persevere, to whom God gives most grace. "He gives grace to the humble." They are

most likely to persevere, who have God dwelling in them. "God dwells in the humble soul." "The Holy Spirit will only come to rest over a humble soul," Bernard. The *lower* the tree roots in the earth—the firmer it is. Just so, the more the soul is rooted in humility—the more established it is, and is in less danger of falling away.

**(5) Would you persevere? Nourish the grace of FAITH.** Faith is our support. "By faith you stand." Faith knits us to Christ, as the members are knit to the head by nerves and sinews. Faith fills us with love to God. "Faith works by love." He who loves God will rather die than desert him; as the soldier who loves his general will die in his service. Faith gives us a glimpse of heaven; it shows us the invisible glory! He who has Christ in his heart, and a crown in his eye—will not faint away. O nourish faith! Keep your faith—and your faith will keep you. While the pilot keeps his ship—his ship keeps him.

**(6) Would we persevere? Let us seek God's power to help us.** We are kept by the power of God. The child is safest when it is held in the father's arms. Just so, we are safest, when we are held in the arms of free grace! It is not *our* holding God—but *his* holding us, which preserves us. When a boat is tied to a rock, it is secure. Just so—when we are fast tied to the Rock of Ages, we are impregnable. O engage God's power to help you to persevere. We engage his power by **prayer**. Let us pray to him to keep us. "Hold up my goings in your path, that my footsteps slip not." "Hold me up—and I shall be safe!" Psalm 119:117. It was a good prayer of Beza, "Lord, perfect what you have begun in me, that I may not suffer shipwreck when I am almost at the haven."

**(7) If you would persevere, set before your eyes the noble examples of those who have persevered in piety.** How many martyrs, how many faithful souls are even now rejoicing in Heaven! What a glorious army of saints and martyrs have gone before us! How constant to the death, was Paul! "Why all this weeping? You are breaking my heart! For I am ready not only to be jailed at Jerusalem but also to die for the sake of the Lord Jesus." Acts 21:13. How persevering in the faith were Ignatius, Polycarp, and Athanasius! They were stars in their orbs, pillars in the temple of God. Let us look on their zeal and courage, and be animated. "Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of

witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily hinders our progress. And let us run with endurance the race that God has set before us." Hebrews 12:1. The *crown* is set at the *end* of the race! If we finish the race—we shall wear the crown!

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