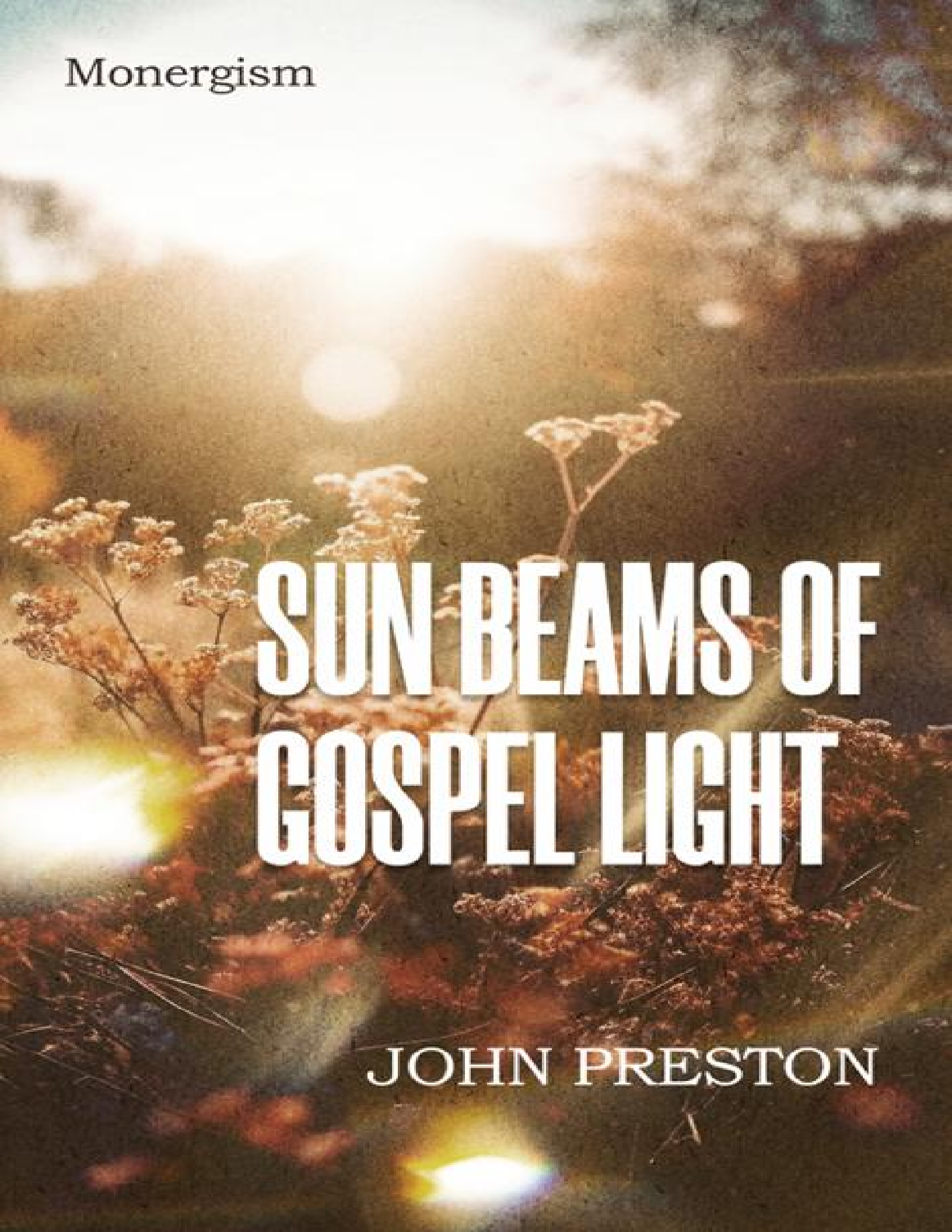



Monergism



**SUN BEAMS OF
GOSPEL LIGHT**

JOHN PRESTON

Monergism

The background of the cover is a photograph of a field of small, light-colored flowers, possibly wildflowers, with bright sunlight filtering through the foliage, creating a soft, hazy atmosphere with visible sunbeams and lens flare effects.

**SUN BEAMS OF
GOSPEL LIGHT**

JOHN PRESTON

SUN BEAMS OF GOSPEL LIGHT

Shining clearly from several Texts of Scripture, opened and applied.

A heavenly treatise on the divine love of Christ.

The Christian's freedom.

The deformed form of a formal profession.

Christ's fullness, and man's emptiness.

By JOHN PRESTON, Doctor of Divinity, Chaplain in Ordinary to King James, Master of Emmanuel College in Cambridge, and sometimes Preacher at Lincoln's Inn.

LONDON, Printed for JOHN STAFFORD, and are to be sold in Black Horse Alley, 1644.

A HEAVENLY TREATISE ON THE DIVINE LOVE OF CHRIST.

Showing,

1. The Motives
2. The Means
3. The Marks
4. The Kinds thereof. Delivered in five Sermons,

by JOHN PRESTON, Doctor of Divinity, Chaplain in Ordinary to his Majesty; Master of Emmanuel College in Cambridge, and sometimes Preacher at Lincoln's Inn.

MATTHEW 22:37-38. This is the first and great Commandment: you shall Love the Lord your God with all your heart.

LONDON, Printed by Thomas Paine, for John Stafford, in Chancery Lane, opposite the Rolls. Anno Domini 1640."

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To the Reader of these pious and plain Sermons,

Grace and PEACE. Christian Reader, it was an old complaint of a Heathen, that the noise of the old Philosophers' opinions did hinder their dung-hill gods from hearing their prayers: And it is no very new complaint of a Christian, that the many idle subtleties of the School have so drawn up Divinity to the highest peg of a curious mind, that it hinders the heart from moulding it into Prayers and practice.

This grave and serious Divine, whose living Sermons are here commended to thee when he is dead, saw it with both eyes. Therefore though he was no small master in subtleties, yet all his thoughts were bent to draw them down from the floating brain, to the feeling heart; that his hearers might be better brought to know and do. As this hath been his course in all his writings before extant; so is it in this, that now comes to thy hands. How might he have hid himself in the thorns of speculation? How high might he have flown in the curious extracts of every word of this Text? But he, that delighted to speak ten words to edification, rather than ten thousand that could not pierce every ordinary brain, contented himself to fill up deep fords to make them passable, and to wade the sweet and shallow streams of the love of the Lord Jesus.

He might, from hence, have set himself upon the mount of cursings, and showered down worse than fire and brimstone upon delinquents: but the meekness of his spirit carries him up to the

mount of blessings, to learn good souls through death to find life, through threatenings to meet with comforts.

He, being lifted up by the Divine love of Christ, doth describe love, and our love to Christ: He soars to the equity, and necessity of it: He rests not before he have given you the means, motives, marks, gains qualifications, and objects of this love. How fain would he have thee love the Lord Jesus, that thou mayest avoid the curse, and enjoy the blessing! He knew nothing more necessary for a good Christian than this love. First, he must be a Christian by faith; next, he must live a Christian by faith and love too: He can do neither without the love of Christ to him; and this he cannot have but in his time: he shall have faith in Christ, and love to the Lord Jesus.

There is neither thing, nor love in all the world more comfortable to a good man than this: Sin presseth hard down, and pulls him back from heaven; Satan baits both the hands, and hooks of the world, prosperity, and adversity, to entangle him; Death brings him down to the bed of darkness, the land of oblivion, and lays him up as a despised lump: But if he have this love, when all vanishing bubbles fly away; this mounts him up into the bosom of God. As water, be it conveyed in Pipes never so low, yet in the same Pipes it will rise up as high as the Spring head: so this love springing from the bosom of God, though it be shed abroad, and run through the channels of our hearts on earth, yet with a willing motion it mounts up to Christ again, and carries us along with it in despite of storms. Where we love, we live: where we love, we desire to be; and God hath so ordered, that this appetite shall not be in vain.

And as for other Loves, see whether the Love of the Lord Jesus do not surpass them all Love other things, and yet often they slide away from thee, so that in them thou hast but a momentary joy: But love

thy Lord, and, doing so he abides with thee forever, and is to thee a spring of everlasting joy. Love other things, and they cannot know the sincerity of thy heart, how much, and in what manner and measure thou lovest them: But love thy Lord, and he knows better the love of thy heart than thyself: Thou mayest say unto him, as did Peter, Thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee; and shalt find entertainment answerable. Love other things, and thou hast vexing care over them, both about their gaining, keeping, and losing: But love thy Lord, and thy care is sweet for him; yea, he careth for thee in all thy ways. Thou canst lose nothing by it, no not thy heart, which though it go out to him, and he keeps it, yet he gives it to thee again, and that better than it was, to comfort thee in thy whole course.

Love other things, and thou findest them not at all times, nor so often as thou wouldst: when thou hast need, thou canst not speak to them as often as thou wouldst, neither do they hearken to thy words as thou couldst wish. But love thy Lord, and he is with thee always to the end of the world: Thou mayest speak to him at any time, by night or by day; he heareth thee at all times and gives thee thy heart's desires. Love other things, and thou canst not know their secrets; there may be something in them which may be vexations unto thee in the end; there may lie a snake under the green grass, a filthy load under a sweet flower, and a worm in the heart of a desired apple. But love thy Lord, and he will reveal the mystery of Godliness and his hidden secrets of truth unto thee according to his word; yea, thou shalt see that nothing but that which is glorious in itself, and good for thee, is either in him or about him.

Love other things, and they put thee to many a trouble; they hinder thee in thy prayers and all thy service to God because thou dost always think and dote upon them. But love thy Lord, and he bringeth

into thy heart and conscience peace which passeth all understanding. The more thou lovest him when thou prayest, the more he gives thee to thyself; yea, the more he gives thee to himself and fills thee with holy comfort. Love other things, and they are without thee still; thou canst never bring them to any more intimate communion, save that which is common to thee with Epicures. But love thy Lord, and he dwelleth in thee, and thou in him, for he is Love.

Love other things, and they seek at thy hands a profit and gain to themselves, or else they perish in thy love. They will take advantage upon thy love to work upon thee for their own perfections. But love thy Lord, and he seeks thy profit and perfection: he always endures to glorify himself in doing thee good. Love other things, and most times they will deceive thee; they are often liars, variable, and inconstant. But love thy Lord, and thou shalt be assured: he is most true and unchangeable, and thou mayest build upon him that he will not fail thee nor forsake thee.

Love other things, and oftentimes they cause grief and heaviness, and so do highly displease thee. But love thy Lord, and it banisheth fear and sad confusion of face because thou canst see nothing in him that can displease thee. Lastly, love other things, and thou knowest not assuredly whether thou art loved by them again. But love thy Lord, and thou mayest be assured that he answereth thee with the same; yea, with better; for he cannot but love a blessed child of the begetting of his own will.

By how much more excellent this love is than the love of all things else, by so much the more must thou press to enjoy and practice it. Every thing naturally desires that which is best for it. If it have it not, it is from the error about the object, or the miscarriage of the appetite. That, therefore, thou mayest fail in neither, but mayest

have the best object, and the best appetite cleared from clouds of ignorance and sin unto thee, these five Sermons of an experienced master in Israel are tendered unto thee. If thou reapest benefit from them, give glory to God, who would not have this lamp of love kept under a bushel and buried in oblivion. If thou receivest the least encouragement from these foregoing lines to make use of this light, know that they proceed from the love of thee in Christ, in him, who desires thy prayers, that he may love the Lord Jesus both in life and death. Farewell.

A HEAVENLY TREATISE OF DIVINE LOVE.

Sermon I.

1 COR. 16. 22. If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema, Maranatha, Let him be had in execration, or let him be excommunicated unto the death. These words have little dependence on the words before them; which are these, The salutation of me Paul with my own hands. It was the custom of the Apostle, that the Church might not be deceived with counterfeit Epistles, to set his name to those he wrote: And that he would not do alone, but did always add some gracious sentence, as commonly this, The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. And there he adds that sentence, which so suits with the spirit and mind of S. Paul, that it might easily show it to be S. Paul's Epistle; a man so abounding in the love of the Lord, as he is zealous against such as love him not. We shall find, in all S. Paul's preaching, that faith and love, were that which he aimed at; those two roots, those two pillars on which the Church is built, from whence all the rest flow: Hereby teaching Ministers what they should aim at, what should be their aim: And so, people are taught hence what to do: they must water these two roots well, and then the branches will flourish. Our wisdom should be to look to these; for these being strong, all will be strong: If these be weak, all will be weak. If any man love not the Lord Jesus, let him be had in execration; yea, accursed unto the death. His scope is to commend love to the Corinthians. If I should cast about me to commend some special thing unto you now at the closing up of my Epistle, I know nothing better than this Love of the Lord Jesus. And

there are two reasons why you should love him, first, you were in a miserable and accursed condition if you do it not. And the second is from the object you are to love, he is the Lord and so may well challenge your love; Jesus your Savior, and so hath well deserved it: so that we have here an exhortation, and two reasons for it. The words have little difficulty. Somewhat I will say of the two words in the original Anathema & Maranatha. The word Anathema signifies the separation of a thing unto destruction. Maranatha is a Syrian word, signifying cursing; taken from the Hebrew root, and signifies more than Anathema. The Apostle doubles this curse to show the greatness of the punishment. It is a great punishment which he would express in two languages. The general doctrine we will observe from these words, is this, That to love the Lord Jesus is so necessarily required of us, that he is worthy to be cursed that doth it not. Sometimes in Scripture, the promise is made to faith, sometimes to repentance, sometimes to love. Love is so required, that without it, a man is worthy to be accursed; yea, and shall be cursed. I will but open and apply this; not standing to prove it. And First, I will show what love is in general: Secondly, what this love of the Lord Jesus is; to show which there will be shown how it is wrought: And thirdly, how they come to be worthy to be accursed, that love him not. And first for the first. Love is among the affections, which are planted in the Will; and it may be described thus, It is a disposition of the Will and Heart of man, whereby it turns and inclines to some good, which it apprehends to be agreeable to its own nature. The Will is carried to nothing, but that which is apprehended to be good. Now this love is a principal act of the Will: and it must be an agreeable good to him, whose Will inclines unto it; for an envious man may confess the excellencies of another man, but he hates them; he suffers by them; they seem not to be an agreeable good to him. And this may be illustrated by the contrary. Hate is that whereby a man turns from a thing which he apprehends contrary to himself. This Love shows

itself in two effects: first, it desires the preservation of what it loves, that it may be kept safe: secondly, it desires Union with it, that they may draw nearer one to another. That you love, which you desire may be yours, with which you desire conjunction: Now sometimes a thing may be nearer, sometimes too far off; therefore it desires such a nearness as may stand with its convenience. And this is common to all love; if you love a Glass, you will take care that it be kept clean, and whole, and for your use: so, if you love a Horse, you will take care that he be well, and in good case, and that he be yours. The same we see in the love of a Father to his Son, of one friend to another. This is the nature of Love. Now Hate contrariwise, desires the destruction of that which is hated, that it may be taken out of the world; and if that cannot be, it desires separation from it, as far as may be. And thus you have seen the nature of Love in general. Now there are diverse kinds of Love: There is a Love of Pity, when you desire the preservation of a man's person, and the removing of some ill quality; As, our Savior mourned in Spirit, for the hardness of their hearts; he did pity them, and yet was angry with their sin.

There is a Love of Desire, when a thing is desired to be kept safe for our use: And this is for the inferior faculties, as the sight loves a pleasant object should be continued.

There is a Love of Complacence, when we look on a thing, in which all the faculties are pleased; not only the inferior but the superior, as the Mind and the Will.

There is a Love of friendship, when a man loves where he is loved again, when love is reciprocal; there is an intercourse of Love.

There is a Love of dependence, when we love him on whom we depend; and thus we love God when we look upon him, as on whom

all our good depends: so that we love him more than ourselves because our good depends upon him, more than on ourselves.

We will add the qualities of Love; there is a natural Love, planted in us by nature: as the love of parents to their children, of one man to another: this love is indifferent, not good in itself; good no otherwise, than directed to a good object.

There is a sinful Love, arising from sinful habits, which seek things convenient to it. As nothing is better than love on a right object, so nothing worse than love on a wrong object. As natural Love puts us in the condition of men: so this sinful Love makes men worse than beasts, and equals them with the Devil.

There is a spiritual Love, arising out of holy qualities, which seeks an object agreeable to it. And this makes a man above a man, and in some sort equal with the Angels. Men are as they love. GOD judges us by our affections, we are judged by what we love. He that loves wickedness, is truly a wicked man; he that loves holiness, is truly holy. This foundation that we have laid, though it may seem somewhat remote, yet you shall find it of use to hold up this building, before we have done with the point.

The second thing that we have to declare, is, What this love of the Lord Jesus is. Now the best way to show what this is, is to show how it is wrought: now for the working of it, there must be two Antecedent things which must make way for it; and they are Humiliation and Faith: for everyone believes not this to be needful; and if they do believe it, yet they may be opposite to it, because it is not agreeable to their nature, That a man must be broken so, and molded again, before he can have this love which is wrought by Humiliation and Faith. And they are wrought on this manner, when we preach the Gospel, and offer Jesus Christ unto you: for the duty of

a Minister, is nothing but this, to offer Jesus Christ himself unto the world. To us a Child is born; To us a Son is given: for, unto you is born a Saviour, that is, Christ the Lord. This is the sum of the Gospel; this is the news which we bring: God hath given us his Son; we offer you not forgiveness of sin, But the Lord Jesus. And when he hath given us him, will he not with him give us all things also? Christ must first be given, and when you have him, you shall have all: in him are the promises, yea and Amen. First have Christ, and then the promises belong to you, not before. The Gospel is nothing but this; we are to manifest, that God the Father is willing to give you his Son. We are his Spokesmen, to beseech you to take him, that you would take him as your husband, to be ruled by him: none, before you are humbled, can marry you to Christ. You must be divorced from all other things, and believe that Christ will take you; and this is Faith, the other Humiliation. And then when you can receive him, you will love him. Now when we preach thus unto the world, what answer do we find? Why, there are some that will not believe that there is such a Lord: and then our work is to persuade, that Christ is such a Lord; and this was the Apostles work, and theirs at the beginning. But when we entreat you to take Christ for your Lord, your answer is, as theirs who were invited to the feast. This, and this excuse they have to hinder them, to believe, that a Christ is propounded, and men regard him not, they will not look after him. Now, that Christ may be received, there is required Humiliation and Faith: Humiliation opens their eyes, by the Law, and spirit of bondage, that they see themselves miserable men, men condemned to die. Now when God hath discovered our misery unto us, and we rightly apprehend what our estates are, then we begin to look on Christ as a condemned malefactor on his pardon; as a Captain on him that comes to redeem him; as a Widow that thought she should live well enough alone, but now when all her goods as seized upon, and they are now to carry her to prison, would be content if any one would marry her. When a man

shall see what he is without Christ, one that is condemned, that must perish if he have him not; then he looks on Christ, as upon one most desirable, to prize him, to thirst for him; and if he know that Christ will then receive him, oh then he cannot but love him; for Love (as hath been said) is to a good apprehended; fit for us. Now without this, we will think of Christ, as if we might be well enough without him: But when the heart is thus prepared by Humiliation, oh that all the World would vanish for Christ! Then comes the Gospel, and tells us that Christ is willing to take us, to redeem us, to be ours. And then when we take him, the match is made up: and thence arises this conjugal Love. The Apostle prays for the Ephesians, that Christ may dwell in their hearts by Faith, Ephes. 3. to unite them to Christ, to marry him; then presently it follows, That ye may be rooted and grounded in Love: so that Love follows this, and not a flash, but it roots us in Love. The act of justifying Faith, is the taking of Christ for rest. Now when you have taken him thus, then you will love him, and then all that follows will be effects of this love: so that this love of the Lord Jesus, is this; to wit,

A holy disposition, arising from Faith, whereby we cleave unto the Lord Jesus Christ, with full purpose of heart, to serve and please him in all things.

Whereby we cleave to him. Love inclines and knits our hearts to him, as it did David's to Jonathan's. And so Barnabas exhorted them to cleave unto the Lord with full purpose of heart, Acts 11. Neither is this idle; but makes a man desirous to please the Lord in all things. A man is said to love the Lord when, out of a persuasion that Christ is most desirable and willing to receive him, he cleaves to the Lord with a desire to serve and please him in all things. Faith that begets Love is not only a persuasion that the Lord will be merciful and forgive us; (For a prisoner may see the Judge willing to pardon him, and

persuade himself that he shall be pardoned, and yet love not the Judge, because he looks not on the Judge as on an amiable person;) but a receiving and resting upon his amiableness. There is another affection; when the heart is so framed, it apprehends Christ for its only good, its happiness. Faith is not only an act of the mind, to believe that God will pardon us; but of the Will and heart also, to take Christ for our Husband; so that all the parts of the heart are inclined and bent after him. If you believe with all your heart, saith Philip to the Eunuch, Acts 8. If a Spouse should see one willing to have her, that is not enough to make up the match; she may not think him fit, she may be unwilling. But suppose there be one that she loves above all, whom she thinks to be most fit for her, yea she thinks she shall be undone if she have him not: but yet she is not sure that he will have her, but thinks it is very probable that he may be induced unto it. So this is Faith, when a man sees Christ only worth his love, he would gladly be divorced from all, so that he might have Christ oh he cannot be without him, yet there is somewhat betwixt them, he cannot firmly believe that Christ loves him, but yet doth not think that he is wholly averse from him. Though thy persuasion be not full, yet if you have this thirst and desire, this hungering after Christ, you may be comforted. This shuts out such as have a persuasion of the pardon of their sins, and yet have not this love, this prizing, this desiring after Christ; and takes in such as do thus love and prize him, yet find not that full persuasion of his love; so that this love is that which follows Humiliation and Faith, the breaking of the heart, and the moulding of it up again: when we see our need of him, and his willingness to receive us, then we will take him, which cannot be without this love to him.

Now we come to the third thing, the reasons why they are worthy to be accursed unto the death that Love not the Lord Jesus. This may seem strange and harsh. What then becomes of all unregenerated

men? The Apostle means, sure, such as continue in their not loving the Lord, or such as have sinned against the holy Ghost. But the former sense I take to be the best, neither is this any strange thing: for it is one part of the Gospel. There are two parts of the Gospel, If you believe, you shall be saved; if you believe not, you shall be damned. Sometimes it is if you repent you shall be saved; or if you do not you shall perish, so if you love you shall be saved; if you love not, you shall be accursed: now why should he pitch on such a frame of words to express their condition?

Because when Christ shall come and be a suitor to us, when he shall woo us, and offer himself to us, and we will have none of him, then the Son waxes angry. When he shall offer himself unto us, and none will kiss him, then he waxes angry unto the death, and they perish in the way. The greatest love not answered turns to the greatest hatred: so when the Father sent to call them to the feast that were invited, and they refused it, this made him wrath; when we shall come to preach Christ to men, when this light hidden from the beginning of the world shall shine, and you shall despise it and contemn it, know that now is the axe laid to the root of the tree. God will bear it at your hands no longer. Now if a man will not Love the Lord Jesus, let him be had in execration, yea let him be accursed unto the death.

If a man did not keep the Law, he was to be cursed, now there was a double keeping of the Law: A Legal, which answers the exact rigor of the Law; an Evangelical, which is an earnest endeavouring to keep the Law, and to make a man's heart as perfect as may be. Now there being more mercy in this, there is a greater curse on the breach of it. Now Love is the fulfilling of the Law; and not to love the Lord, is not to keep the Law, and therefore the Curse follows it.

If a man love not the Lord Jesus, it is because he loves something better than him. It may be you love your Wealth more than Christ: And are you not worthy to be cursed for it? It may be you are lovers of pleasure more than of God, and does not this deserve a Curse? It may be you love the praise of men, before that of God; and is not this to be accursed? Adultery was punished with death; and what punishment then is enough for the going a whoring from such a God, after such vanities?

Again, Cursing belongs to Hypocrites; Woe be unto you Scribes and Pharisees, Hypocrites, Matthew 23. Now, what a man does not out of love, is done out of hypocrisy; which is, to do the outward action without the inward affection: as counterfeit gold has the same stamp and colour with true gold. But as we cast away counterfeit silver and gold, set it apart to destruction, nailing them up, that they may be known, so will God deal with such as serve him outwardly, without this love to him.

Love is that which commands all in a man. It is as the rudder to a ship; all follows love. When a man loves not the Lord, all goes from him. Now when the whole man shall go from the Lord, is not such a one worthy to be cursed, yea to be had in execration to the death?

If this love of the Lord be so necessary, then see what a sin it is, what an execrable thing it is, not to love the Lord; and what you are to think of yourselves, if you love not the Lord. When Jesus Christ shall be propounded unto men, and this light is great, but men do resist it, and not embrace the Lord: when we see this, we should have such a spirit as Paul, (for this was out of the abundance of his zeal) we should, I say, be stirred against such with holy indignation, Acts 17. Do not I hate those that hate thee? Psalm 139. yea I hate them with a perfect hate. This you have, that you hate the works of the

Nicolaitans, which thing also I hate, Revelation 2. And this was a sign of Lot's sincerity, that his righteous soul was grieved, and vexed with the unclean conversation of the Sodomites, 2 Peter 2. If you can see Christ scorned and rejected, and his Word slighted, and his blood trampled on, and you yourselves are not moved with it, you are not of Paul's spirit, who speaking of some, whose God was their belly, whose glory was their shame; of whom (saith he) I have told you often, and now tell you weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ, Philippians, 3. Whence came this, but out of the abundance of his love to Christ, and mankind? I wish ye would all look to yourselves, whether you are in this number or not, of those that love not the Lord. This is such a sin, as the curse is doubled upon it: And the punishment is but to show the measure of the sin. He thunders not out his curse against him that opposes the Lord, or resists him, but against him that loves not the Lord. The Apostle, as Moses, gets him up to the Mount Ebal; and whom does he curse? Even all such as love not the Lord Jesus. This Doctrine thoroughly considered, may let in a crevice of light to thee, that now thou mayest look on thyself, as on an execrable thing which God hates; and thou mayest see GOD, even stretching out his power to confound thee, yea thou mayest see the Gospel cursing thee.

But what terror is there in the preaching of the Gospel, you will say?

O much more (my Brethren) than may be expressed; for the curse of the Law was not so peremptory; though we have plain words for it, yet it was not without all condition. But God swears to this curse, as if we were thus cursed if we would continue not to love him. The Law is the proper instrument of humbling, yet the Gospel humbles more; for sin is the matter of Humiliation. And there be sins against the Gospel, yea greater sins than against the Law: when thou hearest the curse of the Law, Cursed be he that continues not in everything that

is written in the book of the Law; to do them, Galatians 3. You will say, you will go to Christ, & he shall do it for you: But when the Gospel curses such as love not Christ, to whom will you go to love God? Another man cannot love for you. And if you think this be too harsh, let this verse sound oft in your ears.

If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed unto the death.

This cannot be altered; it is the Word of God. Ask then yourself this question, whether you love the Lord or not? And put not yourself off with your Hope, but try your Love; for Love will have sensible strings in the heart; it will drive you close to the Lord, to keep in with him, to have communion with him.

Do you then feel that you are never well but when you are with him, and yet do you not love him? Do you walk with God, as Enoch did? Will any of you say that a Wife loves her Husband, who, with her good will, will never be with him?

Love is also very diligent and laborious; you will never cease until you get near him whom you love; no labour will be tedious to get his favour; many years seem a few days to Jacob, to serve for Rachel, because he loved her.

Again, Love is not of a deferring nature, but is impatient of all delays.

Again, Love is content with itself; it does not need to be hired to love. *Amor est sibi ipsi dulce pabulum*: it carries its meat in its own mouth. If you love the Lord Jesus, you would not ask what wages you should have to love him.

Again, Love is a strong impulsive quality; it carries you on impetuously unto the Lord. It is a fire that breaks through thick and thin. So that he who loves cannot sin willfully, if he would; he cannot but obey; he cannot do anything against the Gospel; he must do all things for it. The Love of Christ constrains me, says S. Paul, 2 Corinthians 5. Look how a man is carried with a strong stream or by a strong man whom he cannot resist; so his love compels him. I preach, and preach, and men think me mad, but I cannot but do it; the love of Christ constrains me. And as it constrains me, so there is nothing more different than constraint and not to do it. The effects of this Love are so violent, as if they were compelled; but for the manner of working, nothing is so contrary to it as compulsion; for you love him, and are carried to it, as a stone to the centre, you would do no otherwise.

So ends the first Sermon. A HEAVENLY TREATISE OF THE DIVINE LOVE OF CHRIST. Sermon II.

BY JOHN PRESTON, DD.

Matthew 22. 37, 38. This is the first and great Commandment: thou shalt Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart.

Psalm 31. 26. Love the Lord O all ye his Saints.

LONDON, Printed by Thomas Paine, for John Stafford 1640.

Sermon II.

1 Corinthians 16:22.

If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be had in execration, yea, let him be accursed unto the death.

That love to the Lord Jesus is so necessarily required, that he is worthy to be accursed who hath it not.

Then, hence you are to consider your condition and to examine yourself; it may be this is your condition, and it may be a thing you never considered, or at least you never knew the danger of it. Therefore, now see what your case is. The best service we can do to you is to show you your estates; if you are right, to comfort you; and if you are not right, is it not best for you to know while it may be amended? You who live in the Church and have gone far, examine yourself. Have you done all out of Love? You have kept yourself in a good course; you keep the Lord's day, and live like a Christian; you do many things indeed. But let me ask you this question: Do you do all out of love? For without love, all is naught. If a man should be a Martyr (which is the highest action), yet without this love, it were to no purpose (1 Corinthians 13). Put the case a man should do many things for you, yet if he does it not out of love for you, you cannot regard it. Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith which works by love (Galatians 5). It is all the same whether you pray or not, hear or not, live well or not if it is not out of love. What was said of circumcision or uncircumcision may be said of any duty. All that you have done is as nothing if it is not out of love. Try yourselves by this, for I know not in all the frames of Theology such a touchstone of Hypocrisy as this. This most unmasks a man of anything. As it was with the Apostle, the Law revived, and he died (Romans 7), so it may be you have thought yourself a living man; see then if you love, deceive not yourself any longer.

This is a Doctrine of much moment. If God would convey it with Majesty by the power of his Spirit, it would amaze and startle even the stoutest stomach to hear, "Cursed is he who loves not the Lord." If you love the Lord, he will bear much with you. See what a testimony he gives of David, for all his failing. But do what you will for him without love, and he will regard it but as a compliment. As men count that a compliment not to be regarded with which the heart goes not, so does God. Look, therefore, that you love the Lord Jesus, for it is a thing of great consequence; the curse follows you if you do not.

You are now therefore to examine yourself, whether you love or not. And to help you in it, I will lay down some marks of this love. But first set down with yourself this conclusion: If I love not the Lord Jesus, I am an accursed man.

Do you feel this love in you? Have you a sense of it? Ammon was sick of love, so that his friends could see him wear away. So the Spouse, "I am sick of love" (Canticles 2). And do you love the Lord, and cannot feel it? Do you feel your heart working towards God? This love is a thing that one would think needs no marks; you cannot but see it. It is noted in love so that if you did love the Lord, you would have a longing desire after him. There will be joy in the fruition of him, anger against all impediments to it, grief when he withdraws himself, hope when there is any probability of enjoying him, fear to lose him. Now do not deceive yourself. You love the Lord, you will say. But is this love to his person, or to his kingdom, his goods? When you present Jesus Christ alone to yourself, can you then love him? The Virgins love him, the Harlots love him. And there is a great deal of harlotry love in the world, to the Lord Jesus. It was one thing to love Alexander, another to love the King. It is true, Christ is a great King who can do much good or evil in the world, and so many may love

him. But can you answer this question, "Do you love me?" with Peter, "Lord, you know that I love you" (John 20). You who know my heart and the secret turnings of it, can bear me witness that I love you.

Do you love his company? Love is seen in nothing more than this. Do you love his presence, to walk with God? Do you observe all his dealings with you from morning to night, refer all still unto him? Are you still in dealings with him? There is not an hour that passes you wherein you have not recourse unto him. When Christ takes a man unto himself, he comes and sups with him (Revelation 3). Do you then have this communion with Christ? Does he sup with you, dwell with you? Now, communion stands in speaking to another and in hearing him speak to us. When you pray, do you pray formally, as one who is glad when the duty is over? Oh, if you loved the Lord, you would never be better than when you are at prayer. And you would go to prayer as you would go to speak with your dearest friend. So do you hunger after the Word, which is the character of Christ, his Will, his Love-letter? Put the case a woman should have her husband at the East-Indies, how welcome would a letter be to her from him? Therefore, Moses, who loved God, desired to see his glory (Exodus 33), to know him better, to grow more acquainted with him. Now, that the Word does to you, it shows you that glory which Moses saw.

If you love the Lord, Holy-days and Sacrament-days would be as Feast-days and Wedding-days; for then you meet with God more nearly. Do you then put off your coming to the Sacrament, and would you not come near it for the speech of some, and yet will you say that you love the Lord? Where love is, there is delight. A person delights in his fellowship, whom he loves. "Whom you have not seen, yet you love him; yea, though you have not seen him, yet you believe and rejoice with joy unspeakable and glorious." Do you then delight in his

presence? For delight will be in the enjoying of that we love; joy follows love.

To delight in a person's company is that mark of love which cannot be dissembled. Do you then love the appearing of the Lord Jesus? "If one should bring you news that you must go to the Lord, or he would come to you tomorrow, would this be acceptable news to you? Does he bring good tidings? If a spouse should have her betrothed husband beyond the Seas, and should hear of his return, if she should say that it were the worst news that could come to her, would you think that she loved him? No, there could not come a more welcome Messenger to you than such a one if you did love the Lord. "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord" (for so says the Spirit), "from henceforth they rest from their labors." So says the Spirit, not so says the Flesh. So much the more spirit a person has, so much the more he will say, it is blessed, and the more he will pray submitingly for it, quickly. Indeed, a godly person, when the flesh is predominant, and the spirit under hatches, then he may be desirous to be spared a while; oh, spare me a little, as the Spouse may sometimes wish her Husband, deferring his coming when she is not fit to receive him; the house is not ready, not clean enough.

"A Crown of Righteousness," says the Apostle, "is laid up for all those who love the appearing of the Lord Jesus" (1 Timothy 4:8). "And the second time shall Christ appear to salvation, to all those who look for him" (Hebrews 9). Are you then one who looks for Christ, who desires nothing but union with him? He will come to you to your salvation. If men look not for him, will he come to them to salvation? It may be in some disease, when you can take no pleasure in the world, you wish that you were with Christ. Nature may have a great hand in this.

But in your youth, in the midst of all worldly contents, when you are in your pleasant Orchard, with your Wife and Children about you, having what your heart can wish, can you say then, "Now would I most willingly leave all these to go to Christ?" When you prefer his company above all things, count that delight the best, that comes from communion with him; then you love the Lord Jesus.

Love is exceeding bountiful, apt to do much for the Lord, and to suffer anything gladly. The Apostle, in the first Epistle to the Corinthians, Chapter 13, sets down many excellent properties of Love. She that loved Christ had a box of Ointment; it may be it was the best thing she had, it may be it was all she had, yet she bestows it on Christ. So Abraham, when God would have his Son, he goes willingly about it; not formally, not out of necessity, but he rose up early to do it. It may be there will come a time when God shall need your wealth; it may be, your credit.

Now, you can deny him nothing if you love him. So, Delilah would not be persuaded that Sampson loved her, so long as he kept back anything from her. If there be anything so near to you as your life, and it be told you that the Lord has need of it, he shall have it. You will say, "It was a wise action of David to pour out that water as an offering to the Lord, which he so longed for and obtained with the hazard of the lives of three of his Worthies." As when a man has a good bit, he will send it to his friend; so in another place, he would not offer to the Lord of that which should cost him nothing (2 Samuel 24). But what can I bestow upon the Lord, you will say? If you are a Preacher, preach the Gospel for Christ; so, every man in his calling, let him do something for the Lord, and if he shall call for your life, let it not be dear unto you. And as love is thus bountiful, so it seeks not its own (1 Corinthians 13). And now, how few will be found that love Christ? We may well complain with Paul, "All men

seek their own, and not the things of Jesus Christ" (Philemon 2). Paul, who loved the Lord, how was he affected? He regarded not himself, took not care what should become of himself, he took the care of all the Churches upon him. "Who is offended, and so, by taking offense, falls away, and I burn not?" Are you a Minister, and do you love the Lord Jesus? You will not be so careful for a living, and that it be a convenient one, but you would preach as Paul, though for nothing; for every man might do much for the Lord if he sought the things of the Lord; if he did plod with himself how to bring advantage to Christ.

And then, if this should come in, if I do this, I shall hinder my estate, lose my friends, it would be nothing: the love of the Lord would be far better to you than anything. Love does much for the Lord; Faith works by Love, and he loves much who does much. Paul, as he was abundant in love, so in labor. "If you love me," says our Saviour, "keep my Commandments." Are you willing then to take much pains for the Lord? Do you feed the lambs of Christ? If you are a Minister, or if you are in the way to that calling, are you diligent to fit yourself for it? And love not only works, but it makes that the commandments are not grievous. The wife may serve her husband, and the servant him, but with a different affection. The covetous man, when he is before some great man that can imprison him or put him to death, may part with his wealth, or if with one that can greatly prefer him, in hope of that, he may be brought to part with his money; but willingly he will not. But you must find delight in what you do: when you do a kindness to one that you love, you do but do yourself a kindness on that party. And in this sense, what thanks deserve you? You do but satisfy your love. As a mother loves her child and does the offices of kindness to it with delight, though she shall never have anything for it. If you had this love, you would come to say, "It is

meat and drink to do your Father's will." Now, you need not be hired to eat and drink.

Lastly, love suffers all things. Are you willing to suffer anything for the Lord? When David did a religious act, Michal looks upon him with another eye, as men look now on religious actions. "It is no matter," says David, "I will bear it, for I did it to the Lord, who chose me before your father's house." And if this is to be vile, "I will be yet more vile." Can you endure to be pointed at, scoffed and mocked, for the Lord? It was a sore trial to have his wife so against him, yet we see how he did bear it. "Bonds and afflictions," says Paul, "abide me in every City; but none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so I may finish my course with joy." Are you able to do thus? But I cannot, you will say, like to be put to it; you do not know, it may be you may lose your wealth, your credit, and respect, among those whom you loved, and this is somewhat: yet love makes it as nothing. We see when a man loves a Maid, neither Father nor Friend, nor the speech of people will move him to give over. True, this is a sinful love, but yet shows what the nature of love is. "Nay, I will go further," you will suffer all with joy, "Strengthened with all might according to his glorious power unto all patience and long suffering with joyfulness." So when the Apostles were whipped where the shame was more than the pain, yet they rejoiced that they were thought worthy to suffer for Christ.

Put all these together, Are you bountiful, that if the Lord should put you to any cost, cost of purse, labors of life, you should willingly have it? Do you take care for the things of Christ, plod how you may glorify him? Do you do much, and suffer much for the Lord? Take these notes no further than you see reason for them: And know that this is that word of the Lord, if you love not the Lord Jesus, you are cursed.

The next property of love is, it desires nothing so much as love again. If a man be serviceable to another, and not out of love, so he be officious to him, he is content. But love will be paid in its own coin, it will not have mercy without grace. A kingdom without grace will not content it. It is very observant in this kind, "Quis fallere possit amantem?" They will be very curious this way. They must see love in everything, or else they can take no delight in it. It is not a kingdom that can quiet them without the love of God.

However it goes with corn, wine, and oil, the prayer is, "Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance on us." If a man's turn were served, so he might be freed from hell and made happy, and then love him, this man loves not the Lord. That which Absalom did in hypocrisy, we are to do in truth (Sam. 14). "What avails it me that I enjoy (saith he) my lands, and that I live in Jerusalem, so long as I may not see the King's face?" So if God should give you abundance of all your hearts can wish, free you from the fire of hell, yet this will not content you without you see his face, if you have this love. And thus, if God's people humble themselves and seek his face, he will hear in heaven and have mercy on them. When a people are oppressed and in captivity, they may come to the Lord and humble themselves, but for their own liberty, they may seek their own good in it, as they "howled on their beds for corn, wine, and oil," but God's people seek his face, his favor. Examine yourself then, if when his countenance is clouded, and he hides his face, you are impatient, you cannot bear it, then you may assure yourself that you love the Lord. Thus did David (Psal. 51) when he wanted the sense of God's favor; how did he complain he would have no denial, and therefore never gives over entreating till he is answered.

Do you love the Lord? Then you love the Saints. This is a true and common note, everyone has it in his mouth (1 John 3). "If you love

the Lord, you will love the brethren." Do you then love the Lord and hate evil in other men? If you love not your brother whom you see daily, how can you love the Lord whom you never see? God is remote from our eyes that we cannot behold him. Now his image is stamped upon the Saints, and so is visible to us. We see them daily, they converse with us. Now, if we love not them, we cannot love God. For, the love of Christ is that holy disposition which you conceive in your mind of him. Now, the like for kind is in the Saints. As those that do the lusts of the Devil are of his disposition, that is, are as it were little Devils, so in the Saints, there is the same disposition, the same mind that was in Christ Jesus for kind.

But you will say, "I would love them if I thought they were not hypocrites."

Take heed, you may persecute Christ under the person of an hypocrite. What if you strike at a hypocrite in seeming? Yet a true member of Christ is found wounded by you. And when your heart shall rise against the side of the likeness of religion and true piety, what would you do if the substance were there, if he had grace in a higher measure? Christ pitches on this note above all others. It is far easier to love a holy man than to love God. For he lives amongst us, we have him continually before our eyes. Do not say then you love such as are far off, you care not for these.

But you will say I love them well enough, do you so? Do you delight then in their company? Are you in your natural element when you are among them? This you will do by a natural instinct if you love the Lord Jesus. Again, do you hate sin in all? The same ground will cause you to hate sin, which moves you to love grace. Do you then hate sin as in dislike, and distaste in regenerate men and their society, be it never so pleasant, so profitable?

But what would you have me to hate men then? No, but hate their sins, and love them with the love of pity.

Let your heart melt to consider their case, and desire their good, love them, but so as it may stand with the love of the Lord Jesus. Look then to yourselves, and examine yourselves by these marks, see that you have this love; if you have it not, you are among the number of these men which are to be accursed unto death.

But I hope I deserve not so bad, my nature I hope is not so vile, as not to love the Lord Jesus.

Nay, you hate him, do you not wish that there were no such Lord to come to judgment, that you might live as you please? Could you not wish that you might ever here enjoy these pleasures and never come to him? Now to wish that one were not, what is it but to hate him? "Quem metuunt, oderunt:" We say men hate him whom they stand in fear of. Do you then fear and quake at his coming? Surely then you are haters of God.

But I hope we are not haters of God. Why, this is not so strange. The Apostle tells us that there were such as loved their pleasures more than God (2 Tim. 3). Yea, and that there were haters of God also (Rom. 1. 30). And in the second commandment, God threatens such as hate him (Exo. 20). And you may be one of them. For if you cannot endure his company, if your heart rises against his image, it is plain you are a hater of God.

What? Do you want to make me out of love with myself? Are you preaching damnation to me? It may be all these signs are not in me; am I then so accursed?

Yes, we do preach damnation to all that are in such a case, and we are to threaten the curse. The Lord esteems you in this way, and it would be good for you to think so of yourselves in time. It is the minister's duty to separate the precious from the vile, to distinguish between men, to show you truly what your conditions are. Therefore, apply this text to yourselves, everyone. If I love not the Lord Jesus, I am an accursed man, yea, to be had in execration to the death. This might make you loathe yourselves, in dust and ashes. It might make sin alive in you and bring you to love this Jesus.

So ends the second sermon. A HEAVENLY TREATISE OF THE DIVINE LOVE OF CHRIST. Sermon II.

BY JOHN PRESTON, DD.

Matt. 22. 37, 38. This is the first and great Commandment: thou shalt Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart.

Psal. 31. 26. Love the Lord, O all ye his Saints.

LONDON, Printed by Thomas Paine, for John Stafford 1640.

Sermon III.

1 Cor. 16. 22. If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be had in execration, yea let him be accursed unto the death.

Now, because this love is so needful, we will add more signs for the trial of yourselves. For we cannot be better occupied.

A sixth sign therefore is this: he that loves, will be apt to praise and speak well of that he loves, and he will exceed in it: yea, he is very glad when he hears others speak well of it. So if we did love the Lord, we should be apt to speak well of him, we would be much in the speech of him. When the heart is full of this love of God in Christ, out of that abundance in your heart, your mouth will speak. But you speak but little of God, and that little is brought in by company, you are cold in your praising of him: why, you do not love him, see in David, a man that loved the Lord. How much was he in the praising of him? Nay, he could not be content to do this alone, but he must have all creatures to praise him and to speak good of his Name: Even as a servant that commends his Master, invites others to serve him. This love enlarges the heart and opens the mouth. O Corinthians, our hearts are enlarged towards you, and our mouths are opened, 2 Corinthians 6. 11. This is an argument that our hearts are enlarged, that we abound in love, when our mouths are opened. So that your heart is straightened towards God, if your mouth is not open to his praises.

But I cannot speak as other men, I am no scholar, if I had elocution gifts, learning, I could thus speak.

This is no excuse, it is the nature of love to make men eloquent, the passions make eloquent. As we say, *Pectus facit eloquentes, & magna pars eloquentiae constat animo.* Are you then apt to speak well of God? But this, you will say, is but a small matter, who does not? Oh yes, we are wanting in that manner of speaking of him which love requires. We do not speak of him with that affection, that sensibleness, that may enflame others to love him. See the Spouse in the Canticles: Oh, says she, My love is fairer than ten thousands. And thus will the soul that loves God do. It will tell of his mercies abroad. It will speak good of his Name. And that not as a duty only, but as a

thing in which it takes especial delight: Love follows the judgment, you cannot love the Lord, but you will think well of him. See then what your speeches are concerning him: see if your heart does nimbly indite, and your tongue be as the pen of a ready Scribe Psalm 45.

Consider whether you endeavor to do anything for Christ without expostulating, and indenting with him. Whether you are ready to do all things freely to him, without consulting with another about it. *Amicitia non est revocanda ad calculos.* A friend must not be strict in taking his account, for then he plays but the Huckster, he does but buy and sell. When you are trying and expostulating then whether such a duty be necessary or no, whether another will not serve the turn; this is a sign you do want love. A Minister that has this love, when he is to take a Living, will not so much inquire what reward he shall have, as what service he may do to God in it. If you did love the Lord you would not stand, saying, is it necessary to keep the Lord's day so strictly? You would be ready to do whatever has but a shadow of pleasing him. Oh, how you would be glad of such a day, so free from other business, wherein you might sequester yourselves from the world, to attend upon God, and to enjoy him? So for a family prayer, you would not ask, can it not be omitted without sin? This questioning will not stand with this love: for the person you serve is the Lord, and you must not be as a mercenary servant. A wife will be devising things to please her husband. So, what shall I render to the Lord (says David.) So Paul was abundant in labors and sufferings. If Paul would have done nothing but out of necessity, he had never done half so much, say then, I will even go do my duty, perform my task, If I must pray in my family, then I will: If I must keep the Lord's day, I will make a shift to wear out the day; This I say argues a heart void of this love. We must know that Christ has died to purchase to himself a people zealous of good works: such as do good works with

desire or dear delight; that would fain do a great deal more than they do. Would you then do no more than just will bring you to heaven as you think? Do you set limits to your performances? you have not this love. Why? you pray that you may serve Christ on earth as the Angels do in heaven, and yet will you say such a man goes faster, it is no matter, this pace will bring me to heaven, and so never mend it? This is a sign of no love to the Lord Jesus.

If you did love the Lord, you should find a holy affection of anger and zeal arising against such as offend him. Anger waits on love. Love is an affection that makes forwards to the thing beloved: and if anything stands in the way, Anger removes it hastily.

If your heart then be not stirred when God is dishonored, his Church spoiled, and Religion goes downward, you do not love him, can you endure to hear yourself scandalized? No, and why? because you love yourself. To see then the blood of the Lord Jesus trampled on, neglected so, as no man should regard it, to see the Saints in adversity, and not to be affected, argues that your heart is void of this love of the Lord Jesus.

Eli when he heard the news of Israel's flight, his sons' death, it must needs grieve him, but all this while, his heart was composed: But the worst news (as usually it does) comes last. The Ark of God was taken: Then his heart was amazed, he could no longer subsist, but he falls down backward and breaks his neck. But it may be you do not hope to attain to the grace of Eli; why, look then on his daughter in law, one of the weaker sex; All that ill news moved her not so much. Oh, the Ark of God was taken, that was it which she pitched upon, her son that was born could not allay this grief.

But the Ark is not taken (you will say) there is not the like cause now with us.

No? Are not many Churches desolate? When you see so many Churches ransacked beyond the Seas, do you not see the Ark of God taken in a great measure? When you see Popery increasing, and the Saints wallowing in their blood? If you take not this to heart, it is because the love of Christ is not in you.

If Christ loses a man, if any be offended, and fall away, I burn, says the Apostle. When the King, Jer. 36, took that book and burnt it, it is noted of those that stood by, that they did rend their clothes. God takes it as a great sign of a profane heart when one shall not take such dishonors of his to heart, when he rends not his clothes at the sight of such a thing. Paul, when he saw the idolatry that abounded in Athens, was enflamed in his spirit.

See what a commendation God gave to Phineas for his zeal against Zimri and Cozbi; he would have it remembered as a special note of his love to him, which he would not let go unrewarded. If you do not then pray for the Church's welfare, If you are not affected with the loss and disadvantages of the Church, as with your own, you lack this love.

A ninth sign is not to dare to do anything that displeases him. If you do a thing amiss that would be displeasing, you would rather that all the world should see you, than him whom you love. Now you know God always beholds you: you should therefore be always alike careful. They shall fear the Lord and his goodness, Hosea 4: The Lord for his goodness; they shall fear to lose him. Above all, consider when you have offended him, how you take that to heart. When you know there is a breach between you and the Lord, and you can be content, and rest in it, this is a shrewd sign of no love. When man and wife shall fall out, and grieve not for it, but let it pass, not seeking to be reconciled, it is a sign of cold love between them.

Think with yourself there is no man whom you profess to love, but you would not willingly provoke. And dare you say that you love the Lord, and yet you will grieve and vex him?

If you love the Lord, there would be a hungering in you after him: there would be still a hanging that way. All impediments would be broken through, the heart would still be moving thitherward. It would be bending thither. It would admit no repulse. As the woman of Canaan, Matt. 15. it would not be put off. As the stone rests not till it comes to the center, so nothing can keep you off from the Lord, no pleasures; away with them: nor any difficulties, no you cannot rest without him.

Say not then with yourself, though you love him not now, yet I may love him hereafter, and I may love him hereafter, though not so much. No, love desires present union, it hates all delays. Consider this: if you did repent out of love, your repentance would be present, and what repentance is it which is not out of love?

Then hence you are to humble yourself, if you are failing in this labor of love. See how great a fault it is, not to love the Lord: and learn to blame yourself exceedingly for it. And that you may do this, I will show you what great reason you have to love the Lord.

Consider that he is worthy to be beloved. As David said, he is worthy to be praised, so may we well say, he is worthy to be beloved. And why? Because he has all that is amiable in him. If you see anything lovely in the creature, it is eminently in him. Shall not he that made the eye see? he that made the ear hear? shall not he that gave these perfections to the creatures have them in himself more eminently?

This perfection of his beauty is that which causes the Angels so much to admire and adore him, to be taken up in the admiration of his

excellencies. Observe that in any man whom you love; there is something not to be beloved: But CHRIST is wholly delectable, there is nothing in him not fully to be beloved. See how the Spouse describes him in the Canticles, how she sets him forth in every part of him most to be desired. If you could but see the Lord. If it did but please him to show himself unto you, as he promised to show himself unto him that loves him, John 14, 21. If the Lord, I say, would give you a glimpse of himself; if by the light of the Spirit you could see him, you would acknowledge him worthy of your love. And this is the reason that some love him, and others do not, because he discovers himself to some and not to others. As he did to Moses, where let us see a little his expression of himself.

The Lord, the Lord, Exodus 34. This is but the Casket, the Jewel is within. If God's Spirit should open these words unto you, you would see Him the fairest of ten thousand, Jehovah, Jehovah. Of every creature (you may say) somewhat it was that it is not, and somewhat it is that it will not be. But God is unchangeable Jehovah, in Him is no alteration, He is not a friend today, and none tomorrow, and such a friend you would desire to choose: as this Name signifies, His immutable being, so His omnipotency, He is Almighty. Now what a Loadstone of love is this? All the power in men enables them but to do some things: as patience enables them to bear injurious acts; But the Lord has all abilities, all ornaments, all excellencies, all is comprehended in this Almighty: So that well may such a friend be desired.

True, will the poor soul say, He is well worth having. But He will not match with such a match as I am.

Oh yes, He is wonderfully pitiful and Merciful: as great a Prince of pity, as of anything else.

Merciful: but I have no beauty, no grace in me, no worth, no repentance.

But God is exceeding gracious. Kings are said to be gracious, because there is supposed such a difference between them and their Subjects, that they can deserve nothing of them: So God is gracious, He does not look for any deservings in thee.

But I have provoked Him by sinning, and sinning often: This will make Him put me off.

No, He is of great forbearance.

But if He does receive me, I must carry myself well, pray, and do, that which I shall never be able to do.

Why no, He is very kind. Look what a kind Father, a kind Husband, would do to a Child, or a Wife, they are careful to give content: the like may you expect of the Lord. He will wink at many infirmities if your desires are found.

Though He says so, how shall I know that He will do it?

To confirm this, He is true: He keeps covenant and has given examples of His mercy to thousands of them that fear Him.

Oh, but still my sins are many and great.

Be it so: yet He forgives iniquities, transgressions, and sins, original sins, sins of weakness, and sins of wilfulness.

This glory God showed to Moses. This is the description of Himself, such a one is Jesus Christ, O you daughters of Jerusalem, and is He not worthy to be beloved?

When you have considered the worth that is in Himself, consider that He sues to you for your love. Suppose a Prince should come and ask this at your hands, would you deny Him? The weak should sue to the stronger, but here the Lord God comes to you for your love.

This is that, O Israel, which He requires of you, that you love the Lord your God, Deuteronomy 10, 16. When such a God shall ask your love, sue for it, shall He be denied? We (the Ministers) are but Christ's spokesmen to woo for Christ. See who it is that requires this? It is your Sovereign Lord that might have required you to sacrifice your children, your life, your goods, for His honor, and can He not have your love? Now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear Him, to love Him? as if He should say, the Lord has done great things for you, and might require great things of you again. This may melt you then, that He requires nothing but your love.

Again, consider, He has planted this love in your heart: shall He not have His own then when He requires it? Shall not He who planted the tree, eat of the fruit? Shall not He who gave this fountain of love taste of its waters?

Again, on whom would you bestow it if you will not give it to the Lord? It must be bestowed on something, and it is the best thing you have to bestow. It sways and commands all in you. Does your wealth deserve it? Do people deserve it? Why, they are not to be compared to the Lord. Can any person do for you what He does? Besides, He forgives your sins day by day. Think of His excellencies.

Again, you are engaged to love Him. You are married to Him; you have given up your names to Him in your baptism: so that now well may I call you an adulterous generation if you love Him not. You are witnesses against yourselves this day (as Joshua said), Joshua 24. if

you serve not the Lord. He takes great advantage of the promise that you made to serve the Lord: you are now witnesses against yourselves if you do not do it.

So all who hear me this day are witnesses against themselves. In their baptism, they took the Lord for their God. Is He not your Master? Where then is your fear? Is He not your Father? Where then is your reverence? Is He not your Friend, where then is your love?

Again, He has bought us, yes, He has overbought us. If you should see a flock of sheep, and hear that such a person has paid such a price for them, far beyond their worth, you will be ready to say, let him have them, he is well worthy of them. And shall Christ be denied that which He has so dearly bought? He has bought you from the world, from the power of the devil, yes, and from yourselves, so that they are not to set us to work. We are not our own, 1 Corinthians 6. we are, therefore, to do a mother's business, and that is Christ's, who requires love.

Besides all these generals, think of the particulars, which work most upon us. See all His dealings with you, how kind He has been toward you. See how He has dealt with you from your youth hitherto. Consider all His kindnesses bestowed upon you: see also what He has done in forgiving you. You have sinned often, and greatly, and yet still He has forgiven you, and this is a great matter. She loved much because much was forgiven her, Luke 7. He feeds you, clothes you; you have not a night's rest but He gives it to you; He is the One who keeps you from all dangers; He cares for you when you cannot take care of yourself. The creature cannot help you without He commands it to help you; He has stood close to you in all exigences. And this most of all affects us: in some great danger when all forsake us, we cannot but love Him most dearly who then sticks close to us.

Thus has the Lord done unto you; with this, Nathan urged David and aggravated his sin: The Lord has done thus and thus unto you, and if that had not been enough, He would have done more. 2 Samuel 12. 8. Take up the same practice with your soul; the Lord has done thus and thus for me, and shall I not love Him? Would we not hate that person who should not love and respect Him from whom he has his whole maintenance?

Lastly, consider that He loves you. Now, as fire begets fire, so let love beget love. The Son of God has loved you and given Himself for you, Galatians 2. Consider Christ has loved you and has given a good experiment of His love, to wit, Himself for you. And if He had given you Himself whole, it had been a gift inestimable: But He has given you Himself broken, crucified for you, who have been a rebel against Him. See His love; He looks on you when you think not of Him; He took care for you when you took none for yourself; Nay, then thought it He not too much to die for your good. Oh, the height, the length, the breadth, the depth of the love of Christ which passes knowledge! You can never know this love of the Lord; it astonished Paul.

All this may stir you up to fear the Lord. This shows you what reason you have to do it. And it may be an incentive to you, or at the least may cause you greatly to condemn yourself for not loving Him. Let these at least make you think well of the Lord and ill of yourself, that you cannot love. It will go hard if He is refused; His wrath will be kindled, Psalms 2. after He has sued to you, and you reject Him, He will not put it up, but will make His wrath known on you, which GOD forbid.

So, the third Sermon ends. A HEAVENLY TREATISE OF THE DIVINE LOVE OF CHRIST. Sermon IIII.

BY JOHN PRESTON, D D.

Matt. 22. 37, 38. This is the first, and great Commandment: thou shalt Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart.

Psal. 31. 26. Love the Lord O all ye his Saints.

LONDON, Printed by Thomas Paine, for John Stafford: 640.

Sermon IV.

1 Cor. 16. 22. If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be held in execration, yea, let him be accursed unto the death.

If it is of so much importance to love the LORD, that those who do not are accursed, let me exhort you to do it. The motive in the Text puts a necessity upon the duty, but to draw you on by the cords of love. See what you shall gain by it. It might be a strong argument, you shall perish if you do not: But let us see the advantages that will come to us by it.

I will make you keep God's commandments with ease and delight: and this is no small benefit. This love makes you go about the work as the ship with wind and sails. The journey must be gone: now they that have not love, must row and take a great deal more pains. This is the love of God, that you keep his commandments. And his commandments are not grievous, 1 John 3. This makes us keep the commandments, so you may fear, you will say. Oh, but love makes them easy. It will be very hard to do them without love. How hard a task had it been for Paul to have done so much as he did, without this love? See what love makes mothers do to children. This love of Christ

constrained Paul: it carried him on like wings; it compelled him to do thus and thus. And is this then nothing? yea, it shall make you abundant in the work of the Lord. For this commands all the faculties, and it winds them up to their highest pegs: and this it will make you do out of an inward principle. There is a great difference between a horse that runs freely, and one that is forced by the spur. Shall not this then cause you to set a high price upon this love?

There are scarce any so desperate, but they would say, they would fain keep God's commandments, were they not so hard. Now this love will make them your delight, it will make them easy and pleasant to you.

This is the surest testimony to your own soul of all others, that you are translated from death to life. A hypocrite cannot love the Lord, he may do the outward works, he may hear the Word, and be diligent in his calling. But here is the difference, he does not do this out of love. This is that distinguishing character which distinguishes a Christian; as reason does a man. If you can find this love of Christ, this hungering after him, that tendering of the heart towards him, that your heart is to Christ, as the iron to the lodestone, you must rest with him. If you can say, I have no great marks of a child of God, I have many infirmities, but yet this I can say, I love the Lord; my life for yours, your case is happy; heaven and earth may pass away, but you cannot miss of your happiness. Whatever you have without this, can be no sound testimony to you of your blessedness; and this alone may secure you of it.

This love does make you lose nothing: whereas in the loving of other things, the more you bestow, the less you have. When you give your heart to God, He gives you your heart again, and sets it on work for your own good; He teaches us to profit, and leads us by the way

which we should go, Isaiah 48. 17. As Christ said of the Sabbath, the Sabbath was made for man: so may I say of all the commandments, when you give your hearts to the Lord, he sets them to keep the commandments, but to this end, that it may be well with you. Oh that there were such a heart in this people, to fear me, and to keep all my commandments that it might go well with them, and their children forever. Deuteronomy 5. 20. You have your heart again, when you give it to God. But here is the difference; before, you were but an unjust professor of it, now the Lord has made you Steward of it: for he has given you leave to love your wives, children, and your lawful recreations, only now you love them at his appointment, as he will, whereas before you did it as you listed. Nay, the Lord does not only give you your heart again, but returns it better than it was, new pointed. As the earth receives in the puddle water, which it sends forth clear and pure. All the streams of your love run as fresh for your good as ever they did, and more. That only which was amiss in them, is taken away. Let not this feed your understanding only, but find it good in your practice.

By this, you shall have much comfort and joy, and this is what all people desire. What is it that keeps you from loving the Lord? Oh, you have a belief that then you must lose your pleasures and your delights. No, it is the most comfortable action in the world, to love the Lord: delights follow action, as the flame follows the fire. Now the best action has the greatest delight. The Philosopher could say, Happiness was to love the most amiable object; "Est amare optimum amabile," to love the best amiable known is the best act. Whom not seeing, yet you love, joying with joy unspeakable and glorious, 1 Peter 1. It is a pleasant thing to love a creature like yourself, your children, your friend. But the creature is not perfect, and it may be it loves not you again. But Christ is perfect and loves you, you cannot lose any love by loving him. Oh, what a pleasant thing it is to love the Lord, to

live with him, to sup and dine with him, to be able to say, "I am my well-beloved's, and my well-beloved is mine!" When you shall consider the world hates you, what a comfort will it be, to know that the Lord loves you! That when the world uses you ill, you may fly unto Christ's bosom and lay open all your grievances to him. To love and to be loved are the most pleasant actions. Now to love the Lord Jesus is so much the more pleasant than the loving of other things, as he is a more excellent object than other things. Besides, is not everything best in its own place, conformed to its own rule, carried to its own end? Take it in your body, when all the parts of it are straight, all the faculties and humours in a right temper, serving to their proper ends, then there is delight and comfort: so, Love, when it is settled upon its own object, sets all things straight, whence wonderful joy cannot but follow; "Amor rectus omnia recta habet," as the Schoolman well observes.

Consider this, the love of the Lord makes you a better person, gives you a greater excellency, which is a thing that all people desire. Look at the excellency of the creatures, it proceeds from their forms; as the excellency of a Pearl above other stones comes from its form: for we know that the matter of all these things is common. Now the object to the faculty has the property of the form; for it gives name and distinction. Now this love makes God and spiritual things, as it were the form of the will. And according to this form is the excellence of the person. Every person is better or worse, as their love is pitched on a better object. He that loves a base thing is base; and he that loves a thing somewhat better excels that person; but he that loves spiritual things is the most noble. Look at the lower faculties, when the sensitive appetite enjoys its proper object, then a person has their perfection in that kind. Thus, when the will is fixed on Jesus Christ, its best object, then a person has their full perfection. If water is united to Wine, it is made better; when the body is united to the soul,

how glorious a creature is it! How glorious a creature then will your soul be, when by love it is united to the Lord! This love puts a greater excellency on the soul, than the soul does on the body. Love brings the soul to God, and makes him all in all to us; so that what we cannot desire, we may have in him: have you not then cause to wish that you loved the Lord? True, you have said enough to inflame us. But how shall we do it, my brethren? if you are brought unfeignedly to desire it, half the work is done; when the Disciples prayed, "Lord, increase our faith," Matth. 18. Christ answers, "If you have faith; but as a grain of Mustard seed, you may say unto this Mountain, be thou moved, and it shall be moved." But this is not the means to get faith. No, but this commends faith. And if out of this commendation they could come to prize and admire it, and so pray earnestly for it, God would give it them. Let this therefore be the first means to help you to the getting of this, to the Lord Jesus.

First, pray heartily for it, "Lord, I desire to love you, I see you most amiable, and would fain love you. This Petition is according to your will, Lord, grant it me."

How would this prevail, how could God put off such a request?

But I have prayed, and I have not obtained it.

But have you prayed importunately, as the woman to the unjust Judge without giving over? This is a precious grace, and therefore God will have us bestow some pains in the getting of it. We shall not obtain it easily, that so we may prize it the more, and keep it the more carefully. The grace of Christ, saith Paul, was abundant with me in faith and love, 1 Timothy 11. 14. This is that which the Apostle magnified so much, that God had given him love. The grace of Christ was abundant towards him in giving him love.

But how does prayer do this?

That little love which moved you to pray, by exercise, is increased and has become greater.

Prayer brings you in acquaintance with God. Before acquaintance, there may be a wishing well to another, but there cannot be that love to another which is required in friendship.

And it may be Christ will show himself to you, as we see when he himself, Matth. 17. prayed, his garments were changed, and he was transfigured.

But especially prayer does this by prevailing with God, as we see the prayers of the blind man prevailed with Christ. And do you think that Christ now in Heaven has put off these kind affections which he had on the earth? will he not also hear, if you should pray to him?

But this, you will say, is a common means to obtain all grace.

Yes, but of this love in a special manner: because love is the most peculiar gift of the Holy Spirit. Now the Holy Spirit is obtained by Prayer. Our hearts are so carnal, so fleshly, that we cannot love the Lord; and He is so holy, so good, that we can no more love Him, unless He Himself kindles this flame of love in our hearts, than cold water can heat, unless it had another principle. Contend, therefore, and strive with the Lord for His Spirit which works this love, who has also declared unto us your love in the Spirit.

Secondly, desire the Lord to show you Himself, that Jesus Christ would manifest Himself unto you. And this is the greatest means of all, to work love. "He that has My Commandments and keeps them, he it is that loves Me, and he shall be loved by the Father, and I will

love him and manifest Myself unto him." When Christ shall show Himself to you, when He shall open the clouds and let you see His beauty, His glory, Oh, then you cannot but love Him.

There is a great difference between the Minister's showing you Christ and His excellencies, and the Holy Spirit's. Though we could speak with the tongue of Angels, yet it would be but as the dead letter to Christ's showing of Himself. When He shall show you your sinfulness, His excellency, your sinfulness, His holiness, your misery, His mercies, you must needs love Him. Paul, when he had revealed Christ, what he could, to the Ephesians, he prays for them, that God would give them the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, Ephesians 1. 18. As who should say, the labour is all lost, if you should see no more than I preach. You love not a person until you know them yourself; the Lord showed Himself to Moses, David, Paul, which made them love Him so much. Go, therefore, to the Lord, and pray as Moses, "Lord, show me Your glory," and beg it earnestly at His hands: and that which was done extraordinarily, shall be done to your soul. That was but a showing of the Lord by a right light, which is done more or less to everyone.

But this is an act of the Lord, what shall I do to it?

Consider what the Scripture says of Him, what the Saints say of Him, but most of all what He has been to you. See with what patience, love, and mercy, He has carried Himself towards you, as when we converse with a person, out of their several actions we gather their disposition, and so frame an Idea of them in our mind.

We must humble ourselves, labour to see our miserable conditions, for that will bring love. So Paul, when he considered that he was the worst of all, it made him love more than them all. So Mary, when she conceived how unfit she was to conceive by the Holy Spirit, she sang

that song. When we look on ourselves, and see our own sins and miseries, our love to Christ will be increased. When a person shall have a true apprehension of themselves and their misery, and can expect nothing but death and damnation, and then Christ should come and say, "no; But they shall live," this wounds a person's heart with love. Look on your secret sins, your relapses, your misery by sin, and then on Christ's coming with His mercies and favours, and you cannot but love Him. I say look on your sins, weigh them with their circumstances. Think that after so many adulteries committed against Christ, yet that He should say, "If you will come in, yet will I receive you," this might shake you and melt your heart. He that loves not the Lord, sees not their misery, nor the good they have by Him.

Strengthen your faith: for the stronger your faith is, the greater will your love be. A strong hand rids more work than a weak. Take a person excellent in all gifts whom you much admire, yet if they loved not you, you would not much care for such a one: so though you see much excellency in Christ, yet you cannot love Him unless you have a persuasion that He loves you. But how shall I know that He will love me? He has made it known that He is yours, and that He is willing to become your familiar friend; God has given Him in marriage to you. "To us a child is born, to us a son is given." And Christ Himself has shown sufficiently His love unto you. He has spent His blood for you, yes, He continually speaks to His Father on your behalf, yes, He sues to you for love, He loves you first, and sues to you, as a man does to a woman; you may be persuaded therefore that He loves you.

But I am not fit to be a spouse to Christ.

It is true, and He knew that well enough. He will take you as you are, and afterwards will put beauty on you, Ezekiel 36. 16. Do not dwell on your unfitness when He is your suitor.

But it may be He stands thus and thus affected to such and such persons, and how shall I know that the Lord loves me and is willing to take me?

I can say nothing to you but this, and that is sufficient, you have His general promise made to all, Mark. 16. Go preach the Gospel to every creature. There is a general mandate given to Ministers to preach the promise to all, and why will you make exceptions where God has made none, and underline His promises? We are commanded to offer Christ to all, everyone that will come may come and drink of this water of life freely. The offer is general, though only some embrace it.

But I want godly sorrow for my sins. And this is required before we can receive Christ.

Yet do not deceive yourself, the matter is not whether your humiliation is more or less, only come. The promise is made to all that come, they shall be refreshed. Indeed, you will not come until you are somewhat humbled. You will not fly to the City of refuge until you are pursued by the avenger of blood. But if you come at all, God will fulfil His promise. Do not dwell so much on the degree of your humiliation. Take a person who has committed high treason, for which he is condemned and brought to the place of execution, ready to suffer, but then there is a pardon offered him: And take another guilty of the same act, but as yet not condemned, and bring him a pardon, he is just as joyful as the other, for he sees his case is just as bad, only it is not so far gone, and he has not lived so long in sorrow. So some people's sins are grosser, and their sorrow more violent, while others' sins are less, but they see them as likely to damn them. They are humbled just as truly, though not as violently. Therefore, even if you have not had as much sorrow as others, or felt

those terrors of the Almighty, yet if you have enough to bring you to Christ and make you cleave to Him, so that you would not leave Him for anything in the world, it is enough, you shall have Him. So why hesitate? What hinders your faith? The impediments must be on God's part or your part. But it is not on God's part, for His promise is full and generous, most free; and there is nothing on your part for which He shall set His love upon you. No merits are required on your part, only accept Him, receive Him, and He will later guide you. Are you willing to take Christ for your husband, for better and worse, with a crown of thorns as well as glory? Then the match is concluded, and you may be sure that Christ will be yours.

But I have renewed my sins and have fallen into various relapses. I still provoke Him and fall back, and God will not endure such a wretch.

Yet He forgives sins of all sorts; He is abundant in mercy and is always forgiving, never giving up. There is a fountain opened to Judah and Jerusalem for sin and uncleanness, Zechariah 12, verse 13. There is a fountain, not a cistern, to wash in, which may be drawn dry. Only this caution must be added: that we do not allow ourselves in any known sin, but that we continually wage war against sin and by no means make peace with Amalek.

Another means is to remove the obstacles to love, which are mainly two: estrangement and worldliness. Estrangement dissolves all friendship, and by this means, the bond of friendship can be severed. Estrangement breeds fear when we approach God, and fear weakens love, whereas boldness nurtures it. "Herein is our love made perfect, that we have boldness in the day of the Lord Jesus." Just as by neglecting fellowship with the saints, we lose the acquaintance we had with them, so neglecting to maintain our acquaintance with God

will eventually cause us to forsake Him. Therefore, continually draw near to God, for this will increase your love for Him. Frequently speak to Him and listen to Him speaking to you.

Engage much in prayer, and often in reading and hearing. Do not perform these acts as mere customs or reluctantly, but with zeal and affection. Approach prayer as you would approach a conversation with your dearest friend, the one you most enjoy talking to. Let it be a delight to converse with Him about all things. When you experience any injury, go and make your case known to Him, as you would with a dear friend. And when you have committed any sin that might offend Him, do not cease until reconciliation is achieved and your friendship restored. Above all, scrutinize your ways, for sin alienates and keeps a person from God. Therefore, make sure to remove sin as much as possible.

Worldly-mindedness is also a hindrance to the love of God. It is the uncircumcision of the heart. Hence, it is written, "The Lord thy God will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, that thou mayest live." Until the heart is circumcised, it is filled with love for the world, making it difficult to love the Lord with all one's heart, as one should.

There is no greater extinguisher of the love of God than the love of the world. Pleasures and the love of worldly things are very prone to steal our hearts away from God without us realizing it. If we do not examine this more closely, they may indeed succeed. Examine your own hearts and see that, to the extent you love the world more, your affection for the Lord diminishes. These things, like Absalom, stealthily rob our hearts from God, just as he did with the people from his father. If you do not find the love for God that was once there, see what has come between God and your heart. Look if some

pleasure or lust has not crept in between; for these will separate you from God. Examine if in your understanding, you have false beliefs about things being better than they really are; for these will turn your heart away from the Lord. But above all, examine your will and affections.

FINIS.

A HEAVENLY TREATISE OF THE DIVINE LOVE OF CHRIST.

Sermon V.

BY JOHN PRESTON, DD.

Matt. 22. 37, 38.

This is the first, and great Commandment: thou shalt Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart.

Psal. 31. 26.

Love the Lord O all ye his Saints.

LONDON, Printed by Thomas Paine, for John Stafford. 1640.

1 Cor. 16. 22. If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be held in execration, yea, let him be accursed unto death.

Now, the next thing we have to do is to show what kind of love the Lord accepts; for He will not accept any kind of love that is offered to Him, but only such a love as He calls for, as He requires.

Thou must love Him with all thy might and with all thy strength. A public person may do more than a private individual. His example may have a great impact, or he may command others, if not to do good, at least to refrain from evil.

God desires that thou love Him with all thy strength; if thou knowest much, thou must do much. Besides, there are some things thou canst do, namely, which others cannot do without great difficulty. As some men are naturally temperate, others naturally patient. If thou art such a one, God requires more of thee than of another, for He considers that which thou canst do without exerting thy might as nothing. It is not enough for thee to love the Lord, but thou must love Him with thy might. The might of a rich man, of a magistrate, of a scholar, or whatever thou art, when thou shalt come to the Lord with a small pittance, when thou hast the opportunity to do much more, the Lord will not accept it. Just as a landlord will not accept a small payment when the tenant could pay a larger sum. Neither is this a matter of indifference for you to do or not to do: for God requires much of him to whom He has given much. He has given us all talents, which He has put as prizes in our hands, and He expects us to spend them according to what we have received. Paul did no work of supererogation, though he was abundant in the works of the Lord, continually applying himself to the work with his whole strength.

Thou must love Him above all things else; above all creatures, above that which is most dear to thee, yes, above thyself. And if thou dost not do so, thou lovest Him only as a creature that will not serve His

purpose. He has done more for thee than any creature has or can do. He died for thee, He gave Himself up to be crucified for thee; He deserves, therefore, more love than your pleasures, profits, or any friend you have. You are, therefore, to love Him above all, to embrace and cleave to Him chiefly, to make Him wholly yours.

But how can He (you will say) be wholly mine, since so many have their share in Him?

Yes, He is wholly yours, and you must be wholly His. He is infinite, and therefore has no parts, but is entirely for everyone, just as every line drawn to the center can claim the whole center for itself, even though there may be a thousand other lines beside it.

But what? Must I love the Lord so much that I cannot love earthly things?

Yes, you may love them as long as it is not with an adulterous love. You may love them for God's sake, as they may enable you to serve God better.

But how will I recognize this adulterous love?

When you love something in a way that diminishes your love for your spouse, that is adulterous love. For instance, when you love some pleasure and delight so much that it occupies your mind and hinders you from hearing, and prevents you from praying without distraction, so that your thoughts must be on it, this love is adulterated love. You may rejoice, but in such a way that your rejoicing does not hinder you from walking with God. Likewise, you may work in your occupation with a love for it, but in such a way that it does not draw your heart away from God.

But this is very difficult (some may say).

No, it is easy. When God has placed this love in your heart, the necessity of it may make it easy. You may do it, or else you cannot be saved. Indeed, it is impossible for a person who has set his heart on riches to remove it himself. In this sense, Christ speaks when He says, "It is so hard for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of heaven." But when God has worked this love in you and has revealed to you the emptiness and vanity of other things, it will be easy.

But I am not able to love the Lord more than myself and all other things.

Yes, thou mayest, if once thou art thoroughly persuaded that he is thy chiefest good and how miserable thou art without him; thou wilt then be content to forsake all and to cleave to him alone.

A man that sows corn is content it should die, so as it may be quickened again and bring forth an increase. And therefore Paul, though he saw the outward building of his body go to decay, he cared not, so long as he was renewed in the inner. So when thou seest thy good contained in him more than in thyself, when thou seest thy happiness laid up in him, thou wilt easily be persuaded to leave thyself to enjoy him: For thou lovest nothing by losing thyself, thy whole happiness is in God.

Again, thou must be rooted and grounded in love. This is that which the Apostle so prays for the Ephesians, Ephesians 3. 17. There is a certain love by fits which God accepts not. When men come and offer to God great promises like the waves of the sea, as big as mountains, oh, they think they will do much for God. But their minds change, and they become like those high waves, which at last fall level with the other waters. If a man should proffer thee great kindnesses, and

thou shouldest afterwards come to him to make use of him, and he should look strangely upon thee, as if he were never acquainted with thee, how wouldest thou esteem of such love! If we are now on, now off in our love, God will not esteem such love, and if you are not rooted in your love, you will be unstable. Let then your love be well rooted, let the foundation be good on which it stands: now that's on two things.

This love must be founded in faith. Therefore Ephesians 3. when the Apostle had prayed that they might be strengthened in faith, he adds this also, that they might be grounded in love. When thou art once rooted in faith, thou shalt be grounded in love. When, therefore, you come to believe, and consider whether Jesus Christ belongs to you or not, do it not overly and slightly, but do it thoroughly, sift everything to the bottom, give not over until thou art fully satisfied, until thou canst answer all objections, and rest in this persuasion, that all is most true which hath been revealed to thee of the Lord Jesus Christ, and it is good for thee to rest upon it.

Your love must be built upon his Person. If you love his, and not him, you will be unstable in your love. If thou lovest him in his Person, thou changest not, for thy love will be constant. But if thou lovest him for that he hath done for thee, because he hath done thee much good, and given thee many favors, and tokens of his love, and kept thee from many troubles, when he changes his dealing towards thee, thou wilt change thy love to him. Thou wilt then do as Job, receive good from the hand of the Lord, and also evil. Put case God should take from thee, and send one affliction in the neck of another, this will try thy love, whether in this case thou wilt stick close unto him. Sometimes God hides his face from his children, and writes bitter things against them: If then thou canst love him, thy love is on his Person, a constant love.

Another condition of our love is that it must be diligent. The Apostle commends the Thessalonians' effectual faith and diligent love, 1 Thessalonians 1. 3. If you say you love the Lord and yet will do nothing for him, you have not that love which God accepts. This love is operative, diligent, and not idle and dead. We regard not a dead drug, a dead plant, we cut it up and cast it away: even so doth the Lord esteem a dead love, and love that shows not its life, its diligence to obey God. This love will cause thee to put on new apparel, to adorn thy life so, as thy love may take delight in thee. This will make thee careful to beautify thyself with the graces of the Spirit. See therefore whether thy love prepares thee for Christ. This love doth that which John the Baptist did. It prepares men for the receiving of the Lord. If thou wilt come then before him in thy old garments; it is a sign thou lovest him not. Again, the operativeness of it is seen in opening thy heart to him, when he offers himself unto thee. This will give thee a capable heart to entertain him, that he may dwell plentifully in thee. This doth make thee comprehend with all the Saints, what is the height, and breadth, and length, and depth of the love of Christ. This love is diligent in cleansing the heart, that it will suffer nothing to remain there that may be offensive to the Lord God that dwells with his people. This love therefore will suffer no sluttish corner to remain in the heart, but keeps all clean. It cleanses a man from all filthiness of flesh and Spirit, 2 Corinthians 5.

Lastly, the diligence of love is seen in keeping of his commandments. If thou doest nothing for the Lord, thou lovest him not. So much love as thou hast, so much care will there be in thee to do his will; so much fire, so much heat to stir for his glory: So much love, so much desire to walk in perfect obedience before him.

And now we come to the object upon whom our love must be placed, The Lord Jesus. Consider whom it is, whom, if you love not, I

pronounce you thus accursed. It is the Lord Jesus, he is your Lord, your Prince, your Saviour, your Messiah, your Prophet, so that he who loves him not, is worthy to be accursed.

First, he is our Lord. Now, to run from an ordinary Master is punishable, to rebel against an ordinary King deserves death, but he is more, our Lord and King in a more special bond. Besides, that he hath made us, and preserves us, we are his by purchase, and he hath bought us dear, he hath shed his blood for us: so that he that will not love this Lord; let him be accursed.

Secondly, again, he is our Saviour, and in this respect love is now more due to God than in the time of innocence. When Adam broke the Covenant and made shipwreck, Christ offered himself as a Saviour. Now if we will not receive him, there is no more hope. He is the second chance, left to us after shipwreck, which if we let go, we cannot escape eternal destruction.

Lastly, he is our Prophet, that Messiah, John. 4. which tells us all things; That great Prophet whom Moses foretold, whom if we believe not, we must be forever accursed. The time of our ignorance God regarded not, but now he will have an eye to us, after the light hath shone unto us, and he hath revealed himself, when this our Prophet hath come unto us and shown himself unto us. Now God claims our love: and if now we refuse to love him, and to come in unto him, we are rebels. Yea, he is our Priest, and would reconcile God unto us. Yea, he is made unto us a King, to subdue our lusts and rebellious affections, to draw us to himself, as it were by force: So that now if we love him not, we deserve the curse. Now mark, the Lord hath joined these two together, the Lord Jesus. We must take heed that we separate them not. And we must see that we take him not only as a Saviour, but also as a Lord. He is not only the Author of the

remission of our sins, but he is our Lord to rule us. The preaching of the Gospel is nothing but the offering of Christ, his whole person, and so you must take him, as a subject, to be your Lord, as a Spouse to be ruled and guided by him, and then we shall have the benefit which arises thence. We are willing to part with the sweet, but we will have none of the sour: as that young man would have had Christ, but he would not part with his wealth for him. But Christ tells him that he must either part with him or them. Canst thou be content to fare as I do? to be rejected & scorned in the world as I am? then well & good, thou mayest follow me, but otherwise thou canst not. And if thou art content to do thus, to suffer persecution, and to forgo all for him, thou shalt have him, and all the benefits that come by him; if not, thou art not worthy of him: he that believes not the Lord Jesus, is condemned already. i. e. He that takes him not when he is offered, is in the state of of condemnation. We must see therefore that we take his whole person, as he is a Lord, as well as he is a Saviour, and not the latter without the former. If any man love not the Lord Jesus, let him be had in execration, yea let him be accursed to the death. The Apostle curses such as love him not, with a double curse. He expresses it in two languages. They are men set apart to evil, appointed to destruction; as some men are set apart to good, so are these to evil. They are shut up in prison, such as God hath set himself against. His eyes are continually upon them for evil. Thus shall he be accursed that loves not the Lord Jesus. There shall be a curse on his soul, for matter of grace, that as Christ cursed the fig tree, when he came and found no fruit upon it, never fruit grow more on thee, and it withered away: So when Christ is offered, and this Gospel preached, and thou refuseth this grace, thou mayest find Christ so curse thee, that thou be ever barren in the matter of grace. And if perhaps thou thinkest this no great matter, the curse goes further. Thou shalt be cursed from the presence of the Lord. Thou shalt have no part nor portion in the light, sweetness and comfort of his favour.

And this Cain took to heart, though he were a wicked man, and had before but God's common favour: and so Saul was exceedingly cast down, when as God would not answer him by any of those usual means: but is this such a matter to be excluded from his presence? yea, and at the time of death you shall find it somewhat, yea in troubles you shall see it a dreadful thing (as they did) to want him to stand your friend. As Saul did, though in his prosperity he little regarded it, yet when the Philistines came upon him, he was driven to his wits' end, because the Lord would not answer him. But these are but spiritual things, I feel them not, you will say. But yet the curse goes further, You shall be cursed also from the earth, that is, from earthly comforts, which it yields to others. Now thou shalt bestow all thy travel and pain upon it, and be never the better for it.

But many a man receives him not, and yet is not thus accursed.

Indeed we see it not many times, and it may be, the time of execution is not yet come. Thou mayest have Cain's privilege, though thou art accursed, that none shall kill thee presently: Thou mayest enjoy thy health and wealth, and no man lay hold on thee here to hurt thee. But thou art reserved to a more solemn day of punishment. And yet the curse goes a step further, thou shalt be cursed eternally. But that thou wilt say, is a great way off; and you need not fear it yet. But consider what eternity is, what those days of darkness will be, when the Sun of comfort shall set, and never rise again upon thee. When it shall be always perfect night, and never day. When God shall open all the treasures of his wrath, and pour them with full fury upon thee, when the storm of vengeance shall never be blown over, but thou shalt be overwhelmed in the midst of all misery, as the old world was in the deluge.

If this be the case of men that refuse, yea, that love not the Lord, then take heed to yourselves. We the Ministers offer you Christ when we preach, and you sit negligently before us, minding other things, not caring to take the Lord. Take heed: this is your portion to be thus accursed.

The Gospel hath two parts: if you take Christ, you shall be happy, you shall be saved. But if you will not love him and embrace him, you shall be damned. Therefore think not that there is nothing but honey in it: yea there is a sting that follows it, if it be neglected: Ministers are not to go a begging in offering the Gospel, but are as Ambassadors of the Lord of Heaven. If men will receive our message, so it is, otherwise the dust which we shake off from our feet, shall be a witness against you, that so God will shake you off. God will not have his Gospel refused, his Son despised; and therefore he counsels us, to kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and we perish all in his wrath, Psalm 2. Though he be a Lamb, and have behaved himself meekly amongst us, yet if we provoke him, we shall know that he can show himself a Lyon. If he be not entertained in the still voice, he will come in fire, in a wind that shall rend the rocks in sunder. Thus he describes himself, One that hath feet like burning brass, out of whose mouth proceeds a fiery sword, Revelation 1. Moses went first to Mount Gerizim, to bless the people; and if that would not move them, he go's up to Mount Ebal, and thence curses them: so the Apostle before exhorts & persuades them to the love of Christ, but if they will not embrace him on fair terms, he tells them what shall follow, they must be accursed.

But what if I take not the Lord at this instant? I hope this curse will not befall me.

It is true, we cannot say so; for while this time lasts, we are still commanded to offer Christ; yet there will come a time, when there will come forth a Decree which shall never be revoked. Take heed therefore, for this is very dangerous. The Lord will not suffer his Gospel to be abused, or neglected: when once the Husbandmen refused the Son, they were presently cast out of the vineyard, Mat. 21. This offends God more than any sin that we can commit. To refuse Christ offered, is worse than drunkenness, theft, adultery, or the like, which men count the grossest sins. My people would none of me, therefore I gave them up to their own hearts lusts. This refusing him, made him swear that they should never enter into his rest. As the Gospel offers greater favour than the Law; so, swifter damnation attends the neglect of it. My brethren, take heed that you receive not the grace of God in vain. While it is called today, harden not your hearts; yea, take heed of refusing it now. For, you know not whether this offer may ever be made you again; and if it be, thou knowest not whether thou shalt have the grace to receive it, or no. Know, that the same Gospel is a savour of life unto life, to such as receive it; but unto the others, of death unto everlasting death.

But the Gospel is continued still.

It is true: but how many are there that live in the congregation, and are never a whit the better, though they hear the Word daily, because by the contempt of it, it becomes the savour of death to them, and their hearts are hardened, so that they shall never receive good by it?

FINIS.

Good Reader, if thou wilt see the reaches of a devout soul after this love of Christ, expressed in these pious Sermons, read this Soliloquy following.

A SOLILOQUY OF A DEVOUT SOUL TO CHRIST,

PANTING AFTER THE LOVE OF THE LORD JESUS.

O Thou Love of all loves, thou chiefest of ten thousand; thou lovedst me before I was, thou dost love me when I am, thou doest love me (if I be thine) when I am here no more. Thy Loves are better than wine, but mine are worse than gall and wormwood. Thou lovest me who deserve less than nothing, I love not thee who deservest more than all things. I have hid myself from thee as Adam, yet thou hast pierced through the dark cloud, and loved me. Thou hast opened thyself in the face of my soul, yet in the sight of this Sun I have not loved thee. No baseness of mine hath closed thy eyes, and kept thy heart from me: yet every base pleasure, and pleasing lust hath kept my heart and eye from thee. Without my love to thee I cannot have my happiness applied, and enjoyed. It is Faith that marries thee to me: but this faith must work by love, or my marriage will end in a fruitless barrenness, and faithless separation. Hitherto, therefore, I have loved thee, but for lust, not for love. I would have thee save me, but I would not honor, and please thee. I can thus think of my disloyalty towards thee; but thou knewest it before I thought it, and more than I can speak or think. Thou doest think thoughts of love and peace to me, but I mind the abuse of thy love, and the too late

repentance of me upon my terms. How can I be acceptable to thee, (My Love, my Dove, my undefiled,) Thou spreadest out thy hands, and art ready for blessing me: but if I open my head, heart, hand, I am apt to receive nothing but Anathema, Maranatha from thee. Can love come to enmity, heaven to hell?

I am hell (my Lord) thou art heaven: I am hatred, thou art Love. Thou showest hatred, yet in my wisdom am I very enmity. Can I then expect either to have the blessing of Love, or to avoid the curse of not loving? Oh show me thy face, for it is comely. Thou hast often shown me thy riches, and I have loved them: but oh show me thyself, that I may love thee. I have seen by goodness, mercy, compassion, merit, salvation, and have cried out, (My blessed Jesus) make these mine. Now let me see thyself, that thou my beloved mayst be mine, and all those riches in thee. From the sight of thy riches I have desired to preserve myself: from seeing thyself I shall desire to draw near to thee, and to cleave to thee forever. O thou whom my soul desires to love, show me then where thou liest at noon, that I may see thee! I know where I shall find thee at the night of my life. I shall find thee sitting on yonder throne, ready to say, either, Come ye blessed, or, Go ye cursed. I do not know whether so short a view shall bring me to hear either the one, or the othre. Shew me then where thou liest at this my noon. Now thy Sun doth shine upon this my tabernacle, and I have some time to behold thy beauty, that I may be in love with thy person: where then shall I find thee? if I look to mount Tabor, I see thee in glory, and I cannot but love thee for that. If I look to the garden, I see thee lying on the cold ground, sweating drops of blood for me, and I cannot but love thee for that. If I look to Golgotha, I see thee nailed to the Cross, and thy heart broached, that I may drink thy blood and live, and I cannot but love thee for that. If I look to mount Olivet, I see thee ascending far above all heavens, and I cannot but love thee for that also. Indeed in Tabor thou hadst visible glory, but it

soon vanished: in the Garden and Golgotha, thou hadst little visible beauty why I should desire thee: and in Olivet, thou wast quite carried out of my sight. If then thou liest for me nowhere else, what hope have I to love thee, O thou to be beloved of all. Art thou not in the tents of the Sheperds? Dost thou not walk in the midst of the golden Candlesticks? Doest thou not dwell in the hearts of men by faith? O let me see thee here below, in the Church, in myself. Let thy glory go before me, that I may love thee forever, and ever, and be blessed in thee. Thou hast a long time been manifested to me in thy natures, offices, and marks for me, and these draw me to love thee. Thou hast been crucified before my eyes, and the virtues of it have been cleared by the Ministry of the Word, and Sacraments. I have heard and seen the promises, signs, and seals of thy dearest love, and these might allure me to love thee. But (O thou chiefest of ten thousand) why hast thou kept thyself at such a distance? why hast thou not been formed in me? why hast thou not dwelt in me, that I might see in thee the glories, and virtues, of thy life, death, resurrection, ascension, and to be sick of love? Thou hast stood and knocked at the door of my unworthy heart for this end. Thou wouldest have come in and supped with me after the noonshine of the Gospel, with thine own banquet. But, alas, there was no room for thee, because I desired first to feast it out with the base guests of sinful lusts, before I would give thee entertainment. The cause hath been in myself, that I have not been better acquainted with thee, and so, that I have not loved thee. O wretched soul that I am, who shall deliver me from being an enemy to myself! I have bowed my knees to the Father of thee, the Lord Jesus, that he would grant to me, according to the riches of his glory, that I may have his assistance to empty myself of all my wickedguests, that thou mayest come into me, and I may have the better list and leisure to contemplate thy glory, and be grounded in thy love, O my blessed Lord Jesus. Could I but get this, my gains would be unspeakable. Whatsoever thou

commandest would be sweet, because I love thee. If I could give thee my heart, thou wouldst give it better to me again: for no unclean thing can come out of thy hands. But (O my desired love) I have denied thee; therefore, I deny myself. I have rejected thee; therefore, I reject myself. Do with me as thou wilt, only first love me, and let me answer thee with love again. And why should not I be confident to be heard in this, seeing thou (my love) sittest at the right hand of God making request for me. Speak thou the word, and thy poor servant shall love thee. Say to my soul, My Father hath heard thy prayer, and then, I will love thee dearly. My Lord Jesus, if I love thee, I live: If I love thee not, I perish under a fearful curse for evermore. And shall it be thus with me, O thou that wilt not the death of poor sinners, who pant after thee? No, no, thy merits and intercession have prevailed with my God. I find the filth of domineering sin, in some measure, washed from the windows of my soul, that the beams of thy glory may pierce it, and draw my love after thee. Now do I begin to be sick of love, and earnestly desire thy company here, by grace, and hereafter by glory. I love to hear thee speak (let me hear thy voice for it is sweet) and to speak to others of thee, and thy beauties. Thou hast made me something willing to do, and to suffer anything for thee, Lord perfect this good work. If I see the meanest persons like thee in thy goodness, My delight is in them; I love them the better for thy sake. I dare not willfully anger thee, and my soul is vexed with them that do it. Thus the pulses of my soul (by thy blessing) do begin to beat after thee. But (alas) when I consider how weak I am in thy love to thee my Saviour: when I find a thousand things creep in betwixt thee & home, and steal my heart away from thee: when I feel how easily I am diverted from thee and thy service, what comfort can my poor soul have now? O my Lord Jesus, thou wilt not leave thy own work, & suffer thy tender plant to wither away! when thou hast sowed thy seed, hast thou not prepared the former and latter rain? Shall I not be able to do this through him that loveth thee and me? I

may not run from thy love, thou art my Lord. I dare not, thou art my Jesus. If thou live, let me know thy love to me. If I live, let me feel my love to thee. Oh shed it more in my heart, that as in believing in thee my person is justified, so in loving thee my faith may be justified, and in having faith working by love, I may so constantly walk in thy presence, that with comfort I may sing with the Bride, Come Lord Jesus, come quickly, Even so,

Amen. FINIS.

TWO TREATISES,

VIZ. THE CHRISTIAN FREEDOM, AND THE DEFORMED FORM
OF A FORMAL PROFESSION.

By that late faithful and worthy Minister of Jesus Christ, JOHN PRESTON, Doctor in Divinity, Chaplain in Ordinary to his Majesty, Master of Immanuel College in Cambridge, and sometimes Preacher of Lincoln's Inn.

LONDON, Printed by I. N. for John Stafford, and are to be sold at his Shop in Chancery Lane, opposite the Rolls. 1641.

THE CHRISTIAN FREEDOM: OR, The Charter of the Gospel, showing the privilege and prerogative of the Saints by virtue of the Covenant. Wherein these four points of Doctrine are properly observed; plainly proved both by Scripture and reason, and pithily applied, Viz.

1. That he who is in the state of grace lies in no known sin, no sin has dominion over him.
2. That sin, though it does not reign in the Saints, yet it does remain and dwell in them.
3. That the way to overcome sin is to get assurance of the Love, and grace, and favour of God, whereby it is forgiven them.
4. That whosoever is under the Law, sin has dominion over him. By that late faithful and worthy Minister of Jesus Christ, JOHN PRESTON, Doctor in Divinity, Chaplain in Ordinary to his Majesty, Master of Immanuel College in Cambridge, and sometimes Preacher of Lincoln's Inn.

ROM. 6. 12. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal bodies, that you should obey it in the lusts thereof.

Printed 1641.

THE CHRISTIAN FREEDOM,

OR THE CHARTER OF THE GOSPEL, SHOWING THE PRIVILEGE
AND PREROGATIVE OF THE SAINTS, BY VIRTUE OF THE
COVENANT.

ROM. 6. 14. For sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

These words are brought in thus; the Apostle exhorts them not to sin, but to give their members as instruments unto righteousness: and to move them to this, he tells them that sin was not their Lord now as it

was heretofore, and that it shall have no more dominion over them, and therefore he bids them strive against it: and then he adds a reason for this, because they were not under the law, but under grace, now Christ has changed their hearts: for while a man is under the Law, sin has dominion over him; it tells him what to do, but gives him no power to do it: but you have the grace of sanctification to change your hearts, and enable you to every good word and work, so that you delight in the Law after the inner man, albeit you see another law in your members warring against the Law of your mind, and bringing you into captivity to the law of sin which is in your members, as it is said, Chap. 7. ver. 23.

Whence we may learn, That he who is in the state of grace, lies in no known sin; no sin has dominion over him.

Now, sin is said to have no Dominion over a man, three manner of ways, viz. in regard

1. It has no right to rule over him; it is no more our Lord, but is as a servant that has no dominion, but is said to offer violence to us: as if the King of Spain should rule over us, he has no dominion over us.
2. In regard it is not obeyed, for there it has dominion: as a Prince may have a right to a Kingdom, yet if he is not obeyed, he has no dominion.
3. In regard though it strive against us, yet it never gets the victory: for though it assault us, yet if it get not the victory, it has no dominion over us: this is proved by three Similitudes which must be explained, viz.

First, it was our Master, and we its servants; but now we have changed our Master, and are become the servants of righteousness, ver. 18.

Secondly, it is said that we were married to sin, and it had dominion and command over us, as the husband over the wife; but now it is dead, and there is a divorce between us, and now we are married to Christ, and he commands us, and we obey.

Thirdly, it is said we are dead to sin, and alive to God, ver. 11. and therefore we cannot live in sin: for, command a dead body to go about a business, and he cannot, because he is dead.

Now the reasons for the point are these. The first is taken from Christ; we are engrafted into Christ, and into his death, and into the similitude of his resurrection, verse 5.

We are grafted as a graft into Christ, and all the old sap is taken away, and we have new sap, and bring forth new fruit, and have no other, because we grow in another tree, and we live to God: yet we may commit sin, though we allow not ourselves in it; for they that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts thereof: if therefore there be any lust reigning in us, we are not in Christ. Again, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, and therefore he does not wallow in his old sins: so says God, I will give you a new heart; and, all things are become new; and, old things are done away: therefore we cannot live in any known sin. Again, whosoever is in Christ, has received of his fullness, and grace for grace; in him we are able to do all things: and therefore if we cannot strive against old sins, we are not in Christ.

Secondly, because we have the Spirit of God ruling in us, and therefore we walk after the Spirit, and not after the flesh: now if we

lie in any known sin, we have not the Spirit, and therefore are not in the state of grace: if any man has not the Spirit of grace, he is not the Son of God: now if he walk after the flesh, he has not the Spirit, for the Spirit gives him the ability to strive against all sins.

Thirdly, he is born of God: now, he who is born of God, does not sin, that is, sin does not rule over him: for a man is said to sin that favours wickedness and sets his heart to sin: he does not sin because he is like God, as a son is like his father; and therefore a wicked man is like the devil because he is his Father, and his wickedness is in him, and therefore the devil is called the father of the wicked: and so every regenerate man has all the righteousness of Christ, though not in the same degree; he has perfect holiness of parts, though not of degrees: now then he has no member of Satan in him, that is, no known sin which he loves.

Fourthly, because he has the whole law written in his heart, and his heart is set to obey the whole law, and therefore he cannot lie in any known sin.

Fifthly, because he is wholly changed and translated to another man: which is expressed in two ways. 1. The whole drift of his mind is changed. As suppose the earth were made free, the whole bent of it were to go upward; so a man is wholly bent towards heaven, or else his heart is not changed: and if so, he can lie in no known sin. 2. He is changed in his taste. S. Paul says, They that are in Christ, savour not the things of the flesh, but of the spirit: every sin is bitter to the regenerate man; if it is not, then he savours the things of the flesh. To this is that agreeable, Keep this feast with unleavened bread, and not with the old leaven of maliciousness: we must be unleavened bread to Christ, we must give no allowance to sin.

Sixthly, because they know God. The Lord says by his Prophet, I will write my law in their hearts, and they shall know me: so that with this writing the law in their hearts, they cannot but know sin; for they are changed in their minds before they can know God: hence I infer that he who knows God will not change from the immutable God to the mutable creature; and they who do it, do it because they know not God.

Seventhly, because he has faith, which will make him not lie in any known sin: for all sins are either of the temptation of the devil, the flesh, or the world: now, faith overcomes all these.

1. It overcomes the world; This is the victory that overcomes the world, even your faith: but if the world could overcome the regenerate in any temptation, then this were not true that faith overcomes the world; but he shall not be overcome by the glory and riches of the world.

Secondly the flesh; The just walks in his integrity. To this may be added, that blessings are everywhere annexed to the keeping of the commandments; Blessed are they that have respect unto thy commandments: If you lean to the right hand, or to the left, &c, Again, If you keep the whole law, and offend in anyone, you are guilty of the whole law. But, besides these Scriptures, there are other reasons to prove that the regenerate man cannot lie in any known sin.

First, because he who lies in any known sin, has another for his Lord and God, and so is an Idolater, and so cannot be regenerate, for he yields to the same still; if it commands, he obeys; God commanding him, he neglects it, and therefore makes it his God.

Secondly, because he who lies in any known sin, will be inconstant in the serving of God: now God rejects such a one; for though the temptation to that sin being removed, he serves God; yet that sin setting upon him, he forsakes God's service, and obeys it, and whenever occasion is offered, he turns to obey it: now such inconsistency God hates. As among men a flower though it is more beautiful than a pearl, yet it is not regarded so much, because it is fading; and a ship may sail safely for a great while, but yet falling upon a rock makes shipwreck: so a man may make shipwreck of faith and a good conscience; and such a one cannot be in the state of grace.

Thirdly, because he that lies in any known sin, will, if he had like strong temptations, commit all the sins in the world; as if a man is inclined to covetousness or uncleanness, he would commit any other if he were as much inclined to any other: now, such a one cannot be in the state of grace.

Fourthly, because if a man has a good heart, no sin can grow there, because it is out of its proper place, and therefore cannot prosper: as plants that grow in India, if they are set here, wither; so every sin in a good heart is out of its proper place, and will not grow, but wither every day more and more: but he who finds sin growing in his heart, his heart is not regenerate.

Fifthly, because he must hate the word of God and godly men: for when a man is ready to commit sin, the word is at him to dissuade him, godly men dissuade him; and therefore now if he does it, and they still rebuke him, he comes to account the word a reproach, and he hates it and good men likewise. Thus Herod is John's friend a great while, until he tells him of his beloved sin, and then off goes his head: so he hates God and wishes there were none, because he

resolves to sin, and God reproveth him, and so he cannot be in a good estate.

Sixthly and lastly, because all his actions will have an evil tincture from that his sin; it so sways all he does, that nothing is current in God's sight. As if a man were set to get honour, though he did not directly fall into that sin, yet he squares all his actions that way, he affects such persons as may further that his intent, so that sin leavens every action of his; and whenever any act of religion opposes him, he then forsakes all: as if a man has a project to get a harvest that is not yet come, all that he does, is for that end, he ploughs, sows, and the like; so it is with a man that has a sin, and resolves to follow it, he biases all his actions by that, therefore God abhors him and all that he does.

First, this is to try us: hereby every man may know whether he is in the state of grace or not. If he lies in the least known sin that is, he is but counterfeit; if though he is admonished, and told that God will not have him to do such a thing, yet he does it, it is a sign he is not in a good estate: as if a man knows and is persuaded he ought not to abound in idle speeches, and yet will, it is a sign he is not in the state of grace. So when he is commanded to pray, and yet does it not, or does it only for show, it's a sign he is in a bad estate: or if he knows it is a sin to be idle, and is persuaded of it, and yet will, it's a sign his estate is not good: so for immoderate gaming, if one is told he should not, yet will use it, certainly he is bad: so for the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, when a man shall spend all his time, and find all thoughts bent that way for any one of them, certainly his heart is not gracious; for then these thoughts would not abound in him, but thoughts of growing in grace; but if his morning thoughts are for satisfying of the flesh and the lusts thereof, or his secret plots, he may justly fear it's a reigning sin: for when all his

projects and thoughts are upon one thing, as to be in fine apparel, it's certain sin reigns in him, and so he is in the state of damnation; as a scholar that wholly aims at vain glory, and how to get honour and credit, that sin reigns in him.

But there were many who seemed religious men, which had these infirmities in them in the Scriptures.

True, and many therefore not truly regenerated, but seeming only so: now many make a fair show under the means, when falling into temptations, they fall away: but if they are not commanded, or think not of it, great faults may stand with true grace; but if they are admonished by their conscience, or others, and told they must not do it, then their estate is not good; for true grace cannot stand with these failings.

Now, the signs whereby we may know whether we live in known sins or not, are these.

1. Living in a known sin is of two sorts; 1. Known when men sell themselves to commit wickedness before the Lord, as Ahab did; when he pours out himself to vanity, as when a man shall give up himself to drink or to company, or to commit any sin of uncleanness, or gives himself to spend all of his time in recreations, this is evident to the world and to his own conscience. Again, when he plainly forsakes God and good courses which he took before, as Demas did, this is plain, he lies in a known sin. Secondly, the secret lying in sin, the signs of which are these.
2. When a man commits it ordinarily: this is what Paul says, that the Saints fall upon occasions: as if a man is sailing into France, a tempest drives him into Spain; so the Saints' face is towards

heaven, but a sudden passion may drive them another way. To commit sin ordinarily is to commit it when temptation assails, and occasion is offered, and impediments removed, then he commits the sin ordinarily; for if there were such temptations always, he would commit the sin always: as Pharaoh was good by fits, he was often restored, and desired Moses to pray for him; yet when temptation came, he would not let the people go, though before he had intended to do it. So Saul, when opportunity was offered, would have killed David, though he swore not to do it; and so Hazael: this is committing of sins ordinarily.

Secondly, When a man rejects admonitions, and the reprove. A poor child is better than a foolish (that is a rich) King who will no longer be admonished, for then his heart is evil: for if a man is willing to have his lust mortified, he is well pleased with him that brings him a knife to cut it off, because he does as he would have him do: but when men are purposed to lie in sin, they do as a man does with Physic that he loathes, he hates even the very pot itself wherein it was; so they hate them that admonish them, even as dogs: but if they can endure the company of good men, it is a sign their hearts are good.

Thirdly, Abstinence from occasions: for many say their infirmities make them run into such and such sins; but if they were minded to leave their sins, they would leave their evil company and all occasions. To this add the use of the means: for he that purposes to forsake his sins, will use the means: as if a man that is a drunkard, will keep drunkards company, he has not purposed to forsake his sins, for then he would forsake and leave his evil company: but if he uses the means for mortifying the sins he loves, then it is a sign he is willing to leave sin.

Now the means for mortifying sinful lusts in us are these.

First, to make a vow not to commit that sin, nor touch the occasions; for then it is a sign our heart is sincere: this is a comfort to those who have made vows; which should be more used, not to make perpetual vows, but for some short time.

Secondly, to fast and pray; for some lusts are not cast out but by these three.

Thirdly, to use godly men's company, for their practice and example help them to forsake their sins, to fast and pray.

Another sign of not lying in any known sin is when a man prays for admonitions, that God would stir up some to admonish him, and can be content to search reasons out of the Scripture against it, and is glad when he hears it reproved in the public ministry.

Fourthly, when we can be content to be deprived of many things that might further our lusts, and to loathe what sweetness might increase them; that is a sure sign that sin rules not in us.

Fifthly, when a man confesses his sins particularly and plainly: for this is a sign he would forsake them: this reason the Scripture does show because then the conscience makes such a noise that he cannot deny it; for when a man is purposed to continue in sin, he will not confess his sins, no not to God: it is said when they came to John Baptist, They confessed their sins, Matthew 3. 6. So David says, I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Psalm 32. 5.

Sixthly, when he is easily convicted: but when men will not be convicted, but seek out distinctions to maintain their sin, it is a sign

it is prevalent in them. Again, when they will not examine both sides, but run to commit it, and stop their ears like a deaf adder, which refuses to hear the voice of the Charmer, charm he never so wisely, and will not hear the reasons against that sin, lest they should be restrained. Therefore the righteous are said to ponder their ways, and consider their paths, and to try everything, and to take that which is good. Now, he that will but hear reasons against the sin he does, he is none of these: but when he will not be convinced, which is the first work of the spirit, it is a sign he is under the dominion of sin.

Seventhly, when a man abstains from sin not only out of a natural conscience but out of a spiritual one; for a natural conscience may deceive him: for there are three degrees of conscience: First, a profane man has some conscience; Secondly, a civil man has more conscience; yet both natural: Thirdly, a godly man has the most conscience.

Paul speaks of the heathen, that they had a conscience that did accuse and excuse them: but when a man does not commit sin, being enlightened by a spiritual conscience, which is when a man has a love for the contrary grace, and is carried with a certain desire to do it (as men eat) though there were no reward, and hates the sin, and will not commit it, this is a good sign that sin has not dominion over him: but a man may have a restraint from a natural conscience, yet it may have dominion over him because it is like a barking dog that keeps the thief from robbing.

Eighthly, when a man 1. Does not purpose to commit the sin; 2. Has reluctance in the committing of it. 3. Grieves afterward and rises with a better resolution not to do it. But if this proceeds from a natural conscience, it is nothing: but if it proceeds from a spiritual conscience and hatred of sin, this is a good sign.

Ninthly, when after striving we have the victory: for we shall have the victory if we strive aright. This takes away their excuse that say it's their infirmity: but if they do not lie in sin, they will have the victory over it; else, you are not a King, for a King is victorious; yet a King may have rebels, yes, he may be wounded, yet he keeps his power. So the Saints may have many infirmities, yes, they may have sound falls, yet in the end they have the victory; God shall tread Satan under their feet: therefore the Godly man's heart, though he fails sometimes, is like a troubled fountain, which though it be muddy, yet because there is a spring of grace in his heart, it works itself pure again, and works out all the mud. Therefore, do not content yourselves with a dislike of sin, but leave not until you have got the victory.

Tenthly, Observe whether you delight in those who commit the same sins: if you do, you lie in sin, whatever you pretend. They do not only do those things but have pleasure in those that do them. Romans 1. ult. This is a sign of a desperate heart. For a man may be drawn to sin by passion, yet his heart may be upright: but when he allows and loves it in another, then there is no passion to lead him, but it's a sign his heart is bent to it: for it's a sign of grace when you love those that excel in grace; so on the contrary, it's a sign of a corrupt and rotten heart when we rejoice in iniquity. As for example, suppose a man has a lust of uncleanness, yet dislikes it in another, and likes those that excel in the contrary virtue, it's a sign he is in a good estate; and this is true, because in another a man has no passion to lead him away.

Eleventhly, when a man shall commit a sin clean to the contrary after persuasion and long deliberation, as in Jeroboam, Saul, and Ahab; these committed their sins but once or twice: Saul had a commandment from Samuel not to do it, he had many days deliberation upon it, yet he did; which lost him his soul. David

committed greater sins, yet God counted them nothing because he did not cast God away: but Saul had cast him off; so Jeroboam set up the calf on deliberation, and contrary to the persuasion of the Prophet, therefore God cast him off. This was Balaam's sin, who deliberated what he should do, yet having a secret desire of reward, did curse Israel; which made God cast him off: this was the sin of Francis Spira, who was smitten for committing a sin of deliberation.

Twelfthly and lastly, when a man shall make no conscience of small particular sins, wherein his judgment is convicted that they are sins, it's a sign sin has dominion over him: this is plain by Scripture; He that is not faithful in the greatest, he may do it, yet not be faithful. Again by reason, if a small sin be a sin against God, then why make you no conscience of the least? for God is offended with these as well as with the greatest: so if ye make conscience of the greatest of the duties of God's worship, why do you not also of the least duties? for God is pleased with these, as well as with the other. Some say they will be religious, but they need not be so precise as some scrupulous men are: but let them examine themselves: if the least sins be sins, they must also make conscience of them: so if we must keep an hour of the Sabbath, there is the same reason for the rest of the hours; so for idle speeches, and fashioning of ourselves to the world; so if we seek for preferment or riches, it is contrary to the commandment of God: seek not to be rich; for they that will be rich, drown themselves in perdition and destruction: so we must not keep company with evil and unsanctified men: examine how we practice this in all duties commanded, let us try ourselves by abstaining from occasions, whether we refrain ourselves from the temptations of objects; for our speech must be gracious, not by fits, but always; so we must be diligent in our Callings: if out of conscience we do this, we are faithful; otherwise we are not: for the same God which commanded us not to kill, commanded us not to commit adultery: if then thou

committest adultery, thou offendest God: so Moses would not leave an hoof behind him in Egypt because God commanded him so to do. Know you not that no unrighteous man shall inherit the Kingdom of God? 1 Corinthians 6. 9. So if we abstain from foul sins, yet if we commit the least, we shall never go to heaven.

It serves for encouragement for fearful Christians: for if sin shall not have dominion over you, then this may encourage you against the sin that prevails against you sometimes; at last, you shall have the victory. It is true that many sins make war against many Christians, and will not be overcome for a long time, it may be for one, two, or three years; yet let us not be discouraged, but renew our strength again, and in the end, we shall have the victory.

Thirdly, we have here the privilege of Christians; for though they be servants while others be Princes, yet they are free in regard of their lusts. To see a man led to his execution, we would not think it were for his honour; so when ungodly men thrive in their worldly lusts, their souls are led to destruction when sin shall have no dominion over the godly; but the ambitious and voluptuous men do whatsoever their lusts command them, with a miserable bondage.

It is not enough for men to see their sins or to blame them in themselves or to purpose to amend or forsake them, but they must strive to overcome them, or else they shall have no promise of the Gospel applied unto them. Pharaoh was a wicked man, yet with heart he purposed to let the children of Israel go; but when some temptation assaulted him, then he would not let them go: so Saul purposed in his heart not to kill David, insomuch that he swore to Jonathan he would not do it; yet afterward he attempted it upon another temptation: but we must come to feel that sin has no dominion over us, otherwise we shall hear that sentence, Depart

from me, ye wicked, into everlasting fire; and, Out of thy own mouth I will adjudge thee, O thou wicked servant.

And so much may be sufficient for the unfolding the first point of doctrine; proceed we to a second which flows from hence also, and that is this, viz. That sin, although it do not reign in the Saints, yet does remain and dwell in them: for proof whereof see this place of Scripture, If any man thinketh (saith Saint John) that he hath no sin, he is a liar, and there is no truth in him. The truth whereof will be seen in these things clearly.

1. Because our knowledge is imperfect, and therefore every grace is imperfect, as our faith, and so our love; and therefore much sin must be in a man, inasmuch as his grace is not perfect.
2. The flesh lusteth against the spirit; therefore it is plain there is sin in us, yea so much that often times it even captivates us.
3. We have in this life but the first-fruits of the spirit: now when we shall have it in fullness, we shall have no more than enough; therefore having now but the first-fruits of the spirit, Mortification, and Sanctification, sin is not wholly abolished in the Saints in this life, but doth dwell in them. The reasons hereof are,
4. To humble us, and to make us see what is in our hearts, and to make us know that the Lord bringeth us to the holy Land; therefore God sometimes left the Israelites to try them; and so he troubled Hezekiah to know what was in his heart; and so he sent a Messenger of Satan to buffet S. Paul, lest he should be exalted above measure through the abundance of Revelations; and so the Lord doth deal with every Saint.

5. That Christ may be acknowledged; for if we had no sin in us, we should not acknowledge the benefits of his mediation so much as now we do: All are shut up under sin, that he might have mercy upon all, Rom. 3. 9. & 11. 32. that is, that it might be manifested and declared, that they are saved merely by the mercy of God in Christ, as is said, Rom. 3. 26. Otherwise we should not rightly value our justification and sanctification; but seeing him subduing, pardoning our sins, we see what need we have of him, how that we are lost without him.

6. That we might exercise our faith. 1 John. 3. 2. We are the sons of God, but it doth not yet appear what we shall be, &c. So God hath hid his children under baseness, that their faith might be exercised: for things we see, we may easily believe; but faith is of things not seen: therefore God doth as men do, hide Jewels under base places, where men would look least for them: wherefore wicked men stumble and are offended at this, because they do not believe it; and therefore it is made an article of our faith, that we need and believe the remission and forgiveness of sins. But let us apply it.

1. This should teach us not to be discouraged by those infirmities that are in us, for there are such in every Saint. Sin is a guest to evil men, but a thief to the godly, which they would not have come into their hearts: so it is one thing to wear a chain as an ornament, and another as a fetter to restrain them: therefore the godly ought not to be discouraged but to assure themselves they are under grace.

2. We must not censure men for the slips and falls we see in them: for we must remember that sin dwells in them; we must not presently judge them to be hypocrites: Be not many masters,

says S. James, that is, censure him not, for he stands or falls to his own Master. Rom, 14. 4.

3. This should teach us to be watchful and not to think our labour is at an end when we are in the state of grace; for sin still dwells in us, and though we have the victory over sin one day, it will fight against us the next day: as in a garden the weeds will grow, because the roots are not quite plucked up and taken away; so sin is in us, and therefore we must think it will fight against us and vex us; and therefore I say, let us renew our strength.

Now for this, we must do these two things.

First, weaken sin. Secondly, pray to God to make us watchful. And so I have also done with the second doctrine. Again, from the latter part of these words, or reason of the promise made unto them in the former part of this verse, that sin shall not have dominion over them, because they are not under the Law but under grace: I gather this conclusion, viz. That the way to overcome sin is to get assurance of the love and grace of God, and that it is forgiven them: the reason why the Apostle promises them sin shall not have dominion over them is because they are not under the Law but under grace, that is, they had assurance of God's love, and that their sin is forgiven them: this is proved from that, Faith purifies the heart; and, You repent and believe the Gospel.

Now the reasons hereof are these four especially.

1. Because it is the means to get the spirit, without which no sin is forgiven, which comes by faith; for it is not received by the law, for so says the Apostle, Received you the spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Gal. 3. 2.

Secondly, it is the way to make us believe the promises, to make us believe that we are transformed into a heavenly nature: for when we believe the promises are true, that works love in us, and love transforms us into the divine nature, without which no sin is overcome.

Thirdly, because hereby we are able to resist the temptations, which are either for the enjoying of good, or fleeing of evil; so that these promises propose more good than sin can harm: sin threatened the loss of outward things, but the promises propose eternal life, which is better than all things else in the world.

Fourthly, because we do delight in God: for when we do believe in God that our sins are forgiven us in Christ, then we look at God as on a merciful Father, and then we cease to delight in the world, and we begin to delight ourselves in the Lord.

The use hereof is, first, for direction, to teach us the way how to heal a sin, and that is to get assurance that it is pardoned and forgiven; for legal terrors do not heal a sin, but it is faith that purifies the heart, and purifying pacifies it: As a Traitor will not come in when he hears a proclamation out for his death; but when he hears he shall live, and be pardoned, this makes him come in: so we, when we only fix our eyes upon the legal terrors, shall not heal our sins; but when we believe they are pardoned, this heals them.

But sorrow and a broken heart are required for sinners to be assured of their forgiveness.

This sorrow is not so much commanded, but it is that whereby God prepares His servant's hearts, to make them see what need they have of pardon, and so they may ask for pardon. But the sorrow

commanded is that which follows belief; for the more I believe the promises, the more I shall grieve for displeasing Him.

But what is the way to get assurance of the forgiveness of our sins, you may ask.

I answer, that there be done which is to be done on our part, believed which God has promised.

First, The things to be done on our part are these:

1. Confession plainly and truly: we must confess them to God, and to man, when we ourselves cannot overcome them.
2. Contrition; which is when a man is not stubborn, and resists God's will, and will please himself; to get his heart broken, and to say as S. Paul says, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" and then we are subject to His will. "To him will I look that is of a contrite heart."
3. Desertion, or forsaking of sin: for, "He that forsaketh not his sins, shall not prosper;" which is when we, having the like occasions, yet will not give way to them, but follow our own lusts.

Secondly, That that be believed which God has promised; and that is, that as He has said, He will forgive our sins, upon such and such conditions, so we believe it. And to make us do this, these motions may persuade us.

1. Because He is merciful; in whose mercy there are three things, all very material and moving.

2. It is natural to Him; He is not weary of showing mercy: as the eye is not weary of seeing, nor the ear of hearing, no more is God in showing mercy: but in us, it is not natural, but an infused quality, and therefore we are weary when men provoke us often.
3. His mercy is infinite; but in men it is not so: therefore come within the compass of this quality, and He will exercise it; for no sin is beyond God's mercy: this keeps us from despair: for though they be great, yet God is able to forgive them. As the rain waters as well the great field as the little garden, and as the Sun shines as well on mountains as on Molehills, and as it disperses the thick mist as well as the least thin cloud, so does God's mercy pass by great sins as well as little.

But if our sins be exceedingly great, aggravated with circumstances, and often committed, then we cannot imagine that God will forgive us. This is answered by the Prophet Isaiah; God is more merciful than man can be sinful, He is more merciful than we can imagine: "My thoughts are as much above your thoughts as the heaven is above the earth."

3. We see much mercy in men, and in the mother of a child: now, it is but as a drop out of the ocean of God's mercy, but as a spark to the whole element of fire. "If you being evil, can give good things to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father, etc." See what the Scripture says, "I am merciful, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin:" the first word signifies original sin, the second actual, the third rebellion; all which God can forgive.

Secondly, because it is the end of Christ's coming into the world: now, no man will do anything, especially so great a matter as to kill himself, for no end: Christ then died for the forgiveness of sins. This

S. Paul urges: the end of Christ's coming was to save sinners; otherwise, the cross of Christ had been of no effect, and his mediation of no use, if men did not commit sins, or if God should not forgive them: therefore God must needs be ready to forgive.

Thirdly, because God beseeches us to be reconciled unto Him through Christ: now, if God does this, if we seek earnestly, He will hear us. The Prodigal, being willing to come home to his Father, He met him and received him joyfully: so does God, He charges His Ministers to compel men to come in, that is, to preach God's mercy, that He will forgive their sins; and therefore the most acceptable action to God is to bring a sinner to Him.

Fourthly, the charge laid on us to believe: we are charged on the pain of death to believe; and therefore it is most profitable for us, and most pleasing to Him: He takes it well at our hands that we should believe, and by the hand of faith lay hold on Him; which He would not do if He were not ready to forgive.

Fifthly, from the examples of others; let us see what God has done for them, and it will make us believe: He forgave Manasseh as well as Joshua, He pardoned Mary Magdalene as well as Elizabeth, and Paul as well as Peter: He has forgiven the greatest sins as well as the least, and He will also deal so with us.

Sixthly, from the effects of it which are these.

1. It glorifies God much: Abraham believed and glorified God much: for the greater the sinner is, the more honour is given to God: as the Physician has the greatest glory by curing the greatest wound: so God has the greatest glory by forgiving the greatest sins, which wound the soul even to death.

2. It moves us to love God the more. Mary loved much because much was forgiven her.
3. It mollifies the most; it causes them to relent, and weep much more. This is plain by that place, where it is said, that when God forgave the greatest sins, then they mourned and lamented, as in those Converts, Act. 2. 37.
4. It purifies the heart: for no man looks to keep his heart pure until he is assured of the forgiveness of his sins; for until then, he cannot look on God as on a Father: but, on the contrary, when the sin is not forgiven, God loses the glory of being a Father, and the glory of his truth, and of his mercy; and that hardens the heart from relenting.

Seventhly, from the price which was paid, and which no sin can go beyond: indeed, if Christ had paid but a finite price, we might fear that our sins should not be forgiven. If a man were in debt two thousand pounds, and there were but one paid, he might be discouraged: but when there is infinitely more paid than the debt is, this should make us believe our sins are forgiven us whatsoever they be, seeing they are all but finite.

Eighthly, from the tenor of the Promises, which proclaim that they that believe and repent, and forsake their sins, shall find pardon for them: as a King that proclaims that all traitors and rebels shall be pardoned if they would lay down their weapons. Now, "Non est excipiendum ubi lex non excipit," There is no exception to be made where the law makes none. God says, yea, therefore has said and sworn it, that he will forgive our sins, that we may believe it.

But I have committed the sin often.

Yet God will forgive thee. Though thou hast often committed whoredom, yet I will forgive thee, if thou turn unto me, saith the Lord, by the Prophet, of the house of Israel, Jer. 3. 1.

Hence then (to make some use of it) we may learn not to deceive ourselves, to think we are in the state of grace when we are not: for if we did truly believe our sins are forgiven us, we would be healed: but if we have the same lusts, and keep the same company, which we did when we were not changed, it is a mere delusion, whatsoever we say or think.

And thus much for the third point too: there yet remains one more, wherewith we will conclude the whole text; and that we may draw from the contrary to what the Apostle here saith; and indeed it is implied, though not expressed: for if sin have no dominion over them that are not under the law but under grace, then on the other side must it needs be as true, That Whosoever is under the law, sin hath dominion over him, that is, He that refrains sin only for fear of the law and of judgments, sin hath dominion over him: this is the case of them that refrain sinning only for fear and for the salvation of their souls, or for education's sake, which have been brought up in good families, or such as repent upon some amazement, like the bulrushes which hang down their heads only while the shower lasts. And that,

First, because all such as are not under grace but under the law have not received the spirit, which cometh by hearing the Gospel: and no creature can change one creature into another, as lead into gold, or a Wolf into a Lamb, unless it be by God's spirit.

Secondly, to such God's service is burdensome; and violent motions last not long: they are weary in clambering up a hill: all natural motions are swifter at the last than at the first; but these are like the Israelites, who after a time would have returned into Egypt again.

Now then, to end all with the time, let us:

1. Be exhorted not to abstain from any sin for fear of punishment, but consider whether thou wouldest serve God for God's sake, although there were neither heaven nor hell: it must be our meat and drink, which men would do though there were no punishment for the omission of it. Blessed is he that hungers and thirsts after righteousness.
2. Hence we may learn not to defer repentance, till death, sickness, crosses, or age comes: then it may be you would not sin, though with Balaam you had your house full of gold and silver: for it's not the abstinence from sin that God loveth, but the change of the heart. Amaziah's heart was not right though he walked in all the ways of David. There are men that have made a covenant with hell and death; but God will disannul that covenant, or it will be but equivocal; many have sworn in their sickness never to commit sin again, which afterward they have committed again with greediness; many have died in the same without repentance.
3. Labor to see yourselves doing duties with as much love as you can, and with as little fear because perfect love casteth out fear. And so (beloved) I have given you a brief survey of the several points contained in this portion of holy Scripture: wherefore, if you know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.

FINIS.

THE DEFORMED FORM OF A FORMAL PROFESSION.

2 TIMOTHY. 3. 5. Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof. OUR Apostle S. Paul doth in these words give us a part of a description of wicked men in the latter times: and he bringeth them in by way of prevention or objection, or answer to an objection, as if some should wonder that there should be such kind of persons in the Church, as he in the former verses had described; Covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, and so on. Do these live as the Church does? Do these retain the Sacraments, and the like? Yes, saith the Apostle, they do, we cannot deny it; only this, They have a form of godliness, but &c. So that the point of doctrine arising from hence, doth plainly appear even at the first sight to be this, viz. That there is a powerful godliness necessary to salvation, and that many have but the form, not the power thereof.

Now, there be three things to be explained in opening of this doctrine, to show:

1. What godliness is.
2. What the power thereof is.
3. The reasons why many have no more but the form thereof.

For the first, that you may better understand what godliness is, I will first show you what it is not.

First then, it is not mere nature; the godliness that God requires of all people is more than that. God has indeed commanded nature, even corrupted nature, to produce many virtues such as abstinence from pleasure, patience, temperance, and the like, which are all

admirable in their own right. However, because these virtues do not originate from God or His sanctifying Spirit, and because they do not have God as their ultimate aim, they are not true godliness, and God does not regard them.

Secondly, it is not an act of religion driven by self-love, even if it is offered to God. Some people might worship God because they see Him as the ruler of the world, holding the keys to heaven and earth. They may do much for God out of such self-centered motivations, using Him as a means to reach their own ends. This is not godliness. But what is it then, you may ask?

Thirdly, it is a divine grace infused into the soul by God, whereby a person follows, loves, magnifies, and exalts God in their heart above all else. They manifest this love for God in their life and conduct, doing all things for Him and to Him. This grace is brought about when the individual recognizes their own lack of beauty and self-sufficiency, acknowledging that God possesses all beauty, excellence, and power to fulfill their every need. They begin to elevate God in their heart, relying on Him completely because they cannot sustain themselves. They realize that they depend on God for everything, and as a result, they do all things for His sake because all things come from Him. Previously, when they saw some goodness in themselves, they magnified themselves and withdrew their hearts from God. This brings us to the next point, which is:

What is meant by the power of godliness? To understand this, you should know that there is a godliness that is not just in words and appearances but in action and truth. It's not just a superficial display of perfection; it deeply affects the heart, dyeing it with holiness. It differs from mere outward godliness in five ways:

First, it is powered by genuine life. It's not just a mere image; there is actual life in it. You can recognize it when a person doesn't need to be pushed to perform good deeds. Instead, there is a natural impulse within them to do good things, and they do them with ease and consistency as if it's a natural part of their life. When a person has life in godliness, they also grow in it, just as any living thing grows. They desire what nourishes and strengthens their godliness, seeking means to deepen their connection with God. In contrast, dead works come from those who lack this vital life in godliness.

Second, it is true and not counterfeit. Counterfeit godliness resembles the real thing but lacks some specific characteristic found in the genuine article. Just as counterfeit Balsam might look like the real Balsam but lacks its healing properties, there are counterfeit versions of godliness. These counterfeit forms are exposed in their use or in specific situations when tested. A jeweler can discern the authenticity of a jewel, but an ordinary person may only do so through usage and experience. For instance, true love for God involves love for fellow believers. True rectitude and uprightness of heart are revealed in gracious speech. Keeping God's commandments genuinely means finding delight and willingness in obeying them, not seeing them as burdens. Similarly, taking Christ by faith is more than a mere claim; it's demonstrated in action when faced with the loss of possessions or reputation.

Third, it possesses strength rather than weakness. It has the power and ability to perform good deeds. This reveals whether a person has strength or weakness in their godliness. Many have good intentions only, which are heartfelt for a time, but they lack the power and strength to follow through. This is true of many in the Church who have knowledge of God's Word, affirm the truth in their consciences, and desire salvation through practice but end up with many good

intentions that lead nowhere because they lack the necessary strength and power. Therefore, examine if you have the power and strength to carry out your intentions, and then you possess the power of godliness. Otherwise, many have good purposes but lack the power to fulfil them.

Fourthly, if you wish to know whether your godliness possesses the power or not, examine whether you have not only the appearance but the substance of it. There is a mere shadow, and there is a shadow with substance. For instance, when you pray, the formal act of praying is like the shadow, but praying in the Holy Spirit, not in your own spirit's voice, but through the Spirit of God, is the substance. It's not a matter of memory or intellect but arises from your heart, a heart sanctified by the Spirit of adoption. Similarly, when you listen, listening for the sake of knowledge is the shadow, but listening for the purpose of putting it into practice is the substance. When we preach the Gospel, doing it out of necessity or fearing the consequences if we don't, is the shadow. However, preaching with power and authority, unlike the Scribes and Pharisees who rely on persuasive human wisdom, is the substance.

Fifthly and finally, it possesses the power when a person follows through with their work. Something is considered to be in the power when it is effective, when a person sees it through to completion without doing things halfway. Some people might start but then leave the work unfinished, only staying at the beginner's level. But if a person possesses the power, they will overcome all obstacles, surpass all difficulties, and persist until they have worked out their salvation with fear and trembling.

Now, moving on to the third and final point, which is the reasons why some have only the form and not the power, they are primarily

these:

Firstly, because the form is easier, but the power is more challenging. The form doesn't require a person to make the radical sacrifices that the power does. The form doesn't demand that someone cut off their right hand, pluck out their right eye, or deny themselves in matters closest and dearest to them, as the power does. The form involves engaging in good deeds and going through them without neglecting or treating any of them lightly. It requires a person to avoid known sins and persistently perform good deeds even when it contradicts their fleshly desires. This is a difficult path, and many are willing to obey the form but not the power.

Secondly, the power generates hatred and opposition in the world, and the world will resist it. So, when a person retains the form and stays aligned with the world, they can continue to be of the world, and the world will favour its own. However, the power makes individuals antipodes to the entire world. This drives many to settle for no more than the form. The passage in Wisdom 2:12 is suitable in this context, where the ungodly say of the righteous, "These men's lives are contrary to ours, and their doings reprove our thoughts; therefore let us oppress them." Jesus also warned that His followers would be hated by all for His name's sake. It's not easy to be at odds with everyone, and this presents another reason.

Thirdly, because the form suffices for unregenerate ends. Since people possess a natural conscience that needs appeasing, and since that conscience lacks discernment and cannot judge the power of godliness, they are content with the form. It's akin to giving nuts to wayward and quarrelsome children because we know they lack the discernment to appreciate gold or silver. Likewise, the natural

conscience deems the form sufficient for attaining heaven, and most are content with doing just enough.

Fourthly, when people possess only the form of godliness, Satan and the flesh do not trouble them. However, when individuals strive for the power of godliness and go beyond the form, Satan, knowing that this path leads to heaven, vehemently opposes them. The flesh does the same. The form does not resist as it aligns with a person's desires, but the power contradicts a person's self-interest. Denying a friend or a stranger when they are persistent is challenging, but denying oneself when one's own desires are relentless is even more difficult. Yet, this is what one must do when they possess the power. Denying the power is when it is offered to individuals, and they stubbornly resist and reject it.

So much for the explanation of these words. Now, to conclude and summarize, let's start with understanding what godliness is.

We must not deceive ourselves. Godliness is not merely natural or moral virtues, nor is it the performance of religious actions with the sole purpose of promoting oneself. Do not content yourself with anything that falls short of godliness. Let me speak to you as Peter did to the dispersed brethren when he listed many virtues, such as patience, knowledge, temperance, and so on. He exhorted them to add godliness to all these virtues, indicating that all the other virtues are insufficient without godliness. Ensure that all your actions are godly, meaning that they originate from God and are directed towards Him. For this is the essence of godliness, to look beyond nature, to have another Alpha and Omega for everything within us, and to derive it from God, not from ourselves. When we preach to others, let us preach Christ and God, emphasizing that all virtues come from them and lead to them. As listeners, make sure that

everything you do is godliness, coming from God and aiming towards Him. Actions are named after their point of origin and their purpose. Just as something is called "calefaction" when it leads to heat, something is genuinely godly when it leads to God and has respect for Him. Are you a student? When you study and put effort into your books, examine whether you do it for yourself, your reputation, or whether you make God your ultimate purpose. Examine your heart thoroughly. Similarly, for those engaged in other professions, do you work with the intention of benefiting mankind, using your talents in the service of your master? If so, this is godliness. Even when you eat, drink, or relax, do you do it to improve your ability to do good? If your actions aim to enhance your ability to serve God and do good, then this too is godliness.

However, you may ask, "Are you condemning natural and moral virtues altogether? Should they serve no purpose?" No, they have their role. They act like the wind that fills the ship's sails. But godliness is the rudder that guides the ship and directs it towards the right destination. For example, you are commanded to love your children and your spouses. You must do this even if you lack natural affections because it's a commandment. However, having these affections makes it easier. Nevertheless, godliness should set the course and steer the ship. Moral virtues are like good horses pulling a chariot, while godliness is the charioteer. Without godliness, even the most excellent qualities of nature are not regarded by the Lord. God regards only that which draws His creatures towards Him. Moral virtues make us rely on our own abilities, and all things that enhance the flesh are similarly disregarded by God. God does not want the flesh to glory in itself; instead, He wants those who boast to glory in the Lord. Furthermore, even the graces of the spirit, which adorn God's saints, must be used carefully. If they are magnified, they draw your heart away from God. In heaven, there is neither sun nor moon,

meaning that no creature's excellence is magnified there. God is all in all, both the sun and the moon. Thus, in Revelation, it is said that the worth of the redeemed lies in their willingness to give everything to God. They cast down their crowns before Him, despite being glorious created beings. When evil angels began to focus on themselves, it led to their downfall. They fell from God because the creature, by itself, is like a glass without a bottom. If it stands on its own, it falls and breaks. Therefore, the angels fell when they tried to stand on their own. Therefore, even in the graces of the spirit, such as faith and love, which God adorns His saints with, do not magnify them, as they must be empty graces that give all to God and nothing to themselves. These graces are essential in religion and must be diligently pursued.

Secondly, since godliness possesses power, if it is indeed such a powerful force, it should comfort us as we navigate its paths. Wherever godliness exists in truth, it is accompanied by power. Even if you possess the knowledge that you cannot believe or walk the paths that lead to faith, if you have godliness, you will be able to overcome. The kingdom of God is a realm of power. When God dwells in someone's heart, He sends godliness to rule within, like a king in his kingdom. Think of godliness as monarchs like Alexander or those spoken of by Daniel, who conquers all before them, bringing every thought under subjection. Therefore, the spirit is described as a spirit of power, and if you have godliness, which comes from the spirit, it is accompanied by power. Christ is said to be full of the Holy Spirit and power. The same applies to Stephen and John the Baptist. Grace is also referred to as a powerful entity, and we are urged to "be strong in the grace of God and in the power of His might."

The reason why godliness possesses power is because God has instilled virtue within it. Just as when you observe a particular herb having a specific virtue to perform a certain function, it's because

God has endowed it with that power. Similarly, with godliness, if you have any task in matters of religion, go ahead. If you have a lust to conquer, confront it. Let me address you as Gideon was addressed: "Go on, you valiant man, in the might of the Lord." When the Israelites journeyed to the land of Canaan, they saw cities with towering walls and giants, the sons of Anak. Yet Joshua encouraged them, telling them not to be afraid, for the Lord would fight for them and deliver their adversaries into their hands. Similarly, even though you may encounter difficulties on the path to heaven, remember that godliness is a powerful force that will carry you through. The Apostle Paul, after praying for the Ephesians, asking for strength through the Spirit in their inner beings, goes on to say that God can do far more abundantly than all they could ask or think, according to the power working within them. Suppose you consider overcoming a particular fleshly lust as something so hard that it seems impossible, or you find it embarrassing to ask for such a thing. In that case, remember that, according to the power working within us, God can do more than we ask or think. Pray that your eyes may be opened to see the greatness of the power that works in you. This revelation is not meant for idle contemplation but for your use so that, by laying hold of it and putting it into practice, you can achieve things that seem as unlikely as getting water to heat when there's none in it. Just as Christ told Mary, "Believe, and you shall see the power of God." Approach God through faith, and He will manifest His power to you, bearing fruit through you. The purpose of faith is not only to apply the holy promises of justification but also of sanctification. For example, God has promised to baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire, which signifies zeal and other graces of the spirit that provide power and strength. This is all to prevent sin from reigning in your mortal bodies. Therefore, approach God with His promises, and He will not deny you. When people make excuses, saying, "I am not capable of doing such a thing, what do you expect me to do?" it is

not a valid excuse. If they were willing, that is all that God requires. The power belongs to God, and if people would only believe and approach Him, He would undoubtedly grant it to them.

So, I ask you now, do you want to turn to God? Do you want to overcome a particular lust, whether it's uncleanness, drunkenness, or anything else? If you answer "No," then you are rightly condemned, and the consequences are upon your own head. However, if you say "Yes," that you do want to change, then simply come to God with a resolute determination to be genuinely religious, and I assure you, He will grant you the power to do so. The Apostle says that God will confirm you until the end so that you may be blameless on the day of the Lord Jesus. He emphasizes that God is faithful, and He will keep His promises. Consider this: is it not an acceptable request to go to God with your whole heart and say, "Lord, I only desire the power and strength to carry out Your work"? Do you think He will not hear you? Remember how Christ, the only Physician, was ready to heal people of their physical ailments when they came to Him. He has not changed His nature now. Do you believe that the power of His death and resurrection is more than mere notions? If so, continue on your path without fear. Just as God said to Joshua, He will never leave you nor forsake you.

Now, with that said and left for your further consideration, let me move on to a third point. Since godliness is as powerful as you have seen, you must be careful not to deceive yourselves with mere desires and purposes that lack power. Do not think they will suffice, not even a few feeble, half-hearted attempts. I say to those who embark on religious journeys without experiencing a change in their hearts, just as Christ said to His disciples, "Tarry in the city until you are endued with power from on high." It is as if our Saviour, Christ, said, "If you go out into the world immediately, you will not be able to complete

your work. Therefore, wait with fasting and prayer until you have received power from on high to carry you through. New resolutions in a person who returns to their old nature are like new wine in old vessels; they will break the vessels and exceed the capacity of your hearts. Therefore, it is sufficient for now to form a resolution and begin to be diligent in your calling or in sanctifying the Sabbath. These resolutions will not survive in a heart that is carnal. Just as the soil must be suitable for each type of seed, or else it will not grow, likewise, your nature must be transformed, or these resolutions will remain fruitless.

In the first place, labour to obtain new hearts, as the foundation for these resolutions, which may serve as the root to provide nourishment for them. Only then will they live and flourish within you, when there is a suitable soil for them.

Secondly, acquire the power of belief. When Christ our Saviour came to His homeland, it is recorded that He did not exert His power to work many miracles there. Why was this the case? One might have thought that He should have performed miracles there more than anywhere else, both for His honour and the benefit of His fellow countrymen. No place was more fitting for it. Yet He worked few or none there, and the reason was their unbelief. They did not believe. So, it is a lack of faith that prevents God from strengthening you. You will not believe God, who has sworn (and this is no idle oath) that He would grant us the ability to serve Him in godliness and holiness all the days of our lives. When the widow came to Christ seeking healing for her long-standing issue of blood, it is said that virtue went out of Him to heal her because she believed. Regardless of how many years she had suffered from her ailment, if He says, "Be whole," it does not matter what the ailment is, as long as God is the Physician. Therefore, believe.

Thirdly, pray and equip yourselves with all the graces of the Spirit. Do not merely engage in actions but maintain a reservoir. Fill your inner cistern daily, sharpen and refine God's graces within you. Just as the inward man is subject to decay every day, so is the outward man. Do not aim at yourself or rely on your strength when you are in a good mood or by virtue of your current temperament. For this mood will vanish unless there is a daily supply of grace from within, unless you sharpen your souls every day.

Fourthly and finally, if it is indeed true that many possess the form of godliness but lack its power, and when we examine the lives of individuals within our churches, we often find the form in many, but scarcely the power (the latter is as rare as the former is common). In their profession, there is a form, but we find religious servants as idle as others, wives as stubborn as others, husbands and masters as harsh in their households and as deceitful in their dealings as others. If this is true (and indeed it is too true), then do not deceive yourselves, for God cannot be fooled. Test and examine yourselves in this matter. For the Kingdom of God does not consist in mere words but in power. The Lord will not judge you based on your intentions and purposes but according to your actions. It is not those who merely say, "Lord, Lord," who will inherit the kingdom of heaven, but those who do the will of my Father, etc. So, do not remain as children in understanding, mistaking counters for gold. Do not waste your money on counterfeit things, and do not be foolish by exerting effort without having your objectives fulfilled. Let me address you as James does: If you claim to have faith but no works, can your faith save you? Similarly, if you possess the form of godliness but not its power, will that save you? Therefore, if you do not want to be deceived, examine yourselves.

First of all, if you do more than what your nature dictates, see to it that you are not the same person you used to be, that you do not remain in the same company as before. If you do, you possess nothing more than the form of godliness. For if you truly possessed it, it would transform your nature and give you wings, enabling you to soar higher than your natural inclinations. You would be able to say, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me," not merely some things but all things. Paul does not say, "I intend to do" or "I desire to do," but "I am able to do all things," etc. Therefore, those who can resist certain lusts contrary to their dispositions but not all of them are weak and lack this power. Perhaps you are capable of serving God when you are poor, but what about when the world entices you? You might be able to abstain from sins by nature, but godliness (as we say of medicine) aids when nature falls short. Just as a natural man can see quite far with his own sight but sees even farther with an optical instrument, so when nature falls short, art comes into play. Even though you can do many things by nature, when godliness enters, it helps in areas where nature falls short. Just as Samson could perform many ordinary tasks through his own strength, when it came to taking down the gates of a city or tearing down a house, it is still said, "The Spirit of the Lord came upon him; the Lord was with him." So it is here as well.

Secondly, examine whether you are truly godly or not. In Christ, there are said to be dead branches as well as living ones, meaning those who have the form as well as those who have the power. But how are they distinguished? The dead branches bear no fruit, and as John said, "Every tree that does not bring forth good fruit, God cuts down with an axe." Likewise, the three types of ground did not bear fruit. Therefore, examine yourselves to see if you are full of fruit, if you abound in good deeds, and if you do them with an honest heart.

This is how the fourth type of ground is distinguished from the others.

Thirdly, examine whether you endure in times of trial, whether you are able to joyfully approve of yourselves, as the Apostle said of himself when he faced trouble on every side, in prosperity and adversity. The third type of ground did not endure in temptation because it lacked depth of earth, meaning it lacked power and an inward stock of grace. This inward stock of grace is what we refer to as depth of earth. Just as a man who manages a large house but lacks a sufficient stock to support it will soon go bankrupt, so will a tradesman who is not diligent in his trade and does not make proper returns. Similarly, when a person lacks inward power and an inward stock of graces to meet daily expenses, they will soon become spiritually bankrupt.

Fourthly, every grace has some distinct quality that sets it apart and differentiates it from counterfeits. For example, there is unfeigned faith, laborious love, patient hope, and the like.

Lastly, beware that no single lust overcomes all others, becoming predominant in your life, such as the desire for the praise of others or the pursuit of pleasure. Just as a hawk, though it may soar and fly high, keeps an eye on its prey below, so do hypocrites. Therefore, serve God with singleness of heart, not with eye-service, and do not harbour any lust within you, for it will eventually corrupt everything. Just as weeds in a garden, if left unchecked and not uprooted, will overrun the herbs, so it is with sin. If it is allowed to persist, even if it starts small, it will spread like a leprosy throughout the whole person. Therefore, be vigilant to ensure that no lust ultimately overcomes all others. With this, I conclude my remarks on this text and for now.

FINIS.

Plenitudo Fontis: OR, Christ's Fullness, and Man's Emptiness.

A Sermon Preached by JOHN PRESTON, etc.

1 Cor. 4. 7. "What do you have that you have not received? If you have received it, why do you boast as though you had not received it?"

LONDON, Printed for John Stafford, and are to be sold in Black Horse Alley, 1644.

To the Anti-Arminian:

OR, To every good Christian Reader.

Good Reader,

Pliny the great Naturalist criticised some Greek and Latin Writers in his time, accusing them of folly, at the very least, for distributing their empty and worthless pamphlets with exaggerated praise in the title, promising much upon first glance but ultimately disappointing the reader upon further examination. However, any reader who approaches this Sermon with discernment will discover more than just an impressive title to commend it. Sometimes the workman adorns the work, and at other times, the work adorns the workman. But in this Treatise, they complement each other, united like a white rose and a red rose in one delightful bouquet. Sadly, in the initial

publication of this work, both the work and the workman have been mishandled, as is evident from the manuscript. Certain passages that might challenge the Arminians and, without a doubt, cause them to stumble to some extent, have been removed by the person who approved the printing, as if Arminianism were the true doctrine of England. However, for your consolation, dear Christian, you now have the Author's Sermon exactly as it was preached before King James, without any alterations. I release it to you with the same prayer or blessing that Jacob bestowed upon his sons when they journeyed into Egypt: "May God Almighty grant you mercy in the sight of the man. In the sight of the great man, that you may humble him. In the sight of the poor man, that you may content him. In the sight of the stubborn man, that you may shape and soften him. In the sight of the penitent man, that you may bind up his wounds and sores. And in the sight of every man, that you may touch his conscience and wound his soul. Amen."

Yours in the Lord Jesus, P. B.

Christ's Fullness, and Man's Emptiness

JOHN 1:16 From his Fullness, we have all received Grace upon Grace.

Saint Augustine, in his book "De Civitate Dei," appears to be struck by the majesty that shines in this passage from John above all other passages in Holy Scripture. Calvin, likewise, states that he is struck by a sense of divinity in this chapter, giving it the highest praise as a

divine and awe-inspiring authority that surpasses all human writings. Innins attests that he had never apprehended the deity until he read this first chapter, affirming it to be the primary and foremost cause of his conversion from atheism to a sincere acceptance of Christianity. You can find this in his autobiography written by himself. In all this chapter, I do not find a richer and fuller sentence than this one that describes the fullness of Christ.

This sentence consists of three parts.

First, a Fullness is ascribed to Christ.

Second, this is not a limited Fullness but an overflowing Fullness, a Fullness that does not confine itself but spills over for our benefit and use.

From his Fullness, we have all received. That is, everyone who ever had any grace drew it from this storehouse, derived it from this source.

Third, these receipts are amplified by their variety: Grace upon Grace. This means that Christ has given us, for all the graces He received from His Father on our behalf, graces that correspond to them. It is as if the seal were said to impart to the wax impression for impression, character for character, or as a father is said to give to his son limb for limb, member for member, though not of the same size and measure. In the same sense, Christ is said to give us Grace upon Grace. So now you see there is a full store, many recipients, a choice of goods, or rather, to use a biblical analogy, a full table with many guests and a variety of dishes: From his Fullness, we have all received Grace upon Grace.

Let's start with the first aspect. This Fullness is attributed to Christ in four respects. [1. In terms of His person, He was full. First, with an uncreated Fullness. Just as the glory of God filled the temple, preventing Moses from entering, the humanity of Christ, which corresponded to that type, was filled not only with the effects of the Deity as then but with the Deity itself, which is said to dwell in Him corporeally or essentially. [2. He was also filled with a created Fullness, and thus, He was said to be full of all divine blessings, which John reduces to two categories: Grace and Truth. Truth encompasses all virtues of understanding, while Grace encompasses all the beauties and perfections of the will.

Second, this Fullness is attributed to Christ in terms of His offices. First, as a Prophet, He was full of all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, so that all the light the world ever had came from Him as a Prophet.

All the revelations that Adam, Abraham, and Noah ever received; all the visions seen by Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the other prophets; all the mysteries declared to Paul and John—all of these came from Him. They all received their light from this Sun, which shone upon the dark world since the beginning of time, without setting, although the darkness did not comprehend it.

Secondly, He was full in His role as a Priest—full of favour with God, allowing Him to have constant access, full of compassion for humankind, always ready to hear their pleas, and full of merit, guaranteeing success in all His requests and intercessions.

Thirdly, He was full as a King—full of authority, with all power granted to Him in heaven and on earth, full of strength and might to defend His servants and resist His enemies until He made them His footstool. Lastly, He was full of royal generosity, ready to supply the

needs of His servants and provide them with a generous reward in the end.

Thirdly, this Fullness is attributed to Christ concerning righteousness. He was full of all righteousness, both original and actual, active and passive, general and particular. Thus, we have the following blessings:

1. He who was so full Himself is able to make us full, even if we lack faith, love, or any other grace.
2. We have a Mediator full of love, patience, and tender compassion, inviting us to come to Him.
3. Despite our weak and limited righteousness, in Him, we are complete.

Fourthly, this Fullness is attributed to Him in terms of His actions. Almost every action performed by Christ displays a Fullness. At the first miracle He ever worked, He filled six water pots with wine. Later, He filled 5000 guests with five loaves and two fishes, leaving twelve baskets full of broken pieces. He filled the nets with fish until they were ready to break, and most importantly, He filled the disciples with the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost and many times afterward, making them full of joy and the Holy Ghost.

The reasons behind this Fullness lie partly in Christ Himself, for He was the Cornerstone and the Prince of our Salvation. He deserved to be exalted above all principalities and powers.

But chiefly, it was for our sake and our emptiness that He might fill our emptiness with His Fullness. Otherwise, we could neither have seen Him nor received from Him. The glorious beauty of His Godhead was too bright for our eyes to behold, so it was put into the lantern or veil of Christ's humanity that we might behold it. The

Deity is an inaccessible fountain, so Christ's humanity became the cistern or conduit-head to receive it for our benefit.

However, one question must be answered: Steven and other saints in Scripture are said to be full of the Holy Ghost. How does this differ from the Fullness of Christ?

Firstly, they were full according to their measure, while Christ was full beyond measure. They were full according to their limited capacity, but Christ's Fullness had no bounds.

Secondly, in them, there was a derived and participated Fullness, while in Christ, there was a Fullness like a fountain springing from Himself, distinct from theirs.

Thirdly, their Fullness was comparative—Steven was full in comparison to other saints. In Christ, there was absolute Fullness without limits or comparison.

What can we deduce from this for our own application?

First and foremost, we should be drawn to come to Christ and partake of this abundant treasure. This is the very purpose of the Evangelist in this passage. Paul often used the riches of Christ's fullness to ignite the desires of the Gentiles to come to Him. In the fullness of time, Christ began to be offered to all who seek Him. He was hidden before but is now fully revealed, seen previously only in types and shadows but now openly. He was preached to only a few before, but now the message goes out to every creature under heaven. Before, the Spirit was given sparingly, but now, He who has ascended on high and led captivity captive has given gifts to men, filling all things.

Therefore, let us be encouraged when we hear of such a fullness not to take God's grace in vain. Let us strive to have our share in it, just as the Corinthians were made rich in Christ, filled with all knowledge and every grace. Don't content yourselves with mere knowledge; it's a common fault to satisfy ourselves with notions without putting them into practice.

Instead, go to Christ as bees to a meadow full of flowers or merchants to the Indies with rich mines. Seek Him so that you may find yourselves returning full of the treasures of truth and grace.

Fullness attracts us in many other things. Joseph's full barns in Egypt drew Jacob and his sons there. Canaan was described as a land flowing with milk and honey, which attracted the Israelites. Solomon's abundance of wisdom drew the Queen of Sheba to his court. In everything, fullness allures and affects us. Even the covetous man, though he spends little, desires to take from a full heap. How much more should the fullness of Christ affect us, especially since in Him, there is not only a fullness but also generosity? Unfortunately, if we look at the ways and actions of people, we'll find that they seek fullness in almost everything else—pleasure, honour, and preferments. This full honeycomb is often overlooked. But happy is the one whose heart is turned toward seeking a fullness of faith, wisdom, and the Holy Spirit. They may lack in other things, but they are full of these, and they have chosen the better part that shall never be taken from them.

Secondly, if there is fullness in Christ, we should respond with fullness of affection. Fully believe and trust in Him, fully love and adore Him, and fully delight in Him. The depth of our affections should match the depth of His fullness. While other excellences in creation warrant limited love and esteem, His fullness demands our

fullest affections. All the excellences in creation are like a drop compared to the ocean, like a spark compared to the whole element of fire. Therefore, if we proportion our affections to the object, which should be our guide, we should give only a drop of love and delight to the creature, but the full stream of our affections should flow towards Him in whom is the fullness of all perfection.

Thirdly, if there is fullness in Christ, we should be content with Him, having our hearts filled and satisfied with Him.

Firstly, in terms of spiritual matters, let us not seek Saints, merits, churches' treasury, or other earthly treasures like the broken cisterns and petty packs of Rome. There is no need, for in Christ, we find completeness.

Secondly, for temporal things, let us find contentment in Him alone, for He is our fullness even in these matters. To understand this better, we must recognize that the first Adam brought emptiness into the world. Though the world may seem full of pleasures, such as the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eye, it is essentially empty because it lacks what it should have. It's like a well that's empty of water, even if it's filled with air. This emptiness isn't just an absence of existence but an absence of what should be there. This is why not only are men's hearts empty, but the entire creation is described as empty. Solomon declared in Ecclesiastes that "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity," meaning emptiness. In Romans 8, it says that the creation is subject to vanity, which means emptiness. This emptiness is brought about by the one who subjected it. Thus, not only are men's hearts unsatisfied with the world, but, as the prophet said, "They eat and are not filled; they drink and behold their soul is empty." The world is like a husk without the grain, a shell without the kernel, full of nothing but emptiness. It's empty in itself, and thus, it can't give us

satisfaction. But the second Adam, Christ, has filled all things anew, as in Ephesians 1:23, "He fills all in all," not just the hearts of men but all things. This shows that many find a lack in the midst of plenty; their hearts don't find rest or satisfaction in all they possess. However, for the holy, regenerated person, it's quite the opposite. Even with little wealth, little food, and little clothing, there's a secret fullness placed into that little, making it sufficient for satisfaction. This is the essence of Psalm 37:16, "A little that a righteous man has is better than the riches of many wicked," because, in that little, filled with the blessings of the second Adam, they find fullness. The wicked, on the other hand, find emptiness in the midst of their abundance.

If there is fullness in Christ, then even though there is fullness of sin and guilt in us, there is a fullness of grace in Him able to remove and erase it. There's a fullness of mercy to accept our supplications, a fullness of merit to make atonement for our gravest sins, and a fullness of favour to win over His Father's heart to our requests. If there's fullness of grace in Christ, and indeed there is, do not be discouraged even if your sins abound. His grace abounds far more, to the extent that your sins cannot be as sinful as His mercy is merciful. Remember two metaphors from Scripture: "I will scatter your sins as a mist" and "they shall be drowned in the bottom of the sea." Just as the sun, with its great strength, can scatter the thickest mist, so can Christ, with His vast fullness of grace, forgive the greatest sins as willingly as the smallest ones. Although grace is a quality in us, it is a nature in God. What is natural is without unwillingness or weariness, just as the eye isn't weary from seeing or the ear from hearing. Therefore, even if our sins are great and numerous, as long as we meet certain conditions, such as refraining from known sin and having a full and resolute purpose, confirmed by our consciences, to avoid any evil and perform every good deed, in essence, making our

hearts perfect before God in all things, then there's no remission of sins without these conditions. However, if these conditions are met, our sins, no matter how great or many, haven't exceeded the price paid for them or the grace of the One we deal with because there is a fullness in Him.

I beseech you, do not take this exhortation lightly, for there is nothing more effective in healing a rebellious disposition, instilling saving grace, and causing a sinner to change his ways than being fully persuaded that he will receive mercy and that his sins will be forgiven in Christ. Just as thieves never return willingly while the hue and cry is after them, and rebels and pirates never come in while the proclamation of rebellion is out against them, yet if there's a proclamation of pardon, and even some great advancement is believed, that alone causes them to come in and become faithful and loyal subjects. Therefore, let this fullness of mercy in Christ motivate us all to lay down the arms of rebellion, choose God for our good, and give ourselves entirely to Him, serving Him with perfect hearts and willing minds all our days.

So much for the first part.

The second part I will briefly address and not delve into the third, lest I become tedious.

"Of his Fulness we have all received."

The second point is that all Grace is received, for just as all stars shine in the light of the Sun, so do all the Saints through received grace. What else distinguished John from Judas or Simon Peter from Simon Magus? Only Christ, who shone upon one and not upon another when they both sat in darkness and the shadow of death.

The Scripture is clear on this, Philippians 2:13: "The deed is wrought in us by God, and not the deed only, but the will also, which produces that deed, and not only that but the thought also, which begets that will." We are not even capable of thinking a good thought of ourselves, as 2 Corinthians 3:5 affirms. Therefore, all grace, even all preparation for grace and the ability to accept grace, come from God, contrary to what Arminius asserts, and not from ourselves. This is so for several reasons.

Because nothing can work beyond its own capabilities; the effect does not exceed the cause. Therefore, it is impossible for corrupt nature to either generate supernatural grace or perform any action preparing or inclining the will toward it. Just as water cannot heat (an action beyond its nature) until a higher principle of heat is infused into it, so too can mere nature do nothing leading to saving grace, as it lacks a principle from which it can draw.

If it is objected (as Arminians do) that although grace does everything, accepting or rejecting it, willing or not willing it, is natural to man as a free agent.

I answer: To will is natural, but to will well is supernatural and must come from a higher source than nature. Just as a hatchet can cut when handled by an ordinary hand but cannot create a chair or stool or anything artificial unless it has the influence of an artisan as an artisan, so even though willing is natural, willing well, doing a supernatural work in a supernatural and holy manner, cannot happen unless it has the influence of a supernatural Agent to direct and guide it.

If a man could accept or reject grace as he pleased, God would not be God, as His will could be thwarted by His creation, and His will would not absolutely govern, especially in the crucial matter of

believing and not believing, and in distinguishing between one person's salvation and another's damnation. According to Arminius, even if God earnestly desired a person's conversion and provided all possible means of grace, that person's free will could still choose to convert or not to convert. Their only response to this is that since God decreed that man would be a free agent, even though He desires a person's conversion, He must allow the creature the liberty to act against His own desires due to His decree. But isn't this akin to putting God in the same predicament as Darius, who earnestly wanted to save Daniel but couldn't due to his decree? Furthermore, if grief in spirits and angels is merely the reluctance of the will, as the Schoolmen suggest, doesn't this mean we're attributing grief to God and thus diminishing His blessedness?

Thirdly, if not all grace is received, and a person can choose to accept or reject it, how can we resolve the fact that people might partially rejoice and boast in themselves, contrary to Paul's instruction to "rejoice in the Lord"? If we were to ask those who are saved why they are saved rather than others, their answer would have to be: "Out of the liberty of my own will, I received and used the offered grace while another did not." According to Arminius, the saints in heaven are no more indebted to God than the damned in hell, as the offering of grace by God was equally common to both. The only difference is that those in heaven can thank their own will for choosing it when another refused it.

They have nothing here to answer, but only that the means of Grace are dispensed by God with some disparity. But what is that when they maintain such freedom of will that he who has the greatest means may reject grace, and he who has the least may accept it?

Other reasons there are, but that I hasten: as that Grace is not Grace without being received, no more than a man can be a man without reason, or a gift can be a gift without being given. For no less does it imply contradiction to suppose it to be grace, and yet not to be freely bestowed by God and received by us.

Secondly, the bowing of the will is an effect of grace, and grace is an effect of the spirit. Now the spirit breathes when, where, and in what measure it lists. Again, if grace should spring out of our soul, it should be but a flower of grass, for all flesh is grass, but the grace of the mediator is of a more durable nature, a flower that fades not, and a spring which is not dried up.

Hence, two corollaries.

One to rectify our judgment. The other to direct our practice. The first shows us the errors of Arminius, who has but refined the old Pelagianism, a dangerous error: for Arianism was like a land flood that overflowed the whole world but was soon dried up again because it had not a spring to maintain it. But the best ages of the Church had in them, as he called it, "*Multas fibras virulentiae Pelagianae*," because it is an error agreeable to nature and reason. We have a spring within our own breast to nourish and maintain it. But now, to keep close to the point in hand, this point shows the error of Arminius and Pelagius, who ascribe the beginning, preparations, and ability to accept grace to our own free will, although the complement belongs to God. Whereas you see by what has been said, not only the fuller streams but every drop of grace is received from His fullness. This error proceeds from their not distinguishing correctly between acquired habits and infused habits. Indeed, in the acquired, the acts precede the habits and prepare for them, but with infused habits, it is quite the contrary. It is with them as it is with the natural powers of

the soul: we have first the faculty of seeing before we do see, and the faculty of hearing before we do hear. So it is in infused habits: we have first the habits before we exercise the operations of them. For even as the wheel does not run that it may be made round, but it is first made round that it may run, so the heart does not first do the actions whereby it is put into a right frame, but it is first fashioned and made a new creature by grace, and then it does actions and brings forth fruits worthy of amendment of life. For what is said of the soul is as truly said of Grace: it prepares a room for itself, uses no harbinger, for nothing can prepare for grace but grace itself.

And if it be objected, as Arminius does in his book upon the 7th to the Romans, that such as Seneca and Socrates were much enlightened, did approve the law of God according to the inward man, and had a kind of universal common grace.

I answer that this privilege cannot be denied to many among the Heathen. As alchemists, though they miss the end, yet they find many excellent things by the way. So though they failed of the right end, the glory of God, yet they were not destitute of many excellent common gifts. Wherein, though one did go far beyond another, as Seneca beyond Nero, and so others, yet, as they say of sins, they do all alike pass the rule of rectitude, though some go further beyond than others. So were they all alike destitute of original Righteousness, although some more elongated from it than others. All are alike dead in sins, though some, as dead bodies, more corrupted and putrefied than others.

And if it be objected, as it is by Arminius, to what end then are Exhortations and Threatenings, the propounding of Punishments and Rewards, if it be not in our power to accept Grace and refuse it as we will.

I answer that as the rain, although it falls as well upon Rocks and Heaths as upon Valleys and Fruitful places, yet no man asks to what end is the first and latter rain. So Exhortations and Admonitions, though they fall as well upon the Reprobates and those that are desperately wicked as upon those that are docile and capable of better things, it is to no less folly to ask to what end they are. Seeing, as the rain, so they are to many beneficial and useful.

So much for the first Corollary, which serves to rectify Judgments.

The next is for Practice. If all grace be received, then defer not repentance, for no repentance is accepted but what proceeds from a Sanctifying grace. And that, as you see, is received, that is given by God as he will. It is not in him that willeth, nor in him that runneth, but he hath compassion on whom he will have compassion, and whom he will, he hardeneth, Rom. 9. 15. As I said before, the Spirit breathes where and when it listeth. Therefore we should, as Millers and Mariners are wont to do, who take the Gale when it comes, because they know the winds are not at their command: Suppose a man were to pass the Seas within 20 days upon pain of death. If the wind should blow the second day, third day, or fourth day, no wise man would omit the opportunity, because he knows the winds are not in his power. So, if the spirit shall breathe into our hearts good motions of turning to God unfeignedly in our youth, at 16. 17. or whenever, it is the greatest wisdom in the world to take the opportunity and not to put it off. Who knoweth whether they will be had again or not? How many thousand are now in Hell who thought to have repented, and did not because they neglected those breathings of the Spirit where they were offered? For there are certain acceptable times after which God offers Grace no more: happy he that knows that day of his visitation, and as our Saviour speaketh, the things which belong to his Peace, in that his day, which

Jerusalem did not, which made Christ weep over it, and which Saul did not, and the Jews in Jeremiah's time did not, when God forbade Jeremiah to pray for them. For as there were certain times when the Angel moved the waters in the pool of Bethesda, and he that then stepped in, was healed; so there are certain acceptable times, wherein God troubles the hearts of men by his spirit. Happy is he who then steps into a good course, that he may be healed to Salvation. I say there are certain times, wherein God does, as it were, thaw and soften the frozen hearts of men. And it is wisdom then with the husbandman to put in the plough while the ground is soft. For the heart in such a case is like iron in the furnace, easily fashioned, but stay till it be cold, and it will not be wrought upon. I beseech you, therefore, let us be exhorted to take the opportunity and not be like those whom Isaiah complains of, who, like bulrushes, bow down their heads for a day while some storm of inward or outward trouble is upon them, but when a fair sunshine day comes to dry it up again, lift up their heads as upright as ever before.

If a man would sit down and call his thoughts together but for one half-hour, and consider this seriously, I have but a little time to live here, it is another place where I must live for all eternity, and it shall be with me for all this eternity, as I spend this short time. I say if this were thoroughly considered, I wonder that anything else should take up the intentions and thoughts of a man's heart, but only how to make sure his salvation. But alas, we are robbed of ourselves through worldly delights and do magno conaru, magnas nugas agere, and so we spend our lives. But if we would not have with the Merchant, Fortunam rudentibus ap • am, that is, an estate hanging upon ropes, and depending upon uncertainties, especially seeing grace whence repentance proceedeth, is as you see received, and not in our power. But we mistake repentance, and that is the cause we defer it, it is not as it is commonly thought, a sorrow for our sins only, nor a mere

leaving of sins out of fear of hell, and desire to be saved, which a man may do out of the strength of natural wisdom, providing for his safety. But it is a much different thing, viz. putting life into a dead man: Ephesians 2. 1. Making a man a new Creature, 2 Corinthians 5. 17. A change of the whole frame of the heart. As if another soul dwelt in the same body, as he saith; Ego non ego. In a word, when a man is quite another man, then he was serving of God out of an inward propenseness and having the whole bent of his disposition turned to delight in the Law of God without these by-respects. And that this may yet be made clearer, and put out of all doubt, I would ask but this question; That repentance which men take up in age, or in times of extremity, whence proceedeth it, if from self-love, as it usually doth in such cases, because the soul is then strongly possessed with an apprehension of death and hell, and another life, then there is no more than nature in it, for the stream riseth not higher than the fountain. A beast would do as much, which sinking into danger, would struggle to save itself. But if it proceed from love to God, why was it not done sooner, why not in the flower of our youth, yea when it is done soonest, would we not be heartily sorry that it was not done sooner, if it proceeded out of love to him? And if it thus proceed out of a holy love to God, it cannot arise but from his holy spirit: the breathings of which spirit as they are most free, so are they most precious. Therefore when such a spark is kindled in our hearts, let us be careful to put fuel to it, and not suffer it to go out again.

All the Creatures in Heaven and Earth cannot help us again to them, yea the best Ordinances are but as pens without ink, or empty Conduit-pipes which give not a drop of true Grace, except Christ who is the Fountain please to convey it by them. You know the Famous Story of Francis Spira, what bitter cries he used upon his Death-bed: O that I had but one drop of Faith! One of the motions which I have been wont to have, but yet could not have them! But died with those

desperate words in his mouth, I am Damned. Therefore let us take heed how we let such motions rise up like bubbles in us, and break again; or go out like sparks upon wet tinder, lest often checking, and snibbing, and quenching the Spirit, in the end we be guilty of resisting the Holy Ghost, and God shall swear in his wrath that we shall not enter into his rest. [Whereby the way observe, that this Doctrine teacheth us not to be idle, and leave all to God, as they slander it] but as Paul makes the Consequence, because God works in you both the will and the deed, therefore work out your Salvation with fear and trembling. Arminius contrarily, ourselves work in ourselves the Will, and the deed; Therefore we need not work out our Salvation with any such fear and solicitude, since we may do it at our own pleasure and leisure.

But it will be said this is a hard case, although a man would repent, yet he cannot: though he desire to serve God, yet it is impossible. Therefore to take away this Scruple, we must know that God is exceeding free and open-handed in giving grace (if it may be taken in time) and if we will not believe it, John cometh here and tells you, I have received of his Fullness, and not only I, but all we have received, that is, all other Saints that either are or have been: and since John's time, many thousand thousands: And shall not such a Cloud of Witnesses persuade us? If a Beggar do but hear of an open House kept; or a great Dole, it affects him, and invites him to go: But when he sees many come from it with arms full, and laps full, and baskets full, then he is confident: that addeth wings to him; So if a sick man do but hear of a Famous Physician, or a healing Well, it stirs him up to go and try: But when he meets with 100 and 1000 coming from the Well, and telling him, I have been there and am healed, I have been there, and am made whole, then he maketh no question; So doth John here, All we have received of his Fullness: Like a Bird that hath found out a full heap and calls his fellows to it. Say not

therefore, oh my sins are so great, and my wants are so many: But rather think thus with yourselves, if there was grace enough for so many, there is surely enough for me: Only you must receive when it is offered in the acceptable time, lest often grieving the Spirit, God suffers his Spirit to strive no longer. Gen. 6, 3. But (as I said before) swear in his wrath that you shall not enter into his rest.

2 If all grace be received, then let us be affected as Receivers [1 In thankfulness towards God] the most gracious are the most grateful. [2 In Humility towards men] For what have we that we have not received? And shall our Purse or Vessel boast itself against another, because the Owner hath put more Gold, or more precious Liquor into it, than into another, it may be of the same, or a better worth? Or shall the wall which glistens with the Sun beams exalt itself against another which stands in the shadow, as if it had Luster from itself, and not borrowed from the Sun.

3. Let us be affected as Receivers, in begging grace at God's hands by Prayer. Therefore it is said to be the Bucket of grace, and it is a true observation, that a man of much Prayer, is a man of much Grace. Now Prayer is either Private, or Public: [Private, is that wherein we express our private and particular occasions to God every day, wherein we renew Repentance & Covenants with God, of abstaining from the sins we are most prone to, and of doing the duties to which we are most unapt, in a word, that wherein we do every day set our hearts straight before God in all things. This is the very Life of Religion, and in this, we must be very frequent and fervent, binding ourselves with an inviolable resolution to keep a constant course in it, but of this there is no doubt. [The next is Public Prayer, of which because it is more questioned and not received by all with that Reverence it should, I will add a word or two of it, and conclude.

That a set Form of Prayer is Lawful, much need not be said, the very newness of the contrary opinion is enough to show the vanity and foolishness of it: It being contrary to the Judgment of approved Councils, Learned Fathers, and the continual Practice of the Church.

Tertullian, who lived not much above an hundred years after the Apostles death, saith in his Book de Oratione, *Premissa Legitima & ordinaria Oratione, Ius est superstruendi Petitiones, &c,* which showeth that they had some ordinary set allowed Prayers, to which, afterwards some were added at more Liberty. In Origen's time, who lived very near Tertullian's time: It is evident that there were set Forms of Prayer used in the Church: for in his 11th Homily upon Jeremiah, he repeateth and expoundeth some passages of them, upon which occasion Illiricus saith. *Tunc temporis certas quasdam formulas orationum sine dubio habuerunt.* Basil in his 63rd Epistle saith, that in his time there were Litanies used in the Neocesarean Churches, and Ambrose in his time affirmeth: *Usum Litaniarum ubique esse frequentem.* Constantine the Great prescribed a set Form of Prayer to his Soldiers, set down by Eusebius in his fourth Book. And Calvin in his 83rd Epistle to the Protector of England saith, that he doth greatly allow a set Form of Ecclesiastical Prayers, which the Ministers should be bound to observe.

But as I said before of the lawfulness, there is little question. That which is chiefly to be reprehended, is of a secret disesteem of public prayers? By reason of which, many neglect to come to them, and they which do, do it in a perfunctory and overly manner, which is an extreme fault. Better were it, that men would come to this disjunction; either it is lawful to use them or not; if not, why do they not wholly abstain, and if they be lawful, why do they not use them constantly, and in a reverent and holy manner. One thing there is, which if it were well considered, would breed in the hearts of men

another esteem of our public prayers then there is. And that is, that besides the end of obtaining the things we want (wherein yet public prayer hath the promise) there is another end in praying, and that is to worship God, and to perform a service to him, for proving of which, there are two places of Scripture unanswerable, Luke 2. 37. Hannah worshipped God by fasting and prayers, the word used is προσκυνέω, which is the proper word for worship, Acts 13. 2. They ministered to the Lord and fasted, the word used is λειτουργέω, whence the word Liturgy is derived. This methinks should breed in the hearts of men a reverend esteem of this duty.

Besides, how straight is that which is objected against the lawfulness of it, as that the Spirit is stinted, when we are fettered with words appointed.

Answer. The freedom of the Spirit stands not so much in the extent of the words, as the intenseness with which they are uttered. Besides if this argument swell against conceived prayer, for if he have greater spirit then he that prayeth, there is no restraint.

Again, it is objected, that we cannot pray for occasional necessities. Therefore we bind not only to a set form: but men may, and ought to use besides, private prayer, wherein we may express our private, accidental, and particular occasions. And if they be more public, there are prayers before and after Sermon, wherein the Minister is left at more liberty? And if it be yet more general belonging to the State or Church, we add it to the public prayers, as it is in the Gunpowder-treason, times of War, dearth, &c. But there needs not much be said to convince the judgment: that which is chiefly to be desired, is, that they may be better observed, and more esteemed, especially seeing our public prayers be holy and good, (and which should be a greater inducement) the Church hath commanded them: And if the

Church be to be obeyed in indifferent things, as it is, much more in appointing of God's own Ordinances.

And if a set form of prayer be lawful, then the Lord's Prayer must needs excel, being dictated by Christ himself, and is therefore to be more frequently used, and withal Reverence both in mind and gesture. Nor doth this want the practice and approbation of the Ancient, it is Cyprian's speech. *Quanto efficacius impertramus quod petimus Christi nominae si ipsius Oratione petamus.* And Saint Augustine. *Disce et retinete orationem Dominicam, et inter omnes sanctos Consono ore proferatis.* Thus if we shall show ourselves affected as Receivers, in using both public and private prayer, we shall find that success which John and the rest found, who of his fullness received Grace for Grace.

FINIS.

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ePub, .mobi & .pdf Editions September 2023. Requests for information should be addressed to: Monergism Books, PO Box 491, West Linn Or 97068