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THE SINFULNESS OF SIN
and the
FULLNESS OF CHRIST



William Bridge

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The Sinfulness of Sin and the Fullness of Christ

by William Bridge

TABLE OF CONTENTS

[Christian Reader](#)

[The Sinfulness of Sin](#)

[The Fullness of Christ](#)

Christian Reader,

"The Sinfulness of Sin and the Fullness of Christ" are profound and timeless sermons transcribed from the pulpit ministry of William Bridge, an influential Puritan theologian. In this insightful work, Bridge delves into the depths of human sinfulness, examining its nature, effects, and the consequences it brings. With clarity and conviction, he exposes the deceitfulness and destructive power of sin, challenging readers to confront their own sinful inclinations.

However, the book does not leave the reader in despair, for Bridge masterfully presents the fullness and sufficiency of Christ as the ultimate remedy for sin. Through an exploration of God's grace, forgiveness, and redemption, Bridge offers a compelling message of hope and transformation. Drawing upon biblical truths and profound theological insights, he invites readers to embrace Christ as the source of true freedom, joy, and eternal salvation. "The Sinfulness of Sin and the Fullness of Christ" is a spiritual treasure that continues to resonate with readers, providing guidance and encouragement in their journey towards a deeper understanding of sin and a greater appreciation of Christ's redeeming love.

I want you to know that these two sermons are not published by the author himself, but rather transcribed exactly as he spoke them during his regular preaching. However, the style, approach, spiritual depth, conciseness, and profound content of these sermons serve as strong evidence to those who know the author that they are truly his own work. They are relevant and beneficial to people from all walks of life, and you may find great value in them with God's blessings.

THE SINFULNESS OF SIN

Romans 7 and part of verse 13. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good: that sin by the Commandment might become exceeding sinful.

My intention now is to speak about the evil and wickedness of sin, and therefore I have chosen these words. In this chapter, the Apostle Paul provides us with some explanation of the process and manner of his conversion. He says, "Before I was converted, I was alive without the Law" (verse 9). But when the Commandment came, sin revived

and I died. Without the Law, sin was inactive, and I felt alive without the Law once. I considered myself a cheerful man, having positive thoughts about my condition. I was alive without the Law at one time. However, when the Commandment came, when the word of the Lord came with power to my soul, for I had the Law and the Commandment always with me, concerning the Law, I was blameless (Philippians 3:6). The letter of the Law was not absent from me. But when God, in His good pleasure, applied the Word of the Lord with power to my soul, then, whereas I was alive before, now sin revived. The sin that was dormant and hidden before now came to life and became evident as sin. This is the same as in verse 9, "Sin revived, and I died." But how did sin revive and become evident? It was through the coming of the Law, through the coming of the Commandment. By doing so, sin broke out even more and was revealed. It is like the sun's rays shining upon a dung heap, causing the filth to stink even more. It's not that the sun's rays are the cause, but they provide the occasion for it. Sin revived and appeared as sin through the coming of the Commandment. It revealed itself more to me in its true form and struck me dead with its presence. Whereas before, sin was dormant, and I was alive, now sin is alive, and I am dead.

From where I derive this observation:

Observation: There is a significant amount of evil and wickedness in sin that remains hidden from a person until they undergo conversion and turn to God. It is only when a person converts and turns to God that sin truly reveals itself as sin.

To clarify and pursue this observation, I will endeavor to demonstrate:

First, that there is a considerable amount of evil and sinfulness in sin.

Secondly, that this evil and sinfulness of sin does not become apparent to a person until they experience the work of conversion within their soul.

Thirdly, that when a person truly converts and turns to the Lord, sin reveals its sinfulness to them.

1. There is a significant amount of evil and sinfulness in sin.

I will illustrate this in a general sense and then provide more specific examples.

I. In general, this can be seen through the various names assigned to sin, as sin has acquired all the names of every kind of evil. The Scripture does not use pet names for sin, but rather sin is associated with every evil name mentioned in Scripture.

1. Is it an evil thing for a person to be unclean and filthy? Sin is referred to as filthiness: "I will wash you from all your filthiness" (Ezekiel 36:25).
2. Is it an evil thing for a person to be naked? Sin is called nakedness: "That your nakedness may not appear" (Revelation 3:18).
3. Is it an evil thing for a person to be blind? Sin is called blindness: "The blind shall lead the blind" (Matthew 15:14).
4. Is it an evil thing for a person to be foolish? Sin is called folly: "That you may no more return unto folly" (Psalm 85:8).
5. Is it an evil thing for a person to be mad? The Prodigal Son came to his senses and said, "I was mad" (Luke 15:17), and Paul also stated, "I was mad" (Acts 26:11).
6. Is it an evil thing for a person to be dead? Sin is called death: "Dead in trespasses and sins" (Ephesians 2:1).

7. It is called an abomination (Proverbs 8:7). Furthermore, because no word can fully express the evil and sinfulness of sin, the Apostle says in this passage, "That sin might become exceeding sinful." Why? Because there is no single word that can capture the depth of sin's evil. Therefore, whatever encompasses and encompasses all the names of every evil must undoubtedly be extremely wicked. Such is the nature of sin.

II. Consider what separates us from God, who is the ultimate and universal good. That must undoubtedly be the greatest evil. As the Prophet said, "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God" (Isaiah 59:2).

III. Look at what unites us with Satan and makes us children of the Devil. That must certainly be very evil. Our Savior said, "You are of your father the devil. Why? For his works you do" (John 8:44). Sin makes us children of the devil.

IV. Consider what caused Christ's death, the very reason for His crucifixion. That must unquestionably be exceedingly evil. And so it was with sin. "He was made sin for us" (2 Corinthians 5:21). He bore our sins on the Cross (1 Peter 2:24), and the Lord laid on Him the iniquity of us all (Isaiah 53:6).

V. Look at what brings a general curse upon all of Creation. That must undoubtedly be evil. And so it is with sin. "Cursed be the ground, and the earth for thy sake" (Genesis 3:17).

VI. Consider what tarnishes and soils our glory and the image of God within us. That must surely be great evil. Sin has stained the beauty of the image of God that was imprinted upon us. As the Apostle says, "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

VII. Look at what causes such terror in our conscience that a soul cannot bear it and can only be appeased by the blood of Jesus. That

must undoubtedly be a great evil. Sin, and the act of eating the forbidden fruit, has given birth to this eternal worm that never dies.

VIII. Consider the evil that fuels Hell, sustaining the eternal flames. That must certainly be great evil. Remove sin, and Hell's flames will extinguish. Sin is the brimstone that feeds the eternal fire of Hell.

IX. Look at the evil that is worse than the most severe afflictions. That must surely be very evil. Even the smallest sin is worse than the greatest affliction. For...

1. Consider an affliction, no matter how severe, it does not defile a person. For what comes from the outside does not defile a person, but what comes from within. Sin comes from within. Affliction is from the outside, not from within. But sin is from within. Therefore, if I speak words of reproach to another, it defiles me more than a hundred reproachful words from another person because my words come from within me, while theirs come from outside me. Now, affliction is from outside and does not defile, but sin is from within and does defile. Therefore, the smallest sin is worse than the greatest affliction.
2. Consider an affliction, no matter how great it may be, yet God is its Author. "Is there evil in the city, and the Lord has not done it?" (Amos 3:6). God commanded Shimei to curse David: "Let him alone, for the Lord has told him to" (2 Samuel 16:11). God says, "I send famine, and I send pestilence, and I send mildew." God is the Author of affliction, but God is not the Author of any sin. It is true that it is said God hardened the heart of Pharaoh and others, but that is not by instilling malice in their hearts, but by withdrawing His grace. God is not the Author of sin, but God is the Author of all affliction.
3. Consider an affliction, no matter how great it may be, it is not contrary to God. But sin, no matter how small, is contrary to God.

4. Consider an affliction, no matter how great it may be, it is merely the fruit and the claws of sin. What are the claws to a lion? If the lion is dead, the claws cannot harm us. But if the lion is alive, its life gives strength to its claws. Afflictions are only the claws of sin. "The sting of death is sin" (1 Corinthians 15:56), and the sting of affliction is sin. But as for afflictions, they are just the bare claws, and it is sin that gives life and strength to these claws.
5. Consider an affliction, no matter how great it may be, God does not hate affliction, nor does affliction make a person hate God. But God hates sin, and sin makes a person hate God.
6. Consider an affliction, no matter how great it may be, a person can be blessed even in the worst affliction. "Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered" (Psalm 32:1). But a person cannot be blessed while living in sin. "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Law" (Galatians 3:10). So you see, the smallest sin is worse than the greatest affliction. Therefore, the evil of sin is undoubtedly very great. That concludes the ninth point.

X. Consider the evil that God punishes with the utmost severity, both in His own people and others, even if it appears small to us. That must undoubtedly be exceedingly evil. God severely punishes what we perceive as minor sins, both in His own people and others. You might think it was not a significant matter for Adam to eat the forbidden fruit. You might consider Moses's anger towards the Children of Israel as only a slight offense, yet he was kept from entering Canaan. And you might think it was inconsequential for Uzzah to touch the falling Ark. However, God punished these seemingly small sins, small in our eyes, with severe consequences for His own people. As for others, due to the infinite evil in sin and God's just punishment, He punishes them for even the slightest sin for all eternity. Among humans, it is just to punish until a person repents, but in Hell, people never repent. Therefore, God punishes them for

all eternity. Since God punishes sin with the greatest severity in both His own people and others, it is undoubtedly a very evil thing.

XI. Consider what is a worse evil than Hell or the Devil. That must surely be a very great and exceedingly evil thing. Sin is worse than the Devil because the Devil is a creature made by God, but sin is not God's creation. It is worse than Hell because Hell is also created by God, but sin is not. It is worse to be given over to sin than to the Devil. If a person is given over to the Devil, it is so that their soul may be saved. However, if a person is given over to sin, it is for the destruction and not the salvation of their soul. Therefore, sin is worse than Hell or the Devil.

XII. Consider what is an evil that serves as its own punishment. That must undoubtedly be exceedingly evil. Sin itself is a punishment, even without any other consequences that may follow. "In keeping your commandments, there is great reward" (Psalm 19:11). Likewise, in breaking God's commandments, there is great punishment. Therefore, sometimes when God intends to punish people for their sins, He punishes them by allowing them to fall into greater sins. As Romans 1:26 says, "God gave them up to vile affections, to uncleanness, etc." Now, consider what is inherently a punishment; that must be exceedingly evil. This is indeed the nature of sin. Therefore, it must be a very great evil. In summary, you can see that there is a significant amount of evil and sinfulness in sin.

But now, let me explain it more specifically, focusing on three types of sins: the sin of our nature, the sin of our hearts and thoughts, and the sin of our lives and actions. Particularly, I will highlight the evil of these sins in the context of living under the Gospel.

1. First, regarding the sin of our nature, the more widespread and pervasive a leprosy or contagion is, the worse and greater it is. Now, the sin of our nature spreads over all our faculties: our understanding, reason, will, and affections. It extends to every aspect of our being.

2. Consider what kind of contagion or leprosy is so severe that nothing can remedy it except tearing down the house. That must undoubtedly be very great. Truly, the sin of our nature is such that nothing can heal it except the complete demolition of our sinful nature.
3. Look at the sin that persists tirelessly, causing a person to be unwearying in sin. That must surely be very great. The sin of our nature is unwearying, like a spring that constantly bubbles up water. A person may grow weary from drawing water from a well, and they may tire from engaging in sinful actions. However, our sinful nature is never weary, and that sin which is tireless is exceedingly great.
4. Consider the sin that serves as the foundation for all our relapses and returns to sin. That must undoubtedly be very great. Now, what is the reason for our continual return to evil after repentance and reformation, if not our nature? Suppose water is heated; once it cools down, heat it again, and it cools down once more. Why? Because cooling is its nature. Likewise, the reason why people repeatedly turn back to their sins despite repentance and reformation is the sin of their nature.
5. Look at the evil that is least mourned and becomes the primary excuse for our sins. That is a grave and dreadful evil. Among all sins, the sin of our nature is the least lamented, thereby providing the greatest excuse for people's sins. "Bear with me, it is my nature," they say. "I am hot-tempered, but it is my nature. I am stubborn, but it is my nature." People excuse themselves in this manner. Now, I say, consider the evil that is least mourned and becomes the primary excuse for our sins. That is indeed a dreadful evil. Such is the nature of the sin of our nature.

Secondly, let us consider the evil of the sin in our hearts and thoughts.

1. Look at the sin that is most incurable. That is the worst. A secret hidden wound or a disease within the body is the most incurable. Such are the sins in our hearts and thoughts—secret sins—and therefore, they are the most incurable.
2. Consider the sin that acts as a friend and parent to other sins. That must undoubtedly be very evil. What are the parents of all our sinful actions but sinful thoughts? It is through sinful thoughts that evil actions are brought to life. This applies to both the godly and the ungodly. Abraham, for instance, said, "I thought, surely the fear of God is not in this place" (Genesis 20:11), and thus he said that his wife was his sister. While she was indeed his sister, his intention was to deceive and conceal the truth, resorting to an unworthy scheme for his own preservation. Where did this evil begin but in a sinful thought? "I thought, surely the fear of God is not in this place." The ungodly are no different. As the Psalmist says, "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether like thyself" (Psalm 50:21). The wicked steal, commit adultery, deceive, and slander others. How are they led into all this but by their thoughts? "Thou thoughtest that I was like thyself." The Psalmist also prays, "Cleanse thou me from secret faults, then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression" (Psalm 19:12-13). Sins in our hearts and thoughts give rise to sinful actions and are, therefore, very evil.
3. Furthermore, through the sins in our hearts and thoughts, our past sins that were once dead are revived and resurrected as we muse on them and take pleasure in contemplating them. Just as the witch at Endor called up the dead Samuel, a delightful thought calls forth a sinful action that was previously dead. Our sins that were once dead are thus revived and resurrected.
4. Additionally, a person may possibly commit a sin in effect, which they never acted upon in reality, and as a result, the Lord may punish them for it. Just as the Lord said to David, "Because

it was in thine heart to build me an house, I will build thy house" (2 Samuel 7:13), God may say to a person as a form of punishment, "Because it was in thy heart to do this evil, though thou didst not do it, I will punish thee for it." It is possible, I say, through the sin in our hearts and thoughts, for a person to commit a sin in effect, even if they never acted upon it in reality. And that is evil.

5. Moreover, through the sins in our hearts and thoughts, a person may repent of their very repentance. A person sins, feels sorrow and repents of it. But afterwards, they delightfully think upon their sin. What is this but repenting of their very repentance? Just as I am sorrowful for my sin through my repentance, by musing on my sin with delight, I am repenting of my repentance. Is it not a great evil for a person to repent of their repentance? Indeed, people can do this, and it is something that commonly occurs. They repent of their repentance by musing on their sin and finding delight in it through sinful thoughts.

But thirdly, let us consider the evil of the sin in our lives and practices, especially when living under the Gospel.

1. Sinning under the Gospel means sinning against the remedy, and of all sins, sinning against the remedy is the greatest. Therefore, it is worse for a married person to commit adultery than for an unmarried person to commit fornication, for the married person sins against the remedy. The Gospel is the great remedy against sin, so for someone to sin under the Gospel is to sin against the very remedy.
2. The greater the obligations a person sins against, the worse and greater their sin. Through the Gospel, we are brought under great obligations. By sinning under the Gospel, what do we do? We make the mercy of God, our greatest friend, become our greatest adversary. We sin against Mercy and Grace, thereby engaging the very mercy of God to turn against us.

3. "Peccatum majus, ubi specialis repugnantia inter peccantem & peccatum" - The more there is a special opposition between the sinner and the sin, the greater the sin. Therefore, it is worse for a judge to be unjust than for another person, because there is a special opposition between the sin and the sinner. Likewise, there is a special opposition between the Gospel and a person who sins under the Gospel, for they profess the contrary. Thus, sin under the Gospel is greater.
4. "Peccatum majus, ubi majus nocumentum" - The more harmful or damaging a sin is, the greater that sin is. Sinning under the Gospel is very harmful, both to ourselves and to others. It is like poison taken in a fine drink or when something warm is added, making it the most venomous. Sin under the Gospel is the deadliest poison because it is fueled by the warmth of the Gospel. It is also harmful to others as it hardens their hearts. When people sin under the Gospel, it leads to the hardening of others.
5. The more capable a sin is of defending itself through knowledge, arguments, and distinctions, the worse and greater that sin is. A person living under the Gospel possesses knowledge and can defend their sin through various distinctions. Sins bred under the Gospel are capable of defending themselves with knowledge drawn from the Gospel, making them even worse.
6. The more deceitful a sin is and the better ends and pretenses it presents, the worse it is and the longer it endures. Sins bred under the Gospel are often the most deceitful, having seemingly noble ends and pretenses. Therefore, they are even worse.
7. The more a person's sin belittles the great things of God, the greater and worse their sin becomes. Sins under the Gospel cast contempt upon the glory of God and the great things He has done, including the glorious offer of His grace. To sin under the

Gospel is to show contempt towards the glory and greatness of God. Thus, sin under the Gospel is all the more severe.

8. The more costly and burdensome a sin is, the greater and worse it is. A person who sins under the Gospel cannot sin at such a low cost as another, even if they commit the exact same sin. Why is that? It is because "he that knows his Master's will and does not do it, shall be beaten with many stripes" (Luke 12:47). What an evil and dreadful thing it is for people to sin under the Gospel, as the Apostle says, "He shall come in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel" (2 Thessalonians 1:8). Flaming fire, not a mere illusion of fire, but real fire. Yet, we cannot simply say it is real fire, for even a spark contains real fire. Therefore, he says, "flaming fire." The Lord will come in flaming fire, taking vengeance on those who do not know God and do not obey the Gospel. Oh, how evil and dreadful it is for a person to sin while living under the Gospel. Now, if there is so much evil in the sins of our lives and practices when living under the Gospel, if there is so much evil in the sin of our hearts and thoughts, if there is so much evil in the sin of our nature, if sin has taken on all the names of all evils, if sin separates us from God, if sin unites us with Satan and makes us children of the Devil, if sin brought about the death of Christ, if sin brings a general curse upon the entire Creation, if sin tarnishes all our glory, if sin awakens conscience to such horror that only the blood of Christ can pacify it, if sin fuels the fires of Hell, if the smallest sin is worse than the greatest affliction, if God punishes even the smallest sin with the utmost severity in both His own people and others, if sin is worse than Hell or the Devil, and if sin itself is a form of punishment, then there is undoubtedly an abundance of evil and sinfulness in sin. So, I have completed the first point, which is that there is a great deal of evil and sinfulness in sin.

Secondly, although there is so much evil and sinfulness in sin, it does not become apparent to a person until they convert and turn to God.

Before that, their sin remains dormant, but upon conversion, it is revived. Until then, the sinfulness of sin remains hidden because:

1. The person is in darkness, and one cannot see the magnitude of an evil in the dark.
2. The presence of grace, its contrary, is not established in the soul. One contrary illuminates the other. White is best seen in contrast to black. Grace is best seen in contrast to sin, and sin is best seen in contrast to grace. Until a person experiences conversion, they do not possess grace, the contrasting element that allows the sinfulness of sin to be revealed.
3. Sin resides in its proper place. "Elementum non gravidat suo loco" - water is not heavy in its own place; it does not feel heavy when it is in the river. A person may lie at the bottom of the river with the weight of all the water upon them and not feel its burden because it is in its rightful place. However, if you take a bucket of water out of the river, you will feel its weight because it is now out of its place. Similarly, until a person converts and turns to God, sin remains in its proper place, and thus, its sinfulness does not become apparent.

Question: But you may ask, why is it that sin does not reveal its sinfulness until a person converts and turns to God?

Answer: 1. Sin is a spiritual matter. I mean that it is a moral, not a natural phenomenon. Sin is spiritual in nature, and a person who lives solely by their senses cannot perceive what is spiritual.

Answer 2. A person is blind to what they love. Until a person converts and turns to God, they love their sin, valuing it above everything else in the world. Therefore, the evil and sinfulness of sin do not yet become apparent to them.

Answer 3. The more blind spots a person has that conceal their sin, the less they perceive its sinfulness. Before a person converts and

turns to God, all their actions and moralities serve as blind spots, covering and disguising their sin. They may acknowledge being a sinner but believe that their prayers, duties, and moral conduct make them less sinful. All their efforts serve as blinds to conceal and diminish the perception of their sin. Hence, it is no wonder that sin does not reveal its true nature until a person converts and turns to God.

Answer 4. The more a person focuses on the benefits and pleasures of sin while indulging in it, the less they perceive its magnitude. Conversely, when they reflect on the consequences of sin and the need for repentance, it appears greater. There is a perspective of entering into sin through commission and a perspective of leaving it through repentance. When a person is engaging in sin, they are drawn to its allure, pleasure, and personal gains, which diminishes its apparent significance. However, when they turn away from sin, they experience sorrow and repentance, which magnifies the magnitude of their sin.

Answer 5. Sometimes, due to God's providence, sin may lead to favorable outcomes, while righteousness may result in unfavorable events in the world. This can obscure the evil and sinfulness of sin from individuals.

Answer 6. Lastly, the less a person engages in the practice of self-examination, the less they perceive sin as sin, and the less aware they are of its true nature. Before a person converts and turns to God, they tend to neglect the private examination of their own souls. Consequently, sin does not appear as sinful to them because they are not diligent in the work of self-examination. Thus, it is evident that sin does not reveal its sinfulness until a person converts and turns to God. This concludes the second point.

III. Thirdly, when a person converts and turns to the Lord, then sin is revealed in its sinfulness to their soul. This occurs because:

1. They become weary and burdened under the weight of their sin. The more burdened and weary a person is with their sin, the more they perceive its evil and sinful nature. When a person converts and turns to God, they experience weariness and heaviness under the burden of their sin, as Jesus invites, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden" (Matthew 11:28).
2. They come to see God, and only then does sin become apparent. The more a person sees God—the glory, goodness, wisdom, holiness, and sovereignty of God—the more they recognize the sinfulness of sin. As Isaiah exclaimed, "Woe is me! For I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips" (Isaiah 6:5). Job also expressed this revelation, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42:5-6). When a person sees the magnificence of God, sin is revealed in its sinfulness to them.
3. They come to see Christ crucified. Nothing reveals the sinfulness of sin more than beholding Christ crucified. The law brings knowledge of sin (Romans 3:20), but by witnessing Christ crucified, one sees the depth of God's hatred for sin. The more a person sees God's aversion to sin, the more they grasp its sinfulness. When a person converts and turns to God, they come to see Christ crucified.
4. They gain a true understanding of Hell and the wrath of God. Sin appears sinful when a person comprehends the true nature of Hell and the wrath of God, from which they are delivered. This understanding becomes clear when a person genuinely converts and turns to God.
5. The more a person is exhausted and wearied by the relentless pursuit and haunting of their sin, unable to find rest from it, the more they perceive the sinfulness of sin. When a person converts

and turns to God, they acknowledge their restlessness, feeling pursued and haunted by sin. At this point, sin becomes undeniably sinful to them.

6. When a person's heart is filled with the love of God and indwelt by the Holy Spirit, sin appears exceedingly sinful. The Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin (John 16:8). When a person converts and turns to God, the convicting work of the Holy Spirit takes place. Their heart is filled with God's love and possessed by the Holy Spirit, causing sin to be revealed in its sinfulness to their soul.

Thus, the doctrine is concluded: there is a significant amount of evil and sinfulness in sin that remains hidden until a person converts and turns to God.

By way of Application:

1. First, consider the power of the grace of God, both external and internal. If there is such a tremendous amount of evil and sinfulness in sin, then marvel at the power of God's grace. Just as you would be astonished if a spark of fire remained alive in the midst of an ocean of water or if a candle stayed lit in a fierce storm, so too should you recognize that it is a strong and mighty hand that preserves even a small spark or candle of grace within us amidst the overwhelming ocean of sin in our hearts. Reflect on the remarkable power of God's grace.
2. If all this is true, then contemplate the riches and the freeness of God's grace that brings deliverance from such overwhelming evil. Sin is undeniably sinful, filled with evil, yet through the grace of God, you are set free from its clutches. Consider the abundance and generosity of God's grace that brings deliverance from the depths of sin's darkness. Marvel at the riches and the freeness of God's grace bestowed upon you.

But secondly, considering the second part, if the sinfulness of sin remains hidden until a person converts and turns to God, then:

1. We can understand why some individuals are not aware of the magnitude of their sins, even though their sins may be great. It is because they have not yet experienced conversion. The commandment of God has not yet come to them, and thus they continue in their sins without being fully convinced of the evil in them.
2. If this is true, it is a sorrowful state for all those who have not undergone conversion and been reconciled to God. They remain in their sins, and their sins remain in them. The entire world lies in wickedness, as mentioned in 1 John 5:19. They are engulfed in their sins and saturated with evil. They are filled with this evil, which is itself full of evil. They are completely immersed in it.
3. They are constantly being filled with sin and never emptying themselves. Just like a vessel that is always being filled and never emptied, a person who is unconverted and has not turned to God is continuously filling themselves with sin. Even when they think they are emptying themselves, when they believe they are repenting and reforming, they are actually filling themselves with more sin. They are always filling and never emptying, therefore they become completely full.
4. They are full of sin because they exceed the temptations they face. If a beggar asks me for six pence and I give him twelve pence, he would say he is full because I have given him more than he asked for. Similarly, when temptation beckons and a person sins beyond what the temptation requires, it signifies that they are full of sin. This is the case for unconverted individuals—they sin beyond what their temptations warrant, indicating that they are full of sin.

5. They are indeed full because they spread their sin wherever they go. Just as a beggar who is full of vermin leaves traces of those vermin wherever they go, unconverted individuals leave the effects of their sin wherever they are. Whether they are in the company of good people or bad people, they leave behind the consequences of their sinful actions. Why? Because they are full of sin, just like a beggar is full of vermin.

But secondly, as men who are not converted and have not turned to God are full of sin, they are also under its power. How does this become evident? It is because their sin commands them away from their duties. Let's consider a scenario: a group of people is sitting together at a table, eating a meal, when suddenly someone enters the room and tells one of them, "Take your cloak and follow me." Without hesitation, the person rises from their meal and follows the command. In such a situation, you would undoubtedly say that the person issuing the command is their master, as they obediently leave their meal and follow him. Similarly, when sin commands a person to deviate from their duty, whether it is reading the Word or engaging in private prayer, what does this indicate? It signifies that they are under the power of sin. Just as when a person is engaged in sinning and grace intervenes, calling them away from their sin, it shows that they are under the power of grace. Likewise, when a person is involved in their duty and sin interrupts, pulling them away from it, it reveals that they are under the power of sin. This is the case for unconverted individuals—they are under the power of their sin.

Furthermore, just as an unconverted person is full of sin and under its power, they are unaware of this reality. Sin does not appear to a person as sin until they convert and turn to God. It does not yet become apparent, as the Apostle mentions in another context (1 John 3).

2. It does not yet appear what we shall be, but it shall appear: So I say in regards to sin, it does not yet appear, but it shall appear to

a person themselves and others. Before a person converts and turns to God, it does not become evident, but it will become evident to such an individual. When a person comes to the end of their life, and all their pretenses are stripped away, then it will become apparent how full of sin they are. Just like a vessel filled with liquid that seeps through the hoops, you can see there is liquid inside, but you don't know the extent of its fullness until the hoops are removed. But then you will say, "Oh, how full was this vessel?" Ah, now our hoops are still on, and it does not yet appear how full of sin people are. It only leaks through the hoops, through their acts of duty. But a day is coming when all our hoops will be removed, and then it will become clear how full of sin people are.

But now, onto the third part.

3. If it is true that when a person converts and turns to God, then their sin becomes apparent in its sinfulness to them, then why should we not all strive to have a true understanding of sin, to be aware of its presence? It is characteristic of a converted person to be conscious of sin; then sin revives. Therefore, if you desire to bear the mark of a converted person, make an effort to be aware of your sin, so that its sinfulness may be revealed.

It is God's intention that all those who have converted should think deeply about and be aware of the sins they committed before their conversion. Some of you were like that, but you have been cleansed, you have been washed (1 Corinthians 6:11). I say it is God's will that those who have been converted should be acutely aware of their sins before their conversion. This is because:

1. It enables them to have compassion for others who are still trapped in their sins.
2. It helps them to refrain from future sins. The reason people are not able to abstain from future sins is often because they are not

aware of their past sins.

3. It keeps them mindful of the free grace extended towards them, and as a result, they magnify the free grace of God. They can say, "I was a blasphemer, a persecutor, I was such and such, but I have been cleansed, I have been justified by grace. Oh, the freedom of God's grace!" In this way, they magnify free grace. Therefore, I say it is God's will that those who are converted should continually be conscious of their sins committed before their conversion. And this is a characteristic of a converted person: sin becomes evident to them as being sinful. Therefore, if you desire to possess the mark of a converted person, strive to see sin more and more in its sinfulness.

Question: Well, the question is, what should we do, whether converted or not, to be able to see sin in its sinfulness?

Answer:

1. Make sure to focus on Christ crucified: Christ on the Cross is like a mirror through which you can see the sinfulness of sin. Study Christ crucified extensively.
2. Strive to walk more and more in the presence of God, in the radiance of His countenance. Just as when the sun shines into a room, you can see tiny specks of dust, when God's light shines into your heart, you can see little sins. The beams of God's countenance reveal the sinfulness of sin. Therefore, endeavor to walk in the presence of God and in the radiance of His countenance.
3. Engage in regular self-examination and introspection. Spend ample time privately examining your own soul. It is rare to find a Christian who is not growing when they regularly engage in private examination. It is also rare to find a proud person who regularly engages in self-examination. If you desire to see sin in

its sinfulness, go alone, frequently hold yourself accountable, and spend significant time in private examination.

4. Dedicate as much effort to maintaining a sense of sin on your heart as you did to attain it. Some people put effort into attaining a good spiritual state but neglect to sustain it once achieved. As the Apostle says, they look at themselves in the mirror of royal liberty, but then forget what kind of people they were.
5. When you identify a specific sin, thoroughly consider its circumstances and intensify its impact on your soul.
6. Utilize your afflictions as an opportunity. Sometimes God sends afflictions to reveal hidden sins, and at times your afflictions are marked with the presence of your sin. Therefore, make the most of your afflictions to uncover the sinfulness of sin.
7. Ensure that you judge sin according to how the Scripture judges it, not according to how humans judge it. The Scripture assesses sin based on its consequences. As our Savior Christ says, "I was hungry, and you did not feed me; I was thirsty, and you gave me no drink; I was naked, and you did not clothe me." How is this so? In as much as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me (Matthew 25:42-45). Christ evaluates sin based on its consequences. Therefore, if you want to see sin in its sinfulness, judge it as Christ and the Scripture do, not as humans do.
8. If you want to see sin in its true colors, in all its sinfulness, then regard the Commandments of God as significant. The more you esteem the greatness of God's Commandments, the greater sin will appear in your eyes. When the Commandments of God hold great importance to you, the sins that go against them will also appear great in your eyes.

9. Never consider anything as trivial in the relationship between you and God. There is nothing small in the context of our relationship with God, for He is an infinite God.
10. Avoid assessing sin during times of temptation, for you are in a state of darkness and not capable of perceiving the magnitude of sin. Seek to discern the distinction between temptation and corruption, and between the sins of God's people and others. But never examine sin during moments of temptation, for you are in darkness and cannot truly perceive its sinfulness.
11. Lastly, if you desire to see sin in its sinfulness, approach God and pray for the unveiling of His Commandments in your heart. Ask God to impress His Commandments upon you, just as Paul said, "When the Commandment came, sin revived, and I died." Perhaps some here have not yet experienced the full weight of God's Commandments in their hearts. In that case, turn to God and seek His guidance in understanding His Commandments. Then you will truly see sin in all its sinfulness.

Now let me add two or three cautions to this, and thus conclude.

1. Be careful not to dwell on sin to the extent of forgetting Christ: If you think about sin without considering Christ, you will fall into despair. If you think about Christ without acknowledging sin, you will become presumptuous. Never contemplate sin without Christ. Seek to recognize your sin, but always look upon it in the light of Christ's wounds and see your sins washed away in His blood.
2. Humble yourself for every sin, no matter how small it may seem. However, do not question your standing before God because of any sin, no matter how great. I am not addressing this to the unconverted, as they have cause to question their standing before God for every sin, regardless of size. But for those who are converted and have turned to God, I say humble yourself for

every sin, no matter how small, but never doubt your position before God because of any sin, no matter how great.

3. The more you sense the weight of sin and its sinfulness, the more you should strive to maintain your assurance of forgiveness. The stronger your assurance of forgiveness for your sins, the more you should labor to see and feel the weight of them. Do not let your awareness of sin extinguish your joy of being pardoned. Likewise, do not let your joy of pardon hinder your perception of sin. If both are genuine and true, they will complement and support one another.
4. (And finally) the more you sense the weight of sin, the more you are drawn to Christ. In Scripture, you will find that not every good work is an end in itself. Some good works serve as a means to other good works. For example, consider keeping the Sabbath. Resting on the Sabbath is a good work, but it is not an end in itself. It serves as a means to prayer, hearing, sanctification, and other duties. Similarly, recognizing the weight of sin is a good work, but it is not an end in itself. It serves as a means to coming to Christ. Therefore, now go to Christ and say, "Lord, now that I see the sinfulness of sin, let me also see the graciousness of grace and the fullness of Christ. I come to you for righteousness because I see the immeasurable sinfulness of my sins."

FINIS.

THE FULLNESS OF CHRIST.

Nevertheless, the darkness will not be as great as that which afflicted the land of Zebulun and Naphtali in the past. He has

brought contempt on the land of the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali, but in the future he will honor the way to the sea, along the Jordan, and Galilee of the Gentiles. The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness, a light has dawned. - Isaiah 9:1-2

These verses are connected to the previous chapter, as indicated by the word "nevertheless." In the end of the previous chapter, the Prophet foretells a time of great trouble and misery for the people of God. It is said that they will become hungry, complain, curse their king and God, and look upward. They will gaze upon the earth and see trouble, darkness, and anguish, and they will be driven to darkness. However, the darkness they experience will not be as great as the affliction they faced before.

In these verses, we find the mention of a significant affliction and the alleviation of that affliction. The affliction has two parts: a lighter part and a heavier part. At first, the land of Zebulun and Naphtali experienced a relatively light affliction, but later they were subjected to a more severe affliction by the way of the sea. This event is recorded in 2 Kings 15:19, where Pul, the king of Assyria, came against the land. Menahem, the king of Israel, gave Pul a thousand talents of silver to secure his support and confirm his hold on the kingdom. Pul then turned back without staying in the land. This was the lighter affliction. However, in verse 29, a heavier affliction is mentioned. During the reign of Pekah, the king of Israel, Tiglath-Pileser, the king of Assyria, came and took various cities and territories, including Ijon, Abelbeth-Maachah, Janoah, Kedesh, Hazor, Gilead, and Galilee, and carried their inhabitants captive to Assyria. This was the more severe affliction that caused great distress to the people.

The mitigation follows in the second verse: "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined." This verse brings relief to the affliction through the promise of Christ. In Matthew

4:12, it is interpreted as referring to Christ: "Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee. And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zebulun and Naphtali: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, The land of Zebulun, and the land of Naphtali, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles: the people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death, light is sprung up."

Therefore, Christ alone is the alleviation for our greatest afflictions.

Now, the doctrine I will discuss is as follows:

Doctrine: There is something in Jesus Christ alone that can and does provide sufficient comfort and relief in the worst of times and conditions.

To explore this doctrine further:

First, we will inquire into the truth of this statement, that it is indeed so.

Secondly, we will examine what it is in Christ that can offer solace, comfort, and relief in the most challenging times and conditions.

Thirdly, we will consider the extent to which this applies to us.

And now for the Application:

1. Firstly, regarding the truth of it, it is stated of Christ that in Him the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily (Colossians 2:9). There is enough in God to meet all our needs. Just as there is enough in Heaven to pay for everything in the end, there is enough in God to supply all our present needs. One is too covetous if the great God of Heaven cannot suffice. When David faced the greatest distress of his life, with his wives and possessions taken

by the enemy and his own men turning against him, how did he find comfort? He found it in God. David encouraged himself in the Lord his God (1 Samuel 30:6). There is enough in God to provide comfort in all situations, and the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily in Christ. Therefore, there is something in Christ that can offer sufficient comfort and relief in the worst of times and conditions.

2. If you examine the Scriptures, you will find that the promises and prophecies of Christ are given specifically for the worst of times. It was common for the prophets to prophesy about Christ, but notice how their prophecies were intended for difficult times. In Jeremiah 23, there is a prophecy of Christ in verse 6: "In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely, and this is his name whereby he shall be called, the Lord our righteousness." Now, to what time does this prophecy relate? It relates to a very troubled time: "Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture" (verse 1). The prophecy of Christ follows this rebuke. Similarly, in Isaiah 28, there is a significant prophecy of Christ in verse 16: "Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation." Yet, why does this prophecy appear? It is calculated for an evil time, as mentioned in verse 14: "Hear the word of the Lord, ye scornful men that rule this people which is in Jerusalem." The prophecy speaks against those who make agreements with death and hell. In Ezekiel 34, there is another prophecy of Christ in verse 23: "And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd." This prophecy explicitly refers to Christ. However, when is it spoken? Look at the beginning of the chapter, verse 2: "Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God unto the shepherds." This prophecy is delivered during a time when the shepherds of Israel are condemned for neglecting their flocks. Therefore, in these instances, the prophecies of Christ are given during difficult

times. When Adam fell and all of humanity was in a sorrowful state, what was the comforting promise given? "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head" (Genesis 3:15). This is a recurring theme – the promises and prophecies of Christ are tailored for the worst of times. Why is this? It is to teach us that there is enough in Christ to provide comfort, support, and relief even in the worst of times.

3. If the types of Christ were sufficient to comfort and relieve the saints and people of God during the Old Testament times in their worst moments, then surely Christ Himself is more than enough to provide relief and comfort to the saints and people of God in the present New Testament times, even in our most difficult moments. In the Old Testament, when they sinned, they had a sacrifice to make atonement, a type of Christ, as stated in Leviticus 4:20, and Christ Himself is the great sacrifice as mentioned in Hebrews 9:26. When they were in the wilderness and needed bread, they had manna, which was a type of Christ, the true bread that came down from heaven, as stated in John 6:50-51. When they needed water, the rock was opened and that rock was Christ, as mentioned in 1 Corinthians 10:4. When they were bitten by fiery serpents, they had the bronze serpent, which was a type of Christ, as mentioned in John 3:15. Therefore, if the people of God in the Old Testament found relief in the types of Christ, it is certain that there is abundant relief for us now in the New Testament times, in Christ Himself.
4. If all the promises of good things that are made to us have their origin in Christ, and if all the promises made to Christ of good things to come descend and are bestowed upon us to some extent, then undoubtedly there is more than enough in Christ to provide relief and support in the worst of times. The promises are like divine conveyances. All the promises of good things made to us are affirmed and confirmed by Christ, for all the promises are "yes" and "amen" in Christ, as stated in 2 Corinthians 1:20. On the other hand, all the promises made to

Christ descend upon us. In Psalm 2, there is a significant promise made to Christ in verse 8: "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." This promise is clearly given to Christ, and see how it descends and applies to us. In Revelation 2:26, it is stated, "He that overcometh and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers, even as I received of my Father." Here, Christ declares that just as He received promises from His Father, those promises also descend and are bestowed upon us. Therefore, if all the promises of good things made to us have their origin in Christ, and if all the promises made to Christ of good things to come descend and are bestowed upon us, there is certainly more than enough in Christ to support and provide relief in the worst of times.

5. There is one more thing to consider. If our lack of comfort and satisfaction stems from not having a clear view of Christ's abundance and excellence, and if all our satisfaction and comfort arises from beholding Christ's fullness and excellence, then this doctrine must undoubtedly be true. Let us turn to Revelation 5 and observe how John weeps and for what reason. He says, "I saw in the right hand of him who sat on the throne a scroll written inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals" (verse 1). Then, in verse 2, he witnesses a mighty angel asking who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals, but no one in heaven, on earth, or under the earth is found worthy. John continues in verse 4, "I wept much because no one was found worthy to open and read the scroll, or to look at it." What brings him solace? What quiets his distress? It is the sight of Christ, as stated in verse 5: "But one of the elders said to me, 'Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll.'" From there, the passage goes on to reveal the excellency and fullness of Christ, and John weeps no more. Therefore, I affirm that our lack of comfort arises from

our failure to perceive the abundance and excellence that resides in Christ. It is clear, then, that Christ possesses more than enough to bring comfort, support, and relief in the most challenging of times. And so, this concludes the first point.

Well, secondly, let us consider what it is in Christ that can bring comfort, support, and relief in the worst of times and conditions.

I. First, I would like to emphasize that whatever good thing the world can offer or take away, Christ possesses it abundantly. And if Christ possesses in great abundance that which the world can offer or take away, then surely there is something in Christ that can bring succor, comfort, and relief in the most difficult times. Now, what can the world give or take away?

1. Can the world take away your wealth, gold, or silver? Then consider what is written in Proverbs 3 regarding Wisdom (where Christ is referred to as wisdom): "Happy is the man who finds wisdom, for her proceeds are better than the profits of silver, and her gain than fine gold; she is more precious than rubies, and all the things you may desire cannot compare with her" (verse 13).
2. Can the world take away your freedom, your liberty in the Gospel? Remember what Christ says in Revelation 3:8, "See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it."
3. Can the world take away your life? Recall the words of Christ, "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). And in John 5:40, He says, "But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life."

On the other hand, what can the world give to you?

1. Can the world give you peace, rest, tranquility? Then you know what Christ says, "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). "I create the

fruit of the lips: Peace" (Isaiah 57:19). "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you" (John 14:27).

2. Can the world give you happiness or blessedness? I am certain that Christ can. He says, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled. Blessed are the pure in heart. Yes, blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake" (Matthew 5). It was the duty of the High Priest to bless the people, and as Christ is our great High Priest, it is His role to bless us. He alone can make us blessed. So if you want to know what there is in Christ that can bring succor, comfort, and relief in the worst of times, I say, look at whatever good thing the world can offer or take away, and you will find it in Christ in great abundance.

II. In Jesus Christ, there is the greatest excellence with the utmost propriety. The greatest excellence, for:

1. If knowledge of Christ is the most excellent knowledge, then surely Christ Himself must be most excellent. The knowledge of Jesus Christ is the most excellent knowledge.
2. It is the most certain knowledge. You know other things by their appearances and species, but you know Christ by the Spirit. You know other things through the testimony of men, but you know Christ through the testimony of the Spirit. And just as the testimony of the Spirit is more certain than the testimony of any man, the knowledge of Christ is the most certain knowledge in the world.
3. It is a knowledge that grants you possession of the thing you know. Through my knowledge of Christ, I am possessed by Christ. Therefore, it is undoubtedly the most excellent

knowledge in the world, and Christ Himself must be most excellent.

2. He is called "The desire of all Nations" in Haggai 2:7. Some nations desire one thing and some another, but Christ is the desire of all nations. What is most desirable that is not in Christ?
 1. Is gold and silver most desirable? He says, "I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire" (Revelation 3:18).
 2. Is wisdom most desirable? He is the wisdom of the Father. In Him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom (1 Corinthians 1:24, Colossians 2:3). He is wisdom personified. "Wisdom has built her house" (Proverbs 9:1), and it is in the plural number, "wisdoms have built her house." He is not only wise, but wisdom itself.
 3. He is called "that good thing" in Jeremiah 33:14. "Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised to the house of Israel and to the house of Judah." That good thing, with emphasis, what is that? "At that time I will cause to grow up to David a Branch of righteousness; He shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land." Christ is that good thing; He is the excellence of Jacob, the greatest excellency.

And this excellency is under the best ownership, to the extent that you can claim it with a double "my." "My God, My God," says David (Psalm 22:1). "My Lord and my God," says Thomas (John 20:28). There is such ownership in this excellency that you can claim it with a double "my." And it is an ownership that can never be lost. "And no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand" (John 10:28-29). So if you want to know what there is in Christ that can comfort, succor, and relieve in the worst of times, I say there is the greatest excellency under the best ownership.

3. There is in Jesus Christ the greatest fullness combined with the most generosity. Some things are empty and not full, some things are full but filled with air like the bladders of creatures that deflate with the slightest prick and become nothing. They

are full but not generous. And some things are generous but not full, like small springs with little water. But Christ is both full and generous. He is the Rose of Sharon and the lily of the valleys (Song of Solomon 2:1). The rose of Sharon, not the rose of a garden that only some can come and enjoy the fragrance of, but the rose of the field that everyone can come and smell. His blood is a fountain opened, not an enclosed fountain, but an opened one. He is the Tree of Life, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations. So there is not only an abundance of fullness but an overflow in Jesus Christ. Therefore, if you want to know what there is in Christ that can comfort and relieve in the worst of times, I say there is the greatest fullness combined with the most generosity.

4. There is in Jesus Christ the most tender love, accompanied by the strongest commitment. The sweetest love: "Your love is better than wine; your name is ointment poured forth; therefore the virgins love you" (Song of Solomon 1:3). No one has greater love than this, says Christ concerning his death (John 15:13). There is love in Christ beyond all dimensions; there is height, breadth, length, and depth of love in him (Ephesians 3:18-19). 1. There is sacrificial love in Christ, who loved us and gave Himself for us (Galatians 2:20, Ephesians 5:25). 2. There is forgiving and pardoning love in Christ, as seen in Peter, whom Christ forgave after denying Him. 3. There is condescending love in Christ, as witnessed by Thomas: "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side" (John 20:27). He condescended to Thomas. 4. There is accepting love in Christ: "Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her" (Matthew 26:13). He accepted what she did. And 5. There is sympathizing love in Christ: "For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses" (Hebrews 4:15). There is the sweetest love in Christ.

And this love is accompanied by the strongest commitment. Isn't a brother committed to help his brother? He is not ashamed to call them brethren (Hebrews 2:11). Isn't a father committed to help his children? He is the everlasting Father (Isaiah 9:6). Isn't a husband committed to help his wife? The Church of Christ is His spouse (Song of Solomon 4:9). Now, imagine if there were one person who could fulfill all these roles: a brother, a father, a husband. How much would that person be committed to help? Christ does fulfill all these roles. Therefore, in Christ, there is the sweetest love under the greatest commitment.

5. There is in Jesus Christ that which is suitable for all conditions. What condition can you find yourself in without a promise suited to it? And what are the promises but the channels through which the blood of Christ flows? There is no condition without a corresponding promise, and therefore, in Christ, there is that which suits all conditions. Let me give a few examples:

Are you poor and in need? "I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich" (Revelation 3:18). 2. Are you naked? "I counsel you to buy from Me white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed." 3. Are you lost and wandering? "I am the way" (John 14:6). 4. Are you in darkness regarding a matter or your condition? "I am the light of the world" (John 8:12). 5. Are you hungry? "I am the bread of life" (John 6:48). 6. Are you thirsty? "I am the water of life. He who believes in Me shall never thirst" (John 4:14). 7. Do you need justification? "The LORD our righteousness" (Jeremiah 23:6). 8. Do you need sanctification? "For their sakes do I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth" (John 17:19). 9. Do you need consolation? "I will send the Comforter" (John 16:7). 10. Do you need protection? "He is the Rock of Ages; the Lord Jehovah" (Isaiah 26:4). 11. Are you in a paradise of prosperity? "He is the Tree of Life" (Revelation 22:14). 12. Are you in a wilderness of adversity? "He is the Manna that came down from heaven" (John 6:50). So, in Christ, there is that which is suited to all conditions.

6. In Jesus Christ, there is a response to all our fears, doubts, and objections. Listen, if there is a poor, doubting soul here, there is something in Christ that addresses all your fears, doubts, and objections.

Will you say, "I am a poor lost creature"? Then Christ says, "I came to seek and save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). Will you say, "But I am a sinner, a great sinner"? Christ says, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Matthew 9:13). Will you say, "But I cannot repent"? Look at what the Apostle says about Christ in Acts 5:31, "Him God has exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins." It is Christ's work to give repentance and forgiveness of sins. Will you say, "But I cannot leave my sins, I cannot turn away from my sins"? Then read Acts 3:26, "To you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities." Will you say, "But I cannot come to Christ"? Then He tells you that He has come to you, "I came to seek and save that which was lost." He brings the lost sheep home on His shoulder, as in the Parable. Will you say, "But His sheep follow Him, and I cannot follow Him"? Then He tells you that He will carry the lambs in His arms and gently lead those who are with young (Isaiah 40:11). He will guide you at your own pace. Will you say, "But I have provoked Christ, and He is angry and will cast me off"? You know what He says then, "Those who come to Me I will in no way cast out" (John 6:37). He is meek and lowly; He is meek, so He will not be angry with you; He is lowly, so He will not disdain you. Learn from Me, He says, for I am meek and lowly (Matthew 11:29). Will you say, "But I have sinned to the utmost"? Then the Apostle tells you that He is able to save to the uttermost (Hebrews 7:25). So, plainly, there is something in Christ that addresses all our fears, doubts, and objections.

7. There is yet one more thing. In Jesus Christ, there is something that does and will fulfill all our needs. What is it that you lack? Do you suffer from abandonment? Then he says, "I will lead you in a way you have not known" (Isaiah 42:16). "I will never leave

you nor forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5). Do you struggle with corruption and bondage to sin? There is freedom in Christ. "Those whom the Son sets free are free indeed" (John 8:36). Truly free, genuinely free, remarkably free; Those whom the Son sets free are free indeed; truly and genuinely. Do you face great temptations? It is He who will trample Satan under our feet (Romans 16:20), and He says, "My grace is sufficient for you" (2 Corinthians 12:9). Do you lack the means of grace or the ministry of the Word? He has received gifts for men, and the Apostle tells you what those gifts are: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers (Ephesians 4:11). Do you struggle with weakness and spiritual infirmity? Then He has seven horns and seven eyes, as described in Revelation 5:6, corresponding to your weakness or infirmity. Or do you suffer from any affliction, outward or inward, or persecution from enemies? Then see what is said about Christ in Micah 5:5, "And this One shall be our peace when the Assyrian comes into our land." Are you afraid of an enemy entering the land? This One shall be our peace when the Assyrian comes into our land. This One, who is it? See in verse 2, it is plainly spoken of Christ. "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting. And He shall stand and feed in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord His God. And this One shall be our peace." This One, who is Christ; He shall be our peace when the worst of enemies enter our land.

Indeed, you may say that you see no likelihood of this. Then take note of what is said in verse 7: "And the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many people as a dew from the Lord, as showers upon the grass that do not wait for man or tarry for the sons of men." If a garden needs to be watered with a watering pot, it waits for man; but if it is watered by the dew, it does not wait for man. Thus says the Lord, "Shall the remnant of my people be like the ground that waits for the dew, that does not tarry for man?" Even if you see no

likelihood of deliverance, no means by which you can be saved when the worst of enemies come into our land, you shall be delivered. For this One shall be our peace. Therefore, whatever it is that you lack, you can find it all in Christ. So, in these seven particulars, you see what there is in Jesus Christ that may, can, and does provide sufficient comfort and relief in the worst of times and conditions. That concludes the second point.

III. Now you might say in the third place, "This is good in general, but what does it have to do with us? We know that there is enough in Christ to help, comfort, and relieve us in the worst of times and conditions, but how does this apply to us?"

Yes, it applies to you, and it applies to you greatly. Why? Because:

1. If you are conquerors and overcome the challenges and evils of the times and places where you live, then all the abundance and excellence that is in Christ belongs to you. If you look into the second and third chapters of the Book of Revelation, you will find that to every mentioned church, a promise is made to bestow some of the fullness and excellence of Christ. And the promise is consistently given to "him that overcometh," at the end of each letter. It means to the one who overcomes the specific evil mentioned in that particular letter, not just in general, but the evil specifically addressed in that letter. Let me give you an example: In the letter to the church in Laodicea, it says in chapter 3, verse 21, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." What is promised here? Communion with Christ in his earthly kingdom. Now, who are those who will partake in this promise? It is those who overcome. To him that overcometh. Overcometh what? The lukewarmness of the Laodiceans. The sin condemned in this letter is lukewarmness, a mixture in the worship of God. Whoever overcomes this compromise shall have communion with Christ in his earthly kingdom. So, I say, this abundance and

excellence of Christ is promised to those who overcome. Therefore, my friends, you know what the evils of your times are. If you overcome the evils of the times in which you live, then you shall partake in this excellence and abundance of Christ. Hence, this is of great relevance to you.

2. If our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ has received all this excellence and abundance from the Father, in order to give it to you, then it is of great concern to you, and it concerns you deeply. Now, why has Christ received all this excellence from the Father? Why has he received the Spirit? Why was he anointed with the Spirit? He tells you in Isaiah 61:1, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me because the Lord has anointed me." Why? "To preach good tidings to the meek, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound. For this reason, I was anointed." And why has our Lord and Savior Christ received gifts? The Apostle and the Psalmist tell us, for men, even for rebellious men (Ephesians 4:8, Psalm 68:18). Will you say, "But I am a poor rebel?" He has received gifts for men, for wicked men, even for rebels. Paul was a rebel, and Christ received gifts for Paul, that very rebel. And why has he received all power in heaven and earth from God the Father? It is for your sake, for your concerns (Matthew 28:18). Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All power is given to me in heaven and on earth. So, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, even to the end of the world." Go, therefore; take note of the "therefore" here: All power is given to me in heaven and on earth. Go, therefore; Jesus Christ has received all power in heaven and on earth with regards to your concerns. Therefore, it is of great importance to you that there is that in Jesus Christ by which he is able to help, comfort, and relieve you in the worst of times.

3. Thirdly, if our Lord and Savior Christ humbles himself to your weaknesses because he is clothed with Majesty and Excellency, and endowed with all this power, then what I have said is for you, and it is of great significance to you. Consider John 13, where you find an assurance of what you will discover in Christ now, based on what he did then when he was about to die. In verse 3, it says, "Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, rose from supper and laid aside his garments, took a towel and girded himself. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet." Why did he do this? Look at verse 3 again, "Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands." He was not proud, nor did he despise his humble disciples. No, he condescended to them and stooped to their weaknesses. His humility, which stems from his excellency, moves him to be kind to us. Now, if he humbles himself to your weaknesses because he is clothed with excellency, then what I have said is for you, and it is highly relevant to you. And thus, the doctrine is clarified.

Now, for the sake of practical application:

1. If this doctrine is true, that in Jesus Christ alone there is sufficient comfort and relief in the worst of times and conditions, what a great encouragement it is for everyone to seek and attain an association with Christ! By having an interest in Christ, you have a constant source of relief in the most challenging situations. Without an interest in Christ, there is no relief in the worst of times. Who wouldn't want to have an interest in Christ? If there are any here who still lack an interest in Christ, whether man or woman, consider what is found in Christ. As you have heard, there is enough in Christ that can provide ample comfort and relief in the worst of times. Times may be difficult, but be encouraged to pursue an interest in Christ.

2. If this doctrine is true, why should we complain? Why should we be discouraged in times like these, or in any situation we may find ourselves in? Shall a living person complain? (Lamentations 3:39). Shall a living Christian complain when they have a living source of relief in Christ? The Book of Job describes the plight of the wicked, who, despite their abundance, find themselves in distress (Job 20:22). Should we be in distress when we have Christ's sufficiency amidst us? Should we complain or be discouraged when we have Christ's sufficiency available to us at all times? There is a story of a woman who, even when facing losses, would console herself by saying, "Yes, I have lost a child or a friend, but God is still alive." And when she lost her husband and grieved deeply, her child asked her, "Mother, is your God dead?" Similarly, others may ask us, while we complain and feel discouraged during these times, "Is your God dead? Is your Savior dead?" But either this doctrine is real or it is not. If it is not, why does the Scripture speak of it as you have heard? And if there is truth in this doctrine, why should we be discouraged or complain, regardless of our circumstances?

3. If this doctrine is true, why should we not acknowledge Christ in the worst of times? Why should we not confess Christ in the midst of adversity? If Christ is our source of relief in the worst of times, should we not openly acknowledge and confess Him during those times? Should we not acknowledge His truth, His ways, and His ordinances, and confess them before others even in the midst of trials? When the sun shines intensely, people seek the shade of a tree; and when it rains heavily, they take shelter under the tree. But when the heat subsides and the rain stops, the tree stands alone, and no one pays attention to it. As long as the sun shines upon the sundial, people gather around it, but when the sun is no longer on the dial, they ignore it. Similarly, when times are favorable for the practice of God's ordinances, the proclamation of truth, and the pursuit of His ways, many will flock to them. However, when those times pass, when truth is obscured and the sun is no longer shining, how

few will continue to acknowledge Christ and His truth? But if this doctrine is true, why should we not boldly acknowledge and confess Christ even in the worst of times?

4. If this doctrine is true, you can see how grievous it is to sin against Christ. It is to sin against our remedy, our relief. It is to sin against the very source of our help. Among all sins, those committed against the remedy are the most severe. Therefore, as I often say, adultery in married individuals is worse than fornication in those who are unmarried because it is a sin against the remedy. Christ is our remedy, our relief, even in the worst of times. Therefore, to sin against Christ is an incredibly grave sin. It is to sin against the very solution to our troubles.

Now, let's consider:

1. When individuals offend weaker believers in matters of indifference, the Apostle explicitly states that they are sinning against Christ, as mentioned in 1 Corinthians 8:12.
2. Furthermore, when men and women refuse to believe despite all the offers of grace and love that Christ extends to their souls, they are sinning against Christ.
3. Likewise, when a professing Christian, a member of the Church, behaves scandalously by frequenting taverns or alehouses, engaging in unjust dealings, and bringing dishonor to the name of Christ, they are sinning against Christ.
4. Moreover, when people persecute the ways and followers of Christ, they are sinning against Christ. As exemplified by Saul, who was called out by Jesus Himself, saying, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" (Acts 9:4). These are just a few examples of how people sin against Christ. Oh, what an evil thing it is to sin against Christ! It is to sin against the greatest remedy in the world. Therefore, be cautious and mindful of how you sin against Christ.

5. If the doctrine we have discussed is true, that there is something in Jesus Christ that can and does provide sufficient comfort and relief in the worst of times and conditions, then we can understand what we should do and where we should turn for relief. Why should we not go to Christ for relief in all circumstances and find solace in Him at every opportunity? If there were a miraculous water capable of curing all diseases, how many people would flock to that water? Well, here is that water, the ultimate remedy. Christ alone possesses the power to heal all ailments, to provide succor and relief even in the direst of times. So why do we not come to Him now and draw water from this well of salvation?

Question: But you may ask, I confess that indeed Christ is the source of salvation, and there is enough in him to provide succor and relief. However, the well is deep, my rope is short, and my arm is weak. I do not know how to access this water. I do not know how to make the most of Christ. What should I do to be able to draw water from this well of salvation? What should I do to make the most of Christ for my succor and relief in the worst of times and conditions?

Answer 1: If you want to draw water from this well of salvation and make the most of Christ for your relief and succor, make sure to recognize Christ as the Father's great provision and appointment for all the help and relief that you seek. In John 6, Jesus says, "You seek me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life." Where can I find it? "The Son of Man will give it to you." How can I obtain it from him? Regard him as the Father's appointed one, sealed and chosen by God the Father. Look to him, therefore, and approach him as the Father's great provision for the very thing you desire.

Answer 2: Make sure to secure your connection with Christ. Obtain assurance of your relationship with him; otherwise, you will be hesitant to approach him. As the Apostle says, "All things are yours,

whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death." Why is that? "Because you belong to Christ." But if you are not certain that you belong to Christ and that Christ belongs to you, how can you find solace in him during difficult times? Therefore, gain assurance of your connection with Christ.

Answer 3: Take note of the attributes and titles of Christ that are most applicable to your situation, and keep them in your thoughts, allowing them to deeply impact your hearts. It is not sufficient for us to approach Christ in a general sense; rather, we must come to him and engage with him based on the attributes or titles that are relevant to our condition. Christ desires us to do so and has purposely adorned himself with titles that correspond to our circumstances. The second and third chapters of the Book of Revelation serve as evidence of this very fact. Each of the epistles to the seven churches begins with titles of Christ. In the letter to the Church in Ephesus, there is one title; in the letter to the Church in Smyrna, there is another title, and so on for all seven churches. Every epistle commences with a distinct title of Christ, in accordance with the condition of the church to which it is addressed. For instance, consider the Church in Smyrna. In verse 8, his title is "The first and the last, who was dead, and is alive" (Revelation 2:8). Why this title? He writes to the suffering Church in Smyrna, stating, "Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison" (Revelation 2:10). Is that all? Is the prison the extent of it? No, he continues, "Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life" (Revelation 2:10). This pertains to the ten persecutions in the early days, times of martyrdom. So what should they do? Remember my titles, my attributes; this is my name and title: "The first and the last, who was dead, and is alive." See how this title aligns with their situation. And rest assured, my friends, that Christ will undoubtedly fulfill the titles with which he is vested. David trusted in this: "The Lord is my shepherd" (Psalm 23:1). What does this mean? "I shall not want." He trusted in the fulfillment of his title, knowing that he would lack nothing. Likewise, do the same today. For example, if there is

distress among the saints and people of God, remember his title, "The King of Saints" (Revelation 15:3). If there is great distress among nations, remember his title, "The King of Nations" (Jeremiah 10:7). If you are experiencing confusion or vexation (as mentioned in this chapter), recall his title, "A light has dawned, a marvelous light." Make sure you approach Christ in accordance with the title of his that is most relevant to your condition.

Answer 4: Ensure that you thoroughly examine both Christ and your condition together. Some individuals focus solely on their condition, fixating on it without considering Christ, and they are filled with unbelief. Others may think extensively about Christ but neglect their own condition, leading to presumption. However, if you truly desire to find genuine relief in Christ, regardless of your condition, then study Christ and your condition together. For example, Christ is a King, a Priest, and a Prophet. If you are ignorant, contemplate Christ as a Prophet. If you feel guilty, reflect on Christ as a Priest. If you are living in disorder, consider Christ as a King. This is how you should approach the study of Christ and your condition together.

Answer 5: Be certain to rely on Christ to support and assist you in the worst of times, expecting him to fulfill the role that he has assigned himself. Just as David did in Psalm 31, examine his reasoning, which is highly sound. He says, "Lord, be my strong rock, for you are my rock" (verse 2). Lord, this is your name, this is your title: You are my rock; therefore, be my rock. And he continues, "Rescue me from the net they have hidden for me, for you are my refuge" (verse 4). I have enemies to contend with, and they have secretly laid their snares for me. Rescue me from the net they have hidden for me, for you are my strength. Similarly, in our situation, there are those who have secretly set traps for us, like the papists. We can approach Christ and say, "Lord, pull us out of the net they have secretly laid for us, for you are our strength." Thus, rely on Christ to fulfill his titles and provide the assistance you need.

Answer 6: If you seek succor, comfort, and relief in Christ during the worst of times and conditions, then rely on him instead of turning to other means of deliverance or unlawful methods when you encounter difficulties. Christ belongs to you to the extent that you rest upon him. Just as our trust in a promise makes it ours, resting upon Christ makes him ours. Remember how graciously the Lord appeared to the three Children when they were in the fiery furnace. Christ walked with them and delivered them because they rested upon him. They declared, "We know that our God is able to deliver us, and even if He does not, we will not bow down to the idol" (Daniel 3:17-18). They placed their trust in him alone, rejecting any unworthy alternatives or unlawful means of deliverance. As a result, Christ manifested himself and provided them with succor and relief.

Answer 7: If you desire to find succor, comfort, and relief in Christ in every situation and condition, then approach God through prayer. Ask God to open your eyes so that you may see the fountain of Christ that is right beside you. It is possible that your eyes may be veiled, just as Hagar's were. Hagar had the fountain near her, but she could not see it because her eyes were veiled. This is true for many of us as well. Christ, our fountain, is near, yet we despair because our eyes are veiled. Therefore, go to God and plead for Him to open your eyes so that you may behold this fountain.

Answer 8: Lastly, if you desire to draw water from the well of salvation and experience Christ's comfort and relief in the worst of times, pay attention to the promises that the Lord has made to His people for the latter times. Engage with these promises extensively. Christ provides comfort and relief through promises, just as the Devil tempts with promises. When a person finds solace in a promise made by Christ, they are finding solace in Christ himself. There are around nine or ten promises that the Lord Christ has made for the latter times, intended to bring comfort to His people. I will briefly mention them and conclude.

1. He has promised that His people will have understanding in the times (Daniel 12:10). While the wicked will continue to do wickedly without understanding, the wise will understand.
2. He has promised that His people will be sealed, set apart, and hidden even in the worst of times, including the Antichristian times (Revelation 7:9).
3. He has promised that despite facing tribulation under Antichrist, His people will come out of it with their garments washed in the blood of the Lamb (Revelation 7:14). They will be purified and cleansed through the sacrifice of Jesus.
4. The Lord has promised that His people in these latter times will have continuous access to His presence and ordinances. They will be able to dwell in His temple day and night without interruption, unlike their current scattered and driven state (Revelation 7:15).
5. He has promised to destroy all their Antichristian enemies. Babylon will fall and be utterly destroyed, thrown down like a millstone into the sea. It will cease to exist (Revelation 18:21).
6. The Lord has promised that His people, even in times of hardship symbolized by sackcloth, will prophesy and bear witness to the truths and ways of God (Revelation 11:3). He will empower His witnesses to prophesy for 1260 days, and they will not be silenced.
7. He has also promised that the light and glory of His people will surpass anything experienced before. In that day, when the Lord heals the wounds and binds up the brokenness of His people, the light of the Moon will shine like the light of the Sun, and the light of the Sun will be sevenfold, like the light of seven days (Isaiah 30:26).

8. He has promised to His people that they will cease from their labours. Those who die in the Lord are blessed, for they will rest from their labours, and their deeds will follow them (Revelation 14:13). There will be a time on Earth when the saints will find rest from their toil.
9. The Lord has promised that the number of His people will greatly increase. Just as the Israelites multiplied when the enemy sought to eliminate their males, the Lord has promised that His people will experience significant growth in the latter days. When the witnesses rise (referring to their resurrection rather than an uprising), they will ascend in a cloud, surrounded by a multitude of people like a cloud, signifying the gratification of their rising. There will be a great earthquake, resulting in the death of 7,000 people, and the remaining population will be frightened and give glory to God (Revelation 11:12-13). There will be a tremendous increase in numbers.
10. Lastly, the Lord has promised that the saints will govern the world and receive the authority. This does not mean that anyone should try to forcefully seize power from the current rulers. In Daniel 7:27, the Lord has promised that the kingdom, dominion, and greatness of the entire kingdom under heaven will be given to the people of the Most High, whose kingdom is everlasting.

These are the ten things that the Lord has promised to His people in the latter days. The believers in the days of the apostles found comfort in these promises, even in the book of Revelation. The book of Revelation is specifically intended to provide comfort and relief to the people of God during Antichristian times. If it brought comfort and relief to them in the days of the apostles, how much more can it bring to us, who are living in these last days? Christ offers comfort through His promises, and when a person is comforted and relieved by a promise made by Christ, they are comforted by Christ Himself. Christ has given these great promises for the latter times. Now that we see the times we are living in, where evil prevails and is expected

to worsen before it gets better, let us remember this doctrine and find comfort in it. There is everything we need in Jesus Christ alone to provide sufficient comfort and relief in the worst of times and conditions. So go to Christ in every situation; do not let relief pass by unused. Christ appreciates it when you seek Him, and the more you rely on Him, the more He appreciates it.

The End.

The Sinfulness of Sin and the Fullness of Christ by William Bridge,
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ePub,.mobi & .pdf Editions. May 2023, Requests for information should be addressed to: Monergism Books, PO Box 491, West Linn, OR 97068