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THE SOUND BELIEVER

A TREATISE OF EVANGELICAL CONVERSION

DISCOVERING THE WORK OF CHRIST'S SPIRIT IN
RECONCILING OF A SINNER TO GOD



THOMAS SHEPARD

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The Sound Believer: a Treatise of Evangelical Conversion

Discovering the Work of Christ's Spirit in Reconciling of a Sinner to God

by Thomas Shepard

Table of Contents

[To His Dear Friend, Mr Greenhill](#)

[CHAPTER I](#)

[As the Great Cause of the Eternal Perdition of Men is of Themselves,
So the Only Cause of the Actual Deliverance and Salvation of Man is
Jesus Christ](#)

[Sect. 1. A fourfold act of Christ's power in rescuing and delivering
men out of their miserable state](#)

[Sect. 2. The first act of Christ's power is conviction of sin. What is the
sin the Lord convicts of? How he doth it; and what measure and
degree of conviction he works](#)

[Sect. 3. The second act of Christ's power is compunction, or sense of
sin. 1. This compunction immediately follows conviction. 2. The](#)

necessity of this to succeed the other. 3. Wherein it consists. 4. The measure of it in all the elect

Sect. 4. The third act of Christ's power, which is humiliation. 1. What is this humiliation? 2. What need there is of it. 3. What means the Lord useth to work it. 4. What measure of it is here required

Sect. 5. The fourth and last act of Christ's power is the work of faith. 1. Faith defined

The efficient cause of faith

The subject or matter of faith

The form of faith

The end of faith

The special ground of faith, viz., the call of Christ in his word

The nature of this call

The necessity of this call in three particulars

An exhortation to come to Christ

CHAPTER II

Every Sinner, Believing in Christ, is Translated into a Most Blessed and Happy Estate. What is that Happy State they are Made Partakers of, Answered in Six Particulars, as Follows:-

Sect. 1. Justification, its nature, its efficient cause, its subjects, and its results

Sect. 2. Reconciliation. It consists in two things, viz., our peace with God, and the love and favor of God

Sect. 3. Adoption; begun and perfected

Sect. 4. Sanctification, its nature, and its evidence of justification

Sect. 5. Audience of all prayers

Sect. 6. Glorification. What is it?

CHAPTER III

All Those that are Translated into this Blessed Estate are Bound to Live the Life of Love, in Fruitful and Thankful Obedience Unto him that Hath Called them, According to the Rule of the Moral Law

The Saint's Jewel. Showing How to Apply the Promises

Certain Select Cases Resolved

Tending to the Right Ordering of the Heart

The First Principles of the Oracles of God

The Sum of Christian Religion, in Way of Question and Answer

Matt, xviii. 11. -- "I came to save that which was lost."

To His Dear Friend, Mr. W. Greenhill.

Sir: Many stragglings I have had about publishing these notes. I have looked up to God, and at last been persuaded upon these grounds: --

The many desires both of friends and strangers, both by private speeches and letters, which I thought might be the voice of Christ.

Some good (as I hear) those which are already out have done, and which the rest might do, which I have looked on as a testimony of the Lord's acceptance of them.

I know not what the Lord's meaning should be to bring to light by his providence, without my privity, knowledge, or will, the former part, unless it was to awaken and enforce me (being desired) to publish the rest; our works, I thought, should resemble God's works, not to be left imperfect.

I considered my weak body, and my short time of sojourning here, and that I shall not speak long to children, friends, or God's precious people, -- I am sure not to many in England, -- to whom I owe almost my whole self, whom I shall see in this world no more; I have been therefore willing to get the wind, and take the season, that I might leave some part of God's precious truth on record, that it might speak (O that it might be to the heart ¹) among whom I can not (and when I shall not) be. I account it a part of God's infinite grace to make me an instrument of the least good. If the Lord shall so far accept of me in publishing these things, it is all that I would desire; if not, yet I have ^{[[114]]} desired forgiveness in the blood of his Son, for whatever errors or weaknesses may be in it, or are in myself, which may hinder success, and frustrate its end; only what I have in much weakness believed, I have written, and sent it unto you, leaving it wholly with yourself, whom I much love and honor, that you would add or detract any thing you see meet, (so as it be not cross to what I have writ;) and if you then think it meet for public view, you see upon

what grounds I am content with it; but if you shall bury it, and put it to perpetual silence, it shall be most pleasing to him who thinks more meanly of it than others can.

Tho. Shepard.

Chapter I.

As the Great Cause of the Eternal Perdition of Men is of themselves, so the only Cause of the Actual Deliverance and Salvation of Man is Jesus Christ.

Hosea xiii. 9, "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help."

Section I.

These words, as they are set down in the Hebrew, are (according to the style of this prophet) very short and sententious, and therefore difficult to translate into English without some periphrasis; but the sense is here truly expressed, "In me is thy help;" which you may see confirmed from verse 4: "There is no Saviour beside me;" and verse 14: "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; O death, I will be thy plague; O grave, I will be thy destruction." Suppose the prophet should speak here of temporal salvation, help and ransom, (which he doth not;) yet the argument is strong; if there be no Saviour from temporal woe and misery but only the Lord Jesus, how much more is there from woes eternal? Only understand me here aright; I am not now speaking of man's deliverance and salvation by

price in way of satisfaction to justice, (for that I have already handled,) but of his deliverance and salvation by power; not of man's purchased deliverance, which is by the blood of Christ, but of man's actual deliverance, which is by the efficacy and power of the Spirit of Christ. Some captives among men are redeemed by price only, some by power without price; but such is the lamentable captivity of all men, under the severity of justice and power of sin, that without the price of Christ's blood, (Eph. i. 7,) and the power of Christ's Spirit, (John viii. 86,) there is no deliverance; the Lord Jesus having paid the price for our deliverance. Yet it is with us as with a company of captives in prison: our sins like strong [[116]] chains hold us; Satan, our keeper, will not let us go; the prison doors, through unbelief, are shut upon us, (Rom. xi. 32;) and thereby God and Christ are kept out from us. What power now can rescue us, that are held fast under such a power, even after the price is paid? Truly it can be no other but that in my text, "In me is thy help." When our ransom is paid, the Lord must come himself and fetch us out by strong hand. (Is. liii. 1.) "To whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? Truly to very few, yet to some it is; and certainly look as they make Christ no Saviour, indeed, who deny his salvation by price and satisfaction, so those also make him an imperfect Saviour who deny salvation and actual deliverance of man to be only the almighty arm and efficacy of his Spirit and power: excellent therefore is the speech of the apostle, (Acts v. 30, 31,) "God hath exalted Jesus to give repentance and remission of sins to Israel." Look as Jesus was abased to purchase repentance and remission, so he is now exalted actually to give and apply repentance and remission of sins. Whose glory is it to remit sins, but God's in Christ, and by Christ only? Whose glory is it to give repentance, (which in this place comprehends the work of conversion and faith, as Beza observes,) whereby we apply remission, but the same God only? The one is as difficult to be conveyed as the other, and we stand in as much need of Christ to do the one as the other; all the

power of Christ exalted is little enough to give us repentance and remission, the condition of the covenant expressed in repentance, and the blessings in the covenant, summed up in the forgiveness of sins; the Socinians deny redemption and salvation by prize; the Arminians by Christ's power, leaving suasion only to him, but power of conversion to the power and liberty of the will of man. O adulterous generation, that are thus hacking at and cutting the cords of their own salvation 'I shall here speak only to one question, which is the principal, and most profitable, and that is this: How doth Christ redeem and save us by his power, out of that miserable estate? and consequently what is the way for us to seek, and so to find and feel deliverance by the hand of Christ's power?

As there are four principal means and causes, or ways, whereby man ruins himself,-- 1. Ignorance of their own misery; 2. Security and insensibleness of it; 3. Carnal confidence in their own duties; 4. Presumption or resting upon the mercy of God by a faith of their own forging,

-- so, on the contrary, there is a fourfold act of Christ's power, whereby he rescues and delivers all his out of their miserable estate.

The first act or stroke is conviction of sin.

The second is compunction for sin.

The third is humiliation or self-abasement.

The fourth is faith; all which are distinctly put forth (when he ceaseth extraordinarily to work) in the day of Christ's power; and so ever look for actual salvation and redemption from Christ, let them seek for mercy and deliverance in this way, out of which they shall never find it; let them begin at conviction, and desire the Lord to let

them see their sins, that so being affected with them, and humbled under them, they may by faith be enable to receive Jesus Christ, and so be blessed in him. It is true, Christ is applied to us next by faith, but faith is wrought in us in that way of conviction and sorrow for sin; no man can or will come by faith to Christ to take away his sins, unless he first see, be convicted of, and loaded with them. I confess the manner of the Spirit's work, in the conversion of a sinner unto God, is exceeding secret, and in many things very various; and therefore it is too great boldness to mark out all God's footsteps herein; yet so far forth as the Lord himself tells us his work, and the manner of it in all his, we may safely resolve ourselves, and so far, and no farther, shall we proceed in the explication of these things. It is great profaneness not to search into the works of common providence, though secret and hidden. (Ps. xxviii. 5, and xcii. 6.) Much greater is it not to do this unto God's work of special favor and grace upon his chosen.

I shall therefore begin with the first stroke -- Christ's power, which is conviction of sin.

The first Act of Christ's Power, which is Conviction of Sin.

Now, for the more distinct explication of this, I shall open to you these four things: --

1. I shall prove that the Lord Christ by his Spirit begins the actual deliverance of his elect here.
2. What is that sin the Lord convinceth the soul thus first of.
3. How the Lord doth it.
4. What measure and degree of conviction he works thus in all his.

1. For the first, it is said, (John xvi. 8, 9,) that the first thing that the Spirit doth when he comes to make the apostles' ministry effectual, is this: it shall "reprove or convince the world of sin;" it doth not first work faith, but convinceth them that they have no faith, (as in verse 9,) and consequently under the [[118]] guilt and dominion of their sin; and after this he "convinceth of righteousness," which faith apprehends. (Ver. 10.) It is true, that the word conviction, here, is of a large extent, and includes compunction and humiliation for sin; yet our Saviour wraps them up in this word; because conviction is the first, and therefore the chief in order; here the Lord, not speaking now of ineffectual, but effectual, and thorough conviction expressed in deep sorrow and humiliation. Now, the text saith, the Lord begins

thus not with some one or two, but with the world of God's elect, who are to be called home by the ministry of the word, which our Saviour speaks (as any may see who considers the scope) purposely to comfort the hearts of his disciples, that their ministry shall be thus effectual to the world of Jews and Gentiles; and therefore can not speak of such conviction as serves only for to leave men without excuse for greater condemnation, (as some understand the place;) for that is a poor ground of consolation to their sad hearts. Secondly. I shall hereafter prove that there can be no faith without sense of sin and misery; and now there can be no sense of sin without a precedent sight or conviction of sin; no man can feel sin, unless he doth first see it; what the eye sees not, the heart rues not. Let the greatest evil befall a man -- suppose the burning of his house, the death of his children; if he doth not first know, see, and hear of it, he will never take it to heart, it will never trouble him: so let a poor sinner lie under the greatest guilt, the sorest wrath of God, it will never trouble him until he sees it and be convinced of it. (Acts ii. 37.) "When they heard this, they were pricked;" but first they heard it, and saw their sin before their hearts were wounded for it. (Gen. iii. 7.) They first saw their nakedness before they were ashamed of it. Thirdly. The main end of the law is to drive us to Christ. (Rom. x. 4.) If Christ be the "end of the law," then the law is the means subservient to that end, and that not to some, but to all that believe: now, the law, though it drives us to Christ by condemnation, yet in order it begins with accusation. It first accuseth, and so convinceth of sin, (Rom. iii. 20,) and then condemneth. It is folly and injustice for a judge to condemn and bring a sinner out to his execution before accusation and conviction; and is it wisdom or justice in the Lord or his law to do otherwise? and therefore the Spirit, in making use of the law for this end, first convinceth as it first accuseth, and lays our sins to our charge. Lastly. Look, as Satan, when he binds up a sinner in his sin, he first keeps him (if possible) from the very sight and

knowledge of it; because, so long as they see it not, this ignorance is the cause of all their woe, why they feel it not, why they desire not to come [[119]] out of it; the Lord Jesus, who came to untie the knots of Satan, (1 John iii. 8.) begins here, and first convinceth his, and makes them see their sin, that so they may feel it, and come to him for deliverance out of it. O, consider this, all you that dream out your time in minding only things before your feet, never thinking on the evils of your own hearts; you that heed not, you that will not see your sins, nor so much as ask this question, What have I done? what do I do? how do I live? what will become of me? what will be the end of my foolish courses? I tell you, if ever the Lord save you, he will make you see what now you can not, what now you will not; he will not only make you to confess you are sinners, but he will convince you of sin: this shall be the first thing the Lord will do with thee.

But you will say, What is that sin which the Lord first convinceth of? which is the second thing to be opened. I answer in these three conclusions: --

The Lord Jesus by his Spirit doth not only convince the soul in general that it is a sinner and sinful, but the Lord brings in a convicting evidence of the particulars: the first is learnt more by tradition, (in these days,) by the report and acknowledgment of every man, rather than by any special act of conviction of the Spirit of Christ; for what man is there almost but lies under this confession that he is a sinner? The best say they are sinners, "and if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves," and "I know I am a sinner;" but that which the Spirit principally convinceth of is some sin or sins in particular; the Spirit doth not arrest men for offences in general, but opens the writ and shows the particular cause -- the particular sins. (Rom. iii. 9.) We have proved, saith the apostle, that Jews and Gentiles are under sin; but how doth the apostle, (being now the

instrument of the Spirit,) in this work of conviction, convince them of this? Mark his method, verses 10-18, wherein you shall see it is done by enumeration of particulars; sins of their natures, there is none righteous; sins of their minds, none understandeth; sins in their wills and affections, none seek after God; sins in their lives, all gone out of the way; sins of omission of good duties, there is none that doth good; their throats, tongues, lips, are sepulchers, deceitful, poisonous; their mouths full of cursing, their feet swift to shed blood, etc. And this is the state of you Jews, (ver. 19.) as well as of the Gentiles; that all flesh may stand convinced as guilty before God. If it be here demanded, What are those but particular sins which the Lord convinceth men of? I answer, In variety of men there is much variety of special sins, as there [[120]] is of dispositions, tempers, and temptations; and therefore the Lord doth not convince one man at first of the same sins of which he doth another man; yet this we may safely say: usu-ally (though not always) the Lord begins with the remembrance and consideration of some one great, if not a man's , special and most beloved sin; and thereby the Spirit discovers, gradually, all the rest: that arrow which woundeth the heart of Christ most, the Lord makes it fall first upon the head of the sinner that did shoot it against Heaven, and convinceth, and as it were hits him first with that. How did the Spirit convince those three thousand, those patterns of God's converting grace? (Acts ii. 37.) Did not the Lord begin with them for one principal sin, viz., their murder and contempt of Christ by imbruing their hands in his blood? There is no question but now they remembered other sinful practices; but this was the imprimis which is ever accompanied with many other items which are then read in God's bill of reckonings where the first is set down. Israel would have a king. (1 Sam. viii. 19.) Samuel, for a time, could not convince them of their sin: herein what doth the Lord do? Surely he will convince them of sin before he leaves them; and this he doth by such a terrible thunder as made all their hearts ache. And

how is it now? What sin do they now see? They first see the greatness of that particular sin; but this came not to mind alone, but they cried out, (1 Sam. xii. 19,) "We have added unto all our evils this, in asking to our-selves a king." Look upon the woman of Samaria. (John iv.) The Lord Christ indeed spake first unto her about himself, the substance of the gospel, about the worth of this water of life: but what good did she get until the Lord began to convince her of sin? And how doth he that? He tells her of her secret whoredom she lived in, the man that she now had was not her husband; and upon the discovery of this, she saw many more sins; and hence (ver. 29) she cries out, "Come see the man that hath told me all that ever I did in my life." And thus the Lord deals at this day: the minister preacheth against one sin, it may be whoredom, ignorance, contempt of the gospel, neglect of secret duties, lying, Sabbath-breaking, &c. This is thy case, saith the Spirit unto the soul; remember the time, the place, the persons with whom thou livedst in this sinful condition: and now a man begins to go alone, and to think of all his former courses, how exceeding evil they have been; it may be the Lord brings upon a man a sore affliction, and when he is in chains, crying out of that, the Lord saith to him as to those, (Jer. xxx. 15,) "Why criest thou for thy affliction? for the multitude of thine iniquities I have done this:" it may be, the Lord sometimes strikes a man's [[121]] companion in sin dead, by some fearful judgment; and then that particular sin comes to mind, and the Lord reveals it armed with multitude of many other sins, the causes of it, the fruits and effects of it; as the father whips a child upon occasion of one special fault, but then tells him of many more which he winked at before this, and saith, Now, sirrah, remember such a time, such a froward fit, such undutiful behavior, such a reviling word you spake, such a time I called, and you ran away and would not hear me; and you thought I liked well enough of the seways; but now know that I will not pass them by, etc. Thus the Lord deals with his; and hence it is, many times, that the elect of

God, civilly brought up, do hereupon think well of themselves, and so remain long unconvinced of their woeful estates; the Lord suffers them to fall into some foul, secret, or open sin, and by this the Lord takes special occasion of working conviction and sorrow for sin; the Lord hereby makes them hang down the head, and cry, "Unclean, unclean." Paul was civilly educated; he turned at last a hot persecutor, oppressor, blasphemer: the Lord first convinced him of his persecution, and cried out from heaven to him, "Paul, Paul, why persecutest thou me?" This struck him to the heart, and then sin revived. (Rom. vii. 9.) Many secret sins of his heart were discovered, which I take to begin and continue in special in those three days, (Acts iii. 9,) wherein he was blind, and did (through sight of sin and sorrow of heart) neither eat nor drink. As a man that hath the plague, not knowing the disease, he hopes to live; but when he sees the spots and tokens of death upon his wrist, now he cries out, because convinced that the plague of the Lord is upon him; so when men see some one or more special sins break out, now they are convinced of their lamentable condition; yet it is not always, (though usually thus;) for some men the Lord may first convince of sin by showing them the sinfulness of their own hearts and ways; the Lord may let a man see his blindness, his extreme hardness of heart, his weakness, his willfulness, his heartlessness; he can not pray, or look up to God, and this may first convince him; or that all that he doth is sinful, being out of Christ; the Lord may suddenly let him see the deceits of his own heart, and the secret sinful practices of his life; as if some had told the minister, or as if he spake to none but him; that he is forced to fall down being thus convinced, and to confess, God is in this man. (1 Cor. xiv. 25.) Nicodemus may first see and be convinced of the want of regeneration, and thereby feel his need of Christ; the Lord may set a man upon the consideration of all his life past, how wickedly it hath been spent; and so not one, but a multitude of [[122]] iniquities compass him about; a man may see the godly

examples of his parents or other godly Christians, in the family or town where he dwells, and by this be convinced, that if their state and way be good, his own (so far unlike it) must needs be stark naught: the Lord ever convinceth the soul of sins in particular, but he doth not always convince one man of the same particular sins at first as he doth another; whether the Lord convinceth all the elect at first of the sin of their nature, and show them their original sin in and about this first stroke of conviction, I doubt not of it. Paul would have been alive, and a proud Pharisee still, if the Lord had not let him by the law see this sin, (Rom. vii. 9;) and so would all men in the world, if this should not be revealed first or last, in a lesser or greater measure, under a distinct or more indistinct notion; and hence arise those confessions of the saints -- I never thought I had such a vile heart; if all the world had told me, I could not have believed them, but that the Lord hath made me feel it and see it at last; was there ever such a sinner, (at least in heart, which is continually opposing of him,) whom the Lord at any time received to mercy, as I am?

2. The Lord Jesus by his Spirit doth not only convince the soul of its sin in particular, but also of the evil, even the exceeding great evil, of those particular sins. The Lord Jesus doth not only convince of the evil of sin, but of the great evil of sin. O thou wretch, saith the Spirit, (as the Lord to Cain, Gen. iv. 10,) what hast thou done, whose sins cry to heaven, who hast thus long lived with God, and done this infinite wrong to an infinite God, for which thou canst never make him amends! That God who could have long since cut thee off in the midst of thy sins and wickedness, and crushed thee like a moth, and sent thee down to those eternal flames where thou now seest some better than thyself mourning day and night, but yet hath spared thee out of his mere pity to thee, that God hast thou resisted and forsaken all thy lifetime; and, therefore, now see and consider what an evil and bitter thing it is thus to live as thou hast done. (Jer. ii. 19.) Look,

as it is in the ways of holiness, many a man void of the Spirit may see and know them in the literal expressions of them, but can not see the glory of them but by the Spirit; and hence it is he doth not esteem and prize them and the knowledge of them above gold. So in the ways of unholiness; many a man void of the spirit of conviction of sin may and doth see many particular sins, and confess them; but he doth not, can not see the exceeding evil of them; and thence it is, though he doth see them, yet he doth not much dislike them, because he sees no great hurt or evil in them, but makes a light matter of [[128]] them; and therefore, when the Spirit comes, it lets him see and stand convinced of the exceeding greatness of the evil that is in them. (Job xxxvi. 8, 9.) In the time of affliction, (which is usually the time of conviction of a wild, unruly sinner,) he shows them their transgressions; but how? that they have exceeded, that they have been exceeding many and exceeding vile. O beloved, before the Lord Jesus comes to convince, we have cause to pray for and pity every poor sinner, as the Lord Jesus did, saying, "Lord, forgive them; they know not what they do." You godly parents, masters, how oft do you instruct your children, servants, and convince them of their sinfulness, until they confess their faults? yet you see no amendment, but they go on still; what should you now do? O, cry out for them, and say, Lord, forgive them, for they know not what they do. Their sins they know, but what the evil of them is, alas! they know not; but when the Spirit comes to convince, he makes them see what they do, and what is the exceeding evil of those sins they made light of before; like madmen that have sworn, and cursed, and struck their friends, and when they come to be sober again, and remember their mischievous ways and words, now they see what they have done, and how abominable their courses then were. O you that walk on in the madness of your minds now, in all manner of sin, if ever the Lord do good to you, you shall account your ways madness and folly, and cry out, O Lord, what have I done in kicking thus long against the pricks?

The Lord Jesus by his Spirit doth not only convince the soul of the evil of sin, but of the evil after sin; I mean, of the just punishment which doth follow sin; and that is this, viz., that it must die, and that eternally, for sin, if it remain in this estate it is now in. (Rom. iv. 15,) "The law worketh wrath," i. e., sight and sense of wrath. (Rom. vii. 9,) "When the law came, sin revived, and I died;" i. e., I saw myself a dead man by it; so the soul sees clearly God hath said, "The soul that sinneth shall die:" I have sinned, and therefore, if the Lord be true, I shall die; to hell I shall, if now the Lord stop my breath, and cut off my life, which he might justly and may easily do. "Death is the wages of sin," even of any one sin, though never so little; what, then, will become of me, who stand guilty of so many, exceeding the number of the hairs on my head, or the stars in heaven? "Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge;" the minister hath said so, the Lord himself hath told me so. (Heb. xiii. 4.) I am the man; my conscience now tears me, and tells me so; what will become of me? "The Lord Jesus will come in flaming fire to render vengeance against all that know not God, and that obey not the gospel." This I believe, for God hath said it. (2 Thess. ii. 7-9.) And now I see I am he that hath lived long in ignorance, and know not God; I have had the gospel of grace thus long wooing and persuading my heart, and oftentimes it hath affected me, but yet I have resisted God and his gospel, and have set my filthy lusts, my vain sports, my companions' cups and queans at a higher price than Christ, and have loved them more than him; and therefore, though I may be spared for a while, yet there is a time wherein Christ himself will come out against me in flaming fire. To this purpose doth the Spirit work; for, beloved, the great means whereby Satan overthrew man at first in his innocency was this principle -- Although thou dost eat and so sin against God, yet thou shalt not die. (Gen. iii. 4.) "Ye shall not surely die." The serpent doth not say, "Ye shall not die," for that is too gross an outfacing of the word, (Gen. ii. 17;) but he saith, "Ye shall not surely

die; "that is, there is not such absolute certainty of it; it may be you shall live; God loves you better than so, and is a more merciful Father than to be at a word and a blow. Now look, as Satan deceived and brought our first parents to ruin by suggesting this principle, so at this day he doth sow this accursed seed, and plant this very principle in the soul of ever}' man's heart by nature; they do not think they can not believe they are dead men, and condemned to die, and that they shall die eternally for the least sin committed by them; men nor angels can not persuade them of it; they can not see the equity of it, that God, so merciful, will be so severe for so small a matter; nor yet the truth of it, for then they think no flesh should be saved; and thus, when the old serpent hath spit this poison before them, they sup it up, and drink it in, and so thousands, nay, millions of men and women are utterly undone. The Lord Christ, therefore, when he comes to save a poor sinner, and raise him up out of his fall, convinceth the soul by his Spirit, and that with full and mighty evidence, that it shall die for the least sin, and tells him, as the Lord told Abimelech in another case, (Gen. xx. 3,) "Thou art but a dead man for this;" and if the Spirit set on this, let who can claw it off. I tell you, beloved, never did poor condemned malefactor more certainly know and hear the sentence of condemnation passed upon him by a mortal man, than the guilty sinner doth his, by an immortal and displeased God; and therefore those three thousand cry out, (Acts ii. 37,) "Men and brethren, what shall we do to be saved?" We are condemned to die; what shall we do now to be saved from death? Now the soul is glad to inquire of the minister, O, tell me, what shall I do? I once thought [[125]] myself in a safe and good condition as any in the town or country I lived in; but now the Lord hath let me hear of other news; die I must in this estate, and it is a wonder of mercies I am spared alive to this day. There is not only some blind fears and suspicions that it may possibly be so, but full persuasions of heart, die I must, die I shall in this estate; for if the Spirit reveal

sin, and convince not of death for sin, the soul under this work of conviction, being as yet rather sensual than spiritual, will make a light matter of it when it sees no sensible danger in it; but when it sees the bottomless pit before it, everlasting fire before it, for the least sin, now it sees the heinous evil of sin; the way of sin, though never so peaceable before, is full of danger now, wherein it sees there are endless woes and everlasting deaths that lie in wait for it. (Rom. vi. 21.) And now, saith the Spirit, you may go on in these sinful courses as others do, if you see meet; but O, consider what will be the end of them; what it is to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, and to be tormented forever for them in the conclusion; for be assured that will be the end: and hence the soul, seeing itself thus set apart for death, looks upon itself in a far worse estate than the brute beasts, or vilest worm upon the earth; for it thinks, When they die there is an end of their misery; but O, then is the beginning of mine forever. Hence also arise those fears of death and of being suddenly cut off, that, when it lies down, it trembles to think, I may never rise again, because it is convinced, not only that it deserves to die, but that it is already sentenced for to die: hence also the soul justifies God, if he had cut him off in his sin; and wonders what kept him from it, there being nothing else due from God unto it: hence, lastly, the soul is stopped and stands still, goes not on in sin as before; or if it doth, the Lord gives it no peace. (Jer. viii. 6.) Why doth the horse go on in the battle? Because it sees not death before it; but now the soul sees death, and therefore stops. O, remember this, all you that never could believe that you are dead, condemned men, and therefore are never troubled with any such thoughts in your mind. I tell you that you are far from conviction, and therefore far from salvation: if God should send some from the dead to hear witness against this secure world concerning this truth, yet you will not believe it, for his messengers sent from heaven are not believed herein; woe be to you if you remain unconvinced of this point.

But you will say, How doth the Lord thus convince sin, and wherein is it expressed? which is the third particular.

All knowledge of sin is not conviction of sin; all confession of sin is not conviction; there is a conviction merely rational, which is not spiritual; there are three things in spiritual conviction.

There is a clear, certain, and manifest light, so that the soul sees its sin, and death due to it, clearly and certainly; for go the word (John xvi. 9) ἐλέγκειν signifies to evidence a thing by way of argumentation, nay, demonstration. The Spirit so demonstrates these things, that it hath nothing to object; a man's mouth is stopped; he hath nothing to say but this: Behold, I am vile; I am a dead man; for if a man have any strong arguments given him to confirm a truth, yet if he have but one objection or doubtful scruple not answered, he is not fully as yet convinced, because full conviction by a clear sunlight scatters all dark objections, and hence our Saviour (Jude 15) will one day convince the wicked of all their hard speeches against him, which will chiefly be done by manifesting the evil of such ways, and taking away all those colors and defenses men have made for their language. Before the Spirit of Christ comes, man can not see, will not see his sin for punishment; nay, he hath many things to say for himself as excuses and extenuations of sin. One saith, I was drawn unto it, (the woman that thou gavest me,) and so lays the blame on others: another saith, It is my nature: others say, All are sinners; the godly sin as well as others, and yet are saved at last, and so I hope shall I: others profess they can not part with sin; they would be better, but they can not, and God requires no more than they are able to perform: another saith, I will continue in sin but a little while, and purpose hereafter to leave it: others say, We are sinners, but yet God is merciful, and will forgive it: another saith, Though I have sinned, yet I have some good, and am not so bad as

other men: endless are these excuses for sin. In one word, I know no man, though never so bad, though his sin be never so grievous, but he hath something to say for himself, and something in his mind to lessen and extenuate sin; but, beloved, when the Spirit comes to convince, he so convinceth as that he answers all these, pulls down all these fences, tears off all these fig leaves, scatters all these mists, and pulls off all these scales from the eyes, stops a man's mouth, that the soul stands before God, crying, O Lord, guilty, guilty; as the prophet Jeremy told them, (Jer. ii. 23,) "Why dost thou say, I am innocent? look upon thy way," etc. So the Spirit saith, Why dost thou say thy sin is small? it is disobedience, as Samuel said to Saul, (1 Sam. xv. 23,) which is rebellion, and as the sin of witchcraft; and is that a small matter? The Spirit of conviction, by the clear evidence of the truth, binds the understanding that it can not struggle against God any more; and hence let all [[127]] the world plead to the contrary, nay, let the godly come to comfort them in this estate, and think and speak well of them, yet they can not believe them, because they are certain their estates are woeful: hence also we shall observe the soul under conviction -- instead of excusing sin, it aggravates sin, and studies to aggravate sin. Did ever any deal thus wickedly, walk thus sinfully, so long against so many checks and chidings, light and love, means and mercies, as I have done? And it is wonderful to observe that those things which made it once account sin light make it therefore to think sin great; ex. gr., my sin is little. The more unkind thou (saith the Spirit) that wilt not do a small matter for the Lord. My sin is common. The more sinful thou that in those things wherein all the world rise up in arms against God, thou joinest with them. God spares me after sin. The greater is thy sin, therefore, that thou hast continued so long in, against a God so pitiful to thee. The dearest sins are now the vilest sins; because, though they were most sweet to him, yet the Spirit convinceth him they were therefore the more grievous unto the soul of God. You poor creatures may now

hide, and color, and excuse your sins before men; but, when the Lord comes to convince, you can not lie hid. Then your consciences (when Jesus Christ the Lord comes to convince) shall not be like the steward in the gospel that set down fifty for a hundred pounds. No; the Lord will force it to bring in a true and clear account at that day.

There is a real light in spiritual conviction. Rational conviction makes things appear notionally; but spiritual conviction, really. The Spirit, indeed, useth argumentation in conviction; but it goeth further, and causeth the soul not only to see sin and death discursively, but also intuitively and really. Reason can see and discourse about words and propositions, and behold things by report, and to deduct one thing from another; but the Spirit makes a man see the things themselves, really wrapped up in those words. The Spirit brings spiritual things as well as notions before a man's eye; the light of the Spirit is like the light of the sun -- it makes all things appear as they are. (John iii. 20, 21.) Ft was Jerusalem's misery she heard the words of Christ, and they were not hid from them; but the things of her peace, shut up in those words, were hid from her eyes. Discourse with many a man about his sin and misery, he will grant all that you say, and he is convinced, and his estate is most wretched, and yet still lives in all manner of sin. What is the reason of it? Truly, he sees his sin only by discourse, but he doth not, nay, can not, see the thing sin, death, wrath of God, until the Spirit [[128]] come, which only convinceth or showeth that really. A man will not be afraid of a lion when it is painted only upon a wall. Why? Because therein he doth not see the living lion: when he sees that he trembles. So men hear of sin, and talk of sin and death, and say they are most miserable in regard of both; yet their hearts tremble not, are not amazed at these evils, be-cause sin is not seen alive, death is not presented alive before them, which is done by the Spirit of conviction only, revealing these really to the soul; and hence it is that

many men in seeing see not. How can that be? Thus, in seeing things notionally they see them not really. And hence many that know most of sin know least of sin, because, in seeing it notionally, they see it not really. And therefore happy were it for some men, scholars and others, that they had no notional knowledge of sin; for this light is their darkness, and makes them more incapable of spiritual conviction. The first act of spiritual conviction is to let a man see clearly that he is sinful and most miserable. The second act is to let the soul see really what this sin and death is. O, consider of this. Many of you know that you are sinful, and that you shall die; but dost thou know what sin is, and what it is to die? If thou didst, I dare say thy heart would sink. If thou dost not, thou art a condemned man, because not yet a convinced man. If you here ask how the Lord makes sin real, I answer, by making God real; the real greatness of sin is seen by beholding really the greatness of God, who is smitten by sin; sin is not seen because God is not seen. (3 John v. 11,) "He that doth evil hath not seen God." No knowledge of God is the cause why blood toucheth blood. The Spirit casts out all other company of vain and foolish thoughts, and then God comes in and appears immediately to the soul in his greatness and glory, and then the Spirit saith, Lo, this is that God thy sins have provoked. And now sin appears as it is; and, together with this real sight of sin, the soul doth not see painted lire, but sees the fire of God's wrath really, whither now it is leading, that never can be quenched but by Christ's blood; and, when the Spirit hath thus convinced, now a man begins to see his madness and folly in times past, saying, I know not what I did; and hence questions, Can the Lord pardon such a wretch as I, whose sins are so great? Hence also the heart begins to be affected with sin and death, because it sees them now as they are indeed, and not by report only. A man accounts it a matter of nothing to tread upon a worm, wherein here is nothing seen worthy either to be loved or feared; and hence a man's heart is not affected with it. Before the

Spirit of [[129]] conviction comes, God is more vile in man's eye than any worm. As Christ said in another case of himself, (Ps. xxii.,) "I am a worm, and no man," so may the Lord complain, I am viler in such a one's eyes than any worm, and no God ; and hence a man makes it a matter of nothing to tread upon the glorious majesty of God, and hence is not affected with it; but when God is seen by the spirit of conviction in his great glory, then, as he is great, sin is seen great; as his glory affects and astonisheth the soul, so sin affects the heart.

There is a constant light ; the soul sees sin and death continually before it; God's arrows stick fast in the soul, and cannot be plucked out. "My sin is ever before me," said David, (in his renewing of the work of conversion.) For, in effectual conviction, the mind is not only bound to see the misery lying upon it, but it is held bound; it is such a sunlight as never can be quenched, though it may be clouded. When the Spirit of Christ darts in any light to see sin, the soul would turn away from looking upon it, would not hear on that ear, Felix-like. But the Spirit of conviction, sent to make thorough work on the hearts of all the elect, follows them, meets them at every turn, forceth them to see and remember what they have done. The least sin now is like a mote in the eye; it is ever troubling. Those ghastly, dreadful objects of sin, death, wrath, being presented by the Spirit near unto the soul, fix the eye to fasten here. They that can cast off at their pleasure the remembrance and thoughts of sin and death, never prove sound, until the Lord doth make them stay their thoughts, and muse deeply on what they have done, and whither they are going. And hence the soul, in lying down, rising up, lies down and rises up with perplexed thoughts. What will become of me? The Lord sometimes keeps it waking in the night season, when others are asleep, and then it is haunted with those thoughts, it can not sleep. It looks back upon every day and week. Sabbath, sermon, prayer, speeches, and thinks all this day, this week, etc., the goodness of the

Lord and his patience to a wretch hath been continued; but my sins also are continued ; I sin in all I do, in all my prayers, in all I think; the same heart remains still not humbled, not yet unchanged.

And hence you shall observe, that word which discovered sin at first to it, it never goes out of the mind. I think, saith the soul, I shall never forget such a man, nor such a truth. Hence also if the soul grow light and careless at some time, and casts off the thoughts of these things, the Spirit returns again, and falls a-reasoning with the soul : Why hast thou done this? What hurt hath the Lord done thee? Will there never be an [[130]] end? Hast not thou gone on long enough in thy lewd courses against God, but that thou shouldest still add unto the heap? Hast thou not wrath enough upon thee already? How soon may the Lord stop thy breath! and then thou knowest thou hadst better never to have been born. Was there ever any that thus resisted grace? that thus adventured upon the sword point? Hast thou but one Friend, a patient, long-suffering God, that hath left thy conscience without excuse long ago, and therefore could have cut thee off? and dost thou thus forsake him, thus abuse him? Thus the Spirit follows; and hence the soul comes to some measure of confession of sin: O Lord, I have done exceeding wickedly; I have been worse than the horse that rush-eth into the battle because it sees not death before it; hut I have seen death before me in these ways, and yet go on, and still sin, and can not but sin. Behold me, Lord, for I am very vile. When thus the Spirit hath let into the soul a clear, real, constant light to see sin and death, now there is a thorough conviction.

But you will say, In what measure doth the Spirit communicate this light?

I shall therefore open the fourth particular, viz.: The measure of spiritual conviction in all the elect, viz., so much conviction of sin as may bring in and work compunction for sin; so much sight of sin as may bring in sense of sin: so much is necessary, and no more. Every one hath not the same measure of conviction; yet all the elect have and must have so much; for so much conviction is necessary as may attain the end of conviction. Now, the finis proximus, or next end, of conviction in the elect, is compunction or sense of sin; for what good can it do unto them to see sin, and not to be affected with it? What greater mercy doth the Lord show to the elect therein than unto the devils and reprobates who stand convinced, and know they are wicked and condemned, but yet their hearts altogether unaffected with any true remorse for sin? "Mine eye," saith Jeremy, "affecteth my heart." The Lord opens the ears of men and sealeth instruction, that he may hide pride from man. Some think that there is no thorough conviction without some affection. I dare not say so, nor will I now dispute whether there is not something in the nature and essence of that conviction the elect have different from that conviction in reprobates and devils. It is sufficient now, and that which teacheth the end of this question, to know what measure of conviction is necessary. I conceive the clear discerning of it is by the immediate and sensible effect of it, viz., so much as affects the heart truly with sin.

But if you ask, What is that sense of sin, and what measure [[131]] of this is necessary? that I shall answer in the doctrine of compunction.

Let not therefore any soul be discouraged, and say, I was never yet convinced, because I have not felt such a clear, real, constant light to see sin and death as others have done. Consider thou if the end of conviction be attained, which is a true sense and feeling of sin, thou hast then that measure which is most meet for thee, more than which

the Lord regards not in any of his. But you that walk up and down with convinced consciences, and know your states are miserable and sinful, and that you perish if you die in that condition, and yet have no sense nor feeling, no sorrow nor affliction of spirit for those evils, I tell thee the very devils are in some respects nearer the kingdom of God than you be, who see, and feel, and tremble. Woe, woe to thousands that live under convicting ministries, whom the word often hits, and the Lord by the Spirit often meets; and they hear and know their sins are many, their estates bad, and that iniquity will be their ruin if thus they continue; yet all God's light is without heat, and it is but the shining of it upon rocks and cold stones; they are frozen in their dregs. Be it known to you, you have not one drop of that conviction which begins salvation. Before I pass from this to the second work of compunction, let me make a word of application.

If the Spirit begins thus with conviction of sin, then let all the ministers of Christ co-work with Christ, and begin with their people here; be faithful witnesses unto God's truth, and give warning to this secure world that the sentence of death is passed, and the curse of God lies upon every man for the least sin. "Lift up thy voice like a trumpet," was the Lord's word to Isaiah, (Is. lviii. 2,) "and tell them their sin." Those bees we call drones that have lost their sting. When the salt of the earth (the ministers of Christ, Matt, v.) have lost their acrimony and sharpness, or saltiness, what is it good for but to be cast out? Our hearers will putrefy and corrupt by hearing such doctrines only as never search. When the Lord inflicted a grievous curse upon the people, (Ezek. iii. 26,) the Lord made Ezekiel dumb that he should not be a reprover to them. What was the lamentation of Jeremy? "Thy prophets have seen vain and foolish things for thee, and have not discovered thine iniquity." How would you have the Lord Jesus by his Spirit to convince men? Must it not be by his word? Verily you keep the Spirit of Christ from falling down upon the

people if you refuse to endeavor to convince the people by your word. Other doctrines are sweet and necessary; but this is in the first place most necessary.

[[132]] Beware of personating, beware of bitterness and passion; but O, convince with a spirit of power and compassion; and he that shall be instrumental unto Christ in this or any other work for Christ's sake, unto him the Lord will be the principal agent, and by him will attain his own ends, finish his great work, gather in his scattered sheep who are in great multitudes throughout the kingdom scattered from him, if once they be thoroughly convinced that they are utterly lost, and gone out of the way.

May not this also be sad reproof and terror to them that stand it out against all means of conviction, and will not see their sin, nor believe the fearful wrath of God due to them for sin? Not a man scarce can be found that will come to this conclusion: I am a sinful man, and therefore I am dead; I am a condemned man; but, like wild beasts, fly from their pursuers into their holes, and thickets, and dens -- their sinful extenuations, excuses, and apologies for sin and for themselves; and if they be hunted thither, and found out there, then they resist, and article against that truth which troubles them. "They flatter themselves in their own eyes until their iniquities be found most hateful." Many a man dislikes the text, the use, especially the long use, wherein his sin is touched, and his conscience tossed -- especially if it be his darling sin, his Herodias, his Rimmon -- especially if withal he thinks that the minister means him, he will not see it nor confess it -- especially if he apprehends he shall lose his honor, or his silver shrines, and profit by it. He will not see his sin that he may not be troubled in conscience for his sin, that so lie may not be forced to confess and forsake his sin, and condemn himself for it before God and men. O Lord, I mourn that I can scarce meet with a

man that either cares to be, or will be, convinced, but hath something always to say for himself: their sins are not so great, they are not so bad, but have some good, and therefore have some hope; and, if God be merciful, it is no great matter though they be exceeding sinful, or some such thing; their mouths are not stopped to say any thing for themselves but guilty. There is less conviction in the world in this age than many are aware of; for I believe that all the powers of hell conspire together to blind men's eyes and darken men's minds in this great work of Christ. Principiis obsta. It is policy to stop Christ in his entrance in this first stroke upon the soul; but O, little do you think what you do herein, and what woe you work to yourselves hereby. Dost thou stifle and resist the first breathings of Christ's Spirit when he comes to save thee? What hurt will it be to know the worst of thy condition now, when there is hope hereby of coming [\[\[133\]\]](#) out of it, who must else one day see all thy "sins in order before thee," to thy eternal anguish and terror? (Ps. 1. 21.) When the Lord shall say unto thee as to Dives, "Remember in thy lifetime thou hadst thy good things," remember such a time, such a place, such a sin; which then you would not see. But now thou shalt see what it is to strike an infinite God. Remember thou wast forewarned of wrath to come, but thou wouldest not believe thyself accursed, that so thou mightest have felt thy need of Him that was made a curse to bless thee; and therefore feel it now: O, you will wish then that you had known this evil in that your day. What dost thou talk of grace? thou thinkest thou hast grace, when as thou hast not the first beginning, nay, not the most remote preparation for it in this work of conviction: what should we do for such as these, but with Jeremy, (Jer. xiii. 17,) "If you will not hear, my soul shall weep in secret for your pride"?

O, be persuaded, therefore, to remember your sins past, and to consider of your ways now. All the profaneness of thy heart and life, all the vanity of thy youth, (Eccl. xi. 9,) all your secret sins, all your

sins against light and love, checks and vows; all that time wherein thou didst nothing else but live in sin; thus God's people have done, (Ezek. vi. 9.,) thus all the elect shall do. O, consider the Lord remembers them all, and that with grief of heart against thee, because thou forgettest them. (Hos. ii. 7.) He that numbers thy hairs, and tells the sparrows that fall, numbers much more thy sins that fall from thee; they are written down in his black book. They are no trifles, for he minds not toys; the books must be opened. O, reckon now you have yet time to call them to mind, which it may be shall not continue long; it is the Lord's complaint (Jer. viii. 6) of a wicked generation, "that he could hear no man say, What have I done?" "Winnow yourselves," (as the word is, Zeph. ii. 1,) "O people not worthy to be beloved." I pronounce unto you from the eternal God, that ere long the Lord will search out Jerusalem with candles; he will come with a sword in his hand to search for all secure sinners in city and country, unless you awaken; he will make inquisition for blood, for oaths, for whoremongers, which grow common; for all secret sins we are frozen up in. O, be willing, be but willing that the Lord should search you and convince you, now in this evening time of the day, before the night come, wherein it will be too late to say, I wish I had considered of my ways in time: of all sins, none can so hardly stand with uprightness as a secret unwillingness to see and be convinced of sin. (John iii. 20, 21.) The helps and means for attaining hereunto are these: --

Bring thy soul to the light, desire the Lord in prayer, as Job [[134]] did. "What I see not, O Lord, show me." (Job xxxiv. 32.) Set the glass of God's law before thee; look up in the ministry of the word unto the Lord, and say, O Lord, search me: the sun of this holy word discovers motes: on the Sabbath day attend to all that which is spoken as spoken unto thee; then examine thyself when thou hast leisure. TV

hen David saw (Ps. xix.) how pure the law was, he cries out, "Who knows his errors? "

Look upon every conviction of thy conscience for sin as an arrest and warning given from the Lord himself; for sometimes the word hits, and conscience startles, and saith, This is my sin, my condition; yet how usual it is then for a man to put a merry face upon a foul conscience! how oft do men think this is but the word of a man who hath a latitude given him of reproofing sin in the pulpit, and we must give way to them therein! or else their hearts rise and swell against the man and word also. And why is it thus? Because he thinks it is man only that speaks; whereas did he see and believe that this was a stroke, a warning, an arrest, a check from the omnipotent God, would he then grapple, think you, with him? Would it pass lightly by him then? When Eli heard Samuel denounced sad things against his house, "It is the Lord," said Eli. (1 Sam. iii. 18.) When Paul saw Jesus speaking, "Why persecutest thou me? "(Acts ix..) he falls down astonished, and dares not kick against the pricks any longer; an arrest in the king's name comes with authority, and awes the heart of the man in debt.

Do not judge of sin by any other rule but as God judgeth of it, according to the rule of the word by which all men's ways shall be judged at the last day. What made Saul (1 Sam. xv.) extenuate his sin to Samuel? he judged not of it as the Lord in his word did; for had he done so, he would have seen disobedience to a command as bad as witchcraft, as Samuel told him; which also made his proud heart sink, and say, I have sinned: remember for this end these scriptures, (Rom. i. 18; Rom. ii. 9; Rom. vi. 23; Gal. iii. 10,) by which thou mayest see, either 1 must die, (in the state I am,) or God himself must lie. Remember that an angry look or word is murder in God's account; a wanton eye, an unchaste thought, is adultery before a holy

God, before whose tribunal thou must give an account of every vain thought and word. And therefore do not judge of sin by the present pleasure, gain, honor, or ease in it; for this is a false rule: Moses forsook the pleasures of sin for a season," (Heb. xi. 20;) nor yet by not feeling any punishment for it, for God reserves wrath (Nahum i. 2) till the day of reckoning; nor yet by the esteem that others generally have of it, who make no more of wounding [[135]] the Son of God by sin than they do of crushing vermin under their feet; nor yet by the practice of others: Every man sins, and therefore I hope I shall do as well as others; nor yet seeing thyself better, and thanking God thou art not as other men: it may be so, thou didst never steal, nor whore, nor murder as yet: that is not the question; but hast thou had any one vain thought in prayer? hast thou heard one sermon unprofitably? hast thou sinned? then know God spared not the angels that sinned, and how wilt thou escape, unless the Lord die for thee? -- nor yet, lastly, judge of it by thy own opinion of God, in thinking God is like unto thee, that as thou makest light of it, so he maketh less. (Ps. 1. 21.) O, take heed of judging the evil of sin by any of these rules: O, remember all men are apt to think of themselves better than they are: "Are we also blind?" say the Pharisees: take heed that by judging of sin by these false rules you deceive not yourselves.

Let this, lastly, be a use of thankfulness to all those whose eyes the Lord hath opened to see, and so convincing you of your sins. When David was going, in the heat of his spirit, to kill Nabal, and Abigail met him and stopped him, what said he? "O, blessed be the Lord for thy counsel;" so when thou wert going on, in the heat and pursuit of thy sin, toward eternal death, that the Lord should now meet thee in thy way, and convince thee of thy folly, and so stop thee, what a world of sin else wouldst thou have committed! how vile wouldst thou have been! O, say, therefore, Blessed be that minister of the

Lord, and blessed forever be the name of the Lord that gave me that counsel. It is said, Christ will "send the Comforter to convince of sin: "is it a comfortable thing to see sin? Yes, it shall one day be matter of unspeakable comfort to you that ever you saw sin; that ever he showed thee that mystery of iniquity in thy heart and life, those arcana imperii, those secrets of the power and dominion of sin over thee: Thou shalt not hate, but reprove thy brother. If the Lord should secretly keep thy sin glowing in his own bosom against thee, and never reprove thee for it, nor convince thee of it, no greater sign of God's everlasting hatred against thee. O, it is infinite love that he hath called thee aside and dealt plainly and secretly with thee, and will you not be thankful for this? The Lord might have left thee in thy brutish estate, and never made known thy latter end; never have told thee of thy sin or flood before it comes.

It may be you will say, If I felt my sin, and were deeply humbled for it, I could then be thankful that ever I saw it: what is it to see sin?

This is a favor the Lord shows not to all mankind; many have [[136]] no means to bring them to the knowledge of it, and those that have yet are smitten with a deep sleep under those means, that they know not when death is at their doors, nor what sin means; and this, it may be, is the condition of some of thy poor friends and acquaintance, that think it strange that thou runnest not with them in the same way as they do.

Suppose some reprobates do see sin; yet the Lord puts a secret virtue in that work of conviction upon thee, which makes thee cry to Heaven for a spirit of brokenness for sin, which, without this sight of sin, thou wouldest never so much as have desired; and this they have not.

However, conviction is a work of the Spirit, though it should be but common; and wilt not thou be thankful for common mercy, suppose it be outward? How much more for this that is spiritual, though it should be common! especially considering that it is the first fundamental work of the Spirit, and is seminally all. Sense of sin begins here, and ariseth hence; as ignorance of sin is seminally all sin. Remember that the discovery of Faux in the vault was the preservation of England: we use to remember the day and hour of the beginning of some great and notable deliverance: O, remember this time, wherein the love of Christ first brake out in convincing thee of thy sin, who else hadst certainly perished in it. And thus much of this first work of conviction. Now the second follows -- compunction.

Section III.

The second Act of Christ's Power, in working Compunction, or Sense of Sin.

Compunction, pricking at the heart, or sense and feeling of sin, is different from conviction of sin: the latter is the work of the understanding, and seated in that principally; the other is in the affections and will, and seated therein principally: a man may have sight of sin without sorrow and sense of it. (Dan. v. 22, with Dan v. 20, 21. James i. 24. Rom. ii. 20, 21.) Yet that conviction which the Spirit works in the elect is ever accompanied with compunction, first or last. For the better unfolding this point, let me open these four things to you: --

1. That compunction or sense of sin immediately follows conviction of sin in the day of Christ's power.
2. The necessity of this work to succeed the other.
3. Wherein it consists.
4. The measure of it in all the elect.

[[137]] That compunction follows conviction is evident from Scripture and reason. (Acts ii. 37.) When they hoard this, that is, when they saw and were convinced of their sin in crucifying the Lord of life, which they did not imagine to be a sin before, what follows next? It is said, "They were pricked at the heart." Lo, here is compunction. Ephraim, also, in turning unto God, (Jer. xxxi. 19,) hath these words: "After that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh," (as men in great calamity befallen them use to do.) "I was ashamed, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth." The men of Nineveh hearing by the prophet they were all to die within forty days, it is said "they believed God," (in the work of conviction,) and then they fell to sackcloth and ashes, (in the work of compunction,) which did immediately follow. Josiah, (2 Chron. xxxiv. 27,) in his renewed return unto God, after he heard the words of the law, "his heart melted, and he wept before the Lord." For what is the end of conviction? Is it not compunction? for if the Lord should let a man see his sin, and death for sin, and yet suffer the heart to remain hard and unaffected, the Lord did but leave him without excuse; nay, the Lord should but leave him under great misery, and under a more fearful judgment, viz., for a man to see and know his sin, and yet unaffected with it, and hardened under it: hardness of heart is one of the greatest judgments; to see sin, and not to be affected with it, argues greater hardness. For it is no wonder if they that see not and know not sin remain senseless of sin; alas! they

know not what they do; but for a man to be enlightened, and see his sin, and yet unaffected, Lord, how great is this hardness, and how inexcusable will such a man be left before God, when the Lord shall reckon with him for his hardness of heart! What is the end of that light the Lord lets into the understanding in other things? Is it not that thereby the heart might be affected thoroughly with it? Why doth the Lord let in the light of the knowledge of Christ and of his will? Is it that this knowledge should, like froth, float in the understanding, and be imprisoned there? No, verily, but that the heart might be thoroughly and deeply affected therewith. And do you think the Lord will, in the light of conviction, imprison it up in the mind? Is there not a further end that by this light the heart might be deeply affected with sin? If any say that the end of conviction is to drive the soul to Christ, I grant that is the remote and last end of it; but the next end is compunction. For if the understanding be convinced of misery, and the heart remain hard, the mind may see indeed that righteousness and life only are to be had in Christ; yet the heart [[138]] remaining hard, the will and affections will never stir toward Christ; it is impossible a hard heart, remaining such, wholly unaffected with sin or misery, should be truly affected with Jesus Christ; but of this more hereafter.

What necessity is there of this compunction, to succeed conviction? I speak now of necessity in way of ordinary dispensation, not of God's usual and extraordinary way of working, where he useth neither law nor gospel (as ordinarily he doth) to work by. Many have been nibbling lately at this doctrine, and demanded, What need is there of sorrow and compunction of heart? A man may be converted only by the gospel, and God may let in sweetness and joy without any sense of sin or misery, and in my experience I have found it so; others, godly and gracious, also feel it so; why, therefore, do any press such a necessity of coining in by this back door unto Christ? This point I

conceive is very weighty, and much danger in denying the truth of it; yet, withal, there needs much tenderness in handling of it, lest any stumble; and therefore, before I lay down the reasons to show the necessity of it, give me leave to propound these rules both for the clearing of the point, and answering sundry objections usually about this point: --

In this work of compunction, do not think that the Lord hath not wrought any true sense of sin, because you find it not in such a measure as you imagine you should desire to have, and that others feel; sense of sin admits degrees. I doubt not but Joseph's brethren were humbled; yet Joseph must be more; he must be cast into the ditch, and into the prison, and the iron must enter not only into his legs, but into his soul. (Ps. cv. 18.) He must be more afflicted in spirit, because he was to do greater work for God, and was to be raised up higher than the rest, and therefore did need the more ballast: some are educated more civilly than others, and thereby have contracted less guilt and stoutness of heart against God and his ways; therefore these have not such cause of trouble; and being less rugged, have less need of axes to hew them: some men's sorrow breaks in upon them more suddenly, like storms and breaches of the sea, and the Lord is resolved to hasten and finish his work in them more speedily, and it may be more exemplarily, (for every Christian is not a fair copy,) as in those, Acts ii. 37. In others their sorrows soak in by degrees; *Gutta cavat lapidem*; the Lord empties them by continual droppings, and hence feel not that measure of sorrow that others do: every Christian is not a Heman, (Ps. lxxxviii.,) who suffers "distracting fears and terrors from his youth up," (ver. 15,) who is "afflicted with all God's ways," (ver. 7,) for he was a man of exceeding high parts and gifts, as you may see, 1 Kings iv. 81; and therefore the Lord had need of hanging some special plummet on his heart to keep it ever low, lest it should be lifted up above

measure. Some sense of sin the Lord will work in all he saves, but not the same measure; the Lord gives not always unto his that which is good in itself, (it is good, I confess, to be deeply affected and humbled,) but that which is fit, and therefore best for thee.

Do not think there is no compunction or sense of sin wrought in the soul because you can not so clearly discern and feel it, nor the time of the working and first beginning of it. I have known many that have come with complaints -- they were never humbled, they never felt it so, nor yet could tell the time when it was so; yet there hath been, and many times they have seen it, by the help of others' spectacles, and blessed God for it. When they in Isaiah lxiii. 17, complained, "Lord, why hast thou hardened our hearts from thy fear?" do you think there was no softness nor sensibleness indeed? Yes, verily, but they felt nothing but a hard heart; nay, such hardness as if the Lord had plagued them with it by his own immediate hand, and not born and bred with them only, as with other men. Many a soul may think the Lord hath left it, nay, smitten it with a hard heart, and so make his moan of it; yet the Lord hath wrought real softness, under self-hardness, as many times in reprobates there is felt softness when within there is real hardness. The stony ground hearers were ploughed and broken on the top, but were stony at the bottom. Some men may be wounded outwardly and mortally; this may easily be discerned. The Lord may wound others, and they may bleed out; their sorrow is more inwardly and secret, and therefore can not point with their finger to the wound as others can.

Do not think the Lord works compunction in all the elect in the same circumstantial work of the Spirit, but only in the same substantial work; the Lord works a true sense of sin for substance and truth of it, yet there are many circumstantial works, like so many enlargements and comments upon one and the same text. Ex. gratia, the same sin

that affects Paul, it may be, doth not affect Lydia or Apollos. The same notions for the aggravation of sin in one do not come into the mind of the other; the same complaints, and prayers, and turnings of spirit in the one, may not be in the same circumstances, and with the like effects, as in the other, and yet both of them feel sin, and therefore complain; they both feel sin, yet by means of various apprehensions and aggravations. This I speak, because you [[140]] may the better understand the meaning of God's servants in opening the work of humiliation. You may hear them say, The soul doth this, and thinks that, and speaks another thing; it may be every one does not so think in the same individual circumstances, and therefore is to be understood as producing only exemplum in re simili: something like this, or for the substance of this, is here wrought.

In this work of compunction we must not bring rules unto men, but men to rules; crook not God's rules to the experience of men, (which is fallible, and many times corrupt,) but bring men unto the rule, and try men's estates herein by that; for many will say some men are not humbled at all, never had any precedent sorrow for sin, God's mercy only hath melted their hearts; and experience proves this, and many find this, who are sincere and gracious Christians.

I answer, We are not in this or any other point to be guided by the experience of men only, but attend the rule; if it be proved that according unto the rule men must be broken and affected with their sin and misery before mercy can be truly apprehended or Christ accepted. What tell you me of such or such men? Let the rule stand, but let men stand or fall according 'to the rule; many are accounted gracious and godly for a time, much affected with mercy and Christ Jesus; yet afterward fall or wizen into nothing, and prove very unsound.

What is the reason?

Truly the cause was here: their first wound and sorrow for sin was not right, as hereafter shall be made good; many thousands are miserably deceived about their estates by this one thing, of crooking and wresting God's rules to Christians' experience. Let all God's servants tremble and be wary here; rack not the Holy Scriptures, nor force them to speak as thou feelest, but try all things by them. (1 Thess. v. 21.)

Do not make the examples of converted persons in Scripture patterns in all things of persons unconverted; do not make God's work upon the one run parallel with God's work upon the other.

Some say that many in Scripture are converted to Christ without an)' sorrow for sin, and produce the examples of Lydia, whose heart God sweetly opened to receive Christ; and the eunuch, (Acts viii.,) converted in the same manner.

I answer. These are examples of persons converted to God before, who did believe in the Messiah, but did not know that this Jesus was the Messiah, which they soon did when the Lord cut the means to reveal Christ; and therefore Lydia, a Jewish proselyte, is called a worshiper of God, (Acts xvi. 14,) and so [[141]] was the eunuch, (Acts viii. 27;) and in the same condition was the centurion, (Acts x. 2,) who feared God, and whose prayers were accepted, (ver. 4,) (which can not be without faith) yet did not know that this Jesus crucified was the Messiah, until Peter came unto him. So that, suppose here was no sense or sorrow for sin, at this time; doth it therefore follow they never had an)' when the Lord at first wrought upon them? are these examples in persons converted fit to show forth God's work in persons unconverted? In some things, indeed, they are examples, in others not so; their examples of believing in Christ are not in that act

examples of sorrow for want of Christ. And yet let me add, to say that God opened Lydia's heart to believe in Christ, and yet opened not her heart to lament her sin and misery in her estate without Christ, (suppose she were without Christ,) is more than can be proved from the text; for it is said her heart was opened to attend unto the things that were spoken by Paul; and can any think that Paul, or an apostle, ever preached Christ without preaching the need men had of him? and could any preach their need of Christ without preaching men's undone and sinful estate without Christ? and do you think that Lydia was not made to attend unto this? do you think that when Philip came to open the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah to the eunuch, that "Christ was bruised for our iniquities;" that he did not let him understand the infinite evil of sin and misery of all sinners, and of him in special, unless the Lord Jesus was bruised for him?

In examples recorded in the Scripture of God's converting grace, do not think they had no sorrow for sin, because it is not distinctly and expressly set down in all places; for the Scripture usually sets down matters very briefly; it oftentimes supposeth many things, and refers us to judge of some by other places; as (Acts vi. 7) it is said, "many of the priests were obedient to the faith: "doth it therefore follow that they did immediately believe, without any sense of sin? Look to a fuller example, (Acts ii.,) and then we may see, as the one were converted to the faith, so were the other, having a hand in the same sin. (1 Tim. i. 13, 14,) Paul, he was a "persecutor, but the Lord received him to mercy;" and that "God's grace was abundant in faith and love," doth it hence follow that Paul had no castings down, because not mentioned here? If we look upon Acts ix., we shall see it otherwise.

Do not judge of general and common workings of the Spirit upon the souls of any to be the beginnings of effectual and special conversion;

for a man may have some inward and yet common [[142]] knowledge of the gospel, and Christ in it, before there be any sorrow for sin; yet it doth not hence follow that the Lord begins not with compunction and sorrow, because common work is not special and effectual work; when the Spirit thus comes, he first begins here, as we shall prove.

The terrors, and fears, and sense of sin and death be in themselves afflictions of soul, and of themselves drive from Christ; yet in the hand of Christ, by the power of the Spirit, they are made to lead, or rather drive unto Christ, which is able to turn mourning into joy, as well as after mourning to give joy; and therefore it is a vain thing to think there is no need of such sorrows which drive from Christ, and that Christ can work well enough therefore without them; when as by the mighty power and riches of mercy in Christ, the Lord by wounding, nay, killing his of all their carnal security and self-confidence, saves all his alive, and drives them to seek for life in the Son.

These things thus premised, let us now hear of the necessity of this work to succeed conviction.

Else a sinner will never part with his sin; a bare conviction of sin doth but light the candle to see sin; compunction burns his fingers, and that only makes him dread the fire. "Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye double-minded "men, saith the apostle James, (Jas. iv. 8.) But how should this be done? He answers, (ver. 9,) "Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep; turn your laughter into mourning. "So Joel ii. 12. The prophet calls upon his hearers to turn from their sin unto the Lord; but how? "Rend your hearts, and not your garments." Not that they were able to do this, but by what sorrow he requires of all in general; he thereby effectually works in the hearts of all the elect in particular; for every man naturally takes

pleasure, nay, all his delight and pleasure is in nothing else but sin; for God he hath none, hut that. Now, so long as he takes pleasure in sin, and finds contentment by sin, he can not but cleave inseparably to it. O, it is sweet, and it only is sweet; for so long as the soul is dead in sin, "pleasure in sin is death in sin." (1 Tim. v. 6.) So long as it is dead in sin, it is impossible it should part with sin; no more than a dead man can break the bonds of death. And therefore it undeniably follows, that the Lord must, first put gall and wormwood to these dugs, before the soul will cense sucking, or be weaned from them; the Lord must first make sin bitter, before it will part with it; load it with sin, before it will sit down and desire ease. And look, as the pleasure in sin is exceeding sweet to a sinner, so the sorrow for it must he exceeding bitter, before the soul will part from it.

[[143]] It is true, I confess, a man sometime may part with sin without sorrow; the unclean spirit may go out for a time, before he is taken, bound, and slain by the power of Christ. But such a kind of parting is but the washing of the cup; it is unsafe and unsound, and the end of such a Christian will be miserable: for a man to hear of his sin, and then to say, 1 will do no more so, without any sense or sorrow for it, would not have been approved by Paul, if he bad seen no more in the careless Corinthians, in tolerating the incestuous person; but their sorrow wrought this repentance. No, the Lord abhors such whorish wiping the lips; and therefore the same apostle, when he reproveth them for not separating the sinner, and so the sin from them, he sums it up in one word: "You have not mourned, that such a one might be taken from you; "because then sin is severed truly from the soul, when sorrow or shame, some sense and feeling of the evil of it, begins it. Not only sin is opposite to God, but when the Lord Jesus first comes near his elect in their sinful estate, they are then enemies themselves by sin unto God. And hence it is they will never part with their weapons, until themselves be thoroughly

wounded; and therefore the Lord must wound their consciences, minds, and hearts, before they will cast them by. Now, if there be no parting with, no separation from sin, but sin is as strong, and the sinner as vile, as ever before, hath Christ (who now comes to save his elect from sin) the end of his work? What is the man the better for conviction, affection to Christ, name what you can, that remains still in his sins? When the apostle would sum up all the misery of men, he doth it in those words, "Ye are yet in your sin." So I say, thou art convicted, but art yet in thy sin; art affected with Christ, and takest hold of Christ, but art yet in thy sin; "He that confesseth and forsaketh his sin shall find mercy."

You will say, May not the sweetness of Christ in the gospel, and sense of mercy, separate from sin, without any compunction?

I answer, 1. Sense of mercy and Christ's sweetness (I conceive) serve principally to draw the soul unto Christ. (Jer. xxxi. 3.) "With loving kindness have I drawn thee." But compunction or sense of sin principally serves, in the hand of Christ, to turn the soul from sin. Aversion from sin is distinct from, and in order goes before, our conversion unto God.

Sense of the sweetness of God's grace in Christ keeps out sin, but it doth not thrust out sin at first.

Christ can not be effectually sweet, unless sin be first made bitter; there may be some general notice of Christ's excellency, and some thirty pieces given for him; some esteem of his grace, [[144]] and hope of his mercy, which may occasion sorrow; but I dare not say, that this is any sound or thorough work, till after sorrow. (Is. l. 4.) Christ hath "the tongue of the learned given him to speak a word in season." Unto whom? It is added, "unto the weary;" they are the men that will prize mercy, and they only to purpose; they that have felt

the bitterness of sin and wrath find it exceeding hard to prize Christ, and to taste his sweetness; how shall they do it indeed that find none at all? Sweetness before sense of sin is like cordials before purging of a foul stomach; which usually strengthen the humor, but recover not the man.

Because, without this, no man will either care for Christ, or feel a need of Christ; a man may see a want of Christ by the power of conviction, but he will never feel a need of Christ, but by the spirit of compunction. "The whole need not the physician, but they that are sick." A whole man may see his want of a physician, but a sick man only feels his need of him, will prize him, send for him. By the whole you are not to understand such as have no need indeed of Christ, (for what sinner but hath need of him?) but such as feel no need of him; as by sick can not be meant such as are sinful and miserable, for then Christ should come actually to save all men; but those that did feel themselves so, as a sick man that feels his sickness: these only are the men that feel a need and necessity of Christ; these only will come to Christ, and be glad of Christ, and be truly thankful for their recovery of Christ. And hence ariseth the great sin of the world in despising the gospel, not at all affected with the glad tidings of it, because they are not affected with their sin and misery; or if they be affected but in part with the gospel, it is because they are not thoroughly affected with their misery before.

And hence it is, that when the Lord called his people to him, yet they would not come to him, because they were the Lord's, and well enough without him. Why did not they come to the supper, being invited? It was because they had farms, and oxen, and wives to attend unto; they felt no need of coming, as the poor, lame, blind, and halt did. The prodigal cares not for father nor father's house, until he comes to see, Here I die. It is true, the grace of the gospel

draws men unto Christ; but it is very observable, that the gospel reveals no grace but with respect and in reference unto sinners, and men in extreme misery; the gospel saith not that Christ is come to save, but to save sinners, and to save his people from their sins. It reveals not this, that God justifies men, but he justifies the ungodly; it reveals [[145]] not this, that Christ died for us, but that he died for them that were weak, for sinners, for enemies. And if so, can any man imagine that this news will be sweet, unless men see and feel the infinite misery of sin, and the fruits of it? Will not men say or think, What great matter is there in that? Suppose we be sinners and enemies, yet we are well enough; before Christ comes, a man's life lies in his sin. Now, suppose any should proclaim to a company of men the great favor of their prince toward them, that he is such a gracious prince as will take away all their lives; will this be glad tidings? Gospel grace can not be set out, much less felt, but in reference to sin and misery, which must be first felt, before it can be sweet. Because Christ will never come but only unto such as feel their misery; for you will say, A man may come to Christ without it: I say again, If he doth, (as he hath many followers,) yet Christ will not come to him, nor commit himself to him: "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance;" in which place note, that as by the righteous is not meant such as are sincerely so, but such as think and feel themselves so; so by sinners is not meant all manner of impenitent and hard-hearted sinners, but such as think and feel themselves such, and lament under it: now, God the Father sent him only unto such; he is sent not to heal the hard-hearted, but the broken-hearted; indeed, he is sent to make men broken hearted who have hard hearts; but he is not sent to heal them until then; the Lord leaves the ninety-nine that need no repentance to wander forever; the one lost sheep, who feels itself so, and feels a need of a Saviour to come and find it out, who can not come and find out him, the Lord Jesus will come unto, and unto him only, leaving all the ninety-nine.

This may lastly appear by considering the end of man's fall into sin, and the publishing of the law to reveal sin; and of the gospel also in reference unto sin and misery. Why did the Lord suffer the fall of man? What was his great plot in it? It is apparent this, that thereby way might be made for the greater manifestation of God's grace in Christ- The serpent poisons all mankind, that the seed of the woman might have the glory of recovering some: this was God's last end; the perdition of some (of themselves) being but subordinate unto this. (Rom. ix. 22, 23.) Surely Adam might have glorified grace if he had stood, and God had revealed his grace in preserving him (made mutable) from fall. But the Lord saw grace should not be sufficiently advanced to its highest dignity by this, and therefore suffers him actually to fall, and that into an extreme depth of misery. Now, consider man's fall in itself can not be a mean of [[146]] glorifying grace, but rather obscures all the glory of God. How shall the Lord attain his end then hereby? Truly, if the Lord let men see and feel their fall and misery by it, now grace offered will be accepted and glorified. And therefore the Lord sends the law to reveal sin, and make it exceeding sinful, and death for sin, that this end might be attained. (Gal. iii. 22.) And therefore feeling of sin, and death, and misery, being the means, must precede the other as the end; and therefore, as grace may be seen by conviction of misery, so the sweetness of it only can be felt by feeling misery in this work of compunction.

But you will say, What is this compunction, and wherein doth it consist?

This is the third particular to be opened; in general it is whereby the soul is affected with sin, and made sensible of sin; but more particularly, compunction is nothing else but a pricking of the heart, or the wounding of the soul with such fear and sorrow for sin and

misery as severs the soul from sin, and from going on toward its eternal misery; so that it consists in three things: --

1. Fear. 2. Sorrow. 3. Separation from sin.

The Lord Jesus when he comes to rescue his elect, look as Satan held them in their misery: First, by blinding their eyes from seeing of it; secondly, by hardening their hearts from feeling of it: so the Lord Jesus, having cut asunder the first cord of Satan by conviction, breaks asunder the second by compunction, and causing the soul to feel and be affected with its misery; and as the whole soul is unaffected before he comes, so he makes the whole soul sensible when he comes, and therefore he fills the conscience with fear, and the heart with sorrow and mourning, so as now the will of sin is broken, which was hardened before these fears and sorrows seized upon it. Let me open these particularly, that you may taste and try the truth of what now I deliver.

I say the Lord Christ, in this work of compunction, lets into the heart of a secure sinner a marvelous fear and terror of the direful displeasure of God, of death, and hell, the punishment of sin. O beloved, look upon most men at this day; this is the great misery lying upon them -- they do not fear the wrath to come, they fear not death nor damning, even then when they hear and know it is their portion; but their hearts are set to sin. (Eccl, viii. 11.)

The Lord Christ therefore lets in this fear, that look as the Lord when he comes to conquer the Canaanites, (Ex. xxiii. 27, 28,) [[147]] "he sent his hornets before him," which were certain fears, which made their hearts faint in the day of battle, and by this subdued them; so the Lord Christ, when he comes to conquer a poor sinner that hath long resisted him, and would go on to his own perdition, lets in these fears, that the soul shrinks in with the thoughts of its woeful estate,

and cries out secretly, Lord, what will become of me if I die in this condition? Paul trembles, astonished at his misery and wickedness, and now he begins to cry out; the jailer was very cruel against Paul, but when the Lord Jesus comes to rescue him from this condition, you shall see him trembling. The Lord had let in that fear, that now he is content to do any thing to be saved from the danger he saw he was now in: when a man sees danger, and great danger, near and imminent, now man naturally fears it: before Christ come, the soul may see its misery, but it apprehends it far off, and hoping to escape it, and hence doth not fear it; but when the Lord Jesus comes, he presents a man's danger, death, wrath, and eternity near unto him, and hence hath no hope to escape it, as now he is, and therefore doth fear; and seeing the misery exceeding great, he hath an exceeding great (though oft-times deep) fear of it; as men near death, and apprehending it so, begin then to be troubled, and cry out when it is too late. The Lord Jesus deals more mercifully with the elect, and brings death and eternity near them before they draw near to it, whilst it is called to-day: the poor jailer began to think of killing himself when fears were upon him; and so many, under this stroke of Christ, have the same thoughts, because they see no hope; but this measure is not in all; this work is in all.

"Put them in fear, O Lord, that they may know they be but men." Before this fear comes, men are above God, and think they can stand it out against him; the Lord therefore lets in this fear to make them know they be but men, and that as proud, and stout, and great as they are, yet that they are not above God, and that it is vain to kick against the pricks, and go on as they have done; for if they do, he will not endure it long. "The spirit of bondage makes men fear." Before the Spirit of adoption comes, these fears therefore are such, as the regenerate, after they have received the Spirit of adoption, never have; and therefore they are such as pursue the soul with some

threatening of the word, pronouncing death and perdition to him in that estate. Ex. gr., "He that believes not is condemned already:" thus the word speaks to conscience. (John iii. 17.) Thou believest not, saith a man's own conscience, the Spirit witnessing with it; therefore thou art condemned, saith conscience; now the spirit [[148]] of bondage is the testimony of God's Spirit, witnessing to both the premises and conclusion: now, this Spirit no regenerate man, indeed, ever hath after this time; but the fears he hath arise from another principle of corruption of conscience and malice of Satan through the present desertion of the Spirit leaving him; not from any positive witness of the Spirit of any such untruth, which yet is truth, while the soul is under this stroke, and not regenerate. Mark therefore diligently that this fear is the work of the Spirit of the Lord Jesus, and hence it follows, --

That these fears are not merely natural, (as those Rom. ii. 15,) arising from natural conscience only, which only accuse of sin, but never effect; but they are supernatural; they are arrows shot into the conscience by the arm of the Spirit, so dreadful that no word nor meditation of death and eternity can beget such fears, but creates them.

Hence it follows that they are clear fears; (for the Spirit's work is ever clear before he leaves it.) (Eph. v. 13;) they are not blind, confused fears, and suspicious and sad conjectures, whereby many a man is afraid, and much afraid, and affrighted like men in a dream, that think they are in hell, yet can not tell what that evil is which they fear; but they are clear fears, whereby they distinctly know and see that they are miserable, and what that misery is.

Hence it follows that they are strong fears, because the almighty hand of the Spirit sets them on, and shakes the soul; they are not

weak fears, which a man can shake off, or cure by weak hopes, sleep, or business's, etc., like some winds that shake the tree, but never blow it down; but these fears cast down the tallest cedar, and appall the heart, and cool the courage and boldness of the most impenitent and audacious sinner; the Spirit presenting the greatest evil in eternal separation from God: hence no evil in the world is so dreadful as this. I had better never been born than to bear it, (saith the soul,) and hence casts off all other thoughts, and can not be quiet; and hence it is that these fears force a man to fly and seek out for a better condition. A man like Lot lingers in his sin; but these fears, like the angel, drive him violently out, the Lord saying to him, Away, for thy life, lest thou perish with the world, for thy sins are come up to heaven; thou must die before one day be at an end, and then what will become of thee? Ah, thou sinful, wretched man! may not the Lord justly do it? Are not thy sins grown so great and many that they are an intolerable burden for the soul of God to bear any longer? And hence you shall observe, if the soul, after sad fears, grows bold and careless again, the Spirit pursues it with more cause of fear; and now the soul cries out, Did the Lord ever elect thee? Christ shed his blood to save his people from their sins; thou livest yet in thy sins. Did he ever shed his blood for thee? Thou hast sinned against conscience after thou hast been enlightened, and fallen back again. Hast not thou therefore committed the unpardonable sin? Thou hast had many a fair season of seeking God, but hast dallied and dreamt away thy time. Is not the day of grace therefore now past? It is true the Lord is yet patient and bountiful, and lets thee live on common mercy; but is not all this to aggravate thy condemnation against that great and terrible day of the Lord which is at hand? Are there not better men in hell than thou art that never committed the like sin? Thus the Spirit pursues with strong fears till proud man falls down to the dust before God. The soul is now under fears, not above them, and therefore can not come out of these chains by the most

comfortable doctrine it hears, nor particular application of it by the most merciful minister in the world, until the Lord say, (as Lam. iii. 57,) "Fear not." The Lord only can assuage these strong winds and raging waters, in which there is no other cry heard of this soul tossed thus with tempests but O, I perish! Only the Lord, making way for the Spirit of adoption by these in his elect, drives them out to seek if there be any hope: and so they are not properly desperate fears, yet, as I say, strong fears, not alike extensively, yet alike intensively, strong in all. A small evil, when tidings are brought of it, doth not fear; but if the evil be apprehended great and near too, the very suspicion of it makes the heart tremble. When a house is on fire, or a mighty army entered the land, and near the city, children that know not the greatness of the evil fear them not; but men that know the danger are full of fear. The wrath of the Lord, that fire, those armies of everlasting woes, are great evils. The blind world may not much fear them; but all the elect, whose minds are convinced to see the greatness of them, can not but fear, and that with strong and constant fears. Nor is it cowardice, but duty, to fear these everlasting burnings; and hence the soul in this case wonders at the security of the world, dreads the terrors of the Lord that are near them, and usually seeks to awaken all its poor friends. I once thought myself well, and was quiet as you be; but the Lord hath let me see my woe, which I can not but fear. O, look you to it.

Thus the Lord works this fear in some in a greater, in others in a lesser, measure. O, consider whether the Lord hath thus affected your hearts with fear. O secure times, what will God [[150]] do with us? many of you having heard the voice of the lion roaring, and yet yon tremble not. The Lord hath foretold you of death and eternal woe for the least sin. Do you believe it, and yet fear it not? How art thou then forsaken of God? Many of you, that, like old mariners, can laugh at all foul weather, and, like weathercocks, set your faces against all

winds; and if you be damned at last, you can not help it; you must bear it as well as you can: and do you hope to do it as well as others shall do? O, how far are such from the kingdom of God, the Lord not yet working nor pricking thy heart so much as with fear!

2. Sorrow and mourning for sin is the second thing wherein compunction consists. And look, as fear plucks the soul from security in seeing no evil to come, so sorrow takes off the present pleasure and delight in sin in a greater measure than fear doth. The Lord therefore having smitten the soul, or shot the arrows of fear into the soul, it therefore grows exceeding sad and heavy, thinking within itself. What good do wife Or children, house or lands, peace and friends, health and rest, do me, in the mean time condemned to die, and that eternally; it may be reprobated never to see God's face more; the guilt and power of sin in heart and life lying still upon me? And hereupon the soul mourns in the day, and in the night desires to go alone and weep, and there confesseth its vileness before God, all the days of vanity and sins of ignorance, thinking, O, what have I done! and seeks for mercy; but not one smile, nothing but clouds of anger, appear; and then thinks, If this anger, the fruit of my sin, be so great, O, what are my sins the cause hereof! When the angel had set out the sin of the Israelites in making a league with the Canaanites, and told them that they should be thorns in their sides, they sat down, (ver. 4.) and lifted up their voices and wept. So it is with a contrite sinner. Note narrowly that eminent place of Scripture, (Is. lxi. 3.) the Lord Christ is sent to "appoint beauty for ashes, and the oil of joy for the spirit of heaviness to them that mourn." Out of which note these four things for the explication of this sorrow or mourning: --

First. It is such a mourning as is precedent unto spiritual joy. And hence it is not said, I will not give the spirit of gladness to beget

mourning, (though the Lord doth so after conversion.) but this goes in order before that. Ephraim-like, who seeing what an unruly beast he had been, unaccustomed to God's yoke, smites upon his thigh, and bemoans himself. It is God's method (after God's people have sinned) to sad their hearts, and then to turn mourning into joy. Much more at first beginning of God's work upon the soul. They shall first mourn, and [[151]] lament, and smite upon the thigh. If God wounds the soul for sin, it shall smart, and bleed too, before God will heal.

Secondly. It is a great mourning, because it is called a spirit of mourning, as a spirit of slumber is a deep slumber. When the poor Jews shall be converted, their great sin shall then be presented before them of cursing and crucifying the Lord of life, as it was to those, Acts ii. 36. And by reason of this there shall be a great mourning,' that they shall desire to go alone in secret, every one apart, and take their fill of mourning, before the Lord open the fountain of grace. It is not a summer cloud, or an April shower, that is soon spent, but a great mourning; for,--

1. Before this spirit of sorrow come, a man's heart takes great delight in his sin. It is his god, his life, and sweeter than Christ and all the joys of heaven, and therefore there must be great sorrow; sin must be made exceeding bitter. A man that is very hungry and thirsty after his lust must find such meat and drink exceeding bitter, else he will feed on it. Solomon took great content in women; but what saith he when the Lord humbled him? "I find a woman more bitter than death." Hear this, you harlots, and you that live in your wanton lusts. The Lord will make your sweet morsels more bitter than death to you, if the Lord saves you.

2. Because the greatest evils are the objects of this sorrow, viz., sin and death. It is true a man may mourn for smaller evils sooner; but

when the Spirit sets on the greatest evils, then they sad much more. "Mine iniquities are too heavy to bear." Why so? Many a man can bear them without sinking. True, but in the elect the Spirit sets on, loads the soul herewith. "A wounded spirit who can bear?" Because the greatest evils lie upon the most tender part of a tender soul, pressed down by the omnipotent hand of Christ's Spirit. For now the multitude of sins, more than the hairs on the head, come now to mind, as also the long continuance in them cradles sins. No sooner, saith the soul, did I begin to live but I began to sin. Obstinacy also in them lies very heavy. I have had warnings, checks, resolutions against them, and yet have gone on. The power of sin also sads it, that it is said, (Prov. xxi. 1,) "When the wicked reign, the people mourn." So doth the soul when it feels sin reign. I can not subdue it, nay, the Lord will not, that I fear the Lord hath left me over to it. The increase of sin it feels makes it mourn also. I grow worse and worse, saith the soul. The leak comes in faster than he can cast it out. The greatness of sin makes it mourn. Was there ever [[152]] such a sinner as I? And lastly, the sense of condemnation for sin lies upon him; this is the fruit of your evil ways, saith the Spirit. The soul doth not let sin pass by it now as water down the mill, but being stopped by conviction and fear of the evil of it, it swells very high, and fills the heart full of grief and sorrow, that many times it is overwhelmed therewith.

8. Because Christ will not be very sweet, unless this mourning under misery be very great: the healing of a cut finger is sweet, but of a mortal wound is exceeding sweet; a little sorrow will make Christ sweet, but great sorrow under sense of deadly wounds is exceeding sweet; and without this Christ hath not his honor due to him, if he be not only sweet, but also exceeding sweet and precious.

Because it is such a sorrow as nothing but that that hath wounded the soul can heal it. Let men have the greatest outward troubles, outward things can cure them, or else they will wear away. As if a man be sick, or in debt, physic and money can cure these; but this wound neither can or ever shall be healed but by the hand that wounded it. And hence a man can take no comfort in meat, drink, sleep, friends, mirth, nor pastime, while this wound, this sorrow lasts; for if any thing else can heal it, it is not the right wound, or sorrow, the Lord breeds in his elect. An adulterous heart, indeed, may be quieted with other lovers. Cain can build away his sorrow. Nay, I will say more: this wounded soul can not comfort itself by any promises till the Lord come: David had a promise of pardon from Nathan, yet he cries out to the Lord to make him hear the voice of joy or gladness, that his broken bones might rejoice. Did not the Lord make him hear the voice of joy by Nathan? Yes, outwardly; but the Lord that had broke his bones must make him hear inwardly. Nay, when the Lord comes himself to comfort, much ado the Lord hath to make him hear it; as the Israelites that "hearkened not to Moses' voice, because of their hard bondage," that unless the Lord did invincibly comfort, it would lie bleeding to death, and never live. It must needs, therefore, be great sorrow, which all the world, men, nor angels can remove.

You may be confirmed in this, if, lastly, you consider the many ways the Lord takes to beget great mourning, if the soul will not be sorrowful; as, sometimes, great afflictions; Manasseh must be taken in the bushes, and be cast into chains. Sometimes strange temptations, hellish blasphemies: Is there a God? are the Scriptures his word? why should the Lord he so cruel as to reprobate any of his creatures, to torment it so long? etc. Sometimes long eclipsing of the light of God's countenance; no prayers [[153]] answered, hut daily bills of indictment. And sometimes it thinks it hears and feels a

secret testimony from God, that he never had thought of peace toward it, and that his purpose is immutable. Sometimes it questions, Can God forgive sins so great? Can it stand with his honor to put up so much wrong? Sometimes it feels its heart so extreme hard and dedolent, that it thinks the Lord hath sealed it up under this plague till the judgment of the great day. And sometimes the Lord makes melancholy a good servant to him to further this work of sorrow. But thus the Lord rebukes many a hard-hearted sinner that will not bear the yoke, nor feel the load; and now the Lord turns the beauty of the proudest into ashes, and withers the glory of all flesh. Nay, sometimes you shall observe the Lord, though he comes not out as a lion to rend, yet as a moth he frets out, by secret pinings and languishings, the senseless security of man, that he shall mourn to purpose before he leave him. I do not mean by this, as if all men had the like measure of sorrow; but a great sorrow it is in all. Every child is delivered by some throes; those that stick long in the birth may feel them longer and very many.

Nor yet do I press a necessity of tears, or violent and tumultuous complaints; the deepest sorrows run with least noise. If a man can have tears for outward losses, and none for sins, it is very suspicious whether he was ever truly sorrowful for sin; otherwise, as the greatest joys are not always expressed in laughter, so the greatest sorrows are not always expressed in shedding of tears; what the measure of this great sorrow is, we shall hear hereafter.

Thirdly. It is a constant mourning, for so it is here called, a spirit of heaviness; as that woman that had a spirit of infirmity, and was bowed down many years: Hannah, constantly troubled, is called a woman of a sorrowful spirit. (1 Sam. i. 12, 15.) As "the spirit of pride and whoredom" (Hos. iv. 12) is a constant frame, where, though the acts be sometimes suspended, yet the spirit remains, so a spirit of

mourning is such sorrow, as, though the acts of mourning be sometime hindered, yet the spirit and spring remain. Hypocrites will mourn under sin and misery; but what is it? It is the hanging down the head like a bulrush in bad weather for a day. O, how many have pangs and gripes of sorrow, and can quickly ease themselves again! these mourners come to nothing in the conclusion. I grant the sorrow and sadness of spirit may be interrupted; but it returns again, and never leaves the soul until the Lord look down from heaven. (Lam. iii. 48-50.) The cause continues, -- guilt and strength of sin, -- and therefore this effect continues.

[[154]] Fourthly. It is such a sorrow as makes way for gladness, for so it is here said, "The Lord gives beauty for "these "ashes;" and hence it is no desperate, hellish sorrow, but usually mixed with sense of some mercy, at least common, and some hope; not that which apprehends the object of hope particularly, (which is done in invocation,) but that the Lord may find out some way of saving it, (Jonah iii. 9; Acts ii. 37,) which hope, with sense of mercy waiting so long, preserving from hell and death so oft, etc., doth not harden the heart, (as in reprobates,) but serve to break the more, and to load it with greater sorrow; thus the Lord works this sorrow in all his elect. I know it is in a greater measure, and from some other grounds after the soul is in Christ; but this sorrow there is for substance, mentioned for the reasons given: if Christ hate you, you shall mourn, but never till it be too late; if he love you, you must mourn now: how great and many are your sins! how near is your doom! The Lord only knows how fearful your condemnation will be, you have oft heard; but yet how few of your hearts are sad and very heavy for these things! Sin is your pleasure, not your sorrow; you fly from sorrow as from a temptation of Satan, who comes to trouble you, and to lead you to despair: David's eyes ran down with rivers of waters, because others brake God's law, and Jeremy wished he had a cottage in the wilderness to

mourn in; and yet you do not, you can not pour out one drop, nor yet wish you had hearts to lament your own sins: but O, know it, that when the Lord Christ comes, he will sad thy soul; when he comes to search thy old sores by the Spirit of conviction, he will make them smart and bleed abundantly, by the spirit of compunction.

3. Separation from sin is the third thing wherein compunction consists: such a fear and sorrow for sin under a sinful estate, as separates the soul from sin, is true compunction; without, which the Lord Christ can not be had: the soul is cut and wounded with sin by fear and sorrow, but it is cut off by this stroke of the Spirit, not from the being, but from the growing power of sin; from the will to sin, not from all sin in the will which is mortified by a spirit of holiness, after the soul is implanted into Christ; for compunction, contrition, brokenness of heart for sin, (call it what you will,) is opposite to hardness of heart, which is in every sinner whilst Christ leaves him; now in hardness (as in a stone) there is, first, insensibleness; secondly, a close cleaving of all the parts together, whereby it comes to pass that hard things make resistance of what is cast against them: so in compunction there is not only sensibleness of the evil of sin and death, by fear and sorrow, but such as makes a separation of that close union between [[155]] sin and the soul; and hence it is that the Lord abhors all fastings, humiliations, prayers, tears, unless they be of this stamp, and are accompanied with this effect. The Lord flings the dung of their fastings and sorrows in their faces, because they did not break the bonds of wickedness; to mourn for sin and misery, and yet to be in thy sin, is the work of justice on the damned in hell, and all the devils at this day, that are pinched with their black chains not loosened from them; and not the work of the grace of Christ in the day of his power. "He that confesseth his sins shall have mercy:" that is true; but remember the meaning of that confession in the next words, "and forsaketh," he shall find mercy. What is the end of the

mother in laying wormwood and gall upon her breast, but that the child, by tasting the bitterness of it, might be weaned, and have his stomach and will turned from it? What is the end of fear and sorrow, but by this to turn away the soul from sin? This point is weighty and full of difficulty, of great use, and worthy of deep meditation. For as the first wound and stroke of the Spirit is, so it is in all after works of it, both of faith and holiness in the soul: if this be right, faith is right, holiness is right; if this be imperfect, or naught, all is according to it afterward: the greatest difficulty lies here, to know what measure of separation from sin the Spirit makes here; for after we are in Christ, then sin is mortified: how, then, is there any separation of the heart from it, before it doth fully believe? or what measure is there necessary? Here, therefore, I shall answer to the fourth and last particular, viz.: --

Fourthly. What is that measure of compunction the Lord works in all the elect?

So much compunction or sense of sin is necessary as attains the end of it. Now, what is the end of it? No other but that the soul, being humbled, might go to Christ, (by faith,) to take away his sin; the *finis proximus*, or next end, of compunction is humiliation, that the soul may be so severed from sin as to renounce itself for it; the *finis remotus*, or last end, is, that, being thus humbled, it might go unto Christ to take away sin; for, beloved, the condemnation of the world lies not so much in being sinful under guilt and power of sin, as in being unwilling the Lord Jesus should take it away: this, I say, is the greatest hindrance of salvation. (John iii. 19. John v. JO.) "O Jerusalem, wilt thou not be made clean?" (Jer. xiii. 17.) That was their great evil; they were not only polluted, but they would not be made clean; the Lord Jesus therefore rolls away this stone from the sepulcher, beats down this mountain; and because it must first

believe in Christ before it can receive grace from Christ, it must come to Christ to take away sin, before the Lord will do it; hence so much loosening from sin as makes the soul thus to come is necessary. So much fear and sorrow as loosens from sin, and so much loosening from sin as makes the soul willing, or at least not unwilling, that the Lord Jesus should take it away, is necessary; for whoever comes to Christ, or is not willing Christ should come to him to take away all his sin, hath (whatever he thinks) some antecedent loosening and separation from sin.

O, saith a poor sinner, when the Lord hath struck his heart, and he feels guilt, and terror, and mighty strength of corruption, if the Lord Jesus would take away these evils from me, though I can not, means can not, that will be exceeding rich mercy. The Lord doth not wound the heart to this end, that the soul should first heal itself, before it come to the Physician, but that it might seek out, or, feeling its need, be willing and desirous of a Physician, the Lord Jesus, to come and heal it. It is the great fault of many Christians, either their wounds and sorrows are so little, they desire not to be healed; or, if they do, they labor to heal themselves first, before they come to the Physician for it; they will first make themselves holy, and put on their jewels, and then believe in Christ. And hence are those many complaints, What have I to do with Christ? Why should he have to do with me, that have such unholy, vile, hard, blind, and most wicked heart? If I were more humbled, and more holy, then I should go to him, and think he would come to me. O, for the Lord's sake, dishonor not the grace of Christ. It is true, thou canst not come to Christ till thou art laden, and humbled, and separated from thy sin. Thou canst not be engrafted into this Olive, unless thou beest cut, and cut off too from thy old root. Yet remember forever, that no more sorrow for sin, no more separation from sin, is necessary to thy closing with Christ, than so much as makes thee willing, or rather not unwilling, that the

Lord should take it away. And know it, if thou seekest for a greater measure of humiliation antecedent to thy closing with Christ than this, thou showest the more pride therein, who wilt rather go into thyself to make thyself holy and humble, that thou mightest be worthy of Christ, than go out of thyself, unto the Lord Jesus, to take thy sin away; in a word, who thinkest Christ can not love thee, until thou makest thyself fair, and when thou thinkest thyself so, (which is pride.) wilt then think otherwise of Christ. The Lord, therefore, when he teacheth his people how to return unto him after grievous sins, directs them to this course -- not to go about the bush to remove their iniquities themselves, or to stay and live securely in their sins, until the Lord did it himself; but bids them come to him, and [[157]] say, "Take away (Lord) all iniquities." (Hos. xiv. 1-3.) You shall see "Ephraim bemoaning himself." (Jer. xxi. 18.) But how? Doth he say he feels his sins now all removed? No, but he desires the Lord to turn him, and then (saith he) I shall be turned.

As if he should say, Lord, I shall never turn from this stubborn, vile heart, nor so much as turn to thee, to take it away, unless thou dost turn me, and then I shall be turned to purpose. What saith the penitent church? "Come," say they, "let us go unto the Lord." They might object and say, Alas! the Lord is our enemy, and wounds us, and hath broken us to pieces; we are not yet healed, but lie dead as well as wounded; shall such dead spirits live? Mark what follows: True indeed, "He hath wounded us; "let us therefore go to him, that he may heal us, and "after two days he will revive us." The Lord requires no more of us than thus to come to him. Indeed, after a Christian is in Christ, labor for more and more sense of sin, that may drive you nearer and nearer unto Christ. Yet know before you come to him, the Lord requires no more than this; and as he requires no more than this, so it is his own Spirit (not our abilities) that must also work this: and thus much he will work, and doth require of all

whom he purposeth to save. If thou wilt not come to Christ to take away thy sins, thou shalt undoubtedly perish in them. If the Lord work that sorrow, so as to be willing the Lord should take them away, thou shalt be undoubtedly saved from them.

If you would know what measure of willingness to have Christ take away sin is required, you shall hear when we come to open the fourth particular in the doctrine of faith.

If you further ask, how the Spirit works this loosening from sin in the work of compunction, --

I answer, The Spirit of Christ works this by a double act. 1. Moral. 2. Physical.

As in the conversion of the soul by faith unto God, the Spirit is not only a moral agent persuading, but also a supernatural agent physically working the heart to believe, by a divine and immediate act; so in the aversion of the soul from sin, the Spirit doth affect the heart with fear and sorrow morally; but this can never take away sin, as we see in Judas and Cain, deeply affected and afflicted in spirit, and yet in their sin. And therefore the Spirit puts forth its own hand physically or immediately, and his own arm brings salvation to us, by a further secret immediate stroke, turning the iron neck, cutting the iron sinews of sin, and so makes this disunion or separation. You think it is easy to be willing that Christ should come and take away all your sins; [[158]] I tell you, the omnipotent arm of the Lord, that instructed Jeremy in a smaller matter, can only instruct you here; both these acts ever go together according to the measure mentioned; the latter can not be without the first, the first is in vain without the latter.

But what evil in sin doth the Spirit morally affect the heart with, and so physically turn it from sin?

He affects the soul with it as the greatest evil; by sin I mean not as considered without death, (for at this time the soul is not so spiritual as that sin without consideration of death and wrath due to it should affect it,) but sin and death: sin armed with wrath, sin working death, pricks the heart as the greatest evil, and so lets out that core at the bottom, as may fit the soul for healing. For, --

If the Spirit make a man feel sin truly, the soul feels it as it is; it is not the name and talk of the danger of sin that troubles it, but the spirit (ever making things real) loads the soul with it indeed, and as it is: now it is the greatest evil, and therefore so it feels sin. Believe it, you never felt sin indeed as it is, if you have not felt it thus.

Else no man will prize Christ as the greatest good, without which no man shall have him.

Else a man will live and continue in sin. If sin had been a greater evil to Pilate than the loss of Cesar's friendship, he would never have crucified Christ. If sin had been a greater evil to Jehu than the loss of his kingdom, he had never kept up the two calves. If sin were a greater evil than poverty, shame, grief in this world, many a professor would never lose Christ and a good conscience too, for a little gain, profit, or honor. Beloved, the great curse and wrath of the Lord upon all men in the world almost is this, that the greatest evils should be the least of all felt, and the smallest evils most of all complained of. What is death, that only separates thy soul from thy body, to sin, that separates God blessed forever from thy soul? and therefore the Lord Jesus will remove this curse from whom he saves.

But you will say, What is that evil the soul sees at this time in sin, that thus affects the heart with it, as the greatest evil? This is the last difficulty here.

There is a threefold evil especially seen in sin: --

1. The evil of torment and anguish.
2. The evil of wrong and injury to God.
3. The evil of separation of the soul from God. The first may affect reprobates, as Saul and Judas, who were sore distressed when they felt the anguish of conscience for sin.

[[159]] The second is only in those who are actually justified, called, and sanctified, who lament sin as it is against God, and a God reconciled to them, and as it is against the life of God begun in them; and hence they cry out of it as a body of death.

The third the elect feel at this first stroke and wound which the Spirit gives them; the anguish of sin indeed lies sore upon them, but this much more. Christ is come to seek that which is lost. The sheep is lost, when first it is separated and gone from the owner; secondly, when it knows not how to return again, unless the shepherd find it and carry it home: so that soul is properly and truly lost that feels itself separated and gone from God, knowing not how to return to him again, unless the Lord come and take it upon his shoulders, and carry it in his arms; this lies heavy upon it, viz., that it is gone from God, and wholly separated from all union to him, and communion with him. You may observe, (John xvi. 9,) that the Spirit convinces of sin. How? "Because they believe not in me." 1. Because they shall see and feel themselves quite separated from me; they shall hear of my glory and riches of mercy, and that happiness which all that have me

shall and do enjoy; but they shall mourn that they have no part nor portion in these things; they shall mourn that they live without me, and that they have lived so long without me.

I confess many other considerations of the evil of sin come now in, but this is the main channel where all the other rivulets empty themselves. And hence it is that the soul, under this stroke, is in a state of seeking only, yet finds nothing; it seeks God and Christ, and therefore feels a want, a loss of both by sin; for the end of all the fears, terrors, sorrows, etc., upon the elect, is to bring them back again to God, and into fellowship with God, the only blessedness of man. Now, if the soul ordained and made for this end should not feel its present separation from God by sin, and the bitterness of the evil of it, it would never seek to return again to him as to his greatest good, nor desire ever to come into his bosom again; for look as sin wounds the soul, so the soul seeks for healing of it; if only the torment of sin wound, ease of conscience from that anguish will heal it: so if separation from God wound the heart, only union and communion with God will heal it, and comfort it again. The Lord Christ therefore having laid his hand upon the soul to bring it back to himself first, and so to the Father, being designed to gather in all the outcasts of Israel, those he ever makes to feel themselves outcasts, as cast away out of God's blessed sight and presence, that so they may desire at last to [[160]] come home again: reprobates not made for this end have not this sense of sin, the means of their return. And hence it is that the souls of those God saves are never quiet until they come to God, and have communion with him; but they mourn for their distance from him, and the hiding of his face, until the Lord shine forth again: whereas, every one else, though much troubled, yet sits down contented with any little odd thing, that serves to quiet them for the time, before the Lord return to them, or they enter into their rest, in that ineffable communion with him.

Let me now make application of this, before I proceed to open the next particular of humiliation.

This may show us the great mistake of two sorts.

1. Such as think there is no necessity of any sense of misery before the application of the remedy or their closing with Christ; because, say they, where there is sense there is life, (all sense and feeling arising from life,) and where there is life there is Christ already. And hence it is that they would not have the law first preached in these days, but the gospel: the other is to go round about the bush.

I answer, that for my own part this doctrine (of seeing and feeling our misery before the remedy) is so universally received by all solid divines, both at home and abroad, that I meet with, and the contrary opinion so cross to the Holy Scriptures, and general experience of the saints, and the preaching of the other so abundantly sealed to be God's own way by his rich blessings on the labors of his servants faithful to him herein, that were it not for the sake of some weak and misled, I should not dare to question it; the Lord himself so expressly speaking, that he "came not to call the righteous," but on the contrary, only to heal the sick, who know and feel their sickness chiefly by the law. (Rom. iii. 20.) Dost thou think, therefore, that there is spiritual life wherever there is any sense? Then I say the devils and damned in hell have much spiritual life, for they feel their misery with a witness.

As for the preaching of the gospel before the law to show our misery, it is true that the gospel is to be looked at as the main end; yet you must use the means, before you can come to the end, by the preaching of the law, or misery in despising the gospel. End and means have been ever good friends, and you may join them well together; you can not sever them without danger. I do observe that

the apostles ever used this method: Paul first proves Jews and Gentiles to be under sin, in almost the first three chapters of the Romans, before he opens the doctrine of justification by faith in Christ. I do not observe that ever there was so clear and manifest opening of man's misery as by Christ and his apostles, who brought in the clearest revelations of the remedy. I do not read in Moses, or in all the prophets, such full and plain expressions of our misery as in the New Testament -- "The worm that never dies," "The fire that never goes out," "The wrath to come," etc.; and therefore, assuredly they thought this no back door, but faith the door to Christ, and this is the way to faith. To say that a man must first have Christ and life, before he feel any spiritual misery, is to say that a Christian must first be healed, that he may be sick; cured, that he may be wounded; receive the Spirit of adoption, before he receive; and that he may receive the spirit of bondage to fear again.

If ministers shall preach the remedy before they show misery, woe to this age, that shall be deprived of those blessings which the former gloried in. and blessed the Lord for. Mark those men that deny the use of the law to lead unto Christ, if they do not fall in time to oppose some main point of the gospel. For it is a righteous thing, but a heavy plague, for the Lord to suffer such men to obscure the gospel, that in their judgments zealously dislike this use of the law. You must preach the remedy; that is true; but you must also first preach the woe and misery of men, or rather so mix them together, as the hearts of hearers may be deeply affected with both; but first with their misery. It argues a greater consumption of the Spirit of grace when Christians' lives are preserved only by alchymy and choice cordials, notions about Christ, nay, choice ones, too, or else the old and ordinary food of the country will not down. I tell you, the main wound of Christians is want of deep humiliations and castings down; and if you believe it not now, it may be, pestilence, sword, and

famine shall teach you this doctrine, when the Lord shall make these things wound you to the very heart, and put you to your wits' end, that were not, that would not in season be, wounded at the heart with sin.

Are we troubled with too many wounded consciences in these times, that we are so solicitous of coining new principles of peace? What is every man by nature but a kind of an infinite evil? All the sins that fill earth and hell are in every one man's heart, for sin in man is endless; and canst not thou endure to be cast down? Nothing is so vile as Christ to a man not unhumbled; and can you so easily prize him, and taste him, without any casting down?

2. Such as think there is a necessity of sense of misery by [[162]] the work of the law, before Christ can be received; but they think there is no such feeling of misery as hath been mentioned, but that it is common to the reprobate as to the elect, and consequently that in sense of sin there is no such special work of the Spirit as separates the soul from sin before it comes unto Christ, but that this is done after the soul is in Christ by faith, viz., in sanctification, being first justified by faith.

This is the judgment of many holy and learned; and therefore, so long as there is no disagreement in the substance of this doctrine, it should not trouble us; only let it be considered, whether what is said is not the truth of Christ; and if it be, let us not cast it aside. The Jewish Rabbins have a speech at this day very frequent in their writings --*Non est in lege unica literula a qua non magni suspensi sunt montes.* It is much more true of every truth, and if I mistake not, much depends upon the right understanding of this point.

That, therefore, 1. There must be some sense of misery before the application of the remedy.

2. That this compunction or sense of misery is wrought by the Spirit of Christ, not the power of man to prepare himself thereby for further grace.

3. That these terrors and sorrows in the elect do virtually differ from those in the reprobate; the one driving the soul to Christ, the other not: these are agreed on all hands. The question only is, "Whether there is this further stroke of severing the soul from sin, conjoined with the terrors and sorrows in the elect before their closing with Christ, which is not in the reprobate; or in one word, whether there is not a special work of the Spirit, turning (at least in order of nature) the soul from sin, before the soul returns by faith unto Christ.

For the affirmative I leave several considerations.

That there is *gratia actualis*, or actual grace, as well as *habitualis*, or habitual grace: learned Ferrius makes a vast difference between them; and therefore to think that there can be no power of sin removed but by habitual or sanctifying grace, is unsound; for actual grace may do it; the Spirit may take away sin mediately by habitual grace, and yet it can do it immediately also by an omnipotent act, by that which is called actual, actuating, or moving grace; Christ can and must first bind the strong man, and cast him out by this working or actual grace, before he dwells in the house of man's heart, by habitual and sanctifying grace. The gardener's knife may immediately cut off a scion from a tree, thereby taking away all its power to grow there any more, before it hath a power to bring forth any fruit, which is wrought only by implanting it into another stock. New creation [[168]] (which is at first conversion,) may well be without habitual graces that are but creatures.

Whether any man since the fall is a subject immediately capable of sanctifying or habitual grace; or whether any unregenerate man is in

a next disposition to receive such grace; as the air is immediately of light, out of which the darkness is expelled by light, and so the habits of grace do expel the habits and power of sin, (say some.) I suppose the affirmative is most false, and in near affinity with some gross points of Arminianism. Adam, in his pure naturals, and considered merely as a living soul, was such a subject; like a white paper, fitted immediately to take the impression of God's image; but since, by his fall, sin is fallen like a mighty blot upon the soul, whereby a man not only wants grace, as the dark air doth light, but also resists grace. (John xiv. 17.) Hence this resistance must be first taken away, before the Lord introduce his image again. To say that a man can of himself dispose himself unto grace, was Pelagianism in Aquinas's time: yet some disposition is necessary, saith Ferrius; not unto actual grace, or that which is wrought upon a man, per modum actus, (as he saith,) but unto the reception of habitual or sanctifying grace, it being in the soul per modum former, no form being introduced but into materiam dispositam, i. e., matter fitted or prepared, or into such a vessel which is immediately capable of it."

There is in man a double resistance against grace.

Of a holy frame of grace, by original corruption, which is opposite to original and renewed holiness, or to this holy frame.

Of the God of grace himself when he comes to work it. (Job xxi. 14. Ezek. xxiv. 14.)

The first is taken away in that which we call the spirit of sanctification, after faith; the second is taken away not only in the act of it, as by terrors it maybe in reprobates, (Ps. lxvi. 2,) but in some measure in the inward root and disposition of it, (only in the elect,) there being (as hath been said) no more separation from sin, at this time required, than so much as may make the soul come to the Lord

to take it away, or at least not unwilling, not resisting the Lord, when he comes to do it himself.

Whether doth not the work of union unto Christ go before our communion with Christ. I suppose it is undeniable, that union must be before communion; and that union to Christ is a work of grace as peculiar to the elect as communion with him.

Now, justification and sanctification are two parts of our communion with him, and follow our union. (Rom. viii. 1.) Our union therefore must be before these, of which there are two parts, or rather two things on our part, necessarily required to it: --

[[164]] 1. Cutting off from the wild olive tree, the old Adam. 2. Implanting into the good olive tree, the second Adam. The first must go before the second; for where there is perfect resistance, there can be no perfect union. But take a man growing upon this old root of nature, there is nothing but perfect resistance, (Rom. viii. 7;) and therefore that resistance must first be taken away, before the Lord draw the soul to Christ, and by faith implant it into Christ. In a word, I see not how a man can wholly resist God and Christ, and yet. be united unto him at the same instant; and therefore the one (in order of nature at least) goes before the other: and therefore let any man living prove his union to Christ, and to his lust also, if he can. You will believe in Christ, many of you, and yet you will have your whores, and cups, and lusts, and pride, and world too, and oppose all the means that would have you from these also. I tell you, you shall find one day how miserably deceived you have been herein. "You can not serve God and Mammon. How can ye believe," saith Christ, (John v. 44,) "that seek honor one of another?" If you can have Christ, and be ambitious too, take him; but how can you believe till the Lord hath broken you off from thence?

Whether vocation (as peculiar to the elect as sanctification) doth not go before justification and glorification. (Rom. viii. 30.) Whether also there are not two things in effectual vocation.

Is not Christ that good, the term to which the soul is firstly called?

Is not sin and world that evil, the term from which the soul is called? I suppose it is evident that the soul is effectually called, and therefore actually and firstly turned from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God. First from darkness, then unto light; first from the power of Satan, then unto God; as is evident by the apostle's own words, (Acts xxvi. 18.) where he methodically lets down the wonderful works of Christ's grace by his ministry: the first is, "to turn them from darkness to light, and from Satan's power unto God," which are the two parts of vocation, "that they may receive forgiveness of sins" in justification, (vocation being a means to this end,) that they may receive an inheritance in glorification among such as, being justified, are sanctified also by faith in his name. The apostle doth not say that he was to return men to light and unto God, and so turn them from darkness and from the power of Satan, (though this is true in some sense,) but he was first to turn from darkness and Satan, and so to return them unto light, and God in Christ. For how is it possible to be turned unto Christ, [[165]] and yet then also to be turned to sin and Satan? Doth it not imply a contradiction, to be turned toward sin, (which is ever from Christ,) and yet to be turned toward Christ together? All divines affirm generally that in the working of faith the Lord makes the soul willing to have Christ, (Ps. cx. 2, 3,) but withal they affirm that of unwilling he makes willing; and therefore it follows that the Lord must first remove that unwillingness before it can be willing, it being impossible to be both willing and unwilling together.

Whether the cause of all that counterfeit coin and hypocrisy in this professing age doth not arise from this root, viz., not having this wound at first, but only some trouble for sin without separation from it, sore throes without deliverance from sin. Is not this the death of most, if not all, wicked men living? How many are there that clasp about Christ, and yet prove enemies to the cross of Christ -- fall from Christ scandalously or secretly afterward! What is the reason of it? Certainly, if the Lord had cut them off from their sin, they had never fallen to everlasting bondage in sin again; but there the Spirit of God forsook them, the Lord not owning so much love to them. Consider seriously why the stony and thorny ground hearers (Matt, xiii.) came to nothing in their growth of seeming faith and sanctification. Was the fault in the seed? No, verily, but only in the ground. The one was broken, but not deep enough. The other was broken deep, but not through enough. The roots of thorns choked them. The lusts and cares of the world were not destroyed first, and therefore they destroyed that ground.

I conclude therefore with that of Jeremy, "Break up your fallow grounds." Seek to the Lord to break them for you, "and sow not among thorns." Take heed of such brokenness which removes not the thorns of sinful, secret stubbornness, "lest the wrath of the Lord break out against you, and burn that none can quench it." Do not cut off John Baptist's head, you that can be content to hear him gladly, and do many things. But he must not touch your Herodias, and make a divorce there; but suffer him to come in the spirit and power of Elias, nay, of Christ Jesus, to beat down your mountains, fill up your valleys, make your crooked, rough ways smooth, that you see the glory of the Lord Jesus, without which he shall be ever hid from you. Cry, you faithful servants of the Lord, that "all flesh is grass, and all the glory of man," of sin, of world, "is a withered flower," that the

Lord Jesus may be revealed ever fresh, and sweet, and precious in the eyes of the saints.

The evidence of this truth in the general put blessed and [[166]] learned Pemble upon another way; for when he perceived (as himself confesseth) that it is the general doctrine of all Orthodox divines, viz., that actual faith is never wrought in the soul, till, beside the supernatural illumination of the mind, the will be also first freed in part from its natural perverseness. (God making all men of unwilling, willing,) hereupon he concludes that this is done by the spirit of sanctification, and one supernatural quality of holiness universally infused in all the powers of the soul at once, so that the Spirit instantly first sanctities us and puts life in us; then it acts in sorrow for, and detestation of, sin; and so we come actually to believe. And because he foresaw the blow, viz., that in this way Christians are sanctified before they be justified, he answers, Yes, we are justified declaratively after this.

Others (who follow him) answer more roundly, viz., that we are sanctified before we are really and actually justified, and herein differ from him.

Now, when it is objected against this, viz., that our vocation is that which goes before our justification, sanctification being a part of glorification following after, (Rom. viii. 30,) hereupon some others (treading in his steps) affirm that vocation is the same with sanctification, and not comprehended with glorification.

Others perceiving the evil of this error, viz., to place sanctification before justification, good fruits before a good tree, they do therefore deny any saving work, whether of vocation or sanctification, before justification. And hence, on the other extreme, they do place a Christian's justification before his faith in vocation, or holiness in his

sanctification; so that by this last opinion a Christian is not justified by faith, (which was Paul's phrase,) but rather (as he said wittily and wisely) faithed by his justification. Before I come to clear the truth in these spiritual mysteries, let this only be remembered, viz., that sanctification, which Pemble calls our spiritual life, may be taken two ways: --

1. Largely. 2. Strictly.

Largely; for any awakenings of conscience, or acts of the Spirit of life; and so it is true we are quickened by these acts, and so in a large sense sanctified first.

Strictly; for those habits of the life of holiness which are opposite to the body of death in us; and that we are not first sanctified before we are justified in this sense, we shall manifest by and by. Only let me begin to show the error of the last opinion first, viz., 1. That a Christian is not first justified before faith or vocation, may appear thus: --

1. It is professedly cross to the whole current of Scripture, which saith, "We are justified by faith," and therefore not before [[167]] faith; and to say that the meaning of such phrases is, that we are justified declaratively by faith, or to our sense and feeling in foro conscientiae, is a mere device; for our justification is opposed to the state of unrighteousness and condemnation going before, which condemnation is not only declarative, and in the court of conscience, but real, and in the court of Heaven; for so saith the Scripture expressly, (John iii. 18,) "He that believeth not is condemned already;" and, (ver. 36,) "The wrath of God abideth on him;" and, (Gal. iii. 22,) "The Scripture (which is the sentence in God's court) hath concluded all under sin." Hence a second argument ariseth: --

2. If a man be justified before faith, then an actual unbeliever is subject to no condemnation. But this is expressly cross to the letter of the text, "He that believeth not is condemned already, (John iii. 18.) and the wrath of God doth lie upon him." The subjects of non-condemnation are those that be in Christ by faith, (Rom. viii. 1.) not out of Christ by unbelief. (Rom. xi. 20.) There is indeed a merited justification by Christ's death, and a virtual or exemplary justification in Christ's resurrection, as in our head and surety; and both these were before not only our faith, but our very being; but to say that we are therefore actually justified before faith, because our justification was merited before we had faith, gives us a just ground of affirming that we are actually sanctified while we are in the state of nature unsanctified, (Eph. ii. 1.) because our sanctification was merited by Christ before we had any being in him.

We must indeed be made good trees by faith in Christ's righteousness before we can bring forth any good fruits of holiness. God makes us not good trees without being in Christ by faith, no more than we are bad trees in contracting Adam's guilt without our being first in him. God gives us first his Son, (offered in the gospel, and received by faith,) and then gives us all other things with him. He doth not justify us without giving us his Son; but having first given him, gives us this also.

2. That sanctification doth not go before justification may appear thus: --

If guilt of Adam's sin go before original pollution, (Rom. v. 12.) then imputation of Christ's righteousness before renewed sanctification.

To place sanctification before justification is quite cross to the apostle's practice, (which is our pattern,) who first sought to be found in Christ, (Phil. iii. 9.) (in the work of union,) not having his

own righteousness in the work of justification, (which in order follows that,) that he may then know him in the power of [[168]] his death and resurrection in sanctification, (here comes in sanctification,) if by any means he might attain to the resurrection of the dead in glorification, (the last of all.)

This is quite cross to the apostle's doctrine which makes justification the cause of sanctification, and therefore must needs go before it. (Rom. v.) As sin goes, before spiritual and eternal death, so righteousness goes before spiritual life in sanctification and eternal life in glory. The Lord holds forth Christ in the gospel first as our propitiation, (Rom. iii. 24.) and then comes dying to sin, and living to God, in sanctification. (Rom. vi. 1.) Holiness is the end of our actual reconciliation. (Col. i. 21, 22.)

If sanctification go before justification by faith, then a Christian's communion with Christ goes before his union to him by faith; but our union is the foundation of communion, and it is impossible there should be communion without some precedent union. (1 Cor. i. 30.) "Christ is made righteousness and sanctification." Unto whom? Read the beginning of the verse, and you shall see it is only to those that be in Christ, which is by faith.

Let none say here (as some do) that we have union to Christ, first by the Spirit, without faith, in order going before faith; for understanding of which, let us a little consider of our union unto Christ. Our union to Christ is not by the essential presence of the Spirit, for that is in every man, as the Godhead is every where, in whom we live and move. This is common to the most wicked man, nay, to the vilest creature in the world. Hence it follows, that our union is by some act of the Spirit peculiar to the elect, (who only shall have communion with Christ,) working some real change in the

soul, (for of real, not relative union, I now speak;) this act can not be those first acts of the spirit of bondage, (for they are common unto reprobates;) they are therefore such acts as are essential unto the nature of union. How, look, as disunion is the disjunction or separation of divers things one from another, so union is the conjunction or joining of them together that were before severed. Hence that act of the Spirit in uniting us to Christ can be nothing else but the bringing back the soul unto Christ, or the conjunction of the soul unto Christ and into Christ, by bringing it back to him, that before this lay like a dry bone in the valley separated from him. Thus, (1 Cor. vi. 17,) "He that is joined, or (as the word signifies) glued to the Lord, is one spirit with him." The Spirit, therefore, brings us to the Lord Christ, and so we are in him. Now, the coming of the soul to Christ, what is it but faith? (John vi. 35.) Our union, therefore, is by faith, not without it; [[169]] for by it only we that were once separated from him by sin, and especially by unbelief, (Heb. iii. 12,) are now come not only unto him, as iron unto the loadstone, (John vi. 87,) but (which is most near) into him, as branches into the vine, and so grow one with him; and hence those phrases in Scripture, to believe in Christ, or into Christ. I speak not this as if we were united to Christ without the Spirit on his part, (for the conjunction of things several must be mutual, if it be firm;) I only show that we are not united before faith by the Spirit unto Christ, but that we are by faith, (wrought by the Spirit,) whereby, on our part, we are first conjoined unto him, and then, on his part, he, by the person of the Spirit, is most wonderfully united unto us. The Spirit puts forth variety of acts in the soul; as it acts us to good works, it is the spirit of obedience; as it infuseth habits of grace, so it is the spirit of sanctification; as it assists us continually, and guides us to our end, and witnesseth favor, it is the spirit of adoption; as it works fears of death and hell, it is the spirit of bondage; but as it drives us from sin to Christ, so it is the spirit of union; and therefore to imagine union before and

without faith by the Spirit, is but a spirit indeed, which when you come to feel it, you shall find it nothing, without flesh, or bones, or sinews. As our marriage union to Christ must have consent of faith on our part, wrought by the Spirit, or else the Lord Jesus is a vain suitor to us, so now the Spirit, on Christ's part, must apprehend our faith, and dwell in us, who otherwise shall suddenly go a-whoring from him. (1 Pet. i. 5. Eph. iii. 17.)

3. That vocation is not all one with sanctification may appear thus: --

Vocation is before justification. (Rom. viii. 30.) But sanctification is not before justification, as we have proved, and therefore they are not the same.

Sanctification is the end of vocation. (1 Thess. iv. 7.) Therefore it is not the same with it.

Faith is the principal thing in vocation: the first part of it being God's call, the second part being our answer to that call, or in coming at that call (Jer. iii. 22.) Now, faith is no part of sanctification, strictly taken, because it is the means and instrument of our justification and sanctification. (Acts xxvi. 18.) Our hearts are said to be purified by faith, (Acts xv. 9;) not our lives only in the acts of holiness and purity, but our hearts in the habitual frame of them. "I live by the faith of the Son of God," saith Paul. "We pass from death to life by faith," (John v. 2-1;) therefore it is no part of our spiritual life. "You will not come to me" (which is faith) "that you may have life;" [[170]] (John v. 40; vi. 50, 51;) therefore faith is the instrumental means of life, and therefore no part of our life: as faith comes by hearing, and therefore hearing is no part of faith, so justification comes by faith, and therefore no part of sanctification: all our life both of justification and sanctification is laid up in Christ our head; this life, according to God's great plot, shall never be had but by coming to

Christ for it, (Ileh. vii. 25.) else grace and Christ should not be so much dishonored. (Horn. iv. 16,) -It is of faith, that it might be of grace." Sanctification therefore is the grace applied by faith, faith the grace applying; by coming to Christ for it, we have it; and therefore have it not when first we come.

I am sorry to be thus large in less practical matters; yet I have thought it not un-useful, but very comfortable, to a poor passenger, not only to know his journey's end and the way in general to it, but also the several stadia or towns he is orderly to pass through; there is much wisdom of God to be seen not only in his work, but in his manner and order of working; for want of which I see many Christians in these days fall very foully into erroneous apprehensions in their judgments, the immediate ground of many errors in practice; the objections made against what hath been delivered are for the principal of them answered; the main end, my beloved, of propounding these things is, that you would look narrowly to your union; O, take heed you miss not there: if you close with Christ, believe in Christ, and yet not cut off from your sin, viz., that spirit of resistance of Christ, you are utterly and eternally undone. This is the condemnation of the world, not that men love darkness wholly, and hate light, but that they love darkness more than light; not that the un-clean spirit is not gone out, but that he is not so cast out as never to return again; the wound of all men. yea, the best of men that profess Christ, and yet indeed out of Christ, lies in this: they were never severed from their sin by all their prayers, tears, fears, sorrows; and hence they never truly come to Christ; and hence perish in their sin.

Trouble me no more, therefore, in asking whether a Christian is in a state of happiness or misery in this condition. I answer, He is preparatively happy; he is now passing from death to life, though not

as yet wholly passed. Nor yet, whether there is any saving work before union. I answer, No; for what is said is one necessary ingredient to the working up of our union, as cutting off the branch from the old stock is necessary to the engrafting it into the new: indeed, without faith it is impossible to please God; nor do I say that this work doth please; i. e., it [[171]] doth not pacify God, (for that is proper to Christ's perfect righteousness received by faith;) yet as it is a work of his own Spirit upon us, it is pleasing to him, (as the after work of sanctification is,) though it neither doth pacify him; nor do I see how this doctrine is any way opposite to the free offer of grace and Christ, because it requires no more separation from sin than that which drives them unto Christ; nay, which is less, that makes them (by the power of the Spirit) not resist, but yield to Christ, that he may come unto them and draw them: you can not repent nor convert yourselves. "Be converted, therefore," (saith Peter, Acts iii. 19,) "that you may receive remission of sins;" and in this offer the Spirit works; and verily he that can truly receive Christ without that sense of misery as separates him from his sin, (as explained to you,) let him believe notwithstanding all that which is said, and the God of heaven speak peace to him; his faith shall not trouble me, if he be sure it shall not one day deceive himself.

Of lamentation for the hardness of men's hearts in these times: as it is said the Lord Jesus "mourned "when he saw "the hardness of the people's hearts," (Mark iii. 5,) are there not some so far from this, as that they take pleasure in their sins, they are sugar under their tongues, as sweet as sleep, nay, as their lives? and you come to pull away their limbs when you come to pluck away their sins. Though they have broke Sabbaths, neglected prayer, despised the word, hated and mocked at the saints, been stubborn to their parents, cursed and swore, (which made Peter go out and weep bitterly,) though lustful and wanton, (which broke David's bones,) though

guilty of more sins than there be motes in the sun or stars in heaven, though their sins be crimson, and fill heaven with their cry, and all the earth with their burden, yet they mourn not; never did it one hour together; nay, they can not do it, because they will not. If you are weary and loaden, where are your unutterable groans? If wounded and bruised, where are your dolorous complaints? If sick, where is your equity for a physician? If sad, where are your tears, in the day, in the night, morning and evening, alone by yourselves, and in company with others? O, how great is the wrath of God, hardening so many thousands at this day! Whence comes it that Christ is not prized, but from this senselessness? Name any reason why the blessed gospel of peace, and all the sweet promises of life are undervalued, but from hence: and what do you hereby, poor creatures, by only aggravate your sins, and make those that are little exceeding great in the eyes of God? Whence it is that you "treasure up wrath against the day of wrath."

[[172]] (Rom. ii. 2-5.) This hardness is that which blunts the edge of God's ordinances, whence God's poor ministers sit sorrowful in their closets, seeing all God's seed lost upon bare rocks. O, this is the condition of many a man, and which is most fearful, the means which should make the heart sensible make it more proud and insensible. Tyre, and Sidon, and Sodom are more lit to mourn than Chorazin and Capernaum, that have enjoyed humbling means long. Kay, how many be there that mourn out their mournings, confess out their confessions, and by their own humiliations grow more senseless afterward! Did we ever live in a more impenitent, secure age? We shall seldom meet with one broken with sin; but how few are broken from sin also! And hence it is many a tall cedar that were set down in the table book for converted men, once much humbled, and now comforted; stay but a few years, you shall see more dangerous sins of a second growth; one turns drunkard, another

covetous, another proud, another a sectary, another a very dry leaf, a very formal-ist, another fully of humorous opinions, another laden with scandalous lusts. Woe to you that lament not now; for you shall mourn. Dost thou think that Christ should ever wipe off thy tears, that sheddest none at all? Dost thou think to reap in joy, that sowest not with these showers? Verily God will make his word good, (Prov. xxix. 1,) "He that hardens his own heart shall perish suddenly." Hear this, you secure, sorrowless sinners: if ever God's hand be stretched out suddenly against thee, in blasting thy estate, snatching away thy children, the wife of thy bosom, the husband of thy delight; in staining thy name, vexing thee with debts and crosses, sharp and sore, or lingering sicknesses, know that all this comes upon thee for a hard heart: but O, mourn for it now, you parents, children, servants; the tokens of death are upon you; desire the Lord to break your hearts for you; lie under God's hammer; be not above the word, and suffer the Lord to take away that which grieves him most, even thy stony heart, because it grieves the least: meditate much of thy woeful condition; chew the bitter pill; remember death and rotting in the grave; that many are now in hell for their sins; that Christ must die, or thou die for the least sin; remember how patient and long suffering the Lord hath been to thee, and how long he hath groaned under thy burden, that, it may be, though he would, yet he can not bear the load long: let these things be mused on, that thy heart may be at last sorrowful before it be too late. But O, the sad estate of many with us, that can mourn for any evil except it be for the greatest -- sin, and death, and wrath that lie upon them!

[[173]] Of exhortation. Labor for this sense of misery, for this spirit of compunction. How can you believe in Christ, that feel not your misery without him? A broken Christ can not do thee good without a broken heart; be afflicted and mourn, ye sinners; turn your laughter into mourning; tremble to think of that wrath which burns down to

the bottom of hell, and under which the eternal Son of God sweat drops of blood. Great sins, which thou knowest thou art guilty of, cause great guilt, and great hardness of heart, and therefore are seldom forgiven or subdued without great affliction of spirit; they have loaded the Lord long, they must load thee. Little sins are usually slighted and extenuated, and therefore the Lord accounts them great; and therefore thy soul must be in bitterness for them before the Lord will pass them by. It is not every trouble that will serve the turn. Look that it be such as separates thy soul from sin, or else it will separate between thy soul and God. I know it is not in your power to break your own hearts, no more than to make the rocks to bleed; yet remember, he that bids thee "cast up and prepare the way of the Lord," he hath promised that "every mountain shall be brought low, and the crooked ways made plain, and the rough smooth, and the valleys filled." He only can do it for thee, and will do it for some, it may be for thee. He that broke the heart of Manasseh and Paul, after their blood and blasphemies, when they never desired any such thing, he can break thine much more when thou art desiring him to do it for thee. Here are many of you that fear you were never humbled nor burdened enough. I say, fear it still. Fear lest there be a stone in the bottom; not so as to discourage and drive thy heart from Christ, but so as to feel a greater need of his grace to soften thy heart, and to take thy senselessness away. The Lord doth purposely command thee "to plow up thy fallow ground," that thou mightest feel thy impotency so to do, and come to him to take it away. Every thing will harden thee more and more until the Lord come and take thy stony heart away by his own hand. All God's kindness will make thee more bold to sin, and all God's judgments more fierce and obstinate in sin, unless the Lord put to his hand. If Pharaoh's heart be softened for a time, it will grow hard again, if the Lord take it not away. The means, therefore, for thee to get this compunction is, 1. To feel the evil of thy hard heart; no surer token of reprobation than

hardness, if continued in -- especially for thy heart to grow hard under or after softening means, as it was in Pharaoh; 2. To look up to the Lord in all ordinances, that he would take it away.

Have not you great cause of abundant thankfulness, into [[174]] whose hearts the Lord hath let in fears and sorrows concerning your estates? The blind world looks upon all troubles of conscience as temptations of the devil to despair, and the very way to run mad. And consider what the Lord hath done for you that have such. What if the Lord had left you without all feeling, as those in Eph. iv. 19? What if the Lord had smitten you with a spirit of slumber, as those Horn. xi. 8? Would not your estate have been then lamentable? And have you; no hearts to acknowledge his unspeakable goodness in a-weakening of you, in shaking thy very foundations? Dost thou think that any ever had such a hard heart as thou hast? Dost not say so in secret before the Lord sometimes? O, then what rich grace is this to give thee any sense and feeling of thy sin and danger by it, though it be never so little in thine eyes! Some think these terrors are a judgment. It is true, if they were merely imaginary, or worldly and desperate; but saith the apostle, (2 Cor. vii. 7,) "I thank God I made you sorry." Suppose thy sorrow should be only in regard of the punishment of sin, yet this is the Lord's goodness to make thy heart so far sensible, that once didst go like a beast to the slaughter, fearing no danger at all. The very means to prize favor from God is to feel wrath, (as well as sin.) and the very reason why the Lord hath let thee feel thy punishment heavy is, that thy soul might feel the evil of sin, by considering that if the fruits be so bitter, what is then the cause. Be not therefore weary of thy burden, so as to think the Lord pours out his vengeance on thee while thy trouble remains. O, consider that this is the hand of the Lord Jesus, and that he is now about to save thee, when he comes to work any compunction in. tlive -- especially such as whereby he doth not only cut thy heart with fears and

sorrows, but cut thee off from thy sin, so far only as humbles thee, and drives thee to the Lord Christ to take them away. And so I come to the third particular, of humiliation.

Section IV.

The third Act of Christ's Power, which is Humiliation.

The Lord Jesus, having thus broken the heart by compunction, is not like a foolish builder that leaves off his work before he hath fully finished it; and therefore, having thus wounded a poor sinner, he goes on to humble him also; for though, in a large sense, a wounded, contrite sinner is a humble sinner, yet, strictly taken, there is a great difference between them; and [[175]] therefore he is said "to dwell with the contrite and humble; "i. e., not only with those that be wounded with sin, but humbled for sin, although it is certain the soul is seldom or never effectually wounded but it is also humbled at the same time. A man may be wounded sore even unto death, and yet the pride of the man is such that he will not fall down before him that smites him. So it is with many a poor sinner. The Lord hath sorely wounded him-that he will resist no more; yet he will rather fly to his duties to heal him, or die alone, and sink under his discouragements, than stoop. O beloved, man must down before the Lord Christ will take him up; and therefore, in Is. xl. 5-7, the glory of the Lord is promised to be revealed. But what means must be used for this end? "Cry," saith the Lord. "What shall I cry?" saith he. The Lord answers that all flesh is grass, and that the glory of it fades, and that the people are this grass; i. e., not only that men's sins are vile, but that themselves also are grass; nay, their glory and excellency is withering and fading; and therefore not only mountains must be pulled down, but all flesh and the glory of it wither, before the Lord shall be revealed.

I shall briefly open these four things: --

1. What is this humiliation?
2. What need there is of it.
3. What means the Lord useth to work it.
4. What measure of it is here required.

What is this humiliation?

Look, as pride is that sin whereby a man conceited of some good in himself, and seeking some excellency to himself, exalts himself above God, so humiliation (in this place) is that work of the Spirit whereby the soul, being broken off from self-conceit and self-confidence in any good it hath or doth, submitteth unto, or lieth under, God, to be disposed of as he pleaseth. (1 Pet. v. 6. Lev. xxvi. 41.) That look, as compunction cuts the sinner off from that evil that is in him, so humiliation cuts it off from all high conceits and self-confidence of that good which is in him, or which he seeks might be in him; and so the soul is abased before God.

What need or necessity is there of this? Because, -- 1. When the Lord hath wounded the hearts of his elect, this is the immediate work of their hearts, (if the Lord prevent them not by his grace, as many times he doth,) --they look to what good they have; or, if they find little or none, they then seek for some in themselves, that thereby they may heal their wound, because they think thus, that as their sins have provoked [[176]] God to anger against them, so if now they can reform and leave those sins, or, if not, repent and be sorry for them, if now they pray, and hear, and do as others do, they have some hope that this will heal their wound, and pacify the Lord toward them.

When they see there is no peace in a sinful course, they will therefore try if there be any to be found in a good course; and look, as Adam, when he saw his own shame and nakedness, hid himself from God in the bushes, and covered his nakedness with fig leaves, so the soul, not being able to endure to see its own nakedness and vileness, not knowing Christ Jesus, and he being far to seek, doth therefore labor to cover his wickedness and sinfulness, which now he feels, by some of these fig leaves. And hence (Micah vi. 7) they inquire "wherewith they should come before the Lord; should they bring rivers of oil, or thousands of lambs, or the first born of their body to remove the sin of their soul?" Paul did account these duties gain, and set them at a high rate, because he thought that God did so himself. When the Lord hath wounded the soul, the first voice it speaks is, What shall I do? Do? saith conscience; leave thy sins, do as well as others, do with all thy might and strength, pray, hear, and confer; God accepts of good desires, and requires no more of any man but to do what he can. Hence the soul plies both oars, though against wind and tide, and strives, and wrestles with his sins, and hopes one day to be better; and here he rests. And observe it, look, as sin is his greatest evil, so the casting away of his sins, and seeking to be better, is very sweet to him; and being so sweet, rests in what he hath, and seeks for what he wants, and so hopes all will be well one day, and so stays here; although (God knows) it be without Christ, nor can not rest on him, though he hath heard of him a thousand times. . And hence it is, if they can not do any thing to ease themselves, then their hearts sink, or, it may be, quarrel with God, that he makes them not better. But, beloved, it is wonderful to see how many times men rest in a little they have and do.

2. But whiles it is thus with the soul, he is incapable of Christ; for he that trusts to other things to save him, or makes himself his own Saviour, or rests in his duties without a Saviour, he can never have

Christ to save him. (Rom. ix. 32.) It is said the Jews lost Christ's righteousness, because they sought it not by faith, but sought salvation by their own righteousness. "He that maketh flesh his arm," (as all duties and endeavors of man be, when trusted to,) the Lord saith, "cursed be that man." (Jer. xvii. 5, 6.) Only the Lord doth not leave his elect here; he that is married unto the law (Rom. vii.) can not be matched [[177]] unto Christ, till he be first divorced, not from the duties themselves, but from trusting to them, and resting in them. And therefore, saith Paul, "I through the law am dead to it, that I might live unto God." He that trusteth to riches can not enter into the kingdom of heaven, no more than a camel through a needle's eye, because it is too big for so narrow a room; so he that trusteth to his duties and abilities is too big to enter in by Christ. The Lord must cut off this spirit, and lay it low, and make it stoop as vile before God, before it can have Christ in this estate; the Lord must not only cut it off from this self-confidence in duties, but also so far forth as that the soul may lie under God, to be disposed of as he pleaseth. And the reason is, because such a soul is unwilling to stoop, is unhumiliated; and he that is so doth not only on his part resist God, but the Lord also resists him. (Lam. iv. 7, 8.) And hence you shall observe, many a one hath lain long under distress of conscience, because they have either rested in their duties, which could not quiet, or because they have not so cast off their confidence in them, so as to lie down quietly before God, that he may do what he will with them; being so long objects of God's resistance, not of his grace. By what means doth the Lord work this?

In general, by the Spirit, immediately acting upon the soul; but after a Christian is in Christ, he hath by the habit of humility, and the virtue of faith, some power to humble himself; but now the Spirit of Christ doth it immediately by its own omnipotent hand; else the proud heart would never down; for we are first" created in Christ"

(which is by God's omnipotent immediate act) unto good works, before we do from ourselves, or by the power of faith, put forth good works. (Eph. ii. 10.) These acts of self-confidence may not be stirring in all Christians; but in all men there is this frame of spirit, never to come to Christ if they can make any thing else serve to heal them or save them; and therefore the Spirit cuts off this sinful frame in part in all the elect; he hews the roughness and pride of spirit off, that it may lie still upon the foundation it is now prepared for. Now, though the Spirit works this, yet it is not without the word; the word it works chiefly by is the law. (Gal. iii. 19,) "I through the law am dead to it," (i. e., from seeking any life or help from it,) "that I might live unto God."

Now, the law doth this by a fourfold act.

1. By discovering the secret corruption of the soul in every duty, which it never saw before. It once thought, I shall perish for my sins, if I continue therein, without confession of them, or sorrow for them; but it also did think that this confession, [[178]] sorrow, and trouble for sin, will serve to save it, and make God accept of it; but the law (while the soul is earnestly striving against his sin) discovering that in all these there is nothing but sin, even secret sins it did never see before, hereupon it begins thus to think: Can these be the means of saving of me, which being so sinful, can not but be the very causes of condemning of me? I know I must perish for the least sin, and now I see that in all I do, I can do nothing else but sin. What made Paul "alive without the law"? You shall find (Rom. vii. 7) it was because he did not know that lust, or the secret concupiscences and first risings of the soul to sin, were sin: he saw not these secret evils in all that which he did; and hence he rested in his duties, as one alive without Christ; but the Lord, by discovering this, let him see what little cause he had to lift up his hand, for any good he did. So it is here, when the

soul sees that all its righteousness is a menstruous cloth, polluted with sin; now, those duties, which, like reeds, are trusted to before, run into the hand, nay, heart of a poor sinner; and therefore now it feels little cause of resting on them any longer; now it sees the infinite holiness of God by the exceeding spiritualness of the law, it begins to cry out, How can I stand or appear before him with such continual pollutions?

2. By irritating or stirring up of original corruption, in making more of that to appear than ever before; that if the soul thinks, All I do is defiled with sin, yet my heart is good, and so it rests there; the Lord therefore stirs that dunghill, and lets it see a more hellish nature than ever before, in that the holy and blessed command of God (to its feeling) makes it worse, more rebellious, more averse from God. "When the commandment came, sin re-vived," saith Paul, and that "which was for life was death to him," sin taking occasion by the law; and hence Paul came "to be slain and die" to all his self-confidence. It was one of Luther's first positions in opposing the pope's indulgences, that *Lex et voluntas sunt duo adversarii sine gratia irreconciliabiles*; for the law and man's will meeting together, the one holy, the other corrupt, make fierce opposition when the soul is under a lively work of the law; and by this irritation of the law, the Lord hath tills end in his elect, to make them feel what wretched hearts they have, because that which is in itself a means of good makes them (through man's corruption) more vile to their feeling than ever before; and hence come those sad complaints on a soul under the humbling hand of Christ: I am now worse than ever I was; I grow every day worse and worse. I have lost what once I had; I once could pray and seek God with delight, and never well but when one duty was done, to be in another; hut now I am worse; all that joy [[179]] and sweetness in seeking of him, and in holy walking, is gone; I could once mourn for sin, but now a hard heart takes hold of me,

that I have not so much as a heart to any thing that is good, nor to shed a tear for the greatest evil. It is true, I confess you may grow (to your feeling) worse and worse, and it is fit you should feel it, that the Lord hereby might pull down your proud heart, and make you lie low; it is the Lord's glorious wisdom to wither all your flowers, which refreshed you without Christ, that you might feel a need of him; and therefore I say the Lord pulls away all those broken planks the soul once floated and rested upon, that the soul may sink in a holy despair of any help from any good it hath; the Lord shakes clown all building on a sandy foundation, and then the soul cries out, It is ill resisting here.

3. By loading, tiring, and wearying the soul by its own endeavors, until it can stir no more, -- for this is in every man by nature, -- when he sees that all he doth is sinful, and all he hath, his heart and nature, to be most sinful; yet he will not yet come out of himself, because he hopes, though he be for the present thus vile, yet he hopes, for future time, his heart may grow better, and himself do better than now; and hence it is that he strives, and seeks, and endeavors to his utmost, to set up himself again, and to gain cure to all his troubles by his duties: now, the law, whose office is to command, but not to give strength, and the Spirit that should give strength withdrawing itself, because it knows the soul would rest therein without Christ; hence it comes to pass that the soul, feeling itself to labor only in the fire and smoke, and to be still as miserable and sinful as ever before, hereupon it is quite tired out, and sits down weary, not only of its sin, but of its work; and now cries out, I see now what a vile and undone wretch I am; I can do nothing for God or for myself; only I can sin and destroy myself; all that I am is vile, and all that I do is vile; I now see that I am indeed poor, and blind, and miserable, and naked. And the truth is, beloved, here come in the greatest dejections of spirit; for when the Lord smites the soul for

sin, it hopes that, by leaving of sin and doing better, it may do well; but when it sees that there is no hope here of healing the breach between God and itself, now it falls low indeed; and I take this to be the true meaning of Matt. xi. 28, "Ye that labor," i. e., you that are wearied in your own way, in seeking rest to your souls by your own hard labor or works, (as the word *κοπιῶντες* signifies,) and are tired out therein, and so are now laden indeed with sin and the heavy pressure of that, finding no ease by all that which you do: "Come to me," saith [[180]] Christ, "and you shall then find rest unto your souls." The Jews, seeking to establish their own righteousness, -- seeking, I say, if by any means they might establish it, -- lost Christ: the Lord, therefore, will make his elect know they shall seek here for ease in vain, and therefore tires them out.

4. By clearing up the equity and justice of God in the law, if the Lord should never pity nor pardon it, nor show any respect or favor to it; for this is the frame of every man's heart, if he can not find rest in his duties and endeavors, as he once expected he should, but sees sin and weakness, death and condemnation, wrapping him about (like Jonah's weeds) in all he doth, then his heart sinks, and quarrels, and falls off farther from Christ by discouragement, and grows secretly impatient that there should be no mercy left for him; because it thinks now the Lord's eternal purpose is to exclude him; for if there were any thoughts of peace toward him, he should have found peace before now, having so earnestly and frequently sought the Lord, and having done so much, and forsaken his sinful ways, according to his own commandment from him. And hence it is, you shall find it a certain truth that the soul is turned back as far from God by sinking discouraging sorrows for sin, as ever it was to a state of security by the pleasures of sin; and hence sometimes it thinks it is vain to seek any more, and hence leaves off duties; and if conscience force it to them, yet it sinks again, because its foot is not stablished upon the

rock Christ, but upon the weakness of the waters of its own abilities and endeavors. 'What, therefore, should the soul do in this case to come to God? It knows not; it can not fly from him, it dare not, it shall not; the Spirit, therefore, by revealing how equal and just it is for the Lord never to regard or look after it more, because it hath sinned and is still so sinful, makes it hereby to fall down prostrate in the dust before the Lord, as worthy of nothing but shame and confusion, and so kisseth the rod, and turns the other cheek unto the Lord, even smiting of him, acknowledging, if the Lord show mercy, it will be wonderful; if not, yet the Lord is righteous, and therefore hath no cause to quarrel against him for denying special mercy to him, to whom he doth not owe a bit of bread. And now the soul is indeed humbled, because it submits to be disposed of as God pleaseth. Thus the church, in her humiliation, (Lam. iii. 22,) having, in the former part of .the chapter, "drunk the wormwood and the gall," at last lies down and professeth, "It is the Lord's mercy it is not consumed;" and verse 29, "He puts his mouth to the dust if there may be any hope; " and verse 39, "Why should a living man [[181]] complain for the punishment of his sin? "You think the Lord doth you wrong, and neglects your good and his own glory too, if he. doth not give you peace and pardon, grace and mercy, even to the utmost of your asking, and then think you have hence good cause to fret, and sink, and be discouraged. No, no; the Lord will pull down those mountains, those high thoughts, and make you lie low at his feet, and acknowledge that it is infinite mercy you are alive, and not consumed; and that there is any hope or possibility of mercy; and that you are out of the nethermost pit; and that if he should never pity you, yet he doth you no wrong, but that which is equal and just, and that it is fit your sinful, froward wills should stoop to his holy, righteous, and good will, rather than that it should stoop and be crooked according unto yours. Believe it, brethren, "he that judgeth not himself" thus, "shall be judged of the Lord:" how can you have

mercy that will set yourselves up in God's sovereign throne to dispose of it, and will not lie down humbly under it, that it may dispose of you? For are you worthy of it? hath the Lord any need of you? have you not provoked him exceedingly? was there ever any that dealt worse with him than you? O beloved, lie low here, and learn of the church, (Micah vii. 9,) "I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him." It was a most blessed frame of spirit in Aaron, when he saw God's hand against him in cutting off his children; "and Aaron held his peace; "so, if the Lord should cast thee off, cut thee off, never take pleasure in such a polluted, broken vessel, unfit for any use for him, hold thou thy peace; quarrel not, be silent before him, and say as they did, (2 Chron. xii. 5,) "The Lord is righteous, but I am vile; let him do with me what seemeth good in his own eyes;" and thus the Lord Jesus, by the law, doth dead the soul to the law, until it be made to submit like wax, or like clay to the hand of the potter, to frame it a vessel to what use he pleaseth; and as the apostle most excellently (Rom. vii.) divorceth it from its first husband, (i. e., sin and the law) that it may be married unto Jesus Christ. In a word, when the Lord Christ hath made the soul feel not only its inability to help itself, -- and so saith Paul, (Gal. ii. 20,) "It is not I," -- but also its own unworthiness, that the Lord should help it, and so cries out with Job, "Behold I am vile;" now, at this instant, it is *vas capax* -- a vessel capable (though unworthy) of any grace. (Lam. iv. 6.)

The last question remains, What measure of humiliation is here necessary 'i

Look, as so much conviction is necessary which begets [[182]] compunction, and so much compunction as breeds humiliation, so so much humiliation is necessary as introduceth faith, or as drives the soul out of itself unto Christ; for, as the next end of conviction is

compunction, and that of compunction is humiliation, so the next end of humiliation is faith, or coming to Christ, which we shall next speak unto.

And hence it is that the Lord calls unto the weary and heavy laden to come unto him. (Matt. ii. 27.) So much as makes you come for rest in Christ, so much is necessary, and no more. If any can come without being thus laden and weary, in some measure, let them come and drink of the water of life freely; but a proud heart that will make itself its own Saviour will not come to the Lord Jesus to be his Saviour; he that will be his own physician so long can not send out for another. Nay, let me fall one degree lower: if the soul can not come to Christ, (as who feel not themselves unable when the Lord comes to draw?) and find not the Lord Jesus coming unto them, to draw them and compel them in, yet if the soul be so far humbled as not to resist the Lord, by quarrelling with him, and at him, as unworthy of the least smile, as worthy of all frowns, verily, the Lord will come to it, and no more is requisite than this; and thus much certainly is, for thus the whole Scripture runs: "He gives grace to the humble." (James iv. 6.) "I dwell with the contrite and humble." (Is. lvii. 16.) "The poor afflicted shall not always be forgotten." (Ps. ix. 12, 18.) "When their uncircumcised hearts are humbled, so as to accept of the punishment of their iniquity, the Lord then remembers his covenant." (Lev.) xxvi. 41, 42.) Conceive it thus: there can be no union to Christ while there is a power of resistance and opposition against Christ. The Lord Christ must, therefore, in order of nature, (for I now speak not of order of time,) first remove prohibens, remove this resistance before he can, and that he may, unite. I do not mean resistance of the frame of grace, but, as was said, of the Lord of grace, whereby he comes to work it.

Now, there is a double resistance, or two parts of this resistance, like a knife without edges.

1. A resistance of the Lord by a secret unwillingness that the Lord should work grace. Now, this the Lord removes in compunction, and no more brokenness for sin or from sin is necessary there than that.
2. A resistance of the Lord by sinking discouragements, and a secret quarrelling with him, in case the soul imagines he will not come to work grace or manifest grace. Now, this the Lord takes away in humiliation; and no more is necessary here than the removal of the power of this, [[188]] which makes the soul, in the sense of its own infinite vileness and unworthiness, not to quarrel at the Lord, and, devil-like, grow fierce and impatient, before and against the Lord, in case he should never help it, never pity it, never succor it. "The Lord will not forsake forever, if the soul thus lies down and puts its mouth in the dust." (Lam. iii. 30, 31.)

Which consideration is of unspeakable use and consolation to every poor empty nothing that feels itself unable to believe, and the Lord forsaking it from helping it to believe. And I have seen it constantly that many a chosen vessel never hath been comforted till now, and ever comforted when now; they never knew what hurt them till they saw this, and they have immediately felt their hurt healed when this hath been removed. In comforting Christians under deep distress, tell them of God's grace and mercy, and the riches of both, you do but torment them the more, that there should be so much, and they have no part nor share in it, and think they never shall, because this is not the immediate way of cure. Tell them, rather, when they are full of these complaints, that they are as they speak, vile and sinful, and therefore worthy never to be accepted of God, and that they have no cause to wonder that they have their lives, and are on this side hell, and so turn all that they say to humiliation and self-loathing; verily,

you shall then see, if the Lord intends good, he will by this do them good, and the weakest Christian that cannot come to Christ, you shall see, first or last, shall see cause to lie down and be silent, and not quarrel, though the Lord should never come to him. And that this is necessary may appear thus: otherwise, --

The Lord should not advance the riches of his grace. The advancement of grace cannot possibly be without the humiliation and abasement of the creature; the Lord not only saves, but calls, things that are not, that "no flesh might glory." (1 Cor. i. 28, 29.)

Otherwise the Lord should not be Lord and Disposer of his own grace, but a sinful creature who quarrels against God, if it be not disposed of, not as the Lord will, but as the creature will. If a stranger comes to our house, and will have what he wants, and if he hath not, he quarrels and contends with the master of the house, what would he say? "Away, proud beggar! dost think to be lord of what I have? dost draw thy knife to stab me if I do not please thee and give thee thy asking? No, thou shalt know that I will do with my own as I see good; thou shalt lie down on the dust of my thresh-hold before I give thee any thing." So it is with the Lord. "It is not in him that willeth, nor in him that runneth, but in God that showeth mercy." It is his [[184]] principal name, "I will be merciful to whom I will be merciful; "and therefore if you will not believe me, yet believe the Lord's oath. (Is. xlv. 23,) "Unto me shall every knee bow;" and do you come to lord it over him, and quarrel and fret, and sink and grow sullen, and vex, if the' Lord stoop not unto your desires? No, no; you must and shall lie upon his thresh-hold; nay, he will make thee lay thy neck upon the block, as worthy of nothing but cutting off, and then, when this "valley is tilled, all flesh shall see the glory of the Lord." (Is. xl. 5.) Thus humiliation is necessary in this measure mentioned. Not that I deny any subsequent humiliation, after a Christian is in Christ,

arising from the sense of God's favor in Christ, than which nothing makes a Christian of an evangelical spirit more ashamed of himself; yet I dare not exclude this, which is antecedent, arising from the spirit of power immediately subduing the soul to Christ that it may be exalted by Christ. (1 Pet. v. 6.) It is true, all things that pertain to life and godliness are received by faith; (2 Pet. i. 3;) yet faith is less a saving work, which is not received by any precedent faith. Faith, therefore, is to be excepted, not only as begotten in us, but as it is in the begetting of it in the conviction and humiliation of every sinner.

Hence, see what is the great hindrance between the mercy of God and the soul of many a man; if it be not some sin and hardness of heart under it, whereby he cares not for Christ to deliver him, then it is some pride of spirit arising from some good he hath, whereby he feels no need of Christ, hoping his own duties shall save him; or else is above Christ, and not under him, willing to be disposed of by him. And hence the Lord makes this the highway of mercy, (Lev. xxvi. 40,) if first they shall confess their sins; secondly, humble themselves, (both which I know the Lord must work,) then he will remember his covenant. Look as it is with a vessel before it can be fit for use: it must first pass through fire, and the earth and dross severed from it; then it must be made holy and empty, which makes it *vas capax*, a vessel capable of receiving that which shall be poured into it. If (O brethren) the Lord hath some vessels of glory, which he prepares beforehand, and makes capable of glory, (Rom. ix. 21, 22;) if the Lord doth not sever you from sin in compunction, and empty you of yourselves in humiliation, you can not receive Christ, nor mercy -- you can not hold them; and if ever you miss of Christ by faith, your wound lies here. How many be there at this day, that were once profane and wicked, but now by some terrors and outward restraints upon them they leave their sins, and say they loathe them, and purpose never to run riot as they have done; and hence, because

[[185]] they think themselves very good, or to have some good, they fall short of Christ, and are still in the gall of bitterness, in the midst of all evil. It were the happiness of some men, if they did not think themselves to have some good because this is their Christ. O you that live under precious means, and have many fears you may perish and be deceived at the last! But why do you fear? I know you will answer, "O, some secret and unknown sin may be my ruin." It is true, and you do well to have a godly jealousy thereof. But remember this also, not only some sin, but some good thou thinkest thou hast, and rosiest in without Christ, and lifting thee up above Christ, may as easily prove thy ruin; because a man's own righteousness rested in doth not only hide men's sins, but strengthens them in some sin by which men perish. Trusting to one's own righteousness, and committing iniquity, are couples. (Ezek. xxxiii. 13.) Nor do I hereby run into the trenches of that wicked generation of the Familists, denying all inherent graces; evidence of favor from any Christian obedience, or sanctification in holy duties; or that a Christian should profanely cast off all duties, because they cannot save themselves by them. No, no; the Lord will search with candles one day for such sons of darkness, and exclude- such foolish virgins, that they have neither oil in their vessels nor light in their lamps. I only speak of that good, that righteousness which is rested in without Christ, and lifts up men above Christ, which in deed and in truth is not true righteousness, but only a true shadow of it. And, therefore, as Beza well observes from Rom. ix. 32, "Why did not Israel, that followed after righteousness, attain it? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law; "they were not fruits of sincere obedience to the law, but as it were the works of the law; now this, saith the apostle, (ver. 33.) is the stumbling stone in Zion. Christ will have all flesh veil, and be stripped naked, and made nothing before him, before they shall ever be built upon him. Now, this men stumble at; they must bring something to him; they will not be vile,

emptiness, and nothingness, that he may be all to them. Verily, observe yourselves, and you shall find, if there be little humiliation, there is little of Christ; if much humiliation, much of Christ; if unconstant humiliation, uncertain fruition of Christ; if real humiliation, real possession of Christ; if false humiliation, imaginary fruition of Christ. Know it, you can not perish if you fall not short here -- you must perish if you do.

Be exhorted, therefore, to lie down in the dust before the Lord, and under the Lord; nay, entreat the Lord that he would I [[186]] put thee upon his wheel, and mold thy heart to his will: why will yon rest in any good you have? O, remember thy father was a Syrian, ready to perish, and thyself polluted, an infinite, endless evil. Whatever good thou dost, is it not a polluted stream of a more polluted spring? Kay, suppose the Spirit works any good in thee, yet is it not polluted by thy unclean heart? Kay, suppose any actions should be perfect, yet remember that the Lord spared not the angels that sinned; perfection present can not satisfy justice for pollution past. Cry out, therefore, and say, O Lord, now I see not only that my sin is vile, but that myself and all my righteousness is vile also; and now, though the Lord stands at a distance, speaks no peace, hears no prayers, yet because thou art very vile, lie down under him, that if he will he may tread upon thee, and thereby exalt himself, as well as lift thee up and exalt thee. Be not careless whether the Lord help or no. but be humbled, not to quarrel in case he should not. For, --

1. Suppose thou art not only miserable, but sinful, and the Lord (thou savest) takes it not away; yet remember, that to quarrel with God for withdrawing his hand is a sin also, (Lam. iii. 39;) and wilt thou add sin to sin?

2. Why art thou quiet and still when the Lord denies thee any common mercy? Is it not because the Lord will have it so? Now, look as we say of him that hates sin as sin, that he hates all sin; so he that is meekened with God's good pleasure in any one thing because of his good pleasure in it, upon the same ground will at least desire to stoop in every thing. Suppose, therefore, it be the Lord's good pleasure to deny thee mercy; I grant you must pray for it, 3-*et* with submission to the good will of the Lord, saying. The Lord's will is good, but mine is evil; otherwise thou hast no meekness in any thing -- thou art not meekly subject to his will in every thing.

3. The greatest pride that is in man appears here; for suppose the Lord should deny thee bread, or water, or clothes, was it your duty to murmur now? nay, was it not pride, if the heart would not lie down, and sn)p, Lord I am worthy to have my bread plucked from my mouth, and my clothes from my back? Now, if it be pride to murmur in case the Lord denies you smaller matters, the offals of this life, dost not thou see that it is far greater pride for thee to sink and quarrel with him if he denies thee greater, and the things of another life? Is he bound to give thee greater, that doth not owe thee the least? Suppose a beggar murmur at thy door if thou dost deny him bread, or a cup of drink, wilt thou not account him a proud, stout beggar? But if thou givest him that, and then he quarrel and murmur at [[187]] thee because thou dost not give him a thousand pounds, or thy whole estate when he asks it, will you not say, I never met with the like insolency? The Lord gives you your lives, blessed be his name, but you ask for treasures of grace and mercy, thousands of pounds, Christ himself, and all that he is worth, and the Lord seems to deny you, and now you sink and grow sullen, and discontent, and quarrel, and murmur at God, not directly, but secretly and slyly; may not the Lord now say, Was there ever such pride and insolency? And therefore, as Christ spoke of himself, (John xii. 24, 25,) "A corn of

wheat can not live unless it die first," so know it, you shall never live with Christ; unless you die and perish in yourselves, unless you be sown and lie under the clods of your own wretchedness, faith will never spring up in such a soul. As it is in burnings, the tire must be first taken out, before there can be any healing, so this impatient spirit, which torments the soul, must first be removed, before the Lord will heal thee.

4. Consider the approaching times; I do believe the Lord at this day is coming out to shake all nations, all hearts, all consciences, all conditions, and to tear and rend from you your choicest blessings, peace and plenty, both external and internal also; for there is need of it; our age grows full, and proud, and wanton; a man's price is fallen in the market, unless his locks and new fashions commend him to the world. O, consider when God comes to rend all from you, then you may find a need of the exercise of this duty; it may be the time is coming wherein you shall have nothing to support your hearts, you shall find rest in no way but this; I know assurance of God's love may quiet you; but what if the Lord shake all your foundations, and deprive you of that? What will you do then? And therefore, as Zephaniah, (ii. 3,) having foretold of the evil day, cries unto his hearers, "Seek meekness, ye meek of the earth; "seek meekness; so say I to you; for you will find all little enough. Come down from thy throne, and be the footstool and thresh-hold of Christ Jesus, before the days of darkness come upon you; be content to be a cipher, a stepping stone, the very offal of the world.

But you will say, Wherein should I express this humiliation and subjection?

Be highly thankful for any little the Lord gives. (Lam. iii. 22, 23.) Be humble, and judge thyself worthy of nothing when the Lord denies;

and verily you shall find the Lord Jesus ere long speaking peace unto you, and giving thee rest in his bosom, that now art quietly contented to lie still at his feet.

For some helps thereunto,--

[[188]] 1. Remember whose thou art; viz., the Lord's clay, and he thy potter, and therefore may do with thee what he will. (Rom. ix. 20.)

2. Remember what thou art; viz., a polluted vessel, a kind of infinite, endless evil, as I have oft said. See the picture of thy own vileness in the damned in hell, who are full, and shall through all eternity pour out all manner of evil. (Job xl. 3, 4.)

3. Remember what thou hast been, and how long thou hast made war against Christ with all thy might, and heart, and strength; why should the Lord therefore choose thee before others, (Jer. iii. 5,) when as, (ask thy conscience,) was there ever such a wretch since the world began as thou hast been?

4. Remember what thou wilt be: fit for no use to Jesus Christ, good for nothing but to pollute his holy name when thou muddiest with it; and why should the Lord take up such a dry leaf, (Is. lxiv. 6,) and breathe upon such a dry bone?

5. Remember how good the Lord's will is, even when it crosseth thine; he shall have infinite glory by all his denials to thee of what thou wouldest; he shall gain that, though thou loosest thy peace and quietness, that good which thy foolish, sinful will desires at his hand, (John xii. 27, 28;) and if so, blessed be his name; let God live, but let man die and perish, that he may be exalted of vile man.

6. Remember the sweet rest thou shalt have by this subjection to the Lord; nothing is man's cross but man's will; a stubborn will, like a stubborn heifer in the yoke, galls and frets the soul. Learn meekness, saith our Saviour, of me, in taking my yoke on you, and then you shall find rest. Hell would not be hell to a heart truly humbled. Sometimes you find enlargements, then you are glad; sometimes none, then you sink; sometimes you have hope of mercy, then you are calm; sometimes you lose your hopes, then the sea works. When the Lord pleaseth you, then you are well; but if a little, cross befall you, then your spring is muddy, and a little thing troubles. O, be humble and vile in thine own eyes, and verily such uncertain fits of peace and trouble are done, and the days of all your mourning are now ended.

Of thankfulness, to all those whom the Lord hath truly humbled. Time was, when the Lord first convinced you, that so long as you could make any shift, find rest in any duties, you would never lie down at Christ's feet; now the Lord might have left you to have stumbled at that stumbling stone, and to have stuck in those bushes; but you may see that the Lord will save you even then when you would not be saved by him; and especially take notice of two passages of God's dealings with you, wherein [[189]] usually you find matter of discouragement, rather than of acknowledgment of God's goodness to you therein. 1. That the Lord hath withdrawn all feeling of any good which it may be once you felt, and that the Lord hath let out more of the evil of your hearts than ever you imagined was in them; nay, so much evil that you I think there is none like unto you, who hast now no heart nor power to stir, think, desire, will, or do any thing that is good. O, bless the Lord for this, for this is God's way to humble, and empty, and make thee poor; the Lord saw, though it may be you did not, that you rested in that good you felt, and was or would be lifted up by these; and therefore the Lord hath broken I

those crazy crutches, famished now, brought you down to nothing, I made you like dry deserts; all the hurt the Lord aimeth at in this being only to humble you, and though these desertions be bitter i for the present, yet that by these he might do you good in your I latter end. O brethren, the apostle stands at a stay, and desires I the Corinthians to consider. "You see your calling," saith he. (1 Cor. i.) "Not many mighty, not many wise, but things that are not doth he call, that no flesh might glory." "The Lord," t saith Moses, (Deut. viii. 2, 3,) "suffered thee to want," (that was (the first,) and then "fed thee, that he might prove thee and humble thee; remember this," saith he. So say I to you, remember this mercy, that when the Lord makes you worst of all, not real, but in your own eyes, that then the Lord is about this glorious work.

2. That the Lord hath kept you (it may be a long time, too) from sight and sense of his peculiar love: one would wonder why the Lord should hide his love so much, so long, from those to whom he doth intend it; the great reason is, because there is in many a one a heart desirous of his love; and this would quiet them, if they were sure of it: but they never came to be quieted j with God's will, in case they think they shall never partake of his I love; but are above that, oppose, and resist, and quarrel with that, unhumbed under that; the Lord therefore intending to bestow his favor only upon a humbled sinner, he will therefore hide his face until they lie low, and acknowledge themselves worthy of i nothing but extremity of misery, unworthy of the least mercy. "The people of God (Lam. i. 16) cry out that "the comforter which should refresh their soul was far from them." What was [God's end in this? you shall see the end of it; (ver. 18,) "The Lord is righteous," (here the church is humbled,) "for I have rebelled;" or, (as Zanchius reads it,) "I have made his mouth bitter," that the Lord speaks no peace to me, but bitter things. The cause is in my own self, and therefore if he never comfort [[190]] me,

nor speak good word unto me, yet he is righteous, but I am vile; and you will find this certain, that as the Lord therefore humbles that he may exalt, so the Lord never refuseth to exalt, (in hiding his face) but it is to humble. And is this the worst the Lord aims at, and will you not be thankful? Why are you, then, discouraged when you find it thus with you? Do not say the Lord never dealt thus with any as with me; suppose that; the reason then is, because the Lord sees, never had any such a high heart as thou hast; but O, be thankful that, notwithstanding this, he will take the pains to take it down.

Thus much for humiliation. I come now to the fourth and last, which is faith.

Section V.

The fourth and last Act of Christ's Power is the Work of Faith.

The Lord having wounded-and humbled his elect, and laid them down dead at his feet, they are now as unable to believe as they were to humble their own souls; and therefore now the Lord takes them up_ into his own arms, that they lean and rest on the bosom of their beloved by faith. After Joseph had spoken roughly to his brethren, and thereby brought the blood of their brother to remembrance, and so had humbled them; and then he can contain no longer, but discovers himself to them, and tells them, "I am Joseph, whom you wickedly sold, yet fear not;" so doth our Saviour carry it toward his

elect, when he laid them low: now is the very season for him to advance the glory of his grace; he can not now contain himself any longer; but having torn and taken away that vail of sin and of the law from off their hearts, now they see the Lord with open face, even the end of that which was to be abolished. (2 Cor. iii.) The explication of this great work is of exceeding great difficulty; nothing more stirring than faith in a true Christian, because he lives by it, yet it is very little known; as children in the womb, that know not that navel string by which they principally live: I shall therefore be wary, and leaving larger explications, acquaint you with the nature of faith, in this brief description of it.

Faith is that gracious work of the Spirit, whereby a humbled sinner receiveth Christ; or whether the whole soul cometh out of itself to Christ, for Christ and all his benefits, upon the call of Christ in his word.

Before I open this particularly, give me leave to premise some general considerations. Faith is the complement of effectual [[191]] vocation, which begins in God's call, and ends in this answer to that call; the Lord prevents a poor humbled soul with his call, either not knowing how, or not able, or not daring to come; and then the soul comes, and hence men called and believing are all one. (Rom. ix. 24, with 33.) Many a wounded sinner will be scrambling after Christ from some general reports of him, before the day and hour of God's glorious and gracious call. Now, for any to receive Christ, or come to Christ before he is called, is presumption; to refuse Christ when called is rebellion; to come and receive when called is properly and formally faith, and that which the Scripture styles the "obedience of faith." (Rom. i. 5.) And now Christ at this instant is fully and freely given on God's part, when really and freely come unto and taken on our part.

This receiving of Christ, or coming to Christ, is for substance the same, though the words be diverse; the Holy Ghost useth to express one and the same thing in variety of words, that our feebleness might the better understand what he meaneth. And hence in Scripture, believing, coming, receiving Christ, rolling, trusting, cleaving to the Lord, etc., set out one and the same thing; and therefore it is no wonder if our divines have different descriptions of faith in variety of words; which, if well considered, do but set out one and the same thing: and I do conceive they do all agree in this description I have now mentioned; I know there are some who tread awry here, whom I shall briefly note out, and so pass on to what we intend.

1. The Papists, with some others of corrupt judgments, at least of weak apprehensions among ourselves, describe faith to be nothing else but a supernatural assent to a divine truth, because of a divine testimony; ex, gr., to assent to this truth, that Christ is come, that he is the Son of God, that he was dead and is risen again, that he is the Saviour of the world, etc.; and to confirm this they produce Matt. xvi. 16; 1 John iv. 3.

It is granted that this assent is in faith, for faith always hath respect to some testimony; for man by his fall hath lost all knowledge of divine and supernatural truths; hence God reveals them in his word; hence faith sees them and assents to them, because God hath spoken them: to see and know things by vision is to see things in themselves intuitively and immediately; but to see things by faith is to see them by and in a testimony given of them. (John xx. 20,) "Blessed is he that hath not seen," (i. e., Christ immediately,) "but believed," i. e., his testimony, and on him in it; this assent, therefore, is in faith, for we must believe Christ before we can believe in him; but this comprehends not the whole nature of faith; I mean of that faith

[[192]] we are now speaking of, viz., as it unites us to Christ, and possesseth us with Christ. For, --

1. This description placeth faith only in the understanding, whereas it is also in the will, as the words trusting, rolling, etc., intimate.
2. This assent is merely general, without particular application, which is ever in true faith. (Gal. ii. 20.)
3. This is such a faith as the devils may have, (James ii. 19,) and reprobate men may have. (2 Pet. ii. 20, 21. Heb. xx. 26.) There is a willful refusing of the known truth.

It is the Papist's aim to vilify faith hereby, by describing it by that which is one ingredient in it, but excluding that which is principal; those phrases, therefore, of "believing Christ is come in the flesh," (1 John iv. 3,) and that "he is the Son of God," (Matt. xvi. 16.) as if this were the only object to faith, are not to be understood exclusively, excluding other acts of faith, which the Scripture in other places sets down clearly; but inclusively, as supposing them to be contained herein; for as we in our times, describing faith by relying upon Christ for salvation, do not exclude hereby our believing that he is the Messiah, but we include it, or suppose it, because that is not now questioned, the truth of the gospel being so abundantly cleared, so in those times, they described faith by one principal act, to believe that he was the Son of God, and come into the flesh, because this was the main and principal thing in question then: and if the Lord had not set our faith by other acts in Scripture, we should not vary from our compass in such expressions in the word in these days; for their faith then is exemplary to us now; because the word doth more fully set it out in more special acts, hence we set it out also by them; for it is evident, as the Jews did believe in a Messiah to come, so they did also believe, and look for all good from him. (John iv. 25,) "He will

teach us all things when he comes:" and therefore their faith did not confine itself to that historical act that a Messiah should come, or that this was the Messiah, but they did expect and look for all good from him: and hence the apostle expounding this saying, viz., believing that Christ is dead and risen again, we shall hereby be saved: "If thou believest" (saith he) "with thine heart" this truth, "thou shalt be saved." Now, to believe with the heart, as it doth not exclude assent, so it necessarily includes the acts of the will and affections in relying upon him, and coming to him. And hence, when Peter had made that confession, (Acts xvi. 16.) Christ tells him, "Thou art Peter;" i. e., a stone resting upon the rock, (as some good interpreters expound it;) and therefore Peter's [[193]] faith did not exclude these principal acts of resting on Christ, cleaving to Christ, but did include and suppose them.

Some run into another extreme, and make faith nothing else but a persuasion or assurance that Christ died for me in particular, or that he is mine. That which moves some thus to think, is the universal redemption by the death of Christ; they know no ground or bottom for faith but this proposition, Christ died for thee, and hence makes redemption universal: and hence the Arminians boast so much of their *quod unusquisque tenetur credere*, etc. But, 1. This is a false bottom, for Christ hath not died for all, because he hath not prayed for all. (John xvii. 2.)

This is a sandy bottom and foundation, which when a Christian rests upon, it shakes under him, when the soul shall think, Though Christ hath died for me, yet no more for me than for Judas, or thousands of reprobates now in hell. Indeed, after faith, a Christian is bound to believe it, as Paul did. (Gal. ii. 20. 1 Cor. xv. 1, 2.)

I conceive, therefore, those holy men of ours who have described faith by assurance, have not so much aimed at a description of what faith is in itself, as it possesseth us with Christ; but of what degree and extent it- may be, and should be, in us; they describe it therefore by the most eminent act of it, in full assurance: and therefore consult with the authors of this description, and inquire of them, Is there no doubting mixed with faith? Yes, (say they,) man's doublings sometimes are even unto a kind of despair, but then (say the) it should not be thus. The Papists commend doublings, and deny assurance, place faith in a general assent; our champions, that were to wrestle with them, maintained it to be a particular application, (and not only a general assent,) and that with a full assurance of persuasion, which, being the most eminent act of faith, excludes not other inferior acts of it, which as they are before it, so may possess the soul with Christ without it. Although with all, it is certain, that there is no true faith but it hath some assurance, of which afterward.

Let me now come to the explication of the description given, where note these five things: --

1. The efficient cause of faith; it is a work of the Spirit.
2. The subject, or matter in which it is seated, viz., the soul of a humble sinner.
3. The form of it, viz., the coming of the whole soul to Christ.
4. The end of it, viz., for Christ and all his benefits.
5. The special ground and means of it, viz., the call of Christ in his word.

1. The efficient cause of faith.

[[194]] Faith is a gracious work of the Spirit of Christ; the Spirit, therefore, is the efficient cause or principal workman of faith; the Spirit doth not believe, but causeth us to believe; it is not principium quod, the principle which doth believe, but principium quo, the principle by which we do; the souls of all the elect (especially when humbled) are, of all other things, most unable to believe: nay, look, as, before compunction and humiliation, Satan held the soul captive chiefly by its lusts and sins, so now, when the Lord hath burnt those cords, and broken those chains, all the powers of darkness strengthen themselves, and keep the soul under mightily, by unbelief. What do you tell me of mercy? (saith the soul:) it is mercy which I have continually resisted, desperately despised: why do you persuade me to believe? Alas! I can not; it is true, all that which you say is true, if I could believe, but I can not see Christ, I can not come at Christ; I seek him in the means, but he forsakes me there, and I am left of God desolate; and here, beloved, the soul had not formerly so many excuses for its sin, as now it hath clouds of objections against believing; the Spirit therefore takes fast hold of the souls of all the elect, draws them unto Christ; and therefore it is called "the spirit of faith," (2 Cor. iv. 13;) and that by an omnipotent and irresistible power. (Is. liii. 1,) "Who hath believed? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" that the soul must and shall believe now. "Compel them to come in," saith the lord of the supper. (Luke xiv. 23.) This the Arminians will not believe, for (say they) the question is not, whether we are enabled to believe by grace; but, whether it be after this manner, and by this means, viz., modo irresistibili. Consider, therefore, these reasons to clear this point: --

1. Whence doth our call and coming to Christ arise, but from God's immovable and unchangeable purpose? The Lord therefore must either alter his purpose, or prevail with the soul to believe, and overpower the heart thereunto.

2. Is not Christ Jesus bound by office and promise to the Father to bring in all his lost, scattered sheep, that so the Father and he may be glorified in them? (John xx. 16,) "Other sheep I have; those I must bring home, and they shall hear my voice.' You that complain you can not believe, nay, that you have no heart to believe, the Lord must fetch you in; and you shall hear the bridegroom's voice with joy.

3. Is not the act of believing wrought by a creating power? (Eph. i. 9; ii. 10. Is. lvii. 18, 19,) "I create the fruit of the I lips peace, peace to him that is near and afar off." And is not a creating voice irresistible, though there be nothing for it to [[195]] work upon? So, though you have no ability, heart, head, or strength to believe, yet the Lord will create the fruit of the lips of God's messengers peace, peace.

4. Doth not the Lord let in that infinite and surpassing sweetness of grace, when he works the soul to believe, standing in extreme need of that grace, that it can not but come and cleave to it? (Ps. lxiii. 2, 3,) "I long to see thee," saith David, "for thy loving kindness is better than life." It is impossible for a man to cleave to his life; much more to that which is better than life. The light is so clear, it can not but see and wonder at grace; the good is so sweet, it can not but taste and accept what God so freely offers; and therefore the poor Canaanitish woman (Matt, xv.) could not be driven away, though Christ bid her in a manner begone; but she made all the objections against her arguments for her, (as usually faith doth, when under this stroke of the Spirit:) "The violent take the kingdom of heaven by force;" the Spirit puts a necessity upon them, and irresistibly overpowers them, and this is the cause of it.

And is not this matter of great consolation to all those who feel themselves utterly unable to believe? You think the Lord would give peace and pardon, life and mercy, if I could believe. O, consider the

Lord hath overtaken in the covenant of grace to work in all his the condition of the covenant, as well as to convey thee good of it. (Jer. xxxi. 31-34.) He hath done this for others by an irresistible power. (Heb. xii. 1, 2.) Look up to Jesus, the Author and Finisher of your faith; he came out of his Father's bosom, not only to give life by his death, but to enable his to eat and close with him by faith, that they might never die. (John vi. 50.) So the Lord may work it in thee; it is true, also, he may not; yet it is unspeakable comfort to consider, that if the Lord had put it over unto thee to believe, it is certain thou shouldst never have believed; but now the work is put into the hand of Christ; that which is impossible to thee is possible, nay, easy, with him; he can comprehend thee when thou canst not apprehend him. This is exceeding sweet when thy body is sick, and soul is deserted, incredible things to be believed are propounded, an impossible work to thy weakness urged, upon pain of God's sorest and most unspeakable wrath; to consider it is not in me, but in the Lord's own hand; and it is his office, his glory to work faith, and, as the apostle speaks, to show mercy unto them that are shut up, not only under sin, but also unbelief. (Rom. xi. 32.) But why hath the Lord made thee feel thy inability to believe? Truly, the end of our wants is not to make us sin and shift for ourselves, but to ask and seek for supply; and the end [[196]] of the continuance of those wants is, that we should continue to ask and seek. And dost thou think thou shalt seek to the Lord by his own hand to create faith, and fetch thee in, and will not the Lord take his time to work it? He that believes, saith the apostle, (Rom. x. 11,) shall not be ashamed. Why so? Because the Lord, saith he, who is over all, is rich unto all that call upon him. (Ver. 12.) If thou hast not a heart shut up from asking of it, the Lord, who hath power, hath not a heart shut up toward thee from working it.

But withal be thankful exceedingly, all you whose hearts the Lord hath drawn and overcome. He came to his own people the Jews, and would oft have gathered them, but they would not; and therefore he forsook them, and left their habitations desolate. O, how oft would the Lord have gathered you, and you would not! Yet the Lord hath not forsaken you, but called you in, whether you would or no; the Lord hath taken many a man at his first word, and left him at the first repulse, shaken off the dust of his feet against him presently, (Matt. x. 14,) without any more entreaties to accept of mercy. Yet thou hast not only refused, but even crucified the Son of God; yet he hath not been driven from thee, but his bowels have been oft kindled together, when he hath been ready to give thee up; when thou hast been under the hedges, and in the highways that lead to death, and didst never think of him, nor didst desire him, yet he hath compelled thee to come in; he hath made thee feel such an extreme need of him, and made himself so exceeding sweet, that thou hast not been able to resist his love, but to cry out, Lord, thou hast overcome me with mercy, I am not able to resist any more; nay, which is more wonderful, when thou hast been gathered, and gone from him, and lost thyself and him also again, and it may be hast been offended at him, yet he hath gone before thee into Galilee, and gathered thee up when thou hast been as water spilt upon the ground: what should be the cause of this, but only this? the work of faith lies upon him, both to begin and finish; he must gather in all his lost sheep, and therefore he hath put forth an irresistible power of his Spirit upon thy heart, which must carry thee captive after him.

I am afraid my faith hath been rather presumption, a work of my own power, than faith wrought by the Spirit's power: how may I discern that?

If you are wrapped up in God's covenant, if any promise be actually yours, it is no presumption to take possession by faith of what is your own. Dost thou seriously will Christ, and resolve never to give the Lord rest until he give thee rest in him?

[[197]] Then see Rev. xxii. 17, "Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life." Dost thou thirst after Christ? Then read Is. lv. 1-3. John vii. 37, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." When Christ "saw their faith," (Matt. ix. 1, 2,) what said he? "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven: "the word signifies, be confident. It is no presumption to believe pardon of sins now thou art come unto me, not only for the healing of thy body, hut especially for pardon of sin. It is the great sin of many saints, when they do thirst, and believe, and come to Christ, and so are under the promise of grace; yet they think it presumption now to believe and take possession of all those treasures that be in Christ, but look that the Lord should first make them feel, and then they will believe; whereas faith should now receive and drink in abundantly of the fullness of Christ. Shall it be accounted presumption for any man to eat his own bread, and drink his own drink, and put on his own clothes? The promise makes Christ and all his benefits your own; therefore it is no presumption to apply them.

Suppose you can not find yourself within any promise, and you see no reason to believe, only you have the Lord's call and command to believe; do you now, in conscience and obedience to this command, or to God's invitation and entreaty in the gospel, believe, because thou darest not dishonor God by refusing his grace? thou dost therefore accept of it; this is no presumption, unless obedience be presumption. Nay, the most acceptable obedience, which is the "obedience of faith," (John vi. 38;) for what was the ground on which those three thousand believed? (Acts ii. 38, 39, etc.) Peter said,

"Repent, that you may receive remission of sins:" now, what follows? "They that gladly received the word -were baptized." O, that word "repent" -- i. e., as Reza expounds it, "return to God and come in" -- was a most sweet word to them, and therefore they received it; this was no presumption, either, for Peter to exhort them to repent, or for them to take the Lord (as that godly man said) at his first word. I know there is a subjection to the gospel, arising only from slavish fear and carnal hopes, (Ps. lxvi. 3, xviii. 44:) this may be in presumptuous reprobates; but there is a subjection arising from the sense of the sweetness and exceeding goodness of God's call and promise. (Ps. ex. 9, 3.) As a woman that is overcome with the words of her loving suitor; the man is precious, and hence his words are very sweet, and overcome her heart to think, Why should such a one as I be looked upon, by one of such a place? It is no presumption now, but duty to give her consent; so it is here, when the Lord [[198]] is precious and his words (O, accept me. O, come to me) are exceeding sweet; and hereupon, out of obedience, gladly yields up itself to the Lord, takes possession of the Lord, this is no more presumption than to sanctify a Sabbath, or to pray, or hear the word, because the Lord's commands are herein very sweet.

If repentance accompanies faith, it is no presumption to believe. Many know the sin, and hence believe in Christ, trust to Christ, and there is an end of their faith; but what confession and sorrow for sin, what more love to Christ, follows this faith? Truly none. Nay, their faith is the cause why they have none; for they think, If I trust to Christ to forgive them, he will do it, and there is an end of the business. Verily, this hedge faith, this bramble faith, that catches hold on Christ, and pricks and scratches Christ by-more impenitency, more contempt of him, is mere presumption, which shall one day be burnt up and destroyed by the. tire of God's jealousy. Fie upon that faith that serves only to keep a man from

being tormented before his time. Your sins would be your sorrows, but that your faith quiets you. But if faith be accompanied with repentance, mourning for sin, more esteem of God's grace in Christ, so that nothing breaks thy heart more than the thoughts of Christ's unchangeable love to one so vile, and this love makes thee love much, and love him the more; as thy sin increaseth, so thou desirest that thy love may increase; and now the stream of thy thoughts runs, how thou mayest live to Him that died for thee. This was Mary's faith, who sat at Christ's feet weeping, washing them with her tears, and "loving him much, because much was forgiven;" who, though she was accounted a presumptuous woman by Simon, (and Christ himself suffered in his thoughts for suffering of her to come so near unto him,) yet the Lord himself dears her therein, and justifies her before God and men. Many a poor believer thinks, If I should believe, I should but presume, and spin a spider's web of faith out of my own bowels; and hence you shall observe, this not believing stops up the work of repentance, mourning, and love, and all cheerful obedience in them; and, on the contrary, if they did believe, it would be with them as themselves think many times, If I knew the Lord was mine, and my sins pardoned, O, how should I then bless him, and love him, and wonder at him! how would this break my heart before him! etc. Now, I say, let all the world judge, if that which thou thinkest would be presumption be not rebellion, because it makes thee worse, and stops up the Spirit of grace in thee. Whereas that faith which lets out those blessed springs of sorrow, love, [[199]] thankfulness, humbleness, etc., what can it be else but such a saving faith as is wrought by the Spirit, because it lets in the Spirit more abundantly into a dry and desolate heart?

2. The subject or matter of faith.

This is the second thing in the description of faith; the soul of a humbled sinner is the subject or matter of faith. I do not mean the matter out of which faith is wrought, (for there is nothing in man out of which the Spirit begets it,) but that wherein faith is seated. I mean also the habit of faith, not the principle of it; for that is out of man in the Lord Jesus, who is therefore called "our hope," as well as "our strength; "the soul, therefore, is the subject of faith, called "the heart; "(Rom. x. 9, compared with Matt. vi. 21;) for we can not go or come to Christ in this life with our bodies; we are "here absent from the Lord," (2 Cor. v. ;) but the soul can go to him, the heart can be with him; as the eye can see a thousand miles off', and receive the species or image of the things it sees into it, so the soul, enlightened by faith, can see Christ afar off; it can long for, choose, and rest upon the Lord of life, and receive the lively image of Christ's glory in it. (2 Cor. iii.)

If Christ were present upon earth, the soul (not the body) only could truly receive him. Christ comes to his elect only by his Spirit, and hence our spirits only are fit to receive him and close with him. Thousands hear Christ outwardly, that inwardly are deaf to all God's calls; their spirits see not, taste not, feel not; it is, therefore, the soul that is the subject of faith; and I say it is a humble, empty soul which is the subject, for a full, proud, broken spirit can not, nay, will not, receive Christ, as we have proved; and therefore (Luke xiv.) the servant is commanded to bid the "poor, halt, and blind, and lame to come in;" they would not make excuses as others did; they that were stung to death with fiery serpents wore the only men that the brazen serpent was lifted up for them to look upon, and to be healed, (John iii. 14;) and therefore the promise doth not run, "If any man have wisdom, let him ask it; "but, "If any man want wisdom," (Lam. i. 5;) so, if any man want light, life, want peace, pardon, want Christ and his Spirit, let them ask, and the Lord will give. Away with your money, if you come to these waters to buy, and take freely. "If any

man would be wise, let him be a fool," (saith the blessed apostle,) an empty nothing. . A soul, in a perishing, helpless, hopeless condition, is the subject of faith; such only feel their need of Christ,, are glad at the offer of Christ, and therefore such only can and will receive Christ, and come unto Christ by faith; and truly, if we had [[200]] but hearts, the consideration of this might be ground of great comfort and confidence unto all God's people whose souls come unto Jesus Christ, for that which was in Thomas (John xxi.) is in all men naturally, -- if we could see Christ with our eyes, and feel him with our hands, and embrace him (as Mary did) with our arms, if we could hear himself speak, we could then believe; as they said, "If he will come from the cross." so we say, If he will come down from heaven thus unto us. we will then believe; if we want this, we fear we may be at last deceived, because we want sense, and can not come to close with our eyes and hands the objects of our faith. But O, consider this point: we are made partakers of Christ's life and salvation by him only, yet certainly by faith. Now, this faith is not by seeing him with our eyes, coming near to him with our bodies, but coming to him with our souls; the soul is the seat of faith. Now, this you may do, though you never thus saw him, "whom though you see not, yet believing you rejoice." This coming of the soul to Christ doth make a firmer union between thee and Christ than if thou wert bodily present with him in heaven; for many touched and crowded him that never were truly united to him, or received virtue from him. If our souls were in the third heaven with Christ, who of us would then doubt of our portion in him? I tell you, if our souls go out of sin and self unto Christ Jesus, and there rest, this makes you nearer to him than if your souls were under his wing in the highest heavens. The poor seaman, when he is near dangerous shores, when he can not go down to the depth of the sea to fasten his ship, yet if he can east his anchor twenty or forty fathom deep, and if that holds, this quiets him in the sorest storms. When we are tossed and can not come to Christ

with our bodily presence, yet if our souls can come, if our faith, our anchor, can reach him, and knit us to him, this should exceedingly comfort our hearts.

How and where should my soul come to Christ, who is now absent from me?

Christ comes to you in his word and covenant of grace; there is his Spirit, his truth, goodness, love, faithfulness; receive this, you receive him; embrace this, you embrace him. As among ourselves, you see great estates are conveyed and surrendered by bonds and writings. (Acts ii. 41,) When they received the word they received Christ. (John xv. 7,) "If my words abide in you," i. e., if I abide in you by my words, you shall be fruitful.

By the word let thine eye pitch upon the person. Do not only account the promise true, but, with Sarah, account him faithful who hath promised: and then let thy heart roll itself [[201]] upon that grace and faithfulness revealed in this Word, lean upon the breast of this beloved; and thus the soul, by the chariot wheels and wings of the word, is professor of Christ in it, and carried up to Christ's cross, as dying. (Gal. iii. 1,) and from thence to his glory in his kingdom by it. (Heb. x. 19-21.) As a man that gives a great estate, by some writing, to us, we believe it as if he were present; and by this we do not only believe the writing to be true, but the man to be faithful and loving to us; and hereupon our hearts are carried after the man himself, though afar off from us. Thus we ascend to Christ in the cloud of faith; as Jacob, though he could hardly believe, yet as soon as he was persuaded Joseph was yet alive, his spirit presently revived, and it was immediately with him, before his body came to him. So it is with faith: the soul goes unto Christ before our bodies and souls, both together, shall have immediate communion with him.

3. The form of faith.

This is the third thing in the description of faith: the coming of the whole soul out of itself unto Christ is the form of faith, and that wherein the life and essence of it consists, and which doth difference, is from all other graces of the Spirit. The first act of faith, as it unites us to Christ, is not assurance that he is mine, but a coming to him with assurance, and hereby he is become mine. "Come unto the waters," and "so buy wine and milk;" i. e., now make them your own. The "weary and heavy laden" shall not have rest unless they come to Christ for it. Faith doth nothing for life, -- for that is the law of works,--it only receives him who hath done all for it, it comes out of all it hath or doth -- like Abraham, that left his servants behind him when he went up to God in the mount -- unto Christ for life. Conceive it thus. Adam had a principle and stock of life in himself, in his own hand, and therefore was to live by this, to live of himself and from himself, and therefore had no need nor use of faith. He lived by the law of works, which the apostle sets in a direct opposition to the law of faith; but Adam, being now fallen, hath lost his life, and become, not like the man that fell among thieves, betwixt Jerusalem and Jericho, stripped, wounded, and half dead, but wholly dead. (Eph. ii. 1.) So that, let any man seek life from himself, it is impossible he should live; for, if there had been a law that could have given life, our righteousness should have been thereby. (Gal. iii. 21.) Hence it follows, if any man will have life, he must go out of himself to another, viz., the Lord of life, for it. (John v. 40; vi. 27-29.)

Now, observe it, this very coining, this very motion of the soul [[202]] to Christ -- a grace which Adam neither had, nor had power to use -- is faith; the Spirit of Christ moving or drawing the soul, the soul is thence moved, and comes to Christ. (John vi. 64, 65.) The soul, by sin, is averted from God, and turns his back upon God; the

turning or coming of the soul (not unto duties of holiness, for that is obedience properly, but) unto God, in Christ again, is properly and formally faith. All evil is in man's self, and from himself; all man's good is in Christ and from Christ. The souls of all God's elect, seeing these things, forsake and renounce themselves, in whom and from whom is all their evil, and come unto Christ, in whom and from whom is all their good. This motion of the soul between these extremes, throughout that vast and infinite distance that is between a sinful, wretched man and a blessed Saviour, is faith; for by faith, principally, we "pass from death to life." (John v. 24.) The soul of a poor sinner, wounded and humbled, sometimes knows not Christ, and then cries out, as those, Acts ii. 37, What shall I do? Whither shall I go? sometimes dares not, sometimes can not; it hath no heart to stir or come; it therefore looks up, and longs, and goes unto the Lord to draw it, like poor Ephraim. (Jer. xxxi. 18.) "o, turn me, Lord, and then I shall be turned," (Lam. v. 21;) and this is the lowest and least degree of faith. But at some other time, the soul mourning for want of the Lord, the Lord comes unto it with great clearness, glory, and sweetness of grace and peace; and hence the soul can not but come and close with him, and cry, Rabboni, and say, O Lord, it is thy good pleasure to have respect to such a clod of earth, to tender such riches of grace to one so unworthy, and to bid, nay, to beseech me to come and take. Lord, behold, I come. This is faith. Would you have a proof of it? Consider, therefore, these particulars; 1. Consider these Scriptures: (John vi. 35,) "I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth in me shall never thirst; "where you see coming to Christ and believing in Christ all are one. So, (John vii. 37,) "In the last day of the feast, the Lord Christ cries out with much vehemency, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." How, in the next verse, (38,) our Saviour expounds this coming; for saith he, "He that believeth on me, out of his belly," etc.

So to come to Christ, as upon this to drink in of Christ's fullness, is believing in Christ. So (Heb. xi. 6) the apostle saith, "Without faith it is impossible to please God;" and then, in rendering the reason of this, explains what he meant by faith, viz., to be our coming unto God upon a double testimony, believing [[203]] first that he is, secondly, that he is a rewarder of them that seek him diligently, or (which is all one) who do come unto him. So, (John i. 12,) "So many as received him," (which is all one with coming,) "he adopted them as sons, even to them that believe in his name." And hence we shall observe, that the Scripture doth not attribute our righteousness and life to our believing of Christ, but to our believing on Christ, in Christ, (a phrase peculiar to heavenly language, and therefore not found in any human writer,) because it is not the bare believing of a testimony that saveth us, unless we so believe it as to believe in Christ, which can not be but by coming to him, and as it were in him, or into him, our union with Christ being made complete hereby.

That upon which the Lord promiseth life, and salvation, and mercy, can not be works, but faith, (Gal. iii. 21; Heb. xi. 6;) but throughout all the Old and New Testament, the Lord promiseth life and salvation to comers, or to them that return. (Jer. iii. 12. Ex. xxxiii. 10. Joel ii. 12, 13. Heb. vii. 25. John v. 40.)

If unbelief be nothing else but a departing from God, faith can be nothing else but a coming unto God; but that is the nature of unbelief. (Heb. iii. 12; x. 38. John vi. 64--69; xii. 37-40.) The Lord's great plot is to gather all his elect under the wings of Christ, (Matt, xxiii. 37; Eph. i. 9, 10,) and therefore calls them to come under them, by the voice of the gospel. The coming under them, therefore, can be nothing else but faith, the proper obedience to the gospel, as works are under the voice of the law. Thus faith is the coming of the soul to

Christ. But you will say, Did not many come to Christ that were never saved by him?

Yes, many came to him with their bodily presence, that were excluded from him. (John vi. 36.)

But you will say, Do not many men's souls come, are not many men's hearts moving, toward Christ, and yet excluded from Christ? Do not many cry, Lord, Lord? are not many enlightened, and taste of this heavenly gift, and yet fall away? I confess it is very true; and therefore it is set down in this description of faith, that it is the coming of the whole soul unto Christ. Never did any yet come to Christ, and receive him with their whole souls, with all their hearts, but they had fruition of him, and blessedness by him. Faith, therefore, is not the coming of the soul, but the coming of the whole soul unto Jesus Christ, and this you may be established in upon these grounds.

1. The Scripture expressly calls for this: (Prov. iii. 5,) "Trust in the Lord with all thy heart." (Acts viii. 37,) "If thou believest with thy heart, thou shalt be saved." (Joel ii. 13,) [[204]] "Turn unto the Lord with all your hearts." (Jer. xxix. 13,) "You shall find the Lord when you seek him with your whole hearts." As when we have a great gift to bestow, and we ask a poor man to whom we intend to give it, whether he will accept of it or no: Yes, saith he, with all my heart: so it is here; the Lord asks those he intends to bestow his Son upon, and saith to them, You have lived thus long without him, and thus long abused him; will you now have him and accept of him? Yes, Lord, with all my heart. This is all the Lord requires. Doth the Lord require no more of me but to come? Lord, this voice is most sweet; I come with all my heart, I come.

2. Because Christ is worthy of the whole heart; all must be sold away to buy this field, this treasure. (Matt, xiii. 44,) "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me." A filthy lust, a base harlot hath had thy whole heart, and dost thou think the Lord Christ will have it divided? is not one heart too little for him? are not ten thousand souls too few to embrace him, or cleave to him? 3. Because without this your coming to him is but feigned. (Jer. iii. 10,) "They return to me, not with their whole heart, but feignedly." To cleave to Christ and a lust, to Christ and a proud heart, can not be unfeigned faith; to go to your lusts in time of peace, and fly to Christ in times of extremity, is damnable hypocrisy. When conscience troubles you, you then go to Christ to ease you; and when your unruly wills and lusts trouble you, you go to the world to ease you; and so your hearts are divided, and you come not wholly and only unto Christ for rest. Believe it, it is such a faith by which you may, as Samuel did on Saul's garment, take hold of him, but the Lord will never take hold of you. Set a branch in the stock, if it stays loosely in it, it will wither in time; and this is the great cause of withering Christians, and of so many apostates in these evil times. Those that came to Christ, (John vi.,) and followed him for a time, but afterward fell away, (ver. G6,) what was the reason of their fall? viz., when they were offended at Christ, they knew⁷ whether to go from Christ; but what saith Peter? "Lord, whither should we go? "(ver. 68.) If you lay the pipes that are to convey water from a full fountain, but one foot or one inch short of it, there can not be any water derived from thence. O beloved, what is the reason that many a man's faith doth him no good, derives no life, spirit, blood, efficacy, peace, power, from the Lord Jesus? Is it because Christ is a dry Christ, and unwilling to communicate? No, no; the wound is in their faith; that pipe is laid but half way to him, they fall one foot short of him, their souls come, but their whole souls do not come to him, [[205]] and hence they never reach Christ; they lie not in Christ, and therefore receive not from Christ; Christ is

precious, (here their souls come,) but not exceeding precious; preciousness itself, as the word is, (1 Pet. ii. 7,) (here the whole soul doth not come;) they cleave to Christ and rest upon Christ, (here their souls come,) but they cleave not to Christ only, (thus their whole souls do not come.) 4. If the whole soul by unbelief departs from God, then the whole soul must return and come again unto God.

5. If the want of this be the great cause why men are rejected of God, then the whole soul must return to him; but this is the cause why all men under the means are rejected of God. "Israel would none of me," i. e., would not be content alone with me, would not "take quiet contentment in me," (as the Hebrew word signifies;) the Lord was not good enough for them; but their hearts went out from him to other things, and therefore "the Lord gave them up to their own hearts' lust, and they walked in their own counsels." The woman that forsakes the guide of her youth, and sets her heart as much upon other men as her husband, is an adulteress, for which only she shall have a bill of divorce.

O. Because, as the gospel first reveals Christ to the mind, and then offers him to the will, so faith, which runs parallel with the gospel, first sees Christ, (there the mind, one part of the soul, goes out,) then receives Christ gladly, (there the other part, the will, goes out,) and so the whole soul comes to Christ. The gospel comes to all the elect, first in great clearness and evidence of the truth of it, (1 Thess. i. 5,) to which the understanding assents, and is persuaded of; secondly, in great grace and goodness, surpassing beauty and sweetness, (Lam. iii. 24,) with which the will is drawn, and so the whole soul comes unto Christ; for the gospel is not only true, but glad tidings to nil the elect, especially when humbled at God's feet, (1 Tim. i. 15,) "in whom," saith the apostle, (Eph. i. 12, 18,) "you believed after that ye

heard the word of truth," (there is the object of the understanding,) "the gospel of your salvation," (there is the goodness of it, the object of the will,) so that the whole soul is drawn to Christ in the work of faith. He that understands how liberum arbitrium may be in two faculties, must not wonder if one grace be seated in both faculties of understanding and will; no grace can be completely seated in divers faculties, but gradually and imperfectly it may: the work of faith is not complete, when the understanding is opened only to see and wonder at the mystery of mercy in the gospel; but when the will adheres and clasps about that infinite and [[206]] surpassing good it sees, then it is perfected, and not before. (John vi. 40.) And this is the reason why saving faith (as it is called) doth not look only to a bare testimony and assent unto it, as human faith doth; because, in the gospel, not only divine truth is propounded to the mind to assent unto, but an infinite and eternal good is offered to the heart and will of man to embrace, and thence it is that it is not sufficient for a Christian to believe God or to believe Christ, but he must also believe in him, or else he can not be saved; the object of believing of him being verum, or truth; the object of the second, bonum, or good: take heed, therefore, a poor, lost sinner, undone in its own eyes forever; not knowing what to do, unless it be to lie down, and lie still at God's feet, as worthy of nothing but hell. What doth the Lord now do? the Lord Christ, by his gospel, first lets in a new light, and it sees the Lord Jesus there bleeding before its eyes, and held forth as a propitiation to all that believe, to all that come to him; the mind sees this mystery, this exceeding rich grace and free mercy, and thinks, Happy are they that share in this mercy? but will the Lord look upon such a nothing as I? can such infinite treasures be my portion? The Lord, therefore, calls, and bids him come away and enter into the possession of it. Thy sins, indeed, are great, saith the Lord; yet remember bloodthirsty Manasseh, persecuting Paul, were pardoned. Nay, remember my grace is free, for whose sake I invite thee. I

beseech thee to come in; thy wants indeed are many; yet remember that thou hast, therefore, the more need and more cause to come, and that it is I that have made thee empty and poor on purpose, that thou mightest come: it is true, I have an eternal purpose to exclude many thousands from mercy, yet my purpose is unchangeable, never to cast off any that do come for it; I never did it yet, I will not do it unto thee, if thou dost come; it is true, many may presume, yet it is no presumption, but duty, to obey my great command; and it is the greatest sin that ever thou didst or canst commit, now to reject it, and refuse this grace: come, therefore, poor, weary, lost, undone creature. Hereupon the heart and will come, and rest, and roll themselves upon these bowels, and there rest; thus the whole soul comes, and this, I say again, is faith. Just as it is with the loadstone drawing the iron; who would think that iron should be drawn by it? but there is a secret virtue coming from the stone which draws it, and so it comes and is united to it; so who would think that ever such an iron, heavy, earthy heart should be drawn unto Christ? yet the [[207]] Lord lets out a secret virtue of truth and sweetness from himself, which draws the soul to Christ, and so it comes.

May not the consideration of this be of great consolation to those that want assurance, and therefore think they have no faith? O, remember that if thou contest unto Christ, as that poor woman of Canaan, -- she had no assurance she should be helped of Christ; nay, Christ tells her, to her teeth, that he would not cast children's bread to such dogs; yet she came to him, and looked up to free mercy, and clasped about him, and would not away. You will say, Mas this faith? yes, our Saviour himself professeth it before men and angels, "O, great is thy faith." (Matt. xv. 28.)

So I say unto all you poor creatures whom the Lord hath humbled, and made vile in your own eyes, unworthy of children's bread as

dogs; yea, you look up unto and rest upon mercy with your whole heart; this is precious faith in the account of Christ.

But how shall I know when the whole soul comes to Christ?

When the eye of the soul so sees Christ, and the heart so embraceth and resteth upon Christ, as that it resteth in Christ, as in its portion and all-sufficient good: many rest upon Christ that do not rest in him; that is, that are not abundantly satisfied with him; and hence their souls go out of Christ to other things to perfect their rest, and so their hearts are divided between Christ and other things. O, "fear" this, saith the apostle, (Heb. iv. 1,) "lest, there being a promise left us of entering into his rest, any of you fall short of it;" for (saith he) "we that have believed do enter into rest." (ver. 8.) So say I to you: of all delusions, fear this, lest, when you come to Christ, and rest upon Christ for life and salvation, that you rest not in Christ. "I tell you," saith Christ to those that came to him, and were constant followers of him, (John vi. 53,) "except you eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of God, you have no life in you." What is this eating and drinking? verily, sipping and tasting is not properly eating and drinking; tasting your meat will not satisfy you, and therefore will not nourish life in you. To eat and drink Christ is to receive him, as to satiate and satisfy the soul with him, to quench all your desires, your hungering and thirsting in him, until thy soul saith, as he said in another case, "It is enough that Joseph lives;" so, Lord, I have enough now I have this love, this grace of Christ to be my portion; now you rest in Christ. For if there be some great good a man enjoys, if there be any good wanting in it, it is not possible that his whole heart should be set upon it; ex. gr., a man hath food, but if he wants clothes, and his bread will not clothe him, his whole heart will not be set upon his food, but upon that which may clothe him also; so, on the contrary, if there be an eminent good, wherein he

finds all in one, no good out of it that is wanting in it, it is certain that the whole soul is carried after this good; so it is here, when the soul so comes to Christ, as that it comes for all good to him, and so finds all good in him, that he now only supports the sinking soul, verily the whole soul is now come, because, as it felt before it came all wants and evils out of him, so now it finds all fullness in him; and whither should the whole soul be carried but after such a good? when the Lord calls to the soul to come and take all with nothing, take all or nothing. And hereupon it comes and drinks, as it is John vii. 37, satisfying itself there, and professing, Lord, I now desire no more; I have enough. O brethren, what faith there is among men at this day I can not tell, but this I am sure was Abraham's faith, (Gen. xvii. 1,) and David's faith, (2 Sam. xxiii. 5,) and Peter's faith, (John vi. 68,) and Paul's faith, (Phil. iii. 8, 9. Gal. vi. 14.) When the soul thus rests upon the rock Christ, the gates of hell may avail, but never prevail against such a one: he that hath set the whole world at his heels, and sold himself out of all for this pearl, and this abundantly recompenseth all his losses, such a one hath Christ his own, and shall never be deprived of him again; the Lord never gives his elect any rest out of Christ, that they may find rest at last in Christ. When thus the soul is entered into rest, the whole soul is drawn here, and this is the great reason why many men famous in their generations and times in the eyes of others for faith, yet rotten at the heart, and thence turn apostates, one proves covetous, another ambitious, another voluptuous, another grows conceited, another grows contentious, another grows formal. What is the reason of this? Verily, they did rest upon Christ, but did never find rest in Christ, and therefore their whole soul never came to him; Christ, after some time of profession, grew a dry and common Christ unto them, though at first they wondered at him, and he was very sweet unto them; and hence they departed from him as from an empty, dry pit in summer time, where they found nothing to refresh them. But the Lord Jesus

carries it toward all the faithful as Elkanah did toward Hannah; though she was in a fit, much vexed and troubled for want of children, yet because he loved her exceeding dearly, he quiets her again with this: "Am not I better unto thee than ten sons?" So, though they may be unquiet for some odd fits for want of many things, yet because Christ loves them, he brings them back unto their rest, saying, Am not I better than all friends, all creatures, all abilities, all [[209]] spiritual created excellences? and hereby they find rest to their souls in him again.

But is there any believer's heart so knit unto Christ but that there is a heart also after other vanities? Do they find such rest in him as that they find no disquietness? Is there not an unregenerate part and much unbelief remaining? Is any man's faith made perfect that the whole soul must come, or else there is no true faith?

It is true, there is an unregenerate and a regenerate part in a godly man, but not a heart and a heart, (the note of a wicked man in Scripture phrase.) There are disquietings in the hearts of saints, after that they be in Christ; even Solomon himself may sometimes seek out of Christ for rest in his orchards and gardens, knowledge and wisdom; yet there is a great difference between these that are in the saints, arising from the unregenerate part, and those that be in the wicked, arising from a heart and a heart, or a double heart; and this difference is chiefly seen in two things.

A double-minded man, who hath a double heart, makes not a daily war against that heart which carries him away from resting only in Christ; for Christ quiets his conscience, and the world comforts his heart; Christ gives him some rest; and because this is not full, his heart runs out to the creature and to his lusts for more; and so between them both he hath rest, and he is quieted with this, because

he feels what he sought for; and therefore he must needs have Christ, else his conscience can not be quiet; and he must needs have his lusts, his ease, and this world too, else his heart is most unquiet; but let him have both, he is now quiet. (Micah iii. 11.) The priests teach for hire, (there the world quiets them,) yet they will lean upon the Lord too, because this also comforts them; what do they do? do they make war against this woeful frame? No, no, but bless themselves in it, saying, "No evil shall come to us." But a poor believer, whose heart is upright, it is true there are many runnings out of his heart after other vanities, and much unquiet-ness of spirit, yet the regenerate part makes war against these, as God's enemies and the disturbers of the peace of Christ's kingdom. (Ps. xlii.) David professeth his tears were his meat day and night, (ver. 3,) and his heart was woefully sunk and fallen; yet what doth he? First he chides himself: "Why art thou cast down, O my soul?" And then, secondly, he makes his moan to the Lord of it, (ver. 5, 6,) "Lord, my soul is cast down; O Lord, pity me." You shall see, also, (Ps. lxxiii. 2,) his eyes were dazzled with the glory of the world and the wicked in it, [[210]] that lie had almost forsaken God; }'et within a little while after he gets into the sanctuary of God, and then loathes himself for such brutish and foolish thoughts, and loseth with God again, saying, ""Whom have I in heaven or earth but thee?" (ver. 25.) All the out-runings of the hearts of the faithful, and their dis-quietness of spirit thereby, make them to return to their rest again, and give them the more rest in the conclusion. David was a bird out of his nest for a time, and therefore when he considered how the Lord had saved his eyes from tears, his soul from hell,' returns again, and saith, "Return to thy rest, O my soul." Ps. xxv. 13, it is said, "his soul shall dwell at ease," or (as the word signifies) "shall lodge in goodness;" some hard work, full of trouble, some strong lust, or sad temptation, desertion, affliction, the Lord exerciseth the soul withal for some time; and so long as the soul is in heaviness and much weariness of spirit, as it is 1 Pet. i. 6, yet

when this day's work is done, when the sin is subdued, and the temptation hath humbled him, then a believer's soul shall lodge in goodness; he shall have an easy bed and soft pillow to rest on at night. "When have the faithful sweeter naps in Christ's bosom than after sorest troubles, longest eclipses of God's pleased face? when do their souls cleave closer to the Lord than when they are ready to forsake the Lord, and the Lord them? Certainly fire is wholly carried upward, when that which suppresseth it makes it at last break out into greater flame. Peter falls from Christ: yet he is Peter, a stone cleaving most close unto Christ, above all other the apostles, because, his fall being greater, his faith clave the closer to the Lord Christ forever after it. Solomon's heart certainly never clave so inseparably unto the Lord as after his fall, wherein he did more experimentally find and feel the emptiness and vanity of those things wherein he did imagine before something was to be found; but he that hath a double heart never enters into rest, but the longer he lives, the more common Christ, his truth, and promises grow; they are but fading flowers, whose beauty and sweetness affect him for a time; but they wither before the sunset. And, therefore, the longer he lives, the less favor he finds in these things, and therefore takes less contentment therein; the Lord Jesus and all his ordinances grow more flat and dry things to him; and therefore, though at first he might rejoice (as John's hearers, John v. 35) in these burning and shining lights, yet it is but for a season; at last he discovers himself-- not by a renewed returning to his rest, but by a wearyish forsaking of it.

The raven never returned to the ark again, because it could [[211]] live upon the floating carrion on the waters; whereas the dove, finding no rest there, returns again.

Fourthly, the end of faith.

This is the fourth particular in the description of faith: The whole soul cometh to Christ, for Christ and all his benefits; and this is the end of faith, or of a believer's coming unto Christ. The end of faith is sometimes expressed by a general word, life, (John v. 40,) but you must remember that hereby is meant the Lord of life first, and so all the blessings of life. The falseness and hypocrisy of Christ's followers appeared in this, (John vi. 26:) You seek me, saith Christ, for loaves; that was their end; as many a one in these days, if they be in outward misery, seek unto Christ for outward mercy; corn in time of famine, health in time of sickness, peace upon any terms in time of war; and if they be in any inward distress, now they seek to Christ for comfort and quiet; and so, like many sick patients, desire the physician, not to have him married to them, but for some of his physic only, to be healed by him. But what saith our Saviour to these persons? (ver. 27,) "Labor not for the meat that perisheth;" what should be the end of their labor then? he tells them, "but for that bread that endures to everlasting life." What is this bread? (see the 33d, 35th, and 48th verses:) he tells them, "I am the bread of life;" seek for me therefore, come for me; and look, as none can have life from the bread, unless he first feed upon the bread itself, so none can have any life or benefit from Christ that comes not first to Christ for Christ. Conceive of this thus: God in Christ is the complete object of faith under a double notion. First, as sufficient, in being all we want unto us; secondly, as efficient, in communicating all to us, and doing all for us. In the first respect, he is Elshaddai in his promise; in the second respect, he is Jehovah, (Ex. vi. 3,) in making good his all-sufficient promise. Hence faith comes to him for a double end: first, that he would give himself and be all to it; secondly, that he would communicate all his blessings and the benefits also, and so do all for it. For in the covenant of grace, the Lord doth not only promise a new heart, pardon of sin, with the rest of those spiritual benefits, but also himself: "I will be their God, and they shall be my people." Hence

faith comes first for that which the Lord principally promiseth, viz., God himself, and then for all the rest of those heavenly and glorious benefits; and hence it is, if any man come for Christ himself, without his benefits, and regard not the conveyance of them, as the Familists at this day do, who abolish all inherent graces, and some of them all ordinances, because Christ is all to them; [[212]] or if any come for the benefits of Christ without Christ himself, as many among ourselves do, who never account themselves happy in him, but only by some abilities they receive from him; neither of these come with a single eye, nor fix a right end in their closing with Christ: You must first come for Christ himself, and so for all his benefits.

For establishing your hearts in which truth, consider these things: --

Consider what drives any man to Christ. Is not sense of wants no main thing? Now, what are a Christian's wants, when the Lord hath humbled him? Are they not, first, want of Christ; and secondly, of all the benefits of Christ? viz., righteousness, peace, pardon, grace, glory. (John xvi. 9.) If, therefore, the souls of all the elect feel a want of both, doth not faith come to Christ for both? (John iv. 10,) "If thou knewest the gift of God," (i. e., the worth of him, and thy want of him,) "thou wouldest ask, and he would give thee water of life."

What doth the Lord offer in the gospel? Is it not first Christ himself, and then all the benefits of Christ? (Is. ix. 6, 7,) "To us a Son is born, to us a Son is given;" in the receiving therefore of Christ by faith, what should the soul aim at, but that it may have the Son himself, and so all his benefits with him?

Can any man have eternal life that not only hath not the benefits flowing from the Son, but that wants the Son himself? I am sure the apostle expressly affirms it; (1 John v. 12,) "He that hath the Son hath life, he that hath not the Son hath not life:" faith therefore must

come for Christ himself: as in marriage the woman consents first to have the man, and so to have all other benefits that will necessarily follow upon this.

The happiness of all the saints consists in two things: first, union to Christ; secondly, communion with Christ. Faith, therefore, pitcheth first upon Christ himself, that it may have sure and certain union to him, (for our union is not unto any of the benefits flowing to us from Christ; we are not united unto forgiveness of sins, nor peace of conscience, nor holiness, etc., but unto the person of the Son of God himself;) and then, secondly, Cometh for the communication of all the benefits arising only from union; as Paul (Phil. iii. 9, 10) esteems "things dung and loss," first, "to be found in him, that so he might have his righteousness "in justification, "and feel the power of his death and resurrection "in sanctification, etc. In one word, faith first buys the pearl itself, and then seeks to be enriched by it.; it finds the treasure of grace, glory, peace, mercy, favor, reconciliation, in Christ; [[213]] but then buys the field itself, that it may have the treasure also. (Matt. xiii. 44) The Lord Christ's great desire is, that "all his might be with him to see his glory," (John xxiv. 14;) and faith desires first to have him and be forever with him, and so to partake of that glory: the Lord's great plot is, first to perfect the saints in Christ; (Col. ii. 10,) "ye are complete in him; "then to make them like to Christ by communicating life, grace, peace, glory from him. (Col. iii. 8, 4. 1 John iii. 1, 2.) Faith, therefore, first quiets itself in him, then seeks for life from him; it conies first for Christ, and then for all the benefits of Christ.

O that this truth were well considered! How would it discover abundance of rotten, counterfeit faith in the world; some seeking for peace and comfort, and catching at promises without seeking first to have the person of Christ himself, "in whom only all the promises are

yea and amen." Others despising the benefits of Christ, especially grace, holiness, and life from him; because, say they, Christ is all in all to them. Ask them, Have you any grace, change of heart, etc.? Tush! what do you tell them of repentance, and faith, and holiness? They have Christ, and that is sufficient; they have the substance, what should they do now with shadows of ordinances, ministries, or sacraments? They have all graces in Christ; why should they look either for being of, or evidence from, any grace inherent in themselves? They have a living holy head, but Christ's body, they say, is a dry skeleton, a dead carcass, and they are but dry bones; and is it so indeed? Then look that God should shortly bury thee out of his sight; assuredly, you that want and despise the benefits coming from him, shall never have part nor portion in him at the great day of account. Christ is a Saviour to save men from their sins, not to save men and their sins; Christ is king and priest of his church," holy and separated from sins," (Heb. vii. 26;) and if you have any part or portion in him, he hath made you kings and priests also to God and his Father, and hath not left you in your pollution, but washed you from it in his own blood. (Rev. i. 5, 6.) The law of God is written on the heart of Christ, (Ps. xl. 8, with Heb. x. 5-7;) and if ever he wraps you up in the covenant of grace, he will write his law in your hearts also. (Heb. viii. 10.)

Let all deluded Familists tremble at this, that, in advancing Christ himself, and free grace, abolish and despise those heavenly benefits which flow from him unto all the elect. Let others also mourn over themselves, that have with much affliction been seeking after Christ's benefits, peace of conscience, holiness of heart and life, promises to assure them of eternal glory, but have [[214]] not sought first to embrace and have the person of the Lord Jesus himself.

O, come, come therefore unto the Lord Jesus for Christ himself, and for all his benefits; I say for all his benefits. This is that which the apostle prays for with bended knees for the Ephesians, that they might -- not take in a little, but -- comprehend the height, depth, length, breadth of Christ's love, that so they might be filled with all the fullness of God. This is that which our Saviour expressly with much vehemency calls for; (John vii. 37.) "Let all that thirst come unto me and drink;" not sip and taste a little, as reprobates and apostates do, (Heb. vi. 4, 5,) but drink, and drink abundantly, as it is. (Cant. v. 1.) And observe it, that upon these very terms the Lord tenders grace and mercy. (Rom. v. 17.) The apostle doth not say, They that receive a little, but abundance of grace, shall reign by righteousness unto eternal life. "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it." (Ps. lxxxi. 11, 12.) And most certainly this is one principal difference between the faith of the elect and the reprobates,-- and if I mistake not, the principal, --the elect close with Christ for that end, for which the Father offers him, which is, that they might possess his Son, and all his benefits, and therefore come poor and empty for all; the reprobate come not for all, but for so much and no more than will serve their own turn; in misery they would have Christ to deliver them; but what care they for spiritual mercies? In trouble of conscience, or after their soul falls into filthy lusts and sins, they come to Christ to forgive them and comfort them; but what care they for holiness and a new nature? Some sins they would have Christ save them from, but they regard not redemption from all. They can not come to Christ, that all the powers of darkness may be perfectly subdued, that their own sins, and selves, conceits, and wills, may be led away captive by this mighty conqueror; that Christ, in all his authority, grace, peace, life, glory, might be forever advanced in them and by them. It was Austin's complaint in his time of many of his hearers, that *Christum assequi*, to have Christ, was pleasing to them; but *sequi Christum*, to follow Christ, this was heavy. To close with

Christ's person is sweet to many; but to close with his will, and to come to him that he would give them a heart to lie under it, this benefit they desire not. All Christ is useless and needless; but something from Christ is precious to them; for the Lord Jesus' sake, beloved, take heed of this delusion. If any thing hath been bought for us at a dear rate, and cost much; if the man should offer to hold any part of it back, we will not abate him any thing, [[215]] we will have it all because it cost dear. I tell you pardon of sin, peace with God, the adoption of sons, the spirit of grace, per-severance to the end, the kingdom of glory, the riches of mercy, have been bought for you by a dear and great price, the precious blood of Christ j and therefore, if the justice of God should hold back any thing, or thy own belief tell thee these are too great and many for so vile a creature as thou art to enjoy, yet abate the Lord nothing: say thou art vile, yet Christ's blood, that bought not some, but all these, is very precious, and therefore take them all to thyself, as thy portion forever, and "bless the Lord," as David doth, (Ps. xvi. 7,) "that gave thee this counsel." Whiles you are in peace, it may be you may neglect so great salvation; but the time of distress and anguish may come, wherein you may feel a need of all, even of those hidden depths of mercy above your reach and reason; and therefore, as bees, gather in your honey in summer time, and, with Joseph, lay up in these times of plenty, wherein the exceeding riches of grace is opened and poured out at your heels for those times of approaching famine, and for those many years of spiritual desertion and distress; wherein you may think, Can it stand with the honor of God to save such a poor sinful creature as I am? What iron heart is not drawn by this love, for the Lord to invite you to possess all or nothing? Dives, in hell, was desirous of a drop to cool his tongue; and behold the very depths and seas of grace are opened for thee to come in and partake of, if the Lord Jesus should be offered unto thee to pardon some sins, but not all; to pardon all sins, but not to heal thy nature also; or to heal some

backslidings, but not all; to supply thy spiritual wants, but not outward also, as may be best for thee; or to supply outward, but not inward and spiritual; if he should offer to do thee good in this life, but not in death nor after death, you might refuse to come in; but when all is offered, all that mercy which no eye ever saw to pity thee; all that love wherewith Abraham, David, Paul, etc., were embraced; now to refuse to come up and possess these, how can you escape the sorest vengeance of a jealous God, that neglect so great salvation? O Lord! what extremity of anguish and bitterness wilt thou one day be in, when the contempt of this grace, gowing upon thy conscience, shall press thee down with these thoughts: I am now under all misery, but I might have had all God's grace, all Christ's glory; but, wretch that I am, I would not. Methinks, if your own good hereby should not draw you, yet the exceeding great glory the Lord shall have thereby should force you to accept all this grace; for, if thou didst receive a little grace, believe a [[216]] little mercy toward thee, this makes thee sometimes exceeding thankful; doth it not? And the very hope of more makes thy heart break forth into a holy boasting and glorying in Christ: "Who is a God like unto thee?" Suppose therefore you drank in all, and received all, that which the Lord freely offers, should not the Lord be exceedingly magnified then? Couldst thou contain thyself then without crying out, "O Lord, now let thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen" (and my soul has now possession of) "thy salvation"? Wouldest not call to the hills, and seas, and earth, and heavens, and saints, and angels, to break forth into glorious praises, and bless this God?

But what have I to do to come, that am so poor, and empty, and full of woes, and wants, and sins? Never was any so miserable, and blind, and naked, as I.

If faith cometh for all to Christ, and fetcheth all from him, then never be discouraged because thou hast nothing to begin unto him ; let all thy wants and miseries be arguments and motives therefore to come unto him. (Rev. iii. 17, 18,) "Because thou art poor and naked," nay, because thou "knowest it not," and art not affected with it, therefore come unto me, and "buy eye-salve, and gold, and white raiment." "Lord, pardon my sin, saith David, "because it is great; have mercy upon me, for I am consumed with grief, and am in trouble. Let mercy and truth continually preserve me, for innumerable evils have compassed me round about. Let us return unto the Lord, because he hath wounded us." I am a dog, therefore let me have crumbs, said the woman of Canaan. O, this is cross to sense and reason, and we can not believe, while we are so exceeding poor, empty, vile, that the Lord should look upon us ; but, beloved, you little think what wrong you do to yourselves and the Lord Jesus hereby : for by this means Christ is not so much exalted, nor the creature humbled,--both which, concurring in faith, make those acts of faith most precious,--for while you stand upon something, and would have something to bring to Christ, you hereby exalt yourselves; but when you come with sense of nothing else but woes and wants, and see Christ now making of you welcome, O, this is not only mercy, but ravishing mercy. If you should come with sense of somewhat to Christ, and to see his love to you, you might glorify mercy in the height, and length, and breadth of it, but not in the depth of it; unless you see it reaching its hand to you, when you are fallen into so low and poor a condition as nothingness, and emptiness, and misery itself. And therefore do not come to Christ only for the benefits of the covenant, but for the condition of it also. [[217]] When you feel a want of faith itself, as Hezekiah did, (Is. xxxviii. 11,) "Lord, I am oppressed, undertake for me," (1 Kings viii. 57, 58,) do not undertake to fulfil any part of the covenant, or any condition in it, or any duty required of thee, of thyself, but go empty to Christ, and say as David, "Lord, I will run the

ways of thy salvation, if thou wilt set my heart at liberty." (Ps. cxix. 32, 33.) "Quicken me, and I will call upon thy name." (Ps. lxxx. 18.) Be strong in the Lord, and the power of his might, but not of thine own.

But I come for all, and am never a whit the better, but as poor and miserable still as ever I was.

If the Lord keeps you poor and low, yet the same motive that made thee come, let it make thee stay; it may be the Lord sees thou wouldest grow full and lifted up if he should give thee a little, and therefore keeps thee low; better be humble than full and proud. "Let us go unto the Lord, because he hath wounded, broken, and slain us." But they might object, We do come, but find no help, no cure. It may be so; yet it is said, "After two days he will revive us, and the third day we shall live in his sight, and we shall know him, if we shall follow on to know him." (ver. 6.) His goings forth are prepared as the morning; it may be night for a time, but the Sun of righteousness will arise gradually and gloriously upon thy soul.

Truly, brethren, when I see the curse of God upon many Christians that are now grown full of their parts, gifts, peace, comforts, abilities, duties, I stand adoring the riches of the Lord's mercy to a little handful of poor believers, not only in making them empty, but in keeping of them so all their days; and therefore come to the Lord, poor, empty, naked, nothing, cursed in the sense of thy want of all things, for all things, and then receive with gladness, yet boldness and holy confidence, not only pardon of some sins, but of all. Believe, answer not to some prayers, but all; embrace in thy bosom not some few promises, but all. It is a great ease of conscience. When may a Christian take a promise without presumption as spoken to him, and given to him in particular? And the rule is very sweet, but certain:

when he takes all the Scripture and embraceth it as spoken unto him, he may then take any particular proper promise boldly. My meaning is, when a Christian takes hold and wrestles with God for the accomplishment of all the promises of the New Testament; when he sets all the commands before him, as his rule, and compass, and guide to walk after; when he applies all the threatenings to drive him nearer unto Christ the end of them, -- this no hypocrite can do, this the saints should [[218]] do, and by this may know when the Lord speaks in any particular to them. Go, I say again, therefore unto the Lord for all, and in the sense of all your emptiness he abundantly comforted; that, though you do not find supply from Christ, yet you come unto the Lord Christ for it. It is a certain rule, you shall not always want that good which you come to Christ to supply, nor always be mastered with that sin which you come to Christ with, to take away; only then be sure you come for all, otherwise you do not come truly. Come first for Christ himself, and then (as I said) for all his benefits.

To conclude: this is the direct and compendious way of living by faith, so much urged and pressed of God's servants; for to live by faith properly is to live upon the promise in the want of the thing, or to apprehend the thing in the promise. (Heb. xi. 1.) Now, the promises are not given to the elect immediately, without Christ, but first Christ is given, i. e., offered in the gospel and received by faith, and then with him all things also; and therefore the Scripture runs thus, (Is. lv. 1-4:) "Come unto the waters and drink, and then I will make an everlasting covenant," (which contains all the promises,) "even the sure mercies of David." The apostle expressly disputes the case, and saith, "Where there is a testament," (containing evangelical promises,) "there must first be the death of the testator," (Heb. ix. 15, 16,) to whom we must first "come by faith," before we can have right to any promise. (Heb. vii. 22-25, and 10, 16-18, 22.) "Being justified

by faith," now "we have peace with God; "nay, "we have access to God; "nay, now "we are of sure standing," now "we hope in and glory to come," (Rom. v. 1-4:) all follow the first.

How shall a Christian, therefore, live by faith? Truly, first receive Christ and come to him for the end I mention; and then thou mayest be sure all other things shall be given to thee. As for example: dost want any temporal blessing? -- suppose it be payment of debts, thy daily bread, provision for thy family, a comfortable yoke-fellow, etc., - look now through the Scripture for promises of these things, and let thy faith act thus: If God hath given me Christ, the greatest blessing, then certainly he will give me all these smaller matters as may be good for me; but the Lord hath given me Christ, and therefore I shall not want. (Ps. xxiii. 1.) "The Lord is my shepherd," saith David; what follows? "I shall not want." There is the like reason in all other things, -- suppose it be in care of protection from enemies, -- if the Lord hath given me Christ to save me from hell, then he will save me from these fleshly enemies much [[219]] more. You shall see (Is. vii.) a promise given that "Syria should not prevail against Judah; "they doubted of this. How doth the Lord seek to assure them? You shall see, (ver. 14,) it is by promising "a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be Immanuel; "this is a strange reason; yet you may see the reason of it if you consider this point. So, (Is. ix. 5, 6,) "The oppressor's rod shall be broken. For unto us a Son is born, a Son is given. By faith they put to flight the armies of aliens, brake down the walls of Jericho, did wonders in the world." What did they chiefly look to in this their faith? You shall see, (Heb. xi. 39, 40,) it was by respecting the promise to come, and the better thing, Christ Jesus himself, which we now see with open face, and therefore he concludes, (Heb. xii. 1-3,) "Having such a cloud of witnesses," that thus lived and died by faith, "let us look unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of ours." The prophet Habakkuk (Hab. ii. 5) affirms that the

"just shall live by faith." What faith is that? Consult with the place, you shall see it was in the promise of deliverance from the Chaldean tyranny; yet the apostle Paul applies it to faith in Christ's righteousness, and that truly, because if their faith had not respected Christ himself, in the first place, they could never have expected any deliverance by the promise of deliverance from the Chaldeans; but thus they might.

5. The special ground of faith.

The last thing in the description of faith is, that the soul thus comes upon the call of Christ in his word; and this is the special ground of faith, wherefore the soul comes to Christ. Take a sinner humbled and broken for sin, he can not prevent the Lord by coming of himself unto Christ, and therefore the Lord prevents him, by his gracious call and invitation to come in. "Whom God hath predestinated, them hath-he called." Our translation from darkness into God's marvelous light is by being called. The soul is lost in humiliation; the Lord Jesus, who is come to save that which is lost, seeketh it out in vocation, or calling. Sanctification is the restoring of us to the image of God we once had in Adam, as corruption is the defacing of that image; vocation is the calling of the soul unto Christ: this voice Adam never heard of; he did not need any call to come to Christ, and therefore was immediately sanctified, as soon as he was made: but we need vocation unto Christ, before we can be sanctified by Christ; we need this call to make us come to Christ, to put us into Christ, and therefore much more before we can receive any holiness from Christ; the ground of our coming by faith is God's call: (2 Thess. ii. 13,14,) "Chosen to salvation through sanctification," [[220]] (the remote end of vocation.) "and belief of the truth," (the next end of it,) "whereunto ho hath called yon:" there is the ground of it.

The explication of this call is a point full of many spiritual difficulties, but of singular use and comfort to them that are faithful and called. I shall omit many things, and explicate only those things which serve our purpose here in these three particulars: --

1. I shall show you what this call is, or the nature of it.
2. The necessity of it.
3. How it is a ground of coming, and what kind of ground for faith.

1. The nature of this call I shall open for your more distinct understanding in several propositions, or theses. Our vocation or calling is ever by some word or voice, either outward or inward, or both; either ordinary or extraordinary; by the ministry of men, or by immediate visions and inspirations of God. I speak not now of extraordinary call, by dreams and visions, and immediate inspirations, as in Abraham and others, before the Scriptures were penned and published; nor of extraordinary call, by the immediate voice of Christ, as in Paul and in some other of the apostles; for these are ceased now, (Heb. i. 1.) unless it be among people that want ordinary means, and elect infants, etc., whose call must be more than by ordinary means, because they want such means; we speak now of ordinary call by the ministry of men.

2. This voice in ordinary calling home of the elect to Christ is not by the voice of the law, (for the proper end of that is to reveal sin and death, and to cast down a sinner,) but by the voice of the gospel bringing glad tidings; written by the apostles, and preached to the world. "He hath called you by our gospel. These things are written that you might believe. By the foolishness of preaching, the Lord saveth them that believe." I mean preaching at the first or second rebound, by lively voice, or printed sermons at the time of hearing, or

in the time of deep meditation, concerning things heard; the Spirit indeed inwardly accompanies the voice of the gospel, but no man's call is by the immediate voice of the Spirit without the gospel, or the immediate testimony of the Spirit breathed out of free grace without the word. (Eph. i. 12, 13.) And therefore that a Christian should be immediately called without the Scripture, and the Scripture only given to confirm God's immediate promise, as a prince gives his letter to confirm his promise made to a man before, (as Valdesso would have it,) is both a false and a dangerous assertion.

3. This voice of the gospel is the voice of God in Christ, or the voice of Jesus Christ, although dispensed by men, who are but weak instruments for this mighty work, sent and set in Christ's stead; but the call, the voice, is Christ's; it is the Lord's call. (Rom. i. o.) It is certain some of the messengers of Christ called the Romans by the gospel; yet Paul saith, "They were called by Christ Jesus; the dead hear his voice, and arise, and live;" and when the time of calling comes, they listen to it as his call: and hence it is styled, (Heb. iii. 1.) because the Lord Christ ; from heaven speaks, takes the written word in his own lips, as it were, (Cant. i. 1, 2,) and thereby pierceth through the ears, to the heart, through all the noise of fears, sorrows, objections against believing, and makes it to be heard as his voice; the bowels of Christ now yearn towards a humbled, lost sinner, bleeding at his feet, therefore can contain no longer, but speaks, and calls, and makes the soul understand his voice: so that this call is not a mean business, because the Lord Jesus himself now I speaks, whose voice is glorious.

4. The substance of this call, or the thing the Lord calls unto, is to come unto him: for there is a more common calling (or, as some term it, a particular calling) of men, as some to be masters or servants, (1 Cor. vii. 20, 21, 24,) or to office in church or commonwealth, as

Aaron, (Heb. v. 4;) and the voice there is to attend unto their work to which they are called. There is also a remote end of vocation, which is to holiness, (1 Thess. iv. 7,) and unto glory also, (2 Thess. ii. 14; Phil. iii. 14;) but we now speak of more special calling, the next end of which is to come unto Christ; the soul hath lived many years without him, the Lord Jesus will now have the lost prodigal to come home, to come to him; the soul is weary and heavy laden, and the Lord Jesus would easily ease it without its coming to him: but this is his will; he must come to him for it: (Matt. xi. 27; Jer. iii. 7, 22,) "I said, after she had done these things, Turn unto me, come unto me, ye backsliding children; I will heal your backslidings." (Jer. iv. 1,) "If thou returnest, return unto me." This voice, "Come unto me," is one of the sweetest words that Christ can speak, or man can hear, full of majesty, mercy, grace, and peace; a poor I sinner thinks, Will the Lord ever put up such wrongs I have I offered him, heal such a nature, take such a viper into his bosom, do any thing for me? If there be but one in the world to be forsaken, is it not I? The Lord therefore comes and calls, "Come unto me, and I will pardon all thy sins, I will heal all thy backslidings, I will be angry no more." (Jer. iii. 12, 13.) "Though I thou hast committed whoredom with many lovers, yet return unto [[222]] me, saith the Lord." (Jer. iii. 1.) Though thou hast resisted my Spirit, refused my grace, wearied me with thine iniquities, yet come unto me, and this will make me amends; I require nothing of thee else but to come: for God's call is out of free grace, (Gal. i. 6,) and therefore calls for no more, but only to come up and possess the Lord's fullness. (Luke xiv. 17. 1 Cor. i. 9.)

5. This call to come is for substance all one with the offer of Christ, which consists in three things: --

Commandment to receive Christ as present and ready to be given to it; as when we offer any thing to one another, it is by commanding

them to take it. (1 John iv. 23.) And this binds conscience to believe, as you will answer for the contempt of this rich grace at the great day of account.

Persuasion and entreaty to come and receive what we offer; for in such an offer, wherein the person is unwilling to receive, and we are exceedingly desirous to give, we then persuade: so doth Christ with us.

Promise; to offer a thing without a promise of having it, if we receive it, is but a mock offer; and hence you shall find in Scripture some promise ever annexed unto God's offer, which is the ground of faith. (Jer. xxii.)

6. This call or offer hath three special qualifications. First, it is inward as well as outward; for the Lord calls thousands outwardly, who yet never come, because they want an inward call to come; an inward, whispering, still voice of God's Spirit; and therefore it is said, "He that hath heard and learned "(not of man only, but) "of the Father cometh unto me." (John vi. 45.) The Lord doth not stand at the outward door only, and call to open, but the Lord Jesus comes in; he comes near unto the very heart of a poor sinner, and makes that understand, (Hos. ii. 14;) and the Lord makes his grace glorious, and his mercy sweet unto the hearts of his elect. Look, (saith the Lord Jesus,) how I have left thousand thousands in the world, and have had greater cause so to have left thee; but behold, I am come unto thee; O, come thou unto me.

2. It is a particular call; for there is a general call and offer of grace to every one. Now, though this be a means to make it particular, yet the Spirit of Christ, which is wont to apply generals unto particulars particularly, makes the call particular, that the soul sees that the Lord in special means me, singles out me in special to believe;

otherwise the souls of the elect will not be much moved with the call of God, so long as they think the Lord offers no more mercy to me than to any reprobate; and therefore the Spirit of Christ makes the call particular. (Is. xliii. 1.) [[223]] "I have called thee by name." (John x. 5,) "He calleth all his sheep by name;" not that the Lord calls any by their Christian name, (as we say,) as the Lord did extraordinarily call Samuel, Samuel, and Paul, Paul; but the meaning is, look, as the Lord from before all worlds writ down their name in the book of life, and loves them in special, so in vocation, (the first opening of election,) the Lord makes his offer and call special, and so special as if it were by name; for the soul at this instant feels such a special stirring of the Spirit upon it, which it feels now, and never felt before; as also its particular case so spoken unto, and its particular objections so answered, and the grievousness of its sin in refusing grace so particularly applied, as if God, the only Searcher of hearts, only spake unto it; and so dares not but think and believe that the Lord meaneth me.

3. It is effectual as well as inward and particular. (Luke xxiv. 33.) "Compel them to come in." (John x. 16.) Christ's other sheep shall hear Christ's voice, and those he must bring home; for every inward call is not effectual. There came a man in without his wedding garment, (Matt. xxii. 6-8;) whence our Saviour saith, "Many are called, but few chosen; "but this I now speak of, as a calling out of purpose, (Rom. viii. 28;) and therefore never leaves the soul until it hath real possession of Christ, and rests there. This call falls upon a sinner humbled, not hard hearted; and hence the call is effectual. (Matt. ix. 12, 13. 2 Chron. xxx. 10, 11.) It is such a call as was in creation. (Rom. iv. 17.) And hence the soul can not but come, and when it is come it can not depart, like Peter, "Lord, whither should we go? "And therefore, though it hath never so many objections in coming to Christ, never so much weakness or heartlessness to close

with Christ, yet the Lord brings it home, and there keeps it; and now it infinitely blesseth God that ever the Lord gave it an eye to see, a heart to come and seek after Jesus Christ.

Thus much of the nature of this call: now follows the necessity of it, which appears in these three particulars: --

1. No man should come unless first called; as it is in calling to an ordinary office, so it is in our calling much more unto special grace. The apostle saith, (Heb. v. 4,) that "no man takes this honor but he that is called of God;" so what hath any man to do with Christ, to make himself a son of God, and heir of glory thereby, but he that is called of God? AVhat have we to do to take other men's goods, unless called thereto? AVhat have we to do to take the riches of grace and peace, if not called thereto? It is presumption to take Christ whilst uncalled, but not when you are called thereunto.

2. Because no man would come without the Lord's call. (Matt. xx. 6, 7,) "Why stand you here all the day idle?" The answer was, "No man hath hired," or "called us thereto." When there is an outward call only, yet men will not come in. (Matt, xxiii. 37.) And therefore there must be an effectual call to bring men home. (Is. lv. 5.) And therefore you shall see many; let there be a legal command, suppose to sanctify a Sabbath, or to speak the truth; they have no objections against obedience unto this. But press them to believe, show them God's call for it, they have more fears and objections rising against this than there be hairs on their head, because the soul would not close with this.

Because no man could come, unless called. (John vi. 44.) "No man can come unto me, unless the Father draw him." And how doth the Father draw anj- man, but by this call? If the Lord should not come and speak himself, and make his call the most joyful tidings and the

sweetest message that ever came to it, it would say, I have no heart, I can not, I am not able, for (Rom. ii. 32) "we are shut up under unbelief;" and therefore the Lord Jesus (Luke xv. 5) must bring his sheep home upon his shoulders, else it will lie in the wilderness of its own droopings; whereas, when the Lord effectually speaks, the soul can not but come. Lastly, how this call is a ground of faith, and what ground of faith. For answer hereunto, I do make this call, considered without the promise, the ground on which faith rests, (for that is God's free grace in the promise,) but the ground by which it rests, or wherefore it rests upon the promise. The mind sees, (1.) The freeness of mercy to a poor sinner in misery; and this breeds some hope the Lord may pity it. (2.) The fullness and plenteous riches of mercy; and this gives very great encouragement to the soul to think, The Lord (if I come to him) surely will not deny me a drop. (Ps. cxxx. 7, 8.) The prodigal comes home because of bread enough in his father's house, though he was not certain he should have any.

(3.) The preciousness and sweetness of mercy make the soul long vehemently for it, (Ps. xxxvi. 6, 7,) and makes it set all other things at a low rate to enjoy it; but when unto all this the Lord sends a special commandment, and a special message on purpose, and calls it to come in and accept of it, and take mercy as its own, and that for no other reason but because it is commanded and called to accept of it. this puts an end unto all doubts, all fears, all discouragements, and the soul answers as those, (Jer. iii. 22,) "Behold, we come; thou art the Lord our God." As a man in great want of bread, one comes and freely offers him bread to preserve his [[225]] life; the man takes it; if you ask him, Why do you take it? you are a poor fellow unworthy of it, never did yet one hour's work for it, he answers, It is true, I am unworthy; but yet because it is offered to me to preserve life, I gladly take it: the man doth not promise absolutely to me that this bread is mine, and shall feed me; but he tells me, if I do receive it, it shall

certainly be mine to feed me. And this is the main ground of his receiving of it. Just so it is in faith. Ask a humbled sinner, Why do you believe? Why do you take Christ as your own? Hath the Lord said absolutely that he is yours? No, saith the soul, but the Lord freely offers himself unto me, who am undone without him, and saith, if I do receive him, he shall be forever mine, to give life to me; and therefore I thankfully accept of him: this is the ground of faith. The Scripture sets out this in a lively similitude of a great supper, to which many were invited. What was the ground of their coming to it? Behold, all things are ready if you come and eat; they are not yours if you do not come; but if you come at my call and invitation, then all things shall be yours. And hence it is that they that came not were excluded; they that came were received with welcome.

I know it is a question of some difficulty among some, viz., whether an absolute testimony of actual favor and justification be not the first ground of faith. They that make faith to be an absolute assurance of God's favor must of necessity maintain this assertion, and then those things will follow.

1. That a Christian must be justified before he believe; for the cause of faith must go before faith.

This proposition, "thou art justified, reconciled," is, according to this assertion, the cause of faith; for no proposition can therefore be true because we are persuaded that it is true, but it must be first true before I am persuaded of it; the wall is not white because my eyes see it so, but it must first be white, and then I see it so. Now, to make actual justification before faith, is cross to the whole current of Scripture. We believe that we might be justified, (Gal. ii. 16;) we are not justified that we might believe. We pass from death to life by faith, (John v. 24;) we are not in a state of life before faith. When the

Lord Jesus saw their faith, (Matt. ix. 2,) he then said, "Be of good comfort; thy sins are forgiven thee." The word saith, "He that believeth not is condemned already," (John iii. 18,) and therefore (unless the Spirit's witness be cross to the word) it doth not say to one that believeth not, that he is absolved already. To be justified by faith, and to be justified by Christ's righteousness, is all one in the [[226]] Scripture's phrase and meaning. (Gal. ii. 16, 17.) And therefore we may as well say that we are justified before and without Christ, as before and without faith. And, indeed, this doctrine of being justified by faith, and by this means to have remission of sins, the apostle Peter affirms to be the doctrine of all the prophets. (Acts x. 43.) To him give all the prophets witness, that whosoever believe in him shall receive remission of sins; not that they had remission of sins before they did believe. I know not any one Protestant writer that maintains our justification before and without faith, except learned Chamier, who not knowing how to avoid the blow of Bellarmine's horned argument, that if faith be an assurance of our actual justification, then we are first justified before we believe, he affirms we are justified before faith; and therefore, that when the Scripture saith we are justified by faith, the reason of that (saith he) is not because our faith doth efficere justificationem, i. e., is a cause (meaning instrumental) of our justification; but because efficitur in justificato, i. e., is wrought in a justified person; but if that be the reason of the phrase, we may affirm our justification to be as well by love, and sanctification, and holy obedience, as by faith, because these are wrought in a justified person also.

2. Then no man's ministry, nor the doctrine delivered by the faithful ministers of Christ from out of the Scriptures, can be any ground of faith, for before faith, no minister of Christ can say to any man in particular, or any men in general, that they are already justified and reconciled, and therefore believe it; but to deny that doctrine which

is opened out of the Scriptures by the ministers of Christ to be the ground of faith, is expressly cross to the testimony of the Scriptures, and the end of the ministry, and of the messengers of Christ, who have the keys of office given to them, that what they bind on earth is bound in heaven; what they loose on earth is loosed in heaven; whose sins they remit, they are forgiven; whose sins they retain, they are retained. (Matt. xvi. 16. John xx. 23.) Most excellent for this purpose is the apostle's dispute, (Rom. x.) "You need not go up to heaven, nor down to hell, to fetch Christ himself to tell you whether you shall be justified and saved," (ver. 6, 7,) "for the word is nigh them," (ver. 8.) that opens Christ's heart unto thy heart. But what word, might some say, is this? Is it not the internal word of the Spirit only? The apostle answers, "It is that word which we preach;" hereby you shall know whether you shall live or no. But what is that word Paul preached? Is it not an absolute testimony that all your sins are already pardoned by Christ, and therefore believe it? No; but if thou [[227]] believest with thine heart that God raised up Christ from the dead, thou shalt be saved, (ver. 9, 11, 12.) What can be more full? Yet consider that one place more, (John xvii. 20,) "I pray for all them that shall believe on me, through their word." What is the ground or means of believing in Christ? It is said here expressly, "their word." Is it not the word of Christ, rather than the word of the apostles and of their successors, in the doctrine they delivered? Is it their word? Truly, that which they delivered was the word of Christ, and that which is opened from their doctrine in the Scriptures is the word of Christ, yet as they open it and apply it, so it is their word; and this word is the ground by which all that Christ prays for do believe in Christ; the bare word I grant can not persuade without the Spirit, yet the Spirit will not give ground of faith without the word, but as by it, so upon it, will build the souls of all the elect, who are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, " Jesus Christ being the

chief corner stone." (Eph. ii. 20.) "How can they believe without a preacher?" (Rom. x. 14.)

3. Then when wicked men and reprobates are commanded to believe, (as they are commanded, John iii. 19; Luke xiv. 17. John vi. 38; Heb. iv. 2,) they are commanded to believe a lie, viz., that their sins are pardoned and they actually justified; for if this testimony be the ground of faith, then when they are commanded to believe, they are commanded to be persuaded of this testimony. But the sins of wicked men, especially reprobates, are not, nor never shall be, forgiven; and therefore this can not be the ground of faith. 4. When the Spirit of adoption, which witnesseth that God is our Father, and that we are his sons reconciled to him, goes before faith; but the apostle expressly denies this, "Ye are the children of God by faith," (Gal. iii. 26,) "and because ye are sons, he hath sent unto 3'ou the spirit of sons, crying Abba, Father." (Gal. iv. 6.)

o. If such a testimony should be the first ground of faith, then no man should believe but he that hath such a testimony antecedent to his faith; but this is to cross the Scripture. (Is. l. 10.) "He that sits in darkness, and sees no light, let him stay himself upon his God." When Jonah is cast out of God's sight to his own feeling, yet he is bound to look again unto the temple.

6. This absolute testimony is either the testimony of the word, or of the Spirit. Not of the word, as is proved; if of the Spirit, then let it be considered, whether that can be the testimony of the Spirit which is not according to the word; na3', contrary to the word, for the word to say none are justified before faith; for the Spirit to testify some are justified before faith. If it be said, [[228]] that the Spirit doth not witness these to any man before and without faith, but yet it is without respect unto, or showing a man his faith, -- for those that

exclude sanctification from being any evidence, they mean faith as well as any other renewed work of holiness, and so exclude that also, -- then I say the testimony of the Spirit (which of itself is exceeding clear) is an obscure and dark testimony; because it clears up the predicate of this proposition, "Thou believer art justified." It witnesseth to a man, "thou art justified; "but clears not up the subject of it, viz., "thou believer." It makes a man believe a testimony without understanding the full meaning of it; for the Spirit, testifying to any man "thou art justified," his meaning is, "thou believer art justified." And I do beseech the God and Father of all lights, that his poor people may be led into the truth in this particular. For want of establishment here, you little think how many delusions you may fall into about your spiritual condition. I remember, that when Satan came to overthrow the faith of Christ, in his second temptation, (Matt. iv. 6,) he brought a promise out of the Scriptures to him, because he saw he held close to them, (ver. 4;) and by this promise sought to lead him into temptation. How so? Observe the text, and see if it was not by hiding part of the meaning of the promise from him; and in special, that very condition required in the person to whom the promise is made; for he tells him, that if he "cast himself down headlong, the Lord hath not" only said it, but "writ it, He shall give his angels charge over him, to keep him from dashing his foot against a stone; "whereas if you consult with the place whence it is cited, viz., Ps. xci. 11, the condition is set down, "in all thy ways," which he purposely hides from our Saviour, as much as in him lay. O, take heed therefore of receiving any testimony from word or Spirit without the meaning of it; without knowing the person thus and thus qualified, to whom it belongs; otherwise, Satan will hurry you headlong to a world of delusions; and you shall find the word of God, appointed to direct you, (through your misapplication of it,) the word of Satan, to deceive and damn you. Do not think that this is building faith upon works; but to believe that they that believe in Christ are

justified, reconciled, and saved, is building faith upon God's promise; yea, and his free promise too: for saith the apostle, "It is of faith that it might be of grace." (Rom. iv. 16.) It is believing to have the end by the means, not the > end without the means of faith. It is true, we may see God's favor and love to us in the cause as well as in the effects of sanctification; but what is that cause? The meritorious cause is [[229]] Christ's righteousness, and the instrumental cause of applying this is our faith; so that we are justified by faith. So, seeing this, we may say assuredly, with Paul, "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God." (Rom. v. 1.) It is true, we can not see our justification by faith, nor the work of faith without the shining of the Spirit into our hearts; but the question is, not whether the Spirit helps us to see our justified estate, but by what means, by what proposition in the word, we come to see it, which we may say is not by any such absolute testimony. Thou art justified already, and therefore believe; but if thou believe and come to Christ, here is then pardon of sin, peace with God; yea, all the blessings of Christ ready for thee, which God intends to give and never to take away, if thou thankfully receive what God freely offers, and as it were lays down at thy feet. The call of Christ, therefore, is the ground by which we first believe; and that you may be confirmed further herein, do but consider the glory and excellency of this ground.

It is a constant ground of faith, for if you come to Christ because you have assurance, or because you feel such and such graces, and heavenly impressions of God's Spirit in you, you may then many a day and year keep at a distance from Christ, and live without Christ; for the feeling of graces, and assurance of favor, are not constant; but this call is always sounding in thine ears, "O, come," not only because thou feelest holiness in thee, but come, because poor, hungry, empty, naked, lost, blind, cursed, forsaken, full of sin. There is not one moment of the day of grace but the Lord beseecheth thee to receive

his grace, (2 Cor. vi. 1-3;) this is an open door to Christ at all times, an open harbor to put in at all storms, a heart-breaking word. O thou tossed with tempests and not comforted, come unto me and thou shalt find rest to thy soul. Many ask, How should I come to Christ, seeing that I have no promise belonging to me? What have dogs to do with children's bread? Be it so; yet , God's call, command, beseechings to come in, should be ground unto thee to come; as a poor beggar, that hath no promise absolutely given him of relief, yet if a rich man sends to him, and bids him come to his door and wait, he thinks he hath good ground and warrant to come.

It is a sure ground against all fears, all doubts of presumption, all sense of unworthiness, and of the greatness of the good promised, etc. For the saints have many fears whereby they dare not come; they fear they may presume, they see themselves most vile, and unworthy of the least smile; the benefits are so exceeding great, to which they are called, that they think it is [[230]] too good for them, etc. But, beloved, when the soul sees evidently, the Lord invites me, persuades me, commands me, waits for me, strives with me, that I would come in, and because his grace is free, therefore requires no more but only to "come and take, come and drink," this forceth the soul to confess, I am sure it is no presumption to obey the call of Christ; and what though I am unworthy, and this good is exceeding great and precious, yet if it be the Lord's grace to call such a poor wretch to receive and accept of it, why should not I rather thankfully receive it, than out of my own head superstitiously refuse it? But this I am sure and certain of, the Lord calls me thus to do. If God should speak from heaven to you to come to his Son, it is not so sure a ground as the call of God from out of the oracle of his word, and the blessed gospel of his dear Son.

It is a strong ground, and of great power and efficacy, to force the soul to come; for you may object, No man can believe, or should believe, and come out of himself. I say so too; but how would you have the Spirit of Christ enable you to come? Verily, it is by this call; and therefore, (Jer. iii. 22,) when the Lord said, "Return, ye backsliding children," they presently answered, "Lord, we come; the dead shall hear this voice of the Son of God, and live." (John v. 25.) "Thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart answered, Lord, thy face will I seek." O, iron, stony, adamant heart, that canst hear so sweet a voice as this word "come," and yet not be overcome!

This call honors grace most, for what more free than for the Lord to say, "Come, and take of the water of life freely"? what more free than for a rich man to inquire of his debtor only to receive so many thousands of him to pay his debts, and set him up again? Verily, brethren, as the Lord honors his grace by commanding us to come, so we honor it when, through the mighty power of the same call, we do come.

Thus much for explication of this call. Now let me put an end to it in a word of application.

Let this persuade all sorts of persons, young and old, one and another, to whom the gospel is sent, to come in to Jesus Christ; for those that God calls should come: but the Lord calls (at least outwardly) all sorts of persons, nay, every individual person, to come in: (Mark xvi. 15, 16,) Paul told the stout jailer, "If thou believest, thou shalt be saved:" and look, as the law speaks particularly to every man, "Thou shalt have no other gods," etc., so doth the gospel, also, (Rom. x. 9,) that so every man might look upon himself as spoken to in particular. And, indeed, if there were not such a particular call, then men should [[231]] not sin by refusing the gospel, nor should

the Lord he angry for so doing, hut their sin and condemnation is great that so do. (John iii. 19.) And the Lord is more wroth for this sin than any other. (Ps. ii. 12. Luke xiv. 18. Heb. iii. 10, 11, 19.) In one word, either the Lord would have thee (who ever thou art) to receive Christ or to reject, and so despise Christ; and if the Lord would have you reject him, he would then have you sin and continue in it, which can not stand either with the honor of God's holiness or of his rich grace. I shall here, therefore, open two things.

1. Set down means to enable you to come. 2. Show you how and in what manner you should come. The means.

1. Consider who it is that doth call you; is it man or ministers? think you; you might never come then; no, it is Jesus Christ himself that calls you by them. Why do many discouraged spirits refuse to come? It is because they think deceitful men or charitable men call them, but the Lord hath no respect unto them; O, foolish conceit! I tell you their ministry is not an act of their charity, wishing well to the salvation of all; but it is an act of Christ's love and sovereign authority. (Matt, xviii. 18-20.) So that what they do, it is in Christ's stead, (2 Cor. v. 19, 20;) if Christ was present, he would call thee to him with more bowels than any compassionate minister can: and I assure you, to receive them is to receive Christ; to despise them is to despise Christ; (John xiii. 20;) and therefore, (Eph. ii. 14,) although the apostles preached to the Ephesians, yet it is said that Christ came and preached to them. "If any minister preacheth any other doctrine of grace than what Christ hath delivered, let him be accursed;" hut if they publish his mind and his call, look upon them as if the Lord himself called unto you, lest the Lord accurse you, and all their ministry to you; the Lord Jesus did not cast off the Jews for crucifying of him and shedding his blood, until the gospel of grace published by his messengers came to them, and that was rejected;

and then Paul waxed hold, and said, "Because you put away the word from you, we leave you." (Acts xiii. 46.)

O beloved, if you did believe Christ called you poor prodigals (that have run riot, and sinned against him as much as you could) home unto him; suppose Christ was present, would it not draw you in? Suppose he was with thee in the chamber, where thou art crying after him, or in the church, where thou art waiting for him, and he should appear visibly before thine eyes, open his bosom, and bowels, and blood before thee, and calling unto thee to this purpose, I do beseech thee, and entreat thee, by [[232]] all these tears I have shed for thee in the days of my flesh, by all those bitter agonies I have suffered for thee, by all these tender bowels which have been rolled together toward thee, come unto me, embrace me, lay thy wearied head in this blessed bosom of mine, crucify me no longer by thy sins, tread me not under foot by thy unbelief any more; and I will pardon all thy sins, though as red as crimson, I will heal thy cursed nature, I will carry thee in my own bowels up to glory with me, where all sins, and tears, and sorrows shall be abolished, etc.; who would not now come in to him? Let me see that man that hath a heart of adamant that would not melt and come in at this. O, my beloved, this very call is done as really by Christ in his ministry now, though not so visibly and immediately as I now describe; and, therefore, take heed how you refuse to hear him that "speaks from heaven." (Heb. xii. 25.)

Consider whom the Lord calls, and that is thee in particular, whoever thou art, to whom the gospel of Christ is sent; for if you think Christ calls some only, that are so and so deeply humbled only to come, and not unto you in particular, you will never come in; but we have proved this, that the Lord calls all in general, and consequently each man in particular: the consideration of this may bring you in. Men fear to commit murder and steal, etc., but 3-011 fear not unbelief; but

the apostle bids you fear that, "for the gospel is preached" (saith he) "unto you, as well as unto those that fell by unbelief." (Heb. iv. 1, 2.) Do not say he calls me indeed, but it is no more than what he doth to reprobates; true, in the outward call it is so; yet upon this ground you may think the Lord commands not, calls not you to sanctify a Sabbath, or to honor God's name, because this is as common to reprobates as unto you; do not say, I am not able to come, and therefore I am not called; no more are you able to attend the rules of the moral law; yet you look upon them as appertaining to you, and because you can not do them, you entreat the Lord to enable you, and so because you can not come, you should look up to the Lord to draw you: and verily, man}- times the great reason why the Lord doth not draw you is, because you do not deeply consider that he doth really and affectionately call you: do not say, I am a dry tree, the Lord can not look upon me, whose condition is worse than ever I heard or read of; yet remember what the Lord speaks to such. (Is. lxv. 3-7.) Look not thou to thy barren and dead heart, but give glory unto God, as Abraham did; (Rom. iv. 19, 20;) and receive his grace with more thankfulness than any else, because none ever so miserable as thyself. You [[233]] young men, hear this; though you have spent the flower of your years in vanity, madness, and filthy lusts, yet the Lord calls you in to him; you old men, grown gray headed in wickedness, though it be the last hour of the day in your life, yet behold, the Lord would hire you, and calls you to come in, before the sorest wrath of a long-provoked God break out upon you; you that have despised God's messengers, crucified the Lord Jesus afresh, imbrued your hands in his blood, scorned and hated the saints, and the word of God's grace, hear what wisdom saith, (Prov. i. 22, 23,) "Return, ye scorers." O, consider, thou that art ignorant of Christ, that never sought after Christ many a year together, that have "continually provoked him to his face," how the Lord calls you, (Is. lxv. 1-3;) you, even you, are all those the Lord calls, and will you not

come? Consider why the Lord calls thee; is it because he hath any need of you to honor him? I tell you he could have gone to others, that would have given his gospel better welcome than it hath had from you; he could have gone to many kings and princes, and out of that golden metal have made himself vessels of honor, rather than out of such base mold as thou art made of; he could have honored himself in thy ruin, as in many millions of other men, and lose nothing by thee neither; he could have been blessed without you in the bosom of his Father; or is it because thou hast done any thing for him? Alas! thou hast not returned him thy nutshells, thou hast not had so much as a form of religion, thou hast done as much mischief to him as thou couldest. (Jer. iii. 5.) Thou hast wearied him with thine iniquities, and made him serve with thy sins, and hath subdued his heart exceedingly by strong impenitency. (Is. xliii. 24.) The only reason that hath moved him to call upon thee hath been to pity thee, seeing thee running to the fire that never can be quenched, without stop or stay; (2 Chron. xxxvi. 15, 10;) and "because thou art fallen by thine iniquities." (Hosea xiv. 1.) And shall this bring you home?

Consider for what end the Lord calls thee. Is it not to come and take possession of all the "grace of Christ," (Gal. i. 6,) nay, of all the "glory of Christ," (1 Thess. ii. 12,) nay, to a most near, sweet, and everlasting "fellowship with Christ himself"? (1 Cor. i. 9.) And can I say any more? Can you desire any more than this? If the Lord should say unto any of us, Come into the garden, and there watch and pray with me, sorrow and surfer with me, who of us would not account ourselves unworthy of such honor? But for the Lord to say, Come and enter into your rest; the land, the kingdom of grace and glory, is before you, go up [[231]] and possess it; O, where are our hearts, if this call will not draw? If the Lord should say at the day of judgment, when the heavens and earth shall be on a light lire, and the Lord Jesus set upon the throne of his glory, admired of all his saints and

angels, Come, you blessed, and take the kingdom prepared for you, would you not gladly come at that call? O beloved, the Lord Jesus now on the throne of his glory in heaven, behold he calls you unto a better good than that kingdom; he calls you to come and take himself and all his precious benefits prepared for you, though in thyself accursed; and would he have you take possession of all this? Is it "not the praise of the riches of his grace" ? (Eph. i.) If this be his end, then if thou wilt not come for thy own good, yet for his sake, his grace' sake, come.

How long the Lord hath called thee 1 how oft he would have gathered thee! He hath stood so long, until "his locks are wet with dew of the night." (Cant. v. 1, 2.) It may be you are afraid, it hath been so long that now time is passed; O, no, for whilst the Lord calls by his word and spirit, "now is the acceptable time." (2 Cor. vi. 2.) I confess there is a time wherein the Lord will not be found; but whilst the Lord is near unto thee by his ministry, by his Spirit, convincing, affecting, stirring, knocking at thy heart, the time is not yet passed, the sun is not yet set; so long as those beams appear, (Is. lv. G,) those thoughts which discourage thee from coming to Christ, whilst the voice of his call is heard, can not be of Christ, but Satan, whose principal work is to lay such stumbling blocks in our way to him.

Consider the greatness of your sin in not coming to him.

This is the condemning sin; for no sin should condemn thee, if thou didst "come to him;" (John iii. 17-19;) thou shouldest please him, and as it were make him amends for all the wrongs thou hast done him, by coming to him. (Heb. xi. 5-7.)

This aggravates all other sins. "If I had not spoke to them," (saith Christ,) "they had had no sin," i. e., comparatively; "but now they have no cloak for their sin." Can the sin of devils be so great as thine,

that never had a Saviour sent unto them? Yet thou hast one sent and come out of heaven to thee, calling to thee from heaven, and yet thou despisest him.

This provokes the Lord to most unappeasable and unquenchable wrath. (Heb. iii. 11,) "I swore in my wrath they should not enter into my rest." After sins against the law, the Lord did not swear that man should die; (for that notes an unchangeable purpose;) but let Christ be despised, the Lord now swears in his wrath against such a one: "He that draws back, my soul shall take no pleasure in him." (Heb. x. 38.) After sin [[235]] against the law, the Lord took pleasure in glorifying his grace upon man fallen; but if you draw back from the grace of Christ in the gospel, the Lord will take no pleasure in you.

4. It provokes the sorest and most unsupportable wrath. "Take heed you despise not him that speaketh, for if they did not escape who refused him that spake on earth, much less shall we, that despise him that speaks from heaven." (Heb. xii. 25.) Take heed therefore you despise not him that speaketh. The word despise signifies in the original to despise or refuse upon some color of reason; every man hath some seeming reason against believing: one thinks time is past; another thinks he is excluded by some antecedent decree of election; another thinks he is not humbled, nor holy enough; another makes excuse, not by pretending his alehouse and whorehouse, but his farm and merchandise, (Matt, xxii:) another thinks he is well enough without Christ, etc. O, take heed, for the wrath of God most intolerable is your portion; the lowest dungeon of darkness is thy place in hell for this sin. "Hear, ye despisers," and wonder, "for I will work "(saith the Lord) "a work in your days, which you shall not believe though it be told you." (Acts xiii. 41.) I pray you what is this work? Certainly a work of wrath and vengeance; but what is it? You will not believe though you be told of it, O you secure sinners; but

what is it that they will not believe? Nay, truly, the Lord himself is silent there, and saith nothing, as if it was so great and dreadful, that the glorious Lord himself is not able to express it; and truly no more am I. O, therefore, be not worse than that generation of vipers that came in to John, because some had "forewarned them to escape the wrath to come," (Matt, iii.,) but come unto a Saviour, that you may be ever blessed with him. But you will say, --

How should we come to him?

Come to him mourning, and loathing yourselves for your long continuance in refusing of him. (Jer. xxxi. 9. Ezek. vi. 9.) Come mourning for all thy sins, but especially for this, that thou hast slighted him, and not sought him, shed his blood, rent his bowels; and if thou canst not come, yet come to him and make thy moan to him of thy unbelief and inability to come.

Come with confidence that "they that do come he will never cast away," and that thou being come, he will never cast thee away. (John vi. 37. Heb. x. 22.)

Come gladly and willingly, glorifying his grace, but abasing thyself. "With gladness shall they be brought and enter into the king's presence." (Ps. xlv. 15.) Do not receive God's grace as a common thing, but thankfully, and with all thy heart; for [[236]] the end why the Lord gives Christ to any man is the glory of his grace; if the Lord attains this end he desires no more, for why should he, when he hath his end?

Do not come and taste, hut "come and drink." (John vii. 37.) You may famish to death, and pine away in your iniquities, and prove apostates, even to commit the unpardonable sin, if you do but taste of him, as those did, Heb. vi. 4, 5; but "drink abundantly, O, ye

beloved of the Lord." (Cant. v. 1.) If you can not satisfy your souls by what you feel already received from him, then satiate }Our souls by what you may find in him. (Is. xlv. 24.) Take possession of all the grace, glory, peace, promises of the Lord Jesus, and leave not a hoof behind thee, and be forever refreshed and comforted therein So come to him, as that "you keep your confidence," and keep your savor of him and joy in him, (Heb. iii. 14, with Heb. vi.) Let the word that called you be ever sweet and precious, as David said, (Ps. cxix. 53,) "I will never forget thy precepts, for by them thou hast quickened me." Let the Lord Jesus be ever fresh, (Heb. iii. 6,) and as "an ointment poured out; "take heed that the blood wherewith you are sanctified do not grow a common thing, and promises withered flowers, and sermons of Christ and his grace (unless there be some new notions about them) as dead drink, for this is the great sin of this age; the old truths about the grace of Christ and the simplicity of the gospel are as water in men's shoes; ministers must preach novelties, and make quintessential extracts out of the Scriptures, and it may be, press blood out of them sometimes rather than milk, or else their doctrines are too many as almanacs out of date, or as news they heard seven years since, and they knew this before. O, the wrath of God upon this God-glutted, Christ-glutted, gospel-glutted age; unless it be among a very few poor believers, whose souls are kept empty, poor, and hungry by some continual temptations or afflictions, and they are indeed glad of any thing, if it be any thing of Christ! Verily I am afraid such a dismal night is toward of spiritual desertions, and of outward, but sore afflictions of famine, war, blood, mortality, deaths of God's precious servants especially, that the Lord will fill the hearts of all churches, families, Christians, that shall be saved in those times, with such readings, tearings, shakings, anguish of spirit, as scarce never more in the worst days of our forefathers; and that this shall continue, until the remnant that escape shall say, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord;" blessed be the

face and feet of that minister that shall come unto us in Christ's name, and tell us that there is a Saviour for sinners, and that he calls us for to come. [[237]] And thus I have done with this divine truth, viz., that the Lord Jesus, in the day of his power, saves us out of our wretched and sinful estate, by so much conviction as begets compunction, so much compunction as brings in humiliation, so much humiliation as makes us come to Christ by faith.

CHAPTER II.

That every sinner, thus believing in Christ, is at that instant translated into a most blessed and happy estate. -- John v. 24. Phil, ii. ult.

If the question be, What is that happy condition they are made partakers of?

I answer, this appears in these six privileges, or benefits, principally,
--

- Justification: all their sins are pardoned.
- Reconciliation: peace with God.
- Adoption: they are made the sons of God.

- Sanctification: they are restored to the image of God.
- Audience of all their prayers to God.
- Glorification, in the kingdom of heaven, in eternal communion with God.

Section I.--Justification.

This is the first benefit which immediately follows our union unto Christ by faith, that, look, as we are no sooner children of Adam, and branches of that root by natural generation, but we immediately contract the guilt of his sin, and so original pollution, so we are no sooner made branches of the second Adam by vocation, and so united unto Christ by faith, but immediately we have the imputation of his righteousness to our justification; after which we receive in order of nature (not time) our sanctification. There is no truth more necessary to be known than this, it being the principal thing contained in the gospel, (Rom. i. 17,) the law showing how a man may be just and live; but it hath not the least word how a sinful man may be just and not die; this is proper to the revelation of the gospel; let me, therefore, give you a taste of the nature of it.

Our justification is wrought by a double act: 1. On God the Father's part; he, by a gracious sentence, absolves and acquits a [[238]] sinner, and accepts of him as righteous. 2. On God the Son's part, procuring the passing of this sentence by his satisfaction imputed and applied. The Father, being the person principally wronged, hath chief power to forgive; yet in justice he can not acquit, nor in truth account a man unrighteous as righteous, unless the Son step in and satisfy, for whose sake he forgives, as the apostle expressly saith, (Eph. iv. tilt. ;) so that our justification is wholly out of ourselves, and we are merely passive in it. Justification is not to make us inwardly just, as the Papists dream, but it is a law term, and is opposed against condemnation. (Rom. viii. 33.) Now, look, as condemnation is the sentence of the judge condemning a man to die for his offences or sin, so justification is the sentence of God the Father, absolving a

man from the guilt and punishment of sin, for the sake of the righteousness of Christ. That you may more particularly understand me, take this description of it: --

Justification is the gracious sentence of God the Father, whereby, for the satisfaction of Christ, apprehended by faith, and imputed to the faithful, he absolves them from the guilt and condemnation of all sin, and accepts them as perfectly righteous to eternal life.

Let us open the particulars herein briefly, in several queries, what it is, in general, to justify.

It is to pass sentence of absolution, to pronounce a sinner righteous; it is God's pardon, remission of sins. This appears from the opposition mentioned it stands in unto condemnation, as a judge pardons a man when he saith he shall live; or as a man manifestly forgives another when he gives him a promise or a bill of discharge; so that --note this by the way, that -- our justification is not God's eternal purpose to forgive, but it is God's sentence published; a sinner is justified intentionally in election, but not actually, till this sentence be past and published. The difficulty only here is, where this sentence is pronounced; for answer whereof, note that there is but a double court where this is passed: 1. Publicly, in the court of heaven, or in the court rolls of the word; for there is no other court of heaven where God speaks but this. 2. Privately, in the court of conscience. By the first we are justified indeed from personal guilt; by the second we feel ourselves justified by the removal of conscience guilt. The first is expressly mentioned, (Acts x. 43, and Rom. i. 17;) the second is expressly set down also. (Ps. xxxii. 4.) The first is the cause and foundation of the second; the second ariseth from the first; otherwise, peace of conscience is a mere delusion. The first is [[239]] sometimes long before the second, (Ps. lxxxviii. 15,) as the sentence

of condemnation in the word is sometimes long before a man feels that sentence in his own conscience; the second comes in a long time after in some Christians. The first is constant and unchangeable; the second very changeable: he that hath peace in his conscience to-day, may lose it by to-morrow. So that you are not (in seeking the testimony of your justification) to look for a sentence from heaven immediately pronounced of God, but look for it in the court of his word, (the court of heaven,) which, though we hear not sometimes, yet it rings and fills heaven and earth with the sound of it, viz., "There is no condemnation to them that believe:" for hereby the Lord mercifully provideth for the peace of his people more abundantly. As when a poor creditor is acquitted, or a malefactor pardoned, I beseech you, (saith he,) let me have an acquittance, a discharge, a pardon under your own hand, and this quiets him against all accusers. So it is here; the Lord gives us an acquittance in his word, under his own hand and seal, and so gives us peace. (Heb. vi. 18.)

Who is this that justifieth?

It is "God the Father." (Rom. viii. 34.) "Father, forgive them," saith Christ. And hence, Christ "is an advocate with the Father." (1 John ii. 2.) All the three persons were wronged by sin; yet the wrong was chiefly against the Father, because his manner of working appeared chiefly in creation, from the righteousness of which man fell by sin. The Father forgives primarily by sovereign authority; the Son of man, Christ Jesus, forgives by immediate dispensation and commission from the Father, (John v. 22; Matt. ix. 6;) the apostles and their successors forgive ministerially. (John xxi. 23.) The Father forgives by granting pardon, the Son by procuring, the ministers (where the Spirit also is) by publishing or applying pardon; so that this is great consolation, that God the Father, the party chiefly

incensed, it is he that justifieth, it is he that passeth this gracious sentence; and then who can condemn?

Why doth the Father thus justify?

It is merely his grace, and out of his grace. And hence I call it his "gracious sentence," (Rom. iii. 24;) "justified freely by his grace." What is his "grace"? The prophet Isaiah expounds it to be, not our grace, or works of grace, (although wrought by grace,) but "his own name's sake." In some respect indeed it is just for God to forgive, viz., in regard of Christ's satisfaction. (1 John i. 7. Rom. iii. 20.) The mercy seat and the tables of the law in the ark may well stand together, but [[240]] that Christ was sent to satisfy justice, and that thy sins were satisfied for, and not another's: thus it is wholly of grace. If therefore you think the Lord pardons your sins because you have been less sinners than others, or if you think the Lord will not pardon your sins because you are greater sinners than any else, you sin exceedingly against the riches of God's grace in this point.

What are the means by which the Father doth thus justify?

It is for the satisfaction or by the price of the redemption of Christ, (Rom. iii. 24; v. 10; Eph. i. 7;) for mercy would, but justice could not forgive, without satisfaction for the wrong done. Hence Christ satisfies, that grace and mercy might have their full scope of forgiving. So that neither works before conversion, which are but glistening sins, (Rom. i. 18,) nor works of grace in us after conversion, can be causes of our justification; for Abraham, when he was justified and sanctified, yet "had not whereof to boast," but "believed in him that justified the ungodly." (Rom. iv. 5.) And the apostle Paul saith expressly, "We "that believe "have believed that we might be justified." (Gal. ii. 16.) It is therefore the price of Christ's redemption which doth procure our justification. But understand

this aright, for this price is not applied to each particular man as the "common price," redeeming all, (for then every believer should be accounted a saviour and redeemer of all,) but as the price of those souls in particular, to whom it is specially intended and particularly applied. Christ's righteousness is sufficient to justify all to whom it is imputed; but it is no further imputed than to the attaining the end of imputation, viz., to justify and save me in particular, not to make me a head of the church or a common saviour. It argues a man weakly principled that denies the necessity of Christ's satisfaction to our justification, because, forsooth, every believer should then be a redeemer. By "satisfaction," I understand the whole obedience of Christ unto the very death, -- which is both active and passive, -- by which we are justified. (Heb. x. 10. Phil. ii. 8.) That righteousness of Christ (wrought in his satisfaction) is imputed, which satisfies the law and divine justice, (Gal. iv. 1-4,) which is both active and passive. The very reason why the law requires perfect obedience of us--which we can not possibly bring before God -- is, that we might seek for it in Christ, that fulfilled all righteousness: and therefore he is called "the end of the law for righteousness." (Rom. x. 3, 4.) And it is strange that any should deny justification by Christ's active obedience, upon this ground, viz., because that "by the works of the law "(which satisfy the law) "shall no sinner be [[241]] justified; "and yet withal say that we are justified by that which satisfies the law.

This righteousness of Christ is not that of the Godhead, (for then what need was there for Christ to do or suffer?) but that which was wrought in the manhood.

And hence it is infinite in itself, though infinite in value, in that it was the righteousness of such a person. This righteousness of God may be considered two ways; first, absolutely in itself; secondly, respectively, as done for us.

Christ's absolute righteousness is not imputed to us, viz., as he is Mediator, head of the church, having the Spirit without measure, (which is next to infinite,) etc.; for though these things are applied for our good, yet they are not imputed as our righteousness; and therefore the objection vanisheth, which saith we can not be justified by Christ's righteousness, because it is of such infinite perfection.

The respective or dispensative righteousness, which some call *justitia fide jussoria*, is that whereby Christ is just "for us" in fulfilling the law, in hearing God's image, we once had, and have now lost by sin; and thus we are truly said to be as righteous as Christ, by imputation, because he kept the law for us. And here observe, that the question is not whether all that Christ

i did and had is imputed to us as our righteousness, but whether all that he did, *pro nobis*, for us as a surety in fulfilling the law, be not "for substance," our righteousness; and therefore to think that we are not justified by Christ's righteousness, because then we are justified by his working of miracles, preaching of sermons, -- which women are not regularly capable of,---is but to east blocks before the blind; so that, though Christ doth not bestow his personal wisdom and justice upon another, yet what hinders but that that which Christ doth by his wisdom and righteousness for another, the same should stand good for him for whom it is done? For thus it is in sundry cases among men. Christ's essential righteousness, infinite wisdom, fullness of spirit without measure, etc., is not imputed to us; yet these have conspired together to do that for us, and suffer that for us, by which we come to be accounted righteous before God: he shall be called "the Lord our righteousness." (Jer. xxiii. 6.) This righteousness therefore imputed to us, justifies us. (Rom. v. 18.) We Tare said to be made "the righteousness of God in him; "not the [righteousness of God whereby "he is just," but whereby "we [are just;" opposed to

the righteousness of man, which is called "our own righteousness." (Rom. x. 3; i. 17.) Not righteousness from him, (as the Papists dream,) hut righteousness in him; [[242]] nor remission by Christ only, by righteousness in Christ; this imputed justifies; as sin imputed condemns. Who are the persons the Lord doth justify? They are believers; we are justified "by faith," (Rom. v.,) or "for Christ's righteousness apprehended by faith," (Phil. iii. 9:) it is by faith not as a work of grace, but as by an instrument appointed of God for this end. Christ did not die that our sins should be actually and immediately pardoned, hut mediately "by faith," (John iii. 16, 17, 20;) and the Lord in wisdom hath appointed this as the only means of applying righteousness, because this, above all other graces, casts down all the righteous-ness of man in point of justification, and so all cause of boasting, and advanceth grace and mercy only, (Rom. iii. 27; iv. 5, 16; ix. 30-32:) the faithful account themselves ungodly in the business of justification, and thence it is said that "Abraham " (though a godly man in himself, yet) "believed in him that justifies the ungodly:" he only is righteous whom God pronounceth and saith is righteous. Now, faith, above all other graces, believes the word; and a believer saith, I believe I am righteous before God, not because I feel it so in myself, but be-cause God saith I am so in his Son, so that you are not justified before you believe; nor then only, when you have performed many holy duties, but at the first instant of your closing with Christ, you are then to see it, and by faith to admire God's rich grace for it.

What is the extent of this sentence?

The description saith, that Christ's satisfaction thus applied, the Father doth two things.

1. He absolves them from all guilt and condemnation of sin, so that, in this sense, "he sees no iniquity in Jacob; "chastisements they may now have after justification, but no punishments, crosses, nor curses, such as destroy their sins, no punishments to destroy their souls: hence those phrases in Scripture, "scattering sins as a mist, blotting them out, remembering them no more, setting them as far as east is from the west." For Christ being made sin for his people, and this being imputed, he "abolishing all sin, by one offering," (Heb. x.,) hence all are forgiven; and hence it is that there can be no suit in law against a sinner, the law being satisfied and the sinner absolved; nay, hence sin is condemned, and the sinner spared, (Rom. viii. 3:) as Christ died for us, so he was acquitted for us, and we in him; we in him in redemption, we by him in actual faith and application. Whether all sins, past, present, and to come, are actually forgiven at the first instant of believing, I will not, dare [[243]] not determine; this is safe to say: 1. That the sentence of pardon of all thy sins is at an instant, (Rom. viii. 1,) but not the sense nor execution of pardon: actual sentence of pardon, not actual application of pardon till they be actually committed. (Col. ii. 13. Heb. ix. 12; x. 1, 2. Rom. iii. 25.) There is a pardon, of course, (some say,) for sins of infirmities; I say there is also a pardon, of course, for sins of wilfulness, -- all manner of sins; but not sense of pardon always. lie accepts and accounts us perfectly righteous. (Rom. iv. 3.) Faith "is accounted for righteousness;" not the act of faith, as the Arminians would, hut the object of it apprehended by faith. (Rom. v. 17.) The Lord accounts us as righteous through Christ's righteousness, as if we had kept all the law, suffered all the punishments for the breach of it. "Who can lay any thing to the charge of God's elect, whom God hath justified?" saith the apostle. (Rom. viii.) Satan may answer, Yes, I can, for the law saith, "The soul that sins must die:" Christ answers, But I have died for him, and satisfied the utmost farthing to justice in that point. True, may Satan say, here is satisfaction for the offence, but

the law must be kept also. The Lord Christ answers, I am the end of the law for righteousness, I am perfectly holy and righteous, not for myself, (for I am a common person,) but for this poor sinner, who, in himself, is exceedingly and wholly polluted; and hence the Lord covers sins as well as pardons sins; clothes us with Christ, as well as remits sin for Christ's sake; and as we are accounted sinners by imputation of Adam's legal unrighteousness, so are we accounted righteous by the second Adam's legal righteousness, and that unto eternal life. (Rom. v. 17, 18.) Thus you see the nature, now the Lord opens your eyes to see the glory of this privilege; you that never felt the heavy load of sin, the terrors of a distressed conscience arising from the sense of an angry God, can not prize this privilege; but if you have, you can not but say as he did, "O, blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sin is covered;" and again, "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputes no sin." (Ps. xxxii. 12.) The Lord pity us; how many be there in these times, that know there is no justification but by Christ's righteousness, and yet esteem it not? let me, therefore, give you one glimpse of the glory of it in these particulars: 1. This is the righteousness by which a sinner is righteous: the law shows you how a man may be righteous, but there is not the least tittle of the law, which shows you how a sinner may become righteous; this could never have entered into the thoughts of angels how this could be; it is cross to sense and reason for a man accursed [[244]] and sinful in himself to be at that very time blessed and righteous in another; to say, "Lord, depart from me, for I am a sinful man," (Luke v. 8,) is the voice of natural conscience awakened, not only concerning God out of Christ, but even when God appears in Christ as he did then to Peter; but that the Lord should become our righteousness, when we think no sinners like ourselves: no cases, no afflictions, no desertions like ours, who can believe this? yet thus it is; the very scope of the fourth chapter to the Romans is not to show how a just man may be made righteous, but how a sinner may; our

own duties, works, and reformation may make us at the best but less sinful, but this righteousness makes a sinner sinless. 2. By this a sinner is righteous before the judgment seat of God: what man that hath awakenings of conscience but trembles exceedingly when he considers the judgment seat of God, and of his strict account there? but by this we can look upon the face of the Judge himself with boldness. "It is God that justifies; who shall condemn?" (Rom. viii. 32.) Can Christ condemn? He is our Advocate. Can sin condemn? Why did Christ die and was made sin then? Can Satan condemn, if God himself justify us? If the Judge acquits us, what can the jailer do? Can the law condemn? No, the Lord Christ hath fulfilled it for us, to the utmost. O, the stings that many have, saying, What shall I do when I die and go down to the dust? May not the Lord have something against me at the day of reckoning that I never saw, nor got cancelled? O, poor creature! Is Christ now before God without spot? Hath he cleared all reckonings? Verily, as he is before him, so are you, through that righteousness which is in him for you.

By this you have perfect righteousness, as perfectly righteous as Christ the righteous. (1 John ii. 1, 2, and iii. 7.) All your own righteousness, though it be the fruit of the Spirit of grace, is a blotted, stained righteousness, very imperfect and little; but by this, the faith of David, Peter, Paul, was not more precious than thine is, because thou hast the same righteousness as they had. (2 Pet. i. 2.) What sincere soul but esteems of perfect holiness more than of heaven itself? O, consider thou hast it (in this sense I now speak of) in the Lord Jesus.

By this you have continual righteousness. What dost thou complain of daily? Is it not because thou feelest new sins, or the same sins confessed and lamented, and in part subdued? nay, some to thy feeling wholly subdued; but they return upon thee again, and the

springs in the bottom fill thy soul again, that thou art weary of thyself and life. O, but remember, this is not a cistern, "but a fountain opened," (Zech. xiii. 1,) for thee to [[245]] wash in; as "sin abounds, so grace in this gift of righteousness abounds much more; the Lord hath changes of garments for thee," (Zech. iii. 1-7,) by means of which there shall never enter into the Lord's heart one hard thought toward thee of casting thee off, or of taking revenge upon any new occasion or fall unto sin.

By this you have eternal righteousness, that never can be lost; if the Lord should make thee as perfectly righteous as once Adam was, or angels in heaven are, and put on thy royal apparel again, thou wast in danger of losing this, and of being stripped naked again; but now the Lord hath put your righteousness into a safer hand, which never shall be lost. (Heb. vi. 12. Dan. ix. 24.)

By this you please God, and are more amiable before him than if you had it in yourself. Do not say this is a poor righteousness, which is thus out of thyself in another. Why do you think righteousness in yourself would be best? Is it not because hereby you think you shall please God? Suppose thou hadst it, yet thy righteousness should be at the best but man's righteousness; but this is called "the righteousness of God," which can not but be more pleasing to him than that in thyself. (2 Cor. v. 20.) What is angelical righteousness to the righteousness of God? It is but a glowworm before the sun: the smell of Esau's garments, the robes of this righteousness of the Son of God, are of a sweeter odor than thine can be or ever shall be. (Eph. v. 1, 2.) It is said, "By faith Abel, Enoch, etc., pleased God:" their persons were sinful, their own duties were weak, yet by faith in this they pleased God. Thou thinkest when thou goest to prayer, If I had no sin, but perfect holiness in me, surely God would hear me. I tell you, when you bring this offering of Christ's righteousness, the Lord

had rather have that than all you can do; you bring that which pleaseth him more than if you brought your own. For ask thy own conscience if it be possible for the righteousness that is done by thyself to be more pleasing to God than the righteousness of the Son of God, the Lord of glory himself, done and perfected for thee.

7. By this you glorify God exceedingly, as "Abraham believed, (Rom. iv.,) and gave glory unto God." "In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory." (Is. xlv. 25.) For,--

1. By this you glorify him perfectly in an instant; for you continue to do all that the law requires that instant you believe. The apostle propounds the question, (Rom. iii. 21.) whether a Christian "by faith doth make void the law." No, saith the apostle, "but we establish the law." How is that? Paræus [[246]] shows three ways: one is this: because that perfect righteousness which the law requires of us, we perform it in Christ by faith. So that in one instant thou continuest to do all that the law requires, and hence ariseth the impossibility of a true believer's apostasy, as from one principal cause -- they that deny satisfaction by Christ's doing of the law, because by our own works and doings we can not be justified before God, may as well deny satisfaction by Christ's sufferings, because by our own sufferings we can not be justified; our obedience to the law in way of suffering is as truly the works of the law as our obedience in way of doing.

By this you glorify God's justice; whatever justice requires to be done or suffered, you give it unto God, by faith in Christ.

By this you glorify grace and mercy, (Eph. i. 7,) for by this means mercy may over-abound toward you, and you may triumph in it as sure and certain to you. What a blessed mystery is this! Doth it not grieve you that you can not glorify God in your times and places? Behold the way; if thou canst not do it by obedience, thou mayest by

faith; and thereby make restitution of all God's glory lost and stolen from him by thy disobedience to him.

By this you have peace in your consciences: by this Christ's blood is sprinkled upon them, and that cools the burning torments of them. (Rom. v. 1.) The comers unto the Levitical sacrifices and washings (types of this offering of Christ) could not thereby be perfected and be without the guilty conscience of sin; none of your duties can pacify conscience but as they carry you hither to this righteousness, hut the comers to this have no more terrors of conscience for sin; I mean the)' have no just cause to have any. This rainbow appearing over your heads is a certain sign of fair weather, and that there shall be no more deluge of wrath to overwhelm thee.

By this all miseries are removed: when thy sins are pardoned, there is something like death, and shame, and sickness, but they are not. It is said. (Is. xxxiii. ult..) "There shall be none sick among them." Why so? "Because they shall be forgiven their iniquities." It is no sickness in a manner, no sorrow, no affliction, if the venom, sting, and curse be taken away by pardon of sin; thy sickness, sorrow, losses, death itself, is better now than health, joy, abundance, life; you may here see death, hell, grave, swallowed up in victory, and now tread upon the necks of them. (1 Cor. xv.) You may see life in death, heaven in the deepest hell, glory in shame, when thou seest all thy sins done away in the blood of Christ Jesus. This is the blessedness of all you [[247]] poor believers and comers to the Lord Jesus: what should you do but believe it, and rejoice in it? If the wicked, that apply this righteousness presumptuously, say, Let us sin that grace may abound, and make no other use of forgiveness but to run in debt and sin with a license, why should not you sa3r, on the other side, Let me believe and own my portion in this righteousness, that as my sins have abounded, so my love may abound; as my sins have been

exceeding great, so the Lord may be exceeding sweet; as my sins continue and increase, so my thankfulness, glory in God, triumph over death, grave, sins, through Christ, may also increase; as you see righteousness in Christ forever yours, so you may from thence expect from him such a righteousness as may make you righteous also, as he is righteous. Tremble, thou hardhearted, impenitent wretch, that didst never yet come to Christ, nor feel thy need of him, or prize his blood; this is none of thy portion; all thy sins are yet upon thee, and shall one day meet thee in the day of the Lord's fierce wrath, when he shall appear as an everlasting burning before thine eyes, and thou stand guilty before him as chaff and stubble.

Section II.--Reconciliation.

This is the second benefit which in order of nature follows our justification, although sometimes in a large sense it is taken for the whole work of justification; strictly taken, it follows it. (Rom. v. 1,) "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God;" i. e., not only peace from God in our consciences, but peace with God in our reconcilment to him, and his favor toward us: "Being justified, we shall be saved from wrath; "i. e., not only the outward fruits of wrath, but wrath from whence those come; Christ is first King of Righteousness, then King of Peace, (Heb. vii. 2;) for is not sin the cause of God's anger? Must not sin, therefore, be first removed in our justification, before we can have God's anger allayed in our reconciliation? So that as in our justification the Lord accounts us just, so in our reconciliation (himself being at peace with us) he accounts us friends; indeed, our meritorious reconciliation is by

Christ's death; as the king's son who procures his father's favor toward a malefactor, who yet lies in cold irons and knows it not. And this is before our justification or being, (Rom. v. 9;) but actually and efficacious reconciliation, whereby we come to the fruition and [[248]] possession of it, is after our justification. (Rom. hi. 24, 25.) Christ is a propitiation by faith; and here the malefactor hath tidings of favor, if he will accept of it, (Eph. ii. 15, 17,) and of this I now speak: God and man were once friends, but by sin a great breach is made; the Lord, only bearing the wrong, is justly provoked, (Is. lxxv. 2, 3;) man, that only doth the wrong, is notwithstanding at enmity with him, and will not be entreated to accept of favor, much less to repent of this wrong. (Jer. viii. 4-8.) The Lord Jesus, therefore, heals this breach by being Mediator between both; he takes up the quarrel, and first reconciles God to man, and man to God, in himself, in redemption, and after this reconciles God and man, by himself, in (or immediately upon) our justification.

This reconciliation consists in two things chiefly: --

In our peace with God, whereby the Lord lays by all acts of hostility against us. (Rom. v. 1.)

In love and favour of God. I do not mean God's love of good will, for this is in election; but his love of complacency and delight, for till we are justified, the Lord behaves himself as an enemy and stranger to us who are polluted before him, but then he begins thus to love us. (1 John iv. 10, 10. Col. i. 21, 22.) A gardener may intend to turn a crab-tree stock into an apple tree; his intention doth not alter the nature of it, until it actually be engrafted upon: so we are "by nature the children of wrath." (Eph. i. 3.) The intention of God the Father, or his love of good will, doth not make us children of favor and sons of peace, until the Lord actually call us to and engraft us into Christ,

and then, as Christ is the delight of God, so we in him are loved with the same love of delight. Peace with God and love of God are of different degrees of our reconciliation. A prince is at peace or ceaseth war against a rebel, yet he may not bring the rebel before him, into his bosom of special favor, delight, and love; but the Lord doth both toward us enemies, strangers, rebels, devils, in our reconciliation with him.

O, consider what a blessed estate this is to be at peace with God. It was the title of honor the Lord put upon Abraham to be the friend of God. (Is. xli. 8.) I am not able to express what a privilege this is: it is better felt than spoken of; as Moses said, (Ps. lx.) "Who knows the greatness of his wrath?" So I may say, Who knows the greatness of this favor and love?

1. That God should be pacified with thee after anger, this is exceeding glorious. (Is. Xii. 1, 2.) What is man that the Lord should visit him, or look upon him, though he never had sinned? But to look upon thee, nay, to love thee, after provocation of sin, [[249]] after such wrath, which like fire hath consumed thousand thousands, and burnt down the bottom of hell, and is now and ever shall be burning upon them; O, blessed are they that find this favor!

2. That the Lord should be pacified wholly and thoroughly, that there should be no anger left for you to feel. The poor, afflicted church might object against those sweet promises made here, (Is. xxvii. 1-3,) that she left no love. "You are mistaken," saith the Lord, "fury is not in me." (ver. 4.) Indeed, against briers and thorns, and obstinate sinners, that prick and cut me to the very heart by their impenitency, I have, but none against you. Out of Christ, God is a consuming fire, but in Christ he is nothing else but love, (1 John iv. 16;) and though there may be fatherly frowns, chastisements, reproofs, and rods;

though he may for a time hide his face, shut out thy prayers, defer to fulfill promises, etc., yet all these are out of pure love to thee, and thou shalt see it, and feel it so in thy latter end. (Heb. xii. 8, 9.) Never did David love Jonathan (whose love exceeded) as the Lord loves thee from his very heart, now thou art in Christ by faith.

3. That the Lord shall be pacified eternally, never to cast thee off again for any sins or miseries thou fallest into, this is wonderful. Those whom men love they forsake, if their love be abused; or if their friends be in affliction, they then bid them good night; but the Lord's love and favor is everlasting. (Is. ix. 7.) "The mountains' may depart out of their places, and the hills cast down to the valleys, but the Lord's kindness never shall, I never can; he hath hid his face a little moment," whilst thou didst live in thy sin and unbelief; but now, "with everlasting mercy he will embrace thee." Nay, which is more, "the abounding of thy sin" is now the occasion "of the abounding of his grace." (Rom. v. 20.) Thy very wants and miseries are the very causes of his bowels and tender mercies. (Heb. iv. 15, 16.) O, what a privilege is this! Did the Lord ever show mercy and favor to the angels that sinned? Did not one sin cast them out of favor utterly? O, infinite grace, that so many thousand thousands every day gushing out of thy heart against kindness and love, nay, the greatest, dearest love of God, should not incense his sorest displeasure against thee 1 The Lord that poured out all his anger upon his own Son for thee, and for all thy sins, can not now pour out, nay he hath not one drop left (though he would) to pour out upon thee for any one sin.

4. That the Lord should be thus pacified with enemies. A man may be easily pacified with one that offends him a little; [[250]] but with an enemy that strikes at his life, (as by every sin you do,) this is wonderful; yet this is the case here. (Rom. v. 7, 8.)

5. That the Lord should be pacified, even with enemies, by such a wonderful way as the blood of Jesus Christ, (Rom. v. 8.) this is such love, as one would think the infinite wisdom of a blessed God could have devised no greater; by this (ver. 6) he commended and set out his love, which though now it grow a stale and common thing in our days, yet this is that which is enough to burst the heart with astonishment and amazement, to think that the party offended (who therefore had no cause to seek peace with us again) should find out such a way of peace as this is. Woe to the world that despise this peace!

6. That, being thus pacified, you may come into God's presence with boldness at any time, and ask what you will. I wonder what he can deny you if he loves you, (Rom. v. 2,) and which is yet more, that now all creatures are "at peace with you," (John v. 23,) as when the captain of the army is pacified, none of his soldiers must hurt or strike that man; nay, that hereby all your enemies should be forced to do good to you; "O death, where is now thy sting?"

I have oft wondered, if Christ hath borne all our miseries, and suffered death for us, why then should we feel any miseries, or see death any more; and I could never satisfy my own heart by any answers given better than by this, viz., that if the Lord should abolish the very being of our miseries, they should, indeed, then do us no hurt, but neither could they then do us any good; for, if they were not at all, how could they do us good? Now, the Lord Jesus hath made such a peace for us as that our enemies shall not only not hurt us, but they shall be forced (himself ordering of them) to do much good unto us; all your wants shall but make you pray the more, all your sorrows shall but humble you the more, all your temptations shall but exercise your graces the more, all your spiritual desertions shall but make you long for heaven, and to be with Christ, the more; it is now

part of your portion not only to have "Paul, and Apollos, and world," but "death" itself to do you good. O Lord, what a blessed estate is this, which, though thousands living under the gospel of peace hear of, yet they regard not; they can strain their consciences in a restless pursuit of the favor of men, and in seeking worldly peace, yet to this day (though born enemies to God) never spent one day, it may be not one hour, in mourning after the Lord for favor from him. nor care not for it, unless it be upon their own terms, viz., that God would be at peace with them, but they may still remain quietly in their sins, [[251]] and war against God; and thence it is that the Lord will shortly take away peace from the whole earth, and plague the world with war and bloodshed, as it is in Zach. xi. 6: "Deliver every man into the hand of his neighbor, and into the hand of his king, and they shall smite the land;" even for this very cause, for despising the peace and reconciliation with God, you might and should have accepted in the gospel of peace.

Section III.--Adoption.

This is the third benefit which, in order of nature, follows our reconciliation, whereby the Lord accounts us sons, and gives us the spirit and privilege of sons; for, in order, we must be first beloved before we can be loved so as to be accounted sons. (1 John iii. 1, 2.) For the Lord of unjust to account us just in our justification is much; but for the Lord to account us hereby as friends, this is more; but to account us sons also, this is a higher degree and a further privilege; and hence, our adoption follows our faith, (John i. 12; Gal. iii. 26;) and if adoption, then the Spirit of adoption much less doth not precede faith. By Christ's active obedience (our divines say) we have

right unto life; by adoption we have a further right; the one destroys not the other; for a man may have right unto the same thing upon sundry grounds. We know there are two sorts of sons: 1. Some by nature, born of our own bodies; and thus we are not sons of God, but children of wrath. 2. Some by adoption, which are taken out of another family, and accounted freely of us as our sons; and thus Moses was, for a time, the son of Pharaoh's daughter. And of this sonship by adoption I now speak, the Lord taking us out of the family of hell to be his adopted sons. Christ is God's Son by eternal generation, Adam by creation; all believers are sons of adoption. Now, adoption is twofold.

External, whereby the Lord takes a people by outward covenant and dispensation to be his sons, and thus all the Jews were God's "first born," (Ex. iv. 22,) and unto them did "belong the adoption," (Rom. ix. 4, 5;) and hence their children were accounted "sons "as well as saints, and "holy," (1 Cor. vii. 11; Ezek. xvi. 20, 21;) but many fail from this adoption, as the Jews did.

Internal, whereby the Lord, out of everlasting love to particular persons in special, he takes them out of the family of [[252]] Satan, and, by internal love and special account, reckons them in the number of sons, makes them indeed sons, as well as calls them so. Isaac, by special promise, was "accounted for the seed," (Rom. ix. 8;) and of this we now speak. Now, this is double.

Adoption begun, (1 John iii. 1, 2.) now we are the sons of God. To which of us, (though sons indeed,) yet the Lord behaves himself toward them for some time, and for special reasons, as unto "servants," exercising them with many fears. (Gal. iv. 1, 2.) Some spirits will not be the better for the love of their Father, but worse, and therefore the Lord keeps a hard hand over them; to others the

Lord behaves himself with more special respect, in making them cry with more boldness, "Abba, Father," (Rom. viii. 15, 16,) who will he more easily overcome, and bent to his will, by love.

Adoption perfected, when we shall receive all the privileges of sons, not one excepted, (Rom. viii. 23,) where we are said "to wait for our adoption, the redemption of our bodies." By the first we are sons, but not seen nor known as such. (1 John iii. 1, 2.) By the second, we shall be known before all the world to be such. We now speak principally of adoption begun, whereby we are sons in God's account, and by real reception of the spirit of sons. The manner of this adoption is thus: --

God loves Jesus Christ with an unspeakable love, as his only Son, and as our elder brother.

Hence, when we are in Christ his Son, he loves us with the same love as he doth his own Son.

Hence, the Lord accounts us sons. (Ephes. i. 5, 6.) God's love is not now toward us as to Adam, his son by creation, viz., immediately diffused upon us; but in loving his own Son immediately, hence he loves us, and hence adopts us, and accounts us children.

O that the Lord would open our eyes to see this privilege. "Behold it," saith John, (1 John iii. 1,) stand amazed at it, that children of wrath should become the sons of the most high God; for a beggar on the dunghill, a vagabond, runagate from God, a prodigal, a stranger to God, whom the Lord had no cause to think on, to be made a son of God Almighty.

If sons, then the Lord doth prize and esteem you as sons. If a man hath twenty sons, he esteems the poorest, least, sick child he hath,

more than all his goods and servants, unless he be an unnatural father; I tell you that the least of you, the poorest and most feeble believer, is accounted of God, and more esteemed than all his household stuff, than heaven, earth, and all the glory [[253]] in it, and all the kings and great men in the world, (Is. xliii. 4-6;) not because thou hast done any thing worthy of this, but only because he accounts thee freely as his son.

If sons, then the Lord surely will take care for you as for sons; a godly father hath a double care of his children. First, of their temporal; secondly, and chiefly, of their eternal estate; we are ready to question, in times of want, what we shall eat, drink, how we shall live. O, consider, art thou a son of God, and will not He that "feeds the ravens, and clothes the lilies," provide for thee? Yes, verily, he will take care for thy temporal good. It is true, you may be brought into outward straits, wants, miseries; yet then the Lord is thereby plotting for thy eternal good; for hence come all God's corrections, (Deut. viii. 5; Heb. xii. 8;) the Lord took all they had from them by their enemies in war, and carried them away captive into a strange land; yet (Jer. xxiv. 5) this was for their good: we think the Lord many times takes no care for us, and so make him of a worse nature than the savage beasts, or bloody men, toward their young; but this is certain--he never denies any thing to us in outward things, but it is to further our eternal Miss with him, to do us good in our latter end: what say godly parents? it is no matter what becomes of my children, when I am dead, if the Lord would but give them himself to be their portion; if at last they may see the Lord in glory: do not wonder, then, if the Lord keeps you short sometimes.

If sons, then he loves you as sons, as a father doth his sons; you think the Lord loves you not, because you do not always feel his love, nor know his love. Is thy son not thy child, because while it is young it

knows not the father that begot it, or because thou art sometimes departed from it, and hast it not always in thine own arms? "Israel saith, My God hath forsaken me and forgotten me," (Is. xlix. 14;) and yet no mother tenders her child as the Lord did them; you think, because you have so many sins and afflictions one upon another, that the Lord loves you not: judge righteously; hath thy child no father because it is sick long together, and therefore kept under unto a spare diet? no, he knows our mold, and that we are but dust, and freely chooses us to be his sons, and hence loves, notwithstanding all our sins. (Ps. lxxxix. 32, 33.) If he sees Ephraim bemoaning his stubbornness, as well as his sickness and weakness, (Jer. xxxi. 20,) doth not the Lord profess, "Is he not my only son?"

If sons, then we are "heirs and co-heirs with Christ," saith the apostle, (Rom, viii. 17;) sons by nature are not always heirs, but all sons by adoption are: we are heirs with Christ, the Lord [[254]] Christ as our elder brother, managing all our estate for us, because unable to do it ourselves; we are heirs, 1. Of the kingdom of glory. (1 Pet. i. 4, 5.) 2. Heirs of all this visible world, (1 Cor. iii. 22;) not that we have the whole world in our own hand, (it would be too cumbersome to us to manage,) but the Lord gives us the rent of it, the blessing and good of it, though it be possessed by others. 3. We are heirs of "the promise," (Heb. xi. 9; vi. 17;) whereby Jehovah himself comes to be our inheritance and portion forever; and look, as Christ was in the world an heir of all, though trod under foot by all, so are we; what can we desire more?

If sons, then we have, and shall ever have, the spirit of sons, (Rom. viii. 15, 16;) and what are we the better for this spirit? Truly, hereby, First, we cry unto him; we are enabled to pray who could not pray before, because guilt stopped our mouths. Secondly, we cry, Abba, Father; and this Spirit witnesseth that we are sons of this Father: it is

not said that it witnesseth to our spirits, but *συ ηνχτυρει*, it witnesseth with our spirits, i. e., our renewed conscience, thus: All believers called and justified of God are sons; but I am such a believer; therefore I am a son: now, the Spirit bears witness with us in every part, both premises and conclusion, only it being the clearest and strongest witness, it testifies the same thing our consciences do, but yet more clearly, more certainly, more comfortably and sweetly, ravishing the soul with most unspeakable peace and joy, especially in the conclusion. I know there is a Noetic testimony, but it is lastly resolved into this: I will not now dispute it, only this is certain; that this testimony all the sons of God have by means of their adoption. They may not indeed sometimes hear it; if they do, they may object against it through the unbelief in part remaining in them; or if it be sometimes suspended, what you want in the witness and comfort of it, you have it in the holiness of it; and, therefore, the Spirit sealing is called "the Holy Spirit," (Eph. iv. 30; 1 Pet. i. 6-8;) and is not this a great privilege? Thirdly, hereby you are led and guided, and that continually, toward your last end. For as, if Adam had stood, he should have had the Spirit of God, this very Spirit to have kept him and all his posterity from falling at any time from God, so Christ, having stood for us, justified us before God, sends the immutable constant assistance of the Spirit in adoption, which, though it doth not always quicken us, nor comfort us, nor assure us, etc., yet it is every moment guiding and leading of us unto our utmost end. From hence it is, that the same sins which harden others, at last humble us, the same [[255]] temptations by which others fall and perish, serve at last to purify us.; hence our decay in grace leads us to growth at last, hence our fears and doubts serve to establish at last, hence our wanderings from God for a time make us esteem more of the presence and ways of God at last, because this Spirit of adoption is that by which we are led, and constantly assisted and carried toward our latter end. O, mourn, thou that art as yet no son, hut a slave to Satan

and unto thy filthy lusts; a servant at best, working for wages only, and fear of the whip, who shalt not only abide in God's house as sons shall do; nay, it may be, hast hated and reviled the sons of God; time shall come that you shall wonder at their glory, who are not known now.

Section IV.--Sanctification.

This is the fourth benefit which follows in order of nature -- our justification, reconciliation, and adoption; for, upon our being sons in adoption, we receive the image of our heavenly Father in sanctification, because we are under grace. Hence it comes to pass that we are freed from the "reigning power of sin," (Rom. vi. 14,) so that our sanctification follows our justification, and adoption goes not before it. In justification, we have the love and righteousness of the Son; in reconciliation, the love of the Father; in adoption, the love of a Father and presence of the Spirit assisting, witnessing; in sanctification, the image of our Father by the same Spirit: and this I conceive, with submission, is "the seal of the Spirit" mentioned Eph. i. 13; the "seal sealing" is the Spirit itself; the "seal sealed" consists, first, in the expression of it in adoption; secondly, in the impression of it in sanctification, and that he only shall pass as current coin that hath both these. I know the most full and clear expression and testimony of the Spirit is after all God's work is finished in glorification; but the beginning of it is here in adoption, a fuller measure of it in sanctification; God's seal is ever set to some promise, (as men's seals to some bond, not to blanks;) the Lord's promise of actual justification and reconciliation pertains only to men sanctified

or called: in adoption, therefore, we receive the Spirit, which looks both ways, testifying either thou sanctified, art justified, or thou called, art justified and reconciled. I speak not now of external sanctification by outward show and profession, and common illumination and operation of the Spirit [[256]] upon men, from which many fall away, (Heb. x. 29,) but of internal and special, the nature of which you may best conceive in these three degrees: --

It is the renewing of a man. So that by it a man is morally made a new man -- another man. "All things are become new;" he hath new thoughts, new opinions of things, new desires, new prayers and praises, new dispositions, regeneration not differing from it.

It is a renewing of the whole man, (1 Thess. v. 23;) for on every part and faculty of man is corrupt by the first Adam, they are renewed by the second Adam; not that we are perfectly renewed in this life by Christ, as we are corrupt by Adam, but in part in every faculty, (Rom. vi. 19;) and from hence ariseth our spiritual combat and warfare with sin, yea, with all sin; it is not because of our sanctification simply, (for if it were perfect, we should war and wrestle no more,) but from the imperfection of it. And this renewal in part is in every part, even in the whole man; and as the first Adam propagates sin chiefly and radically in the soul, especially into the heart of man, and from thence it diffuseth itself like leaven into the whole lump of our lives, so the Lord Jesus chiefly communicates this renewal into our hearts, and thence it sweetens our lives, and hence it is called "the inner man." (Rom. vii. 22. Eph. iii. 16.) You see a little holiness in a Christian; I tell you, if he be of the right make, there is a kind of infinite endless holiness within him from whence it springs, as there is a kind of infinite endless wickedness in a wicked man, from whence his sins spring: if a man be outwardly holy, but not within, he is not sanctified, no more than the painted sepulchres of the

proud Pharisees; if any man say his heart is good, though he makes no show in his life, he speaks not the truth, if the apostle may be believed, (1 John i. 6;) for sanctification is a renewal of the whole man, within and without; it is not for a man to have his teeth white, and his tongue tipped, and his nails pared; no, no, the Lord makes all new where he comes.

It is a renewal unto the image of God, or of God in Christ; an unsanctified man may be after a sort renewed in the whole man, his outward conversation may be fair, his mind may be enlightened, his heart may taste of the heavenly gift, etc., (Heb. vi. 4, 5,) he may have a form of godliness, (2 Tim. iii. 5,) he may have strong resolutions within him unto godliness, (Deut. v. 29,) and hence with the five foolish virgins may be received into the fellowship of the wise, and not discerned of them neither, till the gate is shut; but they are never renewed in their whole [[257]] man "after the image of God:" i. e., they do not know things and judge of them, as God doth; they do not love and will holiness and the means thereto, as God doth; they hate not sin, as God doth; they do not delight in* the whole law of God; it is not writ in their hearts, and hence they love it not as God doth; and this is the cut of the thread between a sanctified and unsanctified spirit; by sanctification a man is renewed unto God's image, once lost, but here again restored. (Eph. iv. 2-1. John i. 16.) We receive from Christ grace for grace, as the seal on the wax hath tittle for tittle to that in the seal itself; we are changed into the same image of Christ by beholding him in the glass of the gospel by faith. (2 Cor. iii. 18.) "I delight in the law of God in in}' inward man," (Rom. vii. 23;) and hence a Christian, by the life of sanctification, lives like unto God; at least hath a holy disposition and inclination (the habits of holiness) so to do. (Gal. ii. 19.) "I live unto God; he calleth us from darkness into his marvelous light, that we might show forth his virtues;" and that this is true sanctification may thus appear: because

our sanctification is opposed to our original corruption, as our justification to our original and contracted guilt of sin: now, as original corruption is the defacing of God's image by contrary dispositions to sinfulness, so our sanctification

I can be nothing else but the removal of this pollution, by the contrary habits and dispositions to be like unto God again; our sanctification is to be holy, (Lev. xx. 7;) our holiness hath no other primary pattern but God's holiness, so that our sanctification is not the righteousness and holiness as it is inherent in Christ, for that is the matter of our justification, and therefore sanctification must be that holiness which is derived unto us

I from Christ, whereby we are made like unto him; and thus Christ is made "sanctification unto us." (1 Cor. i. 30.) There should be no difference between Christ our righteousness and sanctification, if that holiness which is in Christ should be both unto us. Hence, also, sanctification is not the immediate operation of the Spirit upon us, without created habits of grace abiding in us, as the spirit that came upon Balaam, and mightily affected him for a time, hut left him as destitute of any grace or change of his nature as the ass he rode on. No, no; it renews you unto the image of God himself, if you be truly sanctified. And therefore let all those dreams of the Familists, (denying all inherent graces, but only those which are in Christ, to be in the saints,) let them vanish and perish from under the sun, and the good Lord reduce all such who in simplicity are misled from this blessed truth of God. I will not now enter [[258]] into that depth concerning the means of our sanctification, in mortification by Christ's death, and vivification by the resurrection of Christ: this may suffice for explication of the nature of it. Only see and forever prize this privilege, all you blessed souls, whom the Lord hath justified: thou hast many sad complaints: What is it to me, if I be justified in

Christ, and be saved at last by Christ, and my heart remain all this while unholy and unsubdued unto the will of Christ; that he should comfort me, and my holy heart be always grieving of him? what though the Lord save me from misery, but saves me not from my sin? O, consider this benefit. It is true thou findest a woeful, sinful nature within thee, cross and contrary unto holiness, and leading thee daily in captivity; yet remember, the Lord hath given thee another nature, a new nature; there is something else within thee, which makes thee wrestle against sin, and shall in time prevail over all sin, (Matt. xii. 20;) this is the Lord's grace sanctifying of thee. O, be thankful that the Lord hath not left thee wholly corrupt, but hath begun to glorify himself in thee, and to bless thee in turning thee from thine iniquities.

1. By this thou hast a most sweet and comfortable evidence of thy justification and favor with God: he that denies this must (whatever distinction he hath) abolish many places of Scripture, especially the Epistles of James and John, who had to do with some spirits that pretended faith and union to Christ, and communion with him; and so long as it was thus, this was evidence sufficient to them of their justified estates. What saith James? Thou sayest thou hast faith; show it me then; prove it for my part, saith he. I will prove it by the blessed fruits and works which flow from it, as Abraham manifested his. (James ii. 18, 22.) What saith John? You talk (saith he) of fellowship and communion with Christ, and yet what holiness is there in your hearts or lives? If you say you have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth; but if you walk in the light, then, although your holiness, and confession, and daily repentance for sin doth not wash away sin, yet the blood of Christ doth wash us. (1 John i. 6, 7.) Again: you say you know Christ, and the love and good will of Christ toward you, and that he is the propitiation for your sins: how do you know this? Saith he, "He that

saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar." (1 John ii. 4.) True, might some reply, he that keeps not the commandments of Christ hath thereby a sure evidence that he knows him not, and that he is not united unto him; but is this any evidence that we do know him, and that we are united to him, if we do keep his [[259]] commandments? Yes, verily, saith the apostle, "Hereby know we that we know him, if we keep his commandments," (ver. 3;) and again, (ver. 5:) "Hereby know we that we are in him." What can be more plain? What a vanity is this, to say that this is running upon a covenant of works! Is not sanctification, the writing of the law in our hearts, a special benefit of the covenant of grace, as well as justification? (Heb. viii. 10, 12;) and can the evidencing, then, of one benefit of such a covenant, by another, be a running upon the covenant of works? is it a truth contained in the covenant of grace, viz., that he that is justified is also sanctified, and he that is sanctified is also justified? and is it an error against grace to see this truth, that he that is sanctified is certainly justified, and that therefore he that knows himself sanctified may also know thereby that he is justified? Tell me, how will you know that you are justified? You will say, By the testimony of the Spirit; and can not the same Spirit shine upon your graces, and witness that you are sanctified as well? (1 John iv. 13, 24. 1 Cor. ii. 12.) Can the Spirit make the one clear to you, and not the other?

O beloved, it is a sad thing to hear such questions, and such cold answers also, that sanctification possibly may be an evidence: may be? is not certain? Assuredly, to deny it is as bad as to affirm that God's own promises of favor are true evidences thereof, and, consequently, that they are lies and untruths; for search the Scripture, and consider sadly how many evangelical promises are made unto several graces, that is, unto such persons as are invested with them; you may only take a taste from Matt. v. 3, 4, etc., where

our Saviour (who was no legal preacher) pronounced], and consequently evidenceth, blessedness by eight or nine promises, expressly made to such persons as had inherent graces of "poverty, mourning, meekness," etc., there mentioned; the Lord Jesus leaving those precious legacies of his promises unto his children that are called by those names of "mourners," "poor in spirit," "pure in heart," etc., that so ever) one may take and be assured of his position manifested particularly therein; that I many times wonder how it comes to pass that this, so plain and ancient principle of catechism, (for so it was among the Waldenses many hundred years since,) grounded on so many pregnant scriptures, should come to be so much as questioned in our days: sometimes I think it ariseth from some wretched lusts men have a mind to live quietly in; desirous to keep their peace, and yet unwilling to forsake their lusts; and hence they exclude this witness of water, the witness of sanctification, to testify in the court of conscience whether they are beloved of God and [[260]] sincere hearted, or no, because this is a full witness against them, and tells them to their faces that "there is no peace to the wicked," (Is. lvii. ult.; Dent. xxix. 19, 20.) and that the)' "have nothing to do to take God's name in their lips," that seriously "hate to be reformed." (Ps. l. 16.) In others, I think it doth not arise from want of grace, but because the spirit of grace and sanctification runs very low in them; it is so little that they can scarce see it by the help of spectacles; or, if they do, they doubt continually of the truth of it; and hence, because it can speak little, and that little very darkly and obscurely for them, they have no great mind that it should be brought in as any witness for them. Others, I think, may have much grace and holiness, yet, for a time, cast it by as an evidence unto them, because they have experienced how difficult and troublesome it is to find this evidence; and, when it is found, how troublesome to read it, and keep it fair, and thereby have constant peace and quietness; and hence arise those speeches, Why do you look to your

sanctification, a blotted evidence? you may have it to-day, and lose it tomorrow, and then where is your peace? and I do believe the Lord deprives many of his precious saints from the comfort of this evidence, either because they look only to this, and not unto Christ, and their justification by faith, (Rom. v. 1,) or else because there is some secret lust or guile of spirit, (Ps. xxxii. 1, 2,) which the Lord, by sore and long shakings about their call and sanctification, would first winnow out, or because there is a perverse frowardness of spirit, whereby, because they feel not that measure of sanctification which they would, do therefore vilify, and so come to deny what indeed they have; because they "feel a law of sin in their members, leading them away captive;" will not, with Paul, take notice of the law of their minds, whereby that "inner man delights in the law of God," and mourns bitterly "under the body of death," by which they might see, with Paul, that there is "no condemnation" to such. (Rom. viii. 1.) To conclude: whatever is the cause of this crookedness of judgment, I do believe that the general cause is, want of attendance and standing unto the judgment of the Scriptures in this controversy; for if this was stood unto, men would not produce their own experience, viz., that they would never find any evidence from sanctification. but. they have met with it in another way, by the immediate witness of the Spirit only; nor would men cry it down, because grace being mixed with so much corruption, it can hardly be discerned, and so will be always left in doubts, and that the heart is deceitful, and many that have evidenced their estates hereby have been deceived. I confess thus the Popish doctors [[261]] argue against assurance of faith from the Scriptures without special and extraordinary revelation; hut what is all this to the purpose, if the Scriptures make it an evidence? Away, then, with thy corrupt experience; shall this be the judge, or the Scriptures rather? What though many, judging of themselves by marks and signs, have been deceived; yet, if the Scripture make it an evidence, (as we have proved,) then, though

men, through their own weakness or wickedness, have been deceived in misapplying promises, yet the Scriptures can not deceive you. What though it be difficult to discern Christ's grace in us; yet if the Scriptures will have us try our estates by that rule, which in itself is easy, but, to our blindness and weakness, difficult many times to see, who shall, who dares condemn the holy Scriptures? which, as they shall . judge us at the last day, should judge us now. Suppose that divers books and many ministers sometimes give false signs of grace and God's favor; yet doth the Scriptures give any? I shall propose one thing to conscience, as the conclusion of this discourse. Suppose thou wert now lying upon thy death bed, comforting thyself in thy elected and justified estate; suppose the Spirit of God should now grapple with thy conscience, and tell thee, if thou art "justified" then thou art "called and sanctified." (2 Thess. ii. 13,14.) Is it thus with thee? What wilt thou answer? If thou sayest thou art not sanctified, the word and Spirit will bear witness then against thee, and say, Then thou art not elected nor justified; if thou sayest thou knowest not, thou lookest not to sanctification, or fruits of the Spirit, they will then reply, How then canst thou say that thou art elected or justified? for it is a truth as clear as the sun, and as immovable as heaven and earth, none are elected and justified, but they are also sanctified, and they that are not sanctified are not justified. (Rom. viii. 1, 13.) And now tell me, how can you have peace, unless you make your faces like flint before the face of God's eternal truth, or heal your conscience by such a plaster as will not stick? If, therefore, the Lord ever made sin bitter to thee, let holiness be sweet; if continuance in sin hath been an evidence unto thee of thy condemnation, O, let the riches of the grace of Christ, in redeeming thee from the lamentable bondage and power of sin, be an evidence to thee of thy salvation. O, bless God for any little measure of sanctification; do not scorn or secretly despise this spirit of grace, as many in this degenerate age begin to do, saying, You look to graces, and fruits, and marks, and signs, and a holy

frame of heart, and sanctification; what is your sanctification? O, let it be the more precious to thee, mourning that thou hast so little, and blessing the God and Father of all grace for what little thou [[262]] hast, wearing it as a bracelet of gold about thy neck, knowing hereby thou art horn of God, and that "the whole world lieth in wickedness," and shall perish without this. (1 John v. 18, 19.)

2. This is your glory and beauty, this is glorification begun; what greater glory than to be like unto God? To be like unto God is to be next to God; and therefore this is called glory; (2 Cor. iii. 18,) "We are changed into the same image from glory to glory." Every degree of grace is glory, and the perfection of glory in heaven consists chiefly in the perfection of grace; what is the work of some men at this day but to cast reproach upon sanctification, our glory?

8. This will give you abundance of sweet peace, and therefore (Heb. xii. 11) it is called the quiet fruit of righteousness; for from whence come the sore troubles and continual doubts of God's favor in many men's consciences? Is it not some decay or guile here? (Ps. xxxii. 1, 2.) Is it not some boldness to sin, that they "walk not in fear," and therefore not in the "consolation of the Holy Ghost"? Is it not their secret dalliance with some known sin, continued in with secret impenitency? Is it not because they labor with some strong unmortified corruption, pride, or passions, that they are in daily pangs and throes of conscience for? (Ps. xxxii. 1-4.) What was the rejoicing of Paul? Was it not that "in all sincerity and simplicity he had his conversation among men"? (2 Cor. i. 12.) What was Hezekiah's peace when dying, as he thought? was it not this -- "Lord, remember I have walked before thee uprightly"? (Is. xxxviii. 2, 3;) not that this was the ground of their peace, for that only is free grace in Christ, but this is the means of your peace; (John xiv. 22, 23;) it is a cursed peace which is kept by looking to Christ, yet loving thy lust.

This is that which will make you fit for God's use. (2 Tim. ii. 20, 21.) A filthy, unclean vessel is good for nothing till cleansed. God will not delight to glorify himself much by an unsanctified person. What are thy wife, children, friends, family, the better for thee, if thy heart remain unsanctified?

A little holiness is eminently all, springing up to eternal life; this little spring shall never cease running, but it shall fill heaven itself, and thy soul in it, with abundance of glory. (John iv. 14, and vii. 38.) You despise it because it is but little; I tell you this little is eminently ail, and contains as much as shall be poured out by thee so long as God is God. It is true, thou say-est it is weak and oft soiled, and gives thee not complete power and victory over all sin; yet know that this shall, like the house of David, "grow stronger and stronger," and it shall at last [[268]] prevail, and the Lord will not break thee though thou art bruised by sin daily, until judgment come to victory, and the prince of this world be judged, and thy soul perfected in the day of the Lord Jesus.

Section V.--Audience of all Prayers.

This is the first benefit, which, though it be a fruit of other benefits, yet I name it in special, because I desire first that it might be specially observed; and I place it after our sanctification, because of David's speech, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear my prayer, "(Ps. lxvi. 18;) and that of the apostle, (1 John iii. 22,) "We believe whatever we ask we receive, because we keep his commandments, and do those things which are pleasing in his sight."

As the Lord hath respect to the prayers of his people, not only in regard of their justification, but in some sense in regard of their sanctification also, a justified person, polluted with some personal or common sins of the times, may want that audience and acceptance of his prayers I am now speaking of. That God will hear all the petitions of his people, can there be a greater privilege than this? Yet this our Saviour affirms twice together, because it is so great a promise that we can hardly believe it. (John xiv. 18, 11,) "Whatsoever you ask the Father in my name, that will I do." Mark the scope of the words. Our Saviour had promised that "he that believes in me shall do greater works than I have done." Now, because this might seem strange and impossible, the Lord in those verses tells them how; for saith he, "Whatsoever you ask in my name I will do for you." I will do indeed all that is to be done, but yet it shall be by means of your prayers. Christ did great works when he was upon the earth; but for him to do whatever a poor sinful creature shall desire him to do, what greater work of wonder can there be than this? "This is our confidence," saith the apostle, "that whatever we ask according to his will, he heareth us." (1 John v. 15.) The greatest question here will be, What are those prayers the Lord Jesus will hear? I confess many things are excellently spoken this way; yet I conceive the meaning of this great charter is fully expressed in those words, "in my name." If they be prayers in Christ's name, they shall be heard, and it contains these three things: --

1. To pray in Christ's name is to pray with reliance upon the grace, favor, and worthiness of the merits of Christ; thus this phrase is used, "to walk in the name of their God," is in confidence [[264]] of the authority, and excellency, and favor of their God, that they will bear them out in it. So to pray in Christ's name is to pray for Christ's sake ; thus (Eph. ii. 18) through him (i. e., through his death and sanctification rested upon) we have access with confidence to the

Father, (Eph. iii. 12,) in whom we have boldness, and access with confidence, by the faith of him. There are three evils that commonly attend our prayers when we see God indeed: 1. Shame and flight from God. The apostle saith, therefore, that "by faith in Christ we have access." 2. If we do accede and draw near to him, there is a secret fear and straightness of spirit to open all our minds; therefore saith he, we have boldness; the word signifies liberty of speech to open all our minds without fear or discouragement, 3. After we have thus drawn near and opened all our desires and means before God, we have many doubts; viz., Will the Lord hear such a sinner, and such weak, and imperfect, and sinful prayers? And therefore he also affirms, that we have confidence and assurance of being heard; but all this is by faith in him; for look, as Christ hath purchased all blessing for us by his death, and hence makes his intercession for those things daily, according to our need, so we are much more to rest upon and make that satisfaction the ground of our intercession, because Christ's blood purchased this; therefore, O Lord, grant this.

2. To pray in his name is to pray from his command, and according to his will; as when we send another in our name, we wish him to say thus: Tell him that I desire such a thing of him, and that I sent you; so it is here, and thus the phrase signifies, (John v. 43,) "I am come in my Father's name," i. e., by his authority and command.

To pray in Christ's name, therefore, is to pray according to the will of Christ, and from the will of Christ, when we "take those words" the Lord puts into our mouths, (Hos. xiv. 1-3,) and desire those things only that the Lord commands to seek, whether absolutely or conditionally, "according to his will" revealed, and "with submission to his will" concealed. (1 John v. 14.) "Whatever we ask according to his will, he hears us." (Ps. xxvii. 8. Rom. viii. 26.) If you ask any thing

not according to God's will, you come in your own name; he sent you not with any such message to the Father.

3. To pray in his name is to pray for his ends; for the sake and use of Christ, and glory of Christ. Thus the phrase is used, (Matt. x. 41, 42,) "to receive a prophet in the name of a prophet," i. e., for this end and reason, because he is a prophet. A servant comes in his master's name to ask something of another, when he comes as from his command, so also for his master's use. So, when we pray for Christ's sake, i. e., for his ends, not our own, these ever prevail. (Lam. iv. 3.) "You ask and have not, because you ask amiss, to spend it on your lusts." (John xii. 27, 28. Ps. cxlv. 18.) This is to "ask in truth," to act for a spiritual end; to make it our utmost end, arising from a special, peculiar, supernatural presence of the Spirit of life, and consequently a spirit of prayer which is ever heard. And hence you shall observe, the least groan for Christ's ends is ever heard, because it is the groaning of the Spirit, because it is an act of spiritual life, the formality of which consists in this, that it is "for God." (Gal. ii. 19.) The Lord can not deny what we pray for Christ's ends, because then he should crush Christ's glory. And therefore let a Christian observe, when he would have any thing of God that concerns himself, not to be solicitous so much for the thing, as to gain favor and nearness to God, and a heart subject unto God in a humble contentedness, to be denied as well as to be heard, and he shall undoubtedly find the thing itself. A lust is properly such a desire (though for lawful things) wherein a man must have the thing because it pleaseth him; as when Rachel asked for children, she must have them, else she must needs die. "Give us water that we may drink," was their brutish cry, (Ex. xvii. 1, 2;) not that we may live to Him that gives it. Holy prayers or desires (opposed unto lusts) are such desires of the soul, left with God, with submission to his will, as may best please him. Now, the Lord will hear the desires indeed of all that fear him, but not fulfill

their lusts. These three are the essential properties of such prayer as is heard, or, if you will, of that which is properly or spiritually prayer: fervency and assurance, etc., are excellent ingredients; but yet the Lord may hear prayer without them. It is true, the Lord may sometimes not hear us presently, for our praying time is our sowing time; we must not look presently for the harvest. "The Lord hears the prayer of the destitute," (Ps. cii. 17:) the original word is, of the "shrub," or "naked place of the desert," which the prophet saith (Jer. xvii. 6) "sees no good when good comes;" yet such as feel themselves such, the Lord doth regard them, and will have a time to answer I them; and though the Lord may not give us the thing we pray for, nor so good a thing of the same kind, yet he ever gives us the end of our prayers: he that is at sea, and wants stiff winds to carry him to his port, yet hath no cause to complain if the Lord secretly carries him in by a strong current of the sea itself; and it is certain, at the end of all God's dealing with you, you [[260]] shall then see how the Lord hath not failed to answer you in any one particular. (Josh, xxiii. 14.) O, therefore, see and be persuaded of this your privilege. That God will now hear every prayer, many make a question, How may we know when the Lord grants us any blessing as an answer to prayer? Many things are said to this purpose; but the simplicity and plainness of the answer lie in this, viz., if it be a prayer, God hears it; if it be put up in Christ's name, it is then a prayer: and that you may believe this, and glory in this, consider these reasons, to confirm this truth.

From the promise of Christ as in this place, (John xiv. 13,14.) which was a promise in special, to be accomplished when he came to his kingdom; and therefore, though it is true God's grace is free, and therefore you think the Lord may as well refuse to hear you as hear, yet consider that by his promise he hath bound himself to hear.

From the fatherly disposition that is in God, (John xvi. 26, 27;) and hence "he loves us," and hence can not but hear us.

Because all prayers put up in Christ's name, Christ "makes intercession "that they may be heard. (Heb. vii. 25.) He hath laid down his blood that all our prayers might be heard, (as we have proved;) and indeed, hence ariseth the infinite efficacy of prayer, because it is built upon that which is infinitely and eternally worthy.

Because all prayers of the faithful arise from the Spirit of prayer, (Rom. viii. 26;) because, as that which is for the flesh, is of the flesh, so that which is for the Spirit, or for the sake of Christ, for spiritual ends, is ever of the Spirit. (John vii. 18.)

Because of the glory of Christ, that the Father may be glorified in the .Son. Can not Christ be glorified unless he hear all prayers? Yes, he could; but yet his will is to reveal his glory by this means; so that though thou and thy prayers be vile, and therefore deservest no acceptance or answer, yet remember that his glory is dear. It is the glory of kings to hear some requests and petitions, but they can not bear nor answer all; it is the glory of Christ to hear all, because he is able, without the least dishonor to himself, thus to do. O, be persuaded of this; how should your joy then be full! how should you then delight to be off with him! how would you then encourage all to come unto him! how would you then be constrained to do any thing for him, who is ready to do all for you! But O, woe unto our unbelief, for that which the apostle saith (1 John v. 14) was ground of his confidence, viz., that "whatever we ask according to his [[267]] will, he hears us," is no ground to us; and we may say, and mourn to think, (this is our diffidence.) that, Whatever I ask according to Christ's will, he hears me not. But O. recover from such a distrustful frame, and from all dead-heartedness in this duty withal, lest the

Lord send taskmasters and double our bricks, and then we groan, and sigh, and cry, and learn to pray that way, that will not pray nor believe now. If the Lord will but give us hearts, assuredly you might not only rule yourselves and families, but, by the power of prayer, pull down and raise up kingdoms, dispose of the greatest affairs of the church, nay, of the world; you might hereby work wonders, by means of Him, who, ruling all things, yet is overcome by prayer. (Hos. xii. 4, 5.)

Section VI.-- Glorification.

This is the sixth and last privilege and benefit, and you all know is the last thing in the execution of God's eternal purpose toward all his beloved and chosen ones; whom he hath "predestinated, called, justified," them he hath also "glorified," (Rom. viii. 30;) hereby we are made perfect in holiness; no more sin shall stir in us; perfect also in happiness; no more tears, nor sorrows, nor temptations, nor fears, shall ever molest us, (Heb. xii. 13; Rev. xiv. 13;) and all this shall be in our immediate communion with God in Christ. (Col. i. 18. John xvii. 23, 24.) "We shall be then," saith Paul, "forever with the Lord." If the Lord would but open our eyes, and give us one glimpse of this, what manner of persons should we be! How should we then live! How willingly then should we embrace fagots and flames, prisons and penury! The light afflictions here, would not they work for us glory? Nay, the apostle useth such a phrase which I believe may pose the most curious orator in the world to express to the life of it -- "an exceeding weight of glory." (2 Cor. iv. 17.) What is our life now but a continual dying, carrying daily about us that which is more bitter

than a thousand deaths? What saith the apostle? "You are dead, yet when Christ shall appear, you shall appear with him in glory." The general security of these times foretold by Christ, (especially when churches become virgins, and people are seeking after purity of ordinances,) it shall not be in want of watchfulness against the present corruptions of the times, as in a careless want of expectation of the coming of Christ in glory, not having "our loins girt and lamps burning," nor [[268]] readiness to meet the Lord in glory. (Matt. xxv. 1-5, etc.) O that I were able therefore to give yon a blush and a dark view of this glory, that might raise up our hearts to this work!

Consider the glory of the place: the Jews did and do dream still of an earthly kingdom, at the coming of their Messiah; the Lord dasheth those dreams, and tells them "his kingdom is not of this world," and that he "went away to prepare a place for them, that where he is they might be," (John xiv. 2, 3.) and "be with him to see his glory." (John xvii. 23, 24.) The place shall be the third heaven, called our Father's house, built by his own hand with most exquisite wisdom, fit for so great a God to appear in his glory (John xiv. 2, 3) to all his dear children; called also a "kingdom." (Matt. xxv. 31,) "Come, ye blessed, inherit the kingdom prepared for you," which is the top of all the worldly excellency, called also "an inheritance," (1 Pet. i. 3,) which the holy apostle infinitely blesseth God for, as being our own, and freely given to us, being our Father's inheritance divided among his sons, which is a greater privilege than to be born an heir to all the richest inheritance on this earth, or to be Lord of all this visible world; for this inheritance, he tells us, is, 1. "Incorruptible," whereas, "all this world waxeth old as a garment." 2. It is undefiled, never yet polluted with any sin, no, not by the angels that fell, for they fell in paradise, when guardians to man; whereas "this whole creation groaneth under burden and bondage of corruption." (Rom. viii.)

3. This never fadeth away; it is not like flowers, whose glory and beauty soon wither, but this shall be most pleasant, sweet, and ever delightsome, after we have been ten thousand years in it, as it was the first day we entered into it. (for this is the meaning of the word, and so it differs from incorruptible;) whereas in this world (suppose a man should ever enjoy it, yet) there grows a secret satiety and fullness upon our hearts, and it grows common, and blessings of greatest price are not so sweet as the first time we enjoy them; they clog the stomach and glut the soul: but here our eyes, ears, minds, hearts, shall be ever ravished with that admirable glory which shines brighter than ten thousand suns, the very fabric of it being God's needlework, (if I may so say,) quilted with variety of all flowers, in divers colors, by the exactest art of God himself, as the apostle intimates. (Heb. xi. 10.)

Secondly. Consider of the glory of the bodies of the saints in this place: the Lord shall change our vile bodies, which are but as dirt upon our wings, and clogs tit our feet, as the apostle expresseth it. (Phil. iii. ult.) Paul was in the third heaven, and saw the glory, [[269]] doubtless, of some there: see what he saith of them. (1 Cor. xv. 42-44.)

1. It shall be an incorruptible body: it shall never die, nor rot again; no, not in the least degree tending that way; it shall never grow weary, (as now it is by hard labor, and sometimes by holy duties,) nor faint, nor grow wrinkled and withered. Adam's body in innocency *potiut non mori*, we say truly; but this *non potest mori*, it can not die: and hence it is, that there shall be no more sickness, pains, griefs, faintings, fits, etc., when it comes there.

2. It shall be a glorious body: it shall "rise in honor," saith Paul; and what glory shall it have! Verily, it shall be like "unto Christ's glorious

body," (Phil. iii. ult..) which, when Paul saw, (Acts ix.,) did "shine brighter than the sun; "and therefore here shall be no imperfection of limbs, scars, or maims, natural or accidental deformities; but as the third heaven itself is most lightsome, (Gen. i. 1, 2,) so their bodies that inhabit that shall exceed the light and glory thereof, these being more compacted, and thence shining out in greater luster, that the eyes of all beholders shall be infinitely ravished to see such clods of earth as now we are advanced to such incomparable beauty and amiableness of heavenly glory.

3. It shall be a "powerful, strong body: it is sown in weakness," saith Paul, "it shall rise in power;" it shall be able to help forward the divine operations of the soul, which are now clogged by a feeble body; it shall be able to bear the weight of glory, the joy unspeakable and full of glory, which our weak bodies can not long endure here, but we begin to burst and break in pieces (like vessels full of strong spirits) with the weight and working of them; and therefore the Lord in mercy keeps us short now of what else we should feel; it shall be able to sing hallelujahs, and give honor, glory, power, to the Lamb that sits upon the throne, forevermore, without the least weariness.

4. It shall be a spiritual body: our body now is acted by animal spirits, and being earthly and natural, grows, feeds, eats, drinks, sleeps, and hath natural affections and desires after these things, and is troubled if it wants them; but then these same bodies shall live by the indwelling of the Spirit of God poured out abundantly in us and upon us, and so acting our bodies, and swallowing up all such natural affections and motions as those be here; as Moses, being with God in the mount forty days and nights, did not need any meat or drink, the Lord and his glory being all unto him: how much more shall it be thus then! I do not say we shall be spirits like the angels, but our bodies shall be [[270]] spiritual, having no natural desires after any

earthly blessing, food, raiment, etc., nor troubled with the want of them: and hence also the body shall be able as well to ascend up as now it is to descend down; as Austin shows by a similitude of lead, which some artists can beat so small as to make it swim: we are now earthly, and made to live on this earth, and hence fall down to the center; but we are made then to be above forever with the Lord, the Lord proceeding from imperfection to perfection, as the apostle here shows; not first spiritual, and then natural; but first that which is natural, (in this life,) and then that which is spiritual.

5. Consider the glory of the soul: now we know but in part, and see but in part; now we have joy at sometimes, and then eclipses befall us on a sudden; but then "the Lord shall be our everlasting light," (Is. lx. 19;) then we shall "see God face to face." (1 John iii. 1, 2.) We shall then know and see those things that have been hid, not only from the wicked, but from the deepest thoughts of the saints themselves in this world. (2 Cor. xii. 4.)

Paul saw some things "not fit to be uttered," or that he "could not utter:" we shall be swallowed up in those depths of grace, glory, immediate vision; God shall be all in all. The souls shall now enjoy, 1. The accomplishment of all promises which we see not here made good unto us. (1 Cor. xv. 24.) Then you shall have restitution of all these at times of refreshing, wherein your sins shall be publicly blotted out from the presence of the Lord. (Acts iii. 19.) If Joshua said, (Josh, xxiii. 14.) when the people's warfare was ended, "See if the Lord hath been wanting in one word to you," much more will the Lord Jesus say unto you then.

2. Then you shall receive a full answer to all your prayers: all that grace, holiness, power over sin, Satan, fellowship with God, life of

Christ, blessing of God, which you sought for, and wept for, and suffered for here, you shall then see all answered.

3. Then you shall find the comfort of all that you have done for God. (Rev. xiv. 13.) Your work in this sense shall follow you; you shall then infinitely rejoice that ever you did any thing for God; that ever you thought of him, spoke to him, and spoke for him; that ever you gave any one blow to your pride, passions, lust, natural concupiscence, etc.; you shall then enjoy the reward of all your sufferings, cares, sorrows for God's Christ, fastings, and days of mourning, whether publicly or secretly, for God's people. (2 Cor. iv. 17.) The same glory God hath given Christ, the Lord shall at that time give unto you. (John xvii. 22.) [[271]] It shall not be with us there as it was with the wicked Israelites, who when they came into the good land of rest, they then forgot .the Lord and all his works past: no, no, all that which God hath done for you in this world, you shall then look back and see, and wonder, and love, and bless, and suck the sweet of, forevermore. 'It is a fond, weak question, to think whether we shall know one another in heaven. Verily, you shall remember the good the Lord did you here; by what means the Lord humbled you; by what ministry the Lord called you; by what friends the Lord comforted and refreshed you: and there you shall see them with you. Do you think you shall forget the Lord and his works in heaven, which (it may be) you took little notice of, and the Lord had little glory for here?

Fourthly. Consider the glory of the company and fellowship you shall have here. 1. Angels. (Heb. xii. 23, 24.) They will love you, and comfort you, and rejoice with you, and speak of the great things the Lord hath done for you, as they did on earth to the shepherds. (Luke ii. 10.) "Be not afraid," saith the angel, (Matt, xxviii. 5:) "I know ye seek Jesus." So will they say then, Be ever comforted, ye are blessed

servants of the Lord, for we know 3'ou are loved of the Lord Jesus. 2. Saints. You shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of God; be taken into the bosom of Abraham, and there we shall speak with them of the Lord's wonders, of his Christ and kingdom. (Ps. cxlv. 11,) and every sentence and word shall be milk and houe3', sweeter than thy life now can be unto thee. We shall know, and love, and honor one another exceedingly. 3. The man Christ Jesus: when Mary clasped about him, (John xx. 17,) "Let me alone," said he; "touch me not; I am not yet ascended to my Father." As if he had said, (saith Austin,) Then shall be the place and time wherein we shall embrace one another forevermore. Never were husband and loving wife so familiar one with another as the Lord Jesus will be, (not carnally and in an earthly manner, but) in a most heavenly, glorious, yet gracious manner, with all his saints. "Come, ye blessed," will he then say to them: we shall then ever be, not only in the Lord, but with the Lord, saith Paul. (1 Thess. iv. ult.; v. 10.) Just as Moses and Elias in his transfiguration, that talked with him, (which was a glimpse of our future glor3',) so shall we then, (Luke xii. 37,) and you shall then see that love of his, that blessed j bosom of love opened fully, which the apostle saith "passeth knowledge." (Eph. iii. 19.) I need not tell you of your fellowship with the Father, also when the Son shall give up the kingdom to him that he may be all in all.

[[272]] Fifthly. Consider the glory of your work there; which is only to glorify this God.

You shall then lire like Christ in glory. We shall think and speak all with glory. (1 John iii. 1, 2.) Our strings shall be then raised up to the highest strain of sweet melody and glory.

You shall then bless him, (Eph. i. 6; iv. 30.) and that with ravishment; you shall come then to the full acknowledgment of the

Son of God; you shall see and say all this is the work and grace of Christ, and then shall cry out, O, let all angels, saints, ever bless him for this. What should I speak an}1 more? You will say, Is this certain? Can this be so? Yes, assuredly, for Christ is gone to prepare this place and glory for you. (John xiv. 2, 3.) We have also the first fruits of this glory, which we feel sometimes, whereby we see, and taste, and drink, and long for more of that joy unspeakable, and peace that passeth understanding, that triumph over the rage and working power of remaining corruption, that dark vision of God, and holy glorying and boasting in him as our everlasting portion, etc., which can not be delusions and dreams, which never feed, but ever leave the deceived soul hungry, but are realities and things indeed, which satiate the weary soul, and fill it up with the very fullness of God himself, (Eph. iii. 19;) and therefore it is certain that we shall have the harvest that thus taste of the fruits, and the whole sum paid us faithfully that have already the earnest penny. The Lord also fits us for this, as the apostle disputes. (2 Cor. v. 4, 5.) What means the Lord to deny our requests in many things as long as we live? What is his meaning not to let us see the accomplishment of many of his promises? Is it because he is unfaithful? or because he would let us know there is a day of refreshing he hath reserved for us, and would have us look for, wherein we shall see it hath not been a vain thing for us to pray, or him to promise? Why doth he afflict us, and keep us more miserable, both by outward sorrows and inward miseries, than any other people in the world? Doth he not hereby humble us, empty us, wean us from hence, and make us as it were vessels big enough to hold glory, which we hope for in another world?

But you will say, Can this glory be thus great? We see it is certain it shall be so; but shall it be so exceeding great and endless? Yes, verily, because, --

1. The price is great which is paid for it. (Eph. i. 14.) It is a purchased possession, (by the blood of Christ we enter into the holy of holies;) a price of infinite value must bring a kind of infinite glory.

[[273]] We are, by Christ, nearer to God than angels are, whose glory we see is very great.

Shall not our glory be to set out the glory of Christ? (2 Thess. i. 10;) and if so, then if this glory be exceeding great, ours must bear a due proportion, and be very great also.

Doth not God pick out the poor and vile things of the world to be vessels of glory? (1 Cor. i. 27;) and is not that an argument that he intends exceedingly to glorify himself on such? to raise up a most glorious building, where he lays so low a foundation?

Are we not loved with the same love as he hath loved Christ? (John xvii. ult. ;) and shall not our glory abound then exceedingly?

Are not the torment and shame of the reprobates to be exceeding great and grievous? doth not God raise them up to make his power known? (Rom. ix. 23.) What then shall we think, on the contrary, of the glory of the saints, wherein the Lord shall set forth his power in glorifying them, as he doth the glory of his power in punishing others? and therefore (2 Thess. i. 9) the punishment of the wicked is expressed by separation of them "from the glory of the Lord's power;" because that in the glory of the saints the Lord will (as I may so say) make them as glorious as by his power, ruled by wisdom, he is able to make them. This is, therefore, the great glory of all those whom God hath called to the fellowship of his dear Son; and which is yet more, blessed be God, the time is not long but that we shall feel what now we do but hear of, and see but a little of, as we use to do of things afar off. We are here but strangers, and have no "abiding city;"

we look for this "that hath foundations;" and, therefore, let sin press us down, and weary us out with wrestling with it; let Satan tempt, and cast his darts at us; let our drink be our tears day and night, and our meat gall and wormwood; let us be shut up in choking prisons, and cast out for dead in the streets, nay, upon dunghills, and none to bury us; let us live alone as pelicans in the wilderness, and be driven among wild beasts into deserts; let us be scourged, and disgraced, stoned, sawn asunder, and burnt; let us live in sheep skins and goat skins, destitute, afflicted, tormented, (as who looks not for such days shortly?) yet, O brethren, the time is not long, but when we are at the worst, and death ready to swallow us up, we shall cry out, O glory, glory, O welcome, glory. If our miseries here be long, they shall be light; if very bitter, they shall be short; however, long or short, they can not be to us long, who look for an eternal [[274]] weight of glory. Who would not (that considers of these things) despise this world, and set it at his heels, who hath all these privileges and benefits, with Christ in his eye? who would not abhor a filthy lust to enjoy such a Christ? who would ever look back unto his flesh pots, or father's house, that hath such welcome made him the first moment he comes to the Lord Jesus, in having present fruition of some of these benefits, but. present right unto all; fruition of some by feeling, of all by faith? But O, the wrath of God upon these times, that either see not this glory, or, if they do, despise so great salvation! Christ, and pardon, and peace, adoption, grace, and glory, are brought home to our doors, but their price is fallen in our market, and we think it better to be without Christ with our lusts, than to be in Christ with his benefits. The reproach of Christ was dearer to Moses (as great a courtier, and as strong a headpiece, as our times can afford) than all the riches and honors of Egypt; but the grace, and peace, and life, and glory of Jesus Christ is viler to us than the very onions, and leeks, and flesh pots of Egypt; if you had but naked Christ (our life) for a prey in these evil times, you had no cause to complain, but

infinitely to rejoice in your portion; but when with Christ you shall find all these benefits and privileges coming in as to your portion, and yet to despise him! Assuredly the Lord will not bear with this contempt always. Away to the mountains, and hasten from the towns and cities of your habitation, where the grace of Christ is published, but universally despised, you blessed, called ones of the Lord Jesus; for the days are coming wherein for this sin the heavens and earth shall shake, the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, and men's hearts failing for fear of the horrible plagues which are coming upon the face of the earth. Dream not of fair weather, expect not better days, till you hear men say, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord," who thus "blesseth his with all spiritual blessings in Christ." (Eph. i. 3.) I now proceed to the last.

CHAPTER III.

All those that are translated into this blessed estate are bound to live the life of love, in fruitful and thankful obedience unto him that hath called them, according to the rule of the moral law.--Ps. xl. 7, 8.

The Lord doth no sooner call his people to himself, but as soon as ever he hath thus crowned them with these glorious privileges, and given them any sense and feeling of them, but they immediately cry out, O Lord, what shall I now do for thee? how shall I now live to

thee? They know now they are no more their own, but his, and therefore should now live to him. If you ask Moses, after all the love and kindness the Lord had shown Israel, what Israel should do for him, you shall see his answer full, (Deut. x. 12, 13,) "And now, O Israel, what doth the Lord require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, and to love him, and serve him with all thy heart, and to keep his commandments, which I command thee this day for thy good?" If you ask Paul (as evangelical a Christian as ever lived) what now we are to do when we are in Christ, he answers punctually, (2 Cor. v. 14, 15,) "The love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that Christ dying for those that were dead, they that live should not live unto themselves, but unto him that died for them and rose again." If we ask Peter the question, to what end the Lord hath "called us out of darkness into his marvelous light," he expressly tells you it is "to show forth the virtues of him that hath so called us." (1 Pet. ii. 9.) If we be doubtful whether this be the Lord's mind, the Lord himself resolves it by Zechariah, (Luke i. 74,) and tells us that it is his oath, "that, we being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, we should serve him without fear in holiness" (in all the rules of the first table) "and righteousness" (in all duties of the second table) "all the days of our life," and that all this should not be out of a spirit of bondage and slavish fear, but "without fear," that is, fear of our enemies, sin, death, wrath, and so, consequently, out of love to him that hath delivered us; that one would wonder it should ever enter the heart of any Christian man that hath tasted the love of Christ, as to think that there is no use of the law to one in Christ; and that because they are to live the life of love to Christ, that therefore they are not to look to the law as the rule of their love, expressly cross to the letter of the text, (John xiv. 15,) "If ye love me, keep my commandments;" which commandments [[276]] are not only faith and love to the saints, but love to enemies, and spiritual obedience unto the moral law, in a far different manner and measure than as the Pharisees instructed the

people in those days, as you may see. (Matt. v. 17.) It is true, indeed, obedience to the law is not required of us now, as it was of Adam; it was required of him as a condition antecedent to life; but of those that be in Christ it is required only as a duty consequent to life, or as a rule of life, that seeing he hath purchased our lives in redemption, and actually given us life in vocation and sanctification, we should now live unto him, in all thankful and fruitful obedience, according to his will revealed in the moral law. It is a vain thing to imagine that our obedience is to have no other rule but the Spirit, without any attendance to the law. The Spirit, indeed, is the efficient cause of our obedience, and hence we are said to be led by the Spirit, (Rom. viii. 14;) but it is not properly the rule of our obedience, but the will of God revealed in his word, especially in the law, is the rule. The Spirit is the wind that drives us in our obedience; the law is our compass, according to which it steers our course for us. The Spirit and the law, the wind and the compass, can stand well together. (Ps. cxliii. 10.)

" Teach me to do thy will, O God; "(there is David's rule, viz., God's will revealed;) "thy Spirit is good;" (there is David's wind, that enabled him to steer his course according to it;) "the Spirit of life doth free us from the law of sin and death," but not from the holy, and pure, and good, and righteous law of God. (Rom. viii. 1-8.) "The blood of Christ by the Spirit cleanseth us from dead works, to serve the living God, (Heb. ix. 14,) not to serve our own selves, or lusts, or wills, to do what we please. The law indeed is not a rule of that by which we are to obey, viz., of our faith; yet it is the only rule of what we are to obey; we are not to perform acts of obedience now as Adam was to do, viz.. by the sole power of inherent grace; but we are to live by faith, and act by faith, (for "without me you can do nothing," John xv. 5;)we are not united to Christ, our life, by obedience, as Adam was to God by it, but by faith; and therefore, as all action, in living things, comes from union, so all our acts of obedience are to come by

faith from the Spirit on Christ's part, and from faith on our part, which makes our union. Noah built by faith, Enoch walked with God by faith, Joshua and his soldiers fought by faith, Abraham traveled, dwelt in his tents, lived and died, by faith; they acted according to the rule, but all by the power of faith. It is a weak reasoning to imagine a man is not bound to pay his debts because he is to go unto another for the money. Obedience [[277]] is our debt we owe to Christ, (Luke xvii. 10,) though we are to go to Christ poor, and weak, and feeble, to enable us to pay. It is true, Christ hath kept the law for us; and are we therefore free from it as our rule? No, verily; Christ kept the law for satisfaction to justice, and so we are not bound to keep the law. He kept the law also for imitation, to give us a copy and an example of all holiness, and glorifying God in our obedience; and thus Christ's obedience is so far from exempting us from the law, as that it engageth us the more, having both rule and exercise before us. (1 John ii. 6.) "He that saith he abideth in him ought to walk as he walked." (1 Pet. i. 14-16.) It is true, the law is writ in a believer's heart, and if he hath a law within, what need he, say some, look to the law without? when as our Saviour and David argued quite contrary, (Ps. xl. 7, 8,) "I come; I delight to do thy will, it being written of me that I should do it," because "thy law is within my heart." This argues that you are not to attend the law unwillingly, as bondmen and slaves, but willingly and gladly, because the law, even the law of love in your hearts. (1 John v. 3.) The place alleged by some for this liberty from the law, viz., "the law is not made for a righteous man," (1 Tim. i. 1,) if well considered, fully dasheth this dream in pieces; for there were divers Jewish preachers of Moses' law, and they had a world of scruples and questions about it, (ver. 4;) and Paul and others were accounted of as men less zealous, because they did not sound upon that string so much. Away, saith Paul, with those contentious questions; "for the end of the commandment" is not scruples and questions, but charity and love, (i. e., both to God

and man) "out of a pure heart and faith unfeigned." (ver. 4.) And saith he, "The law is very good "when "used lawfully," that is, for this end, and out of these principles; (ver. 8;) it is not talking, but doing, and that out of love, which is the end and scope of the law; so that, note by the way, you may as well abolish love as abolish the law, love being the end and scope of the law. But to proceed: "The law is not made" (saith he) "for the righteous," i. e. for the condemnation of the righteous, i. e., of such as, out of a pure heart and faith unfeigned, love God in the first table, love to show all duties of respect to man in the second table; and therefore they, of all other men, have no cause to abolish the law, as if it was a bugbear, or a thing that could hurt them; but it is made for the condemnation of the lawless Anomians, - - as the original word is, -- or, if you will, Antinomians, (transgressors of the first command,) and disobedient, (transgressors of the second command,) for ungodly and sinners, (transgressors of the third command.) for unholy and [[278]] profane, (transgressors of the fourth command.) for murderers of fathers and mothers, (of the fifth command,) for man slayers, (of the sixth,) for whoremongers and defilers of mankind, (of the seventh,) for man stealers, (of the eighth,) for liars, (of the ninth,) and for those that in any thing walk contrary to sound doctrine, the purity of the law and will of God, (of the tenth;) so that this place is far from favoring any of those that run in this channel of abolishing the law as our rule. No, beloved, the love of Christ will constrain you to embrace it as a most precious treasure. It is the observation of some, that in the preface to the moral law, (Ex. xx. 1, 2,) the Lord reveals himself to be "the Lord their God that brought them out of the land of Egypt; "the very scope of which words is to persuade to a reverend receiving and keeping of that good law. This law all nations are bound to observe, because he is Jehovah the Lord; but to be thy God in special covenant, and that "redeemed thee from Egypt," and from that which was typified by it, this belongs to none but unto them especially that

are the people of God, and therefore, of all other people in the world, they are bound to receive it as their rule; for obedience doth not make us God's people, or God our God; but he is first our God, -- which is only by the covenant of grace, -- and thence it is, that being ours, and we his, we, of all others, are most bound to obey.

To conclude: They that stick in these briers, therefore, cry down the law as a Christian's rule, because by this means a Christian shall find no peace; because he is continually sinning against this law; the law, therefore, say they, will be always troubling of him.

I answer, first, a corrupt heart and putrid conscience can have no peace by the law; (Is. lvii. 21,) "There is no peace to the wicked," and it is good it should be so.

A watchful Christian may. (Ps. cxix. 15,) "Great peace have they that keep thy law." Hezekiah had it when he desired "the Lord to remember how he had walked before him with a perfect heart." (Is. lviii. 1-3.) Paul found it "the testimony of his conscience "bearing him witness, was "his rejoicing herein." (2 Cor. i. 12.)

If a Christian ignorant of maintaining his peace with God by faith in his justification, notwithstanding all the errors in his obedience and sanctification; if, I say, he wants his peace, shall we, therefore, break the law in pieces? If a secure Christian that walks loosely wants peace, by the accusations of the law, it is God's mercy to him to give him no peace in himself, while he is at truce with his lust.

[[279]] 4. That peace will end in dismal sorrow which is got by kicking against the law; it is but daubing for a man to keep his peace by shutting his eyes against the way of peace. A servant may have peace in his idleness by thinking that his master requires no work from him, and by hiding his talent; yet what will his lord say to him

when his day is ended, and he comes to reckon with him at sunset? Bring the law into thy conscience in point of justification; it will trouble conscience; for there only Christ's righteousness, God's grace, and the promise, are to be looked on, and our own obedience and holiness laid up in the dust; but bring it before thee as a rule of thy sanctification, and as thy copy to write after and to imitate, and aspire after that perfection it requires, it will then trouble thee no more than it doth a child, who, having a fair copy set him to write after, and knowing that he is a son, is not therefore troubled, because he can not write as fair as his copy; he knows, if he imitates it, his scribbling shall be accepted: howsoever, though his father may chastise him with rods, if he be careless to imitate, yet he will never east him therefore off from being his son. The truth is this: it argues a most graceless, carnal, wretched heart, for a man to cast by God's rules, because attendance to them is his trouble and torment, which, unto a gracious heart, are life, and peace, and sweetness: "All the ways of wisdom, to him, are ways of pleasantness, and her paths peace." And it is God's common curse upon them that love not the truth in these days, that because sin is not their sorrow, nor breach of rules their trouble, that, therefore, the observance of the law and attendance unto rules shall be their burden and trouble; they feel not the plague in their own hearts, and therefore reproofs plague them, and commands are a plague and a torment unto them: crooked feet and crooked wills make them tread awry in such corrupt opinions.

All the called ones of God are therefore to live this life of obedience, and that out of love, which I call the life of love, (Gal. v. 6;) for else circumcision avails nothing, nor uncircumcision, no, nor faith itself, unless it be of this nature, as that it works by love. There is much obedience and external conformity to the law in many men, but the principal difference between these formalities and the obedience of the saints is love; the obedience of the one ariseth from self-love,

because it pleaseth" themselves and suits with their own ends; the other from the love of Christ, because it pleaseth him, and suits with his ends. (1 Cor. xiii. 4, etc. 1 John v. 8.)

Wherein doth and should this life of love appear?

[[280]] In these five particulars: In thinking and musing much on Christ and upon his love, and on what you shall do for him; he that saith he loves another, and yet seldom thinks on him, or will seldom give him a good look when he meets him, certainly deceives himself; the least degree of love appears in thinking on what we love, because the "loving kindness of God "was "better than life "unto David; hence he did "remember him upon his bed, and meditate on him in the very night." (Ps. lxxiii. 3, 6.) They that "fear the Lord" -- i. e., with a son-like fear, where love is chiefly predominant -- are such as "think upon his name." (Mai. iii. 16.) "We have thought on thy loving kindness, O Lord, in thy temple." (Ps. xlviii. 9.) Thou that canst spend days, nights, weeks, months, years, and hast thy head all this time swarming with vain thoughts, and scarce one living thought of Christ and his love, that didst never beat thy head, nor trouble thyself in musing, O, what shall I do for him? nor in condemning thyself because thou dost so little, verily thou hast not the least degree of this life of love.

In speaking and commending of him. Is it possible that any man should love another and not commend him, not speak of him? If thou hadst but a hawk or a hound that thou lovest, thou wilt commend it; and can it stand with love to Christ, yet seldom or never to speak of him nor of his love; never to commend him unto others, that they may fall in love with him also? You shall see the spouse, (Cant. v. 9, 16,) when she was asked "what her beloved was above others," she sets him out in every part of him, and concludes with

this: "He is altogether lovely." "Because thy loving kindness" (saith David) "is better than life, my lips shall praise thee, and I will bless thee whilst I live." (Ps. lxiii. 3, 4.) Can it stand with this life of love to be always speaking about worldly affairs, or news at the best, both week day and Sabbath day, in bed and at board, in good company and in bad, at home and abroad? I tell you it will be one main reason why you desire to live, that you may make the Lord Jesus known to your children, friends, acquaintance, that so, in the ages to come, his name might ring, and his memorial might be of sweet odor, from generation to generation. (Ps. lxxi. 18.) If, before thy conversion especially, thou hast poisoned others, by thy vain and corrupt speeches, after thy conversion thou wilt seek to season the hearts of others by a gracious, sweet, and wise communication of savory and blessed speeches; what the Lord hath taught thee thou wilt talk of it unto others, for the sake of him whom thou lovest.

In being oft in his company, and growing up thereby into a [[281]] familiar acquaintance with him. Can we be long absent from those we love entirely, if we may come to them? Can we love Christ, and yet be seldom with him, in word, in prayer, in sacraments, in Christian communion, in meditation and daily examination of our own hearts; in his providences of mercies, crosses, and trials? (for Christ is with us here, but those two ways, in his ordinances or providences, "by his Holy Spirit.") "Lord," saith David, "I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honor dwelleth," (Ps. xxvi. 8;) the ground of which is set down, (ver. 3:) "Thy loving kindness is before mine eyes; my soul longeth for thee as in a land where no water is, that I might see thee, as I have seen thee in the sanctuary; "the reason of it was, "because thy loving kindness is better than life." (Ps. lxiii. 1, 2.)

In doing much for him, and that willingly. Did not Jacob love Rachel? How did he express it? His seven years' service, in frost and snow, in heat and cold, by day and night, were nothing to him, for her sake whom he loved. "Shall I serve the Lord "(saith David) "of what cost me nothing? "And when he had prepared many millions for the building of the temple, yet he accounted it a small thing for his sake whom he loved, (1 Chron. xxix. 3;) he gave it out of his poverty, as he speaks: "This is love, to keep his commandments, and those are not grievous." (1 John v. 3.)

In suffering and enduring any evil for his sake. I confess it is not every degree of love that will carry a man hither; yet where there is great and singular love, "for a good man, one may be willing to die." (Rom. v. 7.) Assuredly if there be any love to Christ, it will in time increase to this measure. It will think ten thousand lives too little to lay down for Christ's sake, that laid down his precious life for him. "What tell you me," saith Paul, "of bonds and imprisonments? I am ready, not only to be bound, but to die, for the sake of Christ "at Jerusalem; "my life is not dear to me," no more than a rush at my foot, "that I may finish my course with joy. For thy sake we are killed all the day long." (Rom. viii. 36.) I tell you the love of Christ will make you fall down upon your knees, and bless the Lord, and he will accept of such a poor sacrifice as thy body is, though it be burnt to ashes; and thou wilt bless him again and again, that whereas he might have left thee in thy sins to have trodden him and his glory and grace under foot, as he hath done thousands in the world, yet that he should call thee to share in this honor, not only to do but to suffer for his sake.

[[282]] Now, the good Lord persuade all our hearts unto this fruitful obedience and life of love. O, you young men, you have a fair time before you to do much for Christ in. How pleasing will it be to him to

see such young trees hang full of fruit! You aged men have now one foot in your grave, and you have forgotten the Lord Jesus most of your time, and your time which now remains is very little, and then your lamp is out, your sun is almost set, and all your work is yet to be done for Christ; O, therefore awaken now at last before you awake when it is too late. You rich men have abilities and wherewithal to set forward Christ's kingdom in the towns and villages where you live; you poor men may do much by ardent and instant prayers, day and night, for the advancement of the Lord Jesus.

You husbands, wives, masters, servants, remember, if you are not good in your places, you are not good at all, whatever your profession be; a good woman, but a froward wife; a good man, but a hare-brained, curst husband; a good servant, but a very sore tongue; these can not well stand together. If you have any love to Christ, the life of love will make you move best in your proper place. O, therefore love much, and so think much and speak much of, and converse much with, and do much, and suffer much for the Lord Jesus Christ. Content not yourselves with doing small things for him that hath done and suffered much for you; if you can do but little, yet set God on work by being fervent and frequent in prayer, not only that Christ may be honored in yourselves, but also in your families, and in all churches and kingdoms of the world. If you can not do much, yet maintain alive a will to do much, which is accepted as if you did. (2 Cor. viii. 12.) If thou art a poor man, and hast nothing to give, yet keep a heart as liberal as a prince; if you can do but little yourselves, yet encourage others that they may; thou art not a preacher called to convert souls, yet do thou encourage the messengers of Christ in their work, by thy prayers, counsel, help, and at the last day the conversion of souls shall be attributed unto thee, as well as unto them. If thou canst not do any good, yet prevent what evil thou canst in thy place; to keep off judgments, at least to delay them; mourn

thou for other men's sins, as if they were thine own, that so the Lord may pity and pardon them, and it may be convert them, who shall do no more good, it may be, than ever thou canst do; let the Lord Jesus be in thy thoughts the first in the morning, and the last at night; do what thou canst, nay, go continually to him to enable thee to do more than thou of thyself canst, and mourn [[283]] bitterly and lament daily what thou hast not done, either through want of ability or will; remembering his love to thee, that he came out of his Father's bosom for thee, wept for thee, bled for thee, poured out his life, nay, his soul to death for thee, is now risen for thee, gone to heaven for thee, sits at God's right hand, and rules all the world for thee, makes intercession continually for thee, and at the end of the world will come again for thee; who hast loved him here, that thou mightest live forever with him then.

But is this our life, in these evil and lukewarm times? How many be there that believe in Christ, that they may live as they list? If to drink, and whore, and scoff, and blaspheme; if to shake a lock, and follow every fond fashion; if to cross and cringe before a piece of wood; if to be weary of the word, and outwardly zealous for long prayers; if to seek purity of ordinances in churches, and to maintain impurity in hearts, in shops, in families; if to set our hearts upon farms and merchandises, and so to be covetous; if to set up our own selves, and parts, and gifts, with a secret disdain of God's ministers; if to cry down learning, and set up ignorance; if to set up Christ, and destroy sanctification and obedience; if to be a sect master of some odd opinions; if to crack the nut of some superlunary and monkish notions and high-flown speculations; if to hear much and do little; if to have a name to live, and yet dead at the heart, -- if this be to live the life of love, we have many that live this life; the Lord Jesus wants no love, if this be to love. But O, woe unto you, if you thus requite the Lord, foolish people and unwise.

The Lord knows we may complain as Paul did, "Every man minds his own things, and not the things of Jesus Christ;" none in comparison of that huge number that think they are religious enough, if they be baptized, and say that they believe in Jesus Christ. Verily the time draws near wherein the Lord will come for fruits of his vineyard; and if he finds it not, assuredly he will not be beholding to us for obedience; he can raise his glory out of other people, and there carry his gospel to them who shall bring forth the fruits of it; the Lord will shortly lay his ax unto the root of our tree, and if we will not serve the Lord in this good land in the abundance of peace and mercy, we shall serve our enemies in hunger, cold, and nakedness; if we will not serve him in love, we must serve our enemies in fear. Do not think that the Lord will be put off with venerable names and titles, shadows and pictures: what is most men's profession at this day but a mere paint, which may serve to [[284]] color them while they live, hut will never comfort them (unless conscience be asleep) when they come to die? O, take heed of such formality. I can never think enough of David's expression, (Ps. cxix. 167,) "I have kept thy commandments, and I love them exceedingly:" should he not have said first, "I have loved thy commandments, and so have kept them?" Doubtless he did so, but he ran here in a holy and most heavenly circle: I have kept them, and loved them; and loved them, and kept them. If we love Christ, we shall live such a life of love in our measure, and his commandments will be most dear, when himself is most precious.

The Saint's Jewel; Showing How to Apply the Promise.

Acts ii. 39. -- "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

Rev. iii. 20. -- "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

To The Header

Reader, the body may as well subsist without the soul, as the soul can without a promise; and as the body is not wearied with bread, (being the staff of life,) though it hath it every day for nourishment, so, likewise, the fainting, hungry soul can never be cloyed with feeding upon the promises. For which cause I have also adventured this little Sermon, not doubting but it may reap its due fruit from those whose hearts are rightly affected; which God granting, I shall account my labor abundantly requited. Farewell.

Thomas Shepard.

April 2, 1655.

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Edmund Calamt.

The Saint's Jewel, Showing How to Apply the Promise.

2 Cor. vii. 1, "Having these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all Pithiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

The apostle Paul in the former chapter exhorteth the Corinthians to beware of unequal yoking themselves with unbelievers; and he gives a double argument for it, one from the unequalness of it, the other from the promises, as in my text, "Having these promises."

In these words are three parts: --

A loving appellation, in these words, "Having these promises, dearly beloved."

A gracious exhortation, "Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

An argument for instigation or motive, that he useth to press his exhortation, which is from the nature of the promise.

That which is in the last part of the division is first in order of the words, and therefore we will look upon the words as they lie in order; and so from the last part and first words I shall handle this doctrine.

That God made many promises unto his people.

I am come to you this day not to set out unto you the excellency of wit or learning, or the creature; but the excellency of a naked promise, according to that, (2 Pet. i. 4,) "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises."

Now, all the promises of God unto his people are such as concern the body, or the body and the soul. Those that concern the body are with this limitation, that is, so far as concerns God's glory and the good of our souls; but for the body and soul, consider that place, "For the Lord is a sun and shield; [[287]] the Lord will give grace and glory, and no good will he withhold from them that live uprightly." (Ps. lxxxiv. 11.)

I come to the reasons why God hath thus made many promises unto his people; and they are three.

The first reason is this: that his people might have a fit object for their faith to lay hold upon; for if you look upon all the creatures in the world, you shall not find in all of them jointly, or any of them apart, a fit object for faith to work upon, or be satisfied in. It is with faith as with a poor woman that hath a child, and hath nothing in the world to give it; she takes the child at her back and goeth from door to door, and what she getteth she giveth to the child; so faith takes the soul, and carrieth it to promise after promise, and whatever she finds there she gives it to the soul.

The second reason why God hath made many promises unto his people is, that they may have a ground of comfort; for as it is the object of their faith, so it is the ground of their comfort; for all other things of this world can not profit or comfort the believing soul. As suppose we should go to friends for comfort; it maybe they want comfort for themselves, and so are unfit to comfort us; or it may be they will not comfort us; or it may be they are a great way off, and so can not do it; or perhaps, though able and sometimes willing, yet they are mutable in their comforts, so as though at one time they are willing, and do comfort us, yet another time they fail us. But Christ, to whom the soul is led by the promise, not only hath comfort, and is able to comfort us, but he is willing also to give comfort to us, who knoweth our wants, "and is near to all that call upon him in truth," (Ps. cxlv. 18;) and also he is immutable in his comforts. And were the creature a sufficient ground of comfort to God's people, then to want the creature were a sufficient ground of misery to them. But a man may want health, wealth, liberty, and the like, and yet through and in Christ his soul may have satisfying comfort; but if he want Christ, though he hath a fullness of the creature, he is most miserable and

without all satisfying comfort. The promise only is able to afford comfort, to the soul in health, in sickness, in life, and in death.

The third reason why God hath made many promises unto his people is, that they may become mutual comforters one of another, by having somewhat by experience from a promise, wherewith they may be enabled to comfort others, so that you may see the promise is not given to comfort ourselves with only, but also one another.

Now for use. Is it so, that God hath made many promises [[288]] unto his people? Let us try ourselves, whether we have any right to the promises or no. I will name but one note that you may the better remember it, and it is a true one, for you shall find it in Scripture. "But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe." (Gal. iii. 22.) So that you may see it is to them, and to them only, that believe. He that can exercise faith in the promise, hath right to the promise, "for ye walk by faith, and not by sight." (2 Cor. v. 7.)

If Christians be in affliction, and see that it doth them good, then it is easy to believe that promise which God hath made. "All things shall work together for the good of them that love God." (Rom. viii. 28.) But to believe this promise, when we can not see any good come of affliction, that is to believe by faith, and not by sight: but when we can see no good come by affliction, but find ourselves more dead and dull, and also God to frown upon us, and yet we trust in God, and believe the promise, and stay our souls upon God's word; this is to live by faith, as we are commanded. "Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God." (Is. 1. 10.) Faith maketh things absent to be present, and maketh the promise good to us, though things seem to

thwart the promise never so much. "Now, faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen "(Heb. xi. 1) with the eye of sense. As Abraham believed against hope, (Rom. iv. 18,) that he should have a child, according as God had promised, so must we trust God upon a naked promise, that if health should be gone, or wealth, liberty, strength, friends, yea, life itself almost gone, and God seems to be gone, and hell to be threatened, yet still to trust in God, and believe -- this is to live by faith, and comfort is in the promise for all such; but I speak now to God's people.

The second use of this doctrine is, that seeing God hath made many promises unto his people, it is a ground of comfort unto them all, that though they go up and down sad, as if they were the worst people in the world, yet have they the only cause to rejoice, and they only in all the world. For here is comfort against all their sins, God hath promised to do them away. "I am he that blotteth out thy sins, for mine own name's sake." (Is. xliii. 25.) Comfort thyself, Christ is thine. "I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine;" if, therefore, there be enough in Christ's merits, hold up thy head and take comfort to thyself.

[[289]] O, but, saith the poor soul, I find sin prevail, and how can I then be comforted?

I answer, Look into that place of Scripture, "I will subdue your iniquities, and cast your sins in the midst of the sea," (Micah vii. 18-20;) and in the twentieth verse you may see the oath of God, for the truth and mercy of the promise was gone forth before.

But saith the soul, The devil will be busy with me wherever I go, and how can I be cheerful?

I answer, God hath said it, "I will tread down Satan under your feet shortly." (Rom. xvi. 20.) Comfort thyself in this, though Satan may trouble thee for a time, yet thou shalt have him under thy feet shortly.

O, but again saith the soul, I shall meet with abundance of opposition in the world, and I am not able to make my party good, and how can I then rejoice?

I answer, Flee thou to the promise against that also, as where it is said, "Though hand join in hand," etc. (Prov. xi. 21.) Though men join themselves together, and strike hands even with the devil against God's children, yet shall they not overcome them.

But alas! saith a poor soul, I am in present want of outward comfort, and how should I be comfortable in such a condition?

I answer, It may be God dealeth with thee in this as a mother with her children, who takes away the victuals from the children for a while, and puts it into the cupboard, but afterward she giveth it them again. So sometimes God taketh away these outward things, and locketh them up for a while in the cupboard, which is in the promise, and when he seeth it best for us, he giveth it us again: and thus he did with Job; he took away all his outward comforts, and left him so poor, as it is a proverb at this day, "as poor as Job," (Job i. 15, etc. ;) but after a while, God did not only restore unto him his former comforts, but gave him double. And this was written for thy comfort, and the strength of thy patience: comfort thyself, therefore; happiness is above the creature.

But I shall meet with many mocks and reproaches in the world.

Answer. Let us comfort ourselves against this with God's promises: let us do as the covetous man in the poet, who, being mocked as he went in the streets, went home and looked into his closet, and there seeing his bags' of gold, rejoiced in his wealth, and scorned all their reproaches: so when we are mocked and scorned of men of the world, let us look into the Bible, and we shall find bags of promises, true treasure; and therein let us rejoice.

[[291]] But it may be the poor soul will say, Alas, I can not, go to God by prayer to fetch comfort, or if I do pray, it is with so much coldness and deadness, as I can not believe I shall obtain any thing.

I answer, Though it be so, yet believe and thou shalt have thy desire, though it may be thou canst but chatter, and though others, hearing thee, regard it not, yet God will say, Let me hear thee; and as a father loves to hear his child prattle, though others regard it not, so God loveth to hear his children pray.

But O, I am afraid of death, and that taketh away all my joy and comfort.

I answer, Thou mayest comfort thyself against that, yea, and make death itself a ground of comfort and joy to thyself. If a child be at board from his father's house, though he be at play with his fellows, yet if he see horse and man come to fetch him, he is glad, and leaves his play and companions to go home to his father willingly: so here we are at board in the world, and we are at play, as it were, among the creatures; but when death comes, which is as horse and man, we should be willing to go to our Father's house, which is best of all.

But I am afraid, if suffering times come, I should never be able to stand out.

If God call thee to sufferings, he will give thee grace suitable to thy condition. "He will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it." (1 Cor. xiii. 10.)

But alas! I am afraid I shall fall away from God, and that continual fear thereof doth take away all my comfort.

Answer. None can pluck thee out of Christ's hands, neither sin nor devil; she were a cruel mother that would cast her child into the fire; Christ must do so if thou shouldest go to hell; yea, more, if that should be so, he should rend a member from himself, for he is thy head, and thou art one of his members: therefore, for thy comfort, know this can not be; the Lord saith, "I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good." But you may say, perhaps, I shall turn from him; see therefore what followeth in the same verse -- "I will put my fear into their hearts, and they shall not depart from me."

This is good news, it may be the poor creature will say, if I had right to the promise; but alas! I can not believe, and take a naked promise.

Answer. Dost thou desire to believe and to have Christ, and canst thou say thus? If it were possible heaven and Christ could [[292]] be separated, I would rather have Christ without heaven than heaven without Christ; then comfort thyself, for God hath promised, "I will give to him that thirsteth of the water of life freely."

But this is a hard matter, and I can not say I truly desire Christ on such terms as I should.

But is it a grief to thy heart that thou canst not deny thyself, and desirest, rather than be separated from Christ, to close with Christ,

even upon any terms? Is it thy burden, because thou canst not desire to believe as thou shouldest? Then comfort thyself; God will accept the will for the deed in this case. (1 Cor. viii. 12.)

But the soul objecteth and saith, Alas! I am so far from being grieved as I ought, that I rather find a heart that will not grieve and mourn for sin; I can not find breakings of heart for it.

For thy comfort, I will come one step lower to thee: hast thou any will to it? Mark this place; if any place in the whole Scripture be for thee, here it is in the last words of this verse. "And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." (Rev. xxii. 17.)

But it may be the wicked will say, I will have Christ: but stay; not every one that saith so shall have Christ; but art thou willing to part with thy sins, and it may be to part with health, wealth, liberty, friends, yea, and your own life also? What say you? Are you willing upon these terms?

But the poor soul saith again, I fear I shall never do this. But art thou willing that Christ should make thee willing, and pitch thee upon a promise, and should hold thee there? If thou canst find these things, then comfort thyself, for thou hast right unto God's promises.

The third use is, seeing God hath made many promises unto his people, this is terror to the wicked. Here are many in this congregation to whom I have not spoken one word in the last use of comfort; now God sends other news to you, therefore put it not off from you. If I prove not what I say by Scripture, believe me not. What I have said for the comfort of God's people, I must say the contrary unto you.

First. As God's children have their names written in God's book, so you have your names written also; but it is in the black book of God's wrath.

Secondly. As God's children have a mark set on their foreheads, so there is a mark set on you; but it is a woeful one; for, though I judge you not, yet I am persuaded the devil hath set his black mark with a brand from hell on some of you: yea, a [[293]] man may gather from your very faces, almost, what some of you are; but the day of judgment will fully discover you all. But in the mean time, know this: whosoever you are that are under your natural condition, you are under God's curse, as it is, "If any shall hear the words of this curse, and bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace though I walk in the imagination of my heart," etc., then the Lord will not spare him, but the anger of the Lord and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses of this book shall be upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven," etc. (Dent. xxix. 19, 20.) Also, "I will heap up mischief upon you, and I will send mine arrows upon you." (Deut. xxxii. 23.) O, what a heavy thing is this, I pray you consider sadly; not to have right to God's promises is the condition of a man that is cursed, and miserable in his life, at his death, and after his death.

You rich gentlemen and gentlewomen, give me leave to speak to you. I pray you consider thus much: if you have not right to God's promises, the curse of God is stamped upon every cross and penny, and upon every thing you have. See but this place: "I have cursed your blessings, saith the Lord;" (Mai. ii. 2, 3;) as if he should have said, Though I have given plenty of corn, and money, and other things, yet they are to you but as curses; and is not this a very sad thing? Give me leave to deal plainly; it is as if a man had but two-pence in all the world, and he should go and buy a halter with it, to

hang himself; yea, further, all that thou hast, in this condition, is but as if thou shouldest twist a cord together to hang thy soul in hell. And to you of the poorer sort, that have not a right to the promise, you are in a miserable condition, for you are both miserable here and hereafter also. "Israel hath not returned to him that smote them, neither do they seek unto the Lord; therefore the Lord will cut off from them both head and tail, branch and rush, in one day." (Is. ix. 13.) Again: whatsoever you do in your calling is accursed unto you; yea, your praying, reading, hearing, fasting, and mourning, all is sin; for, "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination unto the Lord." (Prov. xv. 8.)

But if it be so, may these wicked men say, that our best duties are sin, why should we perform any duties, either praying, hearing, or the like?

In answer to this, know for certain whilst thou art in this condition, thou art in a bad condition, for every thing you do is sin. "Unto the pure all things are pure; but unto them that are denied, and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but even their minds and consciences are defiled." (Tit. i. 15.) So that to you, to [[294]] perform duty it is sin, or not to perform duty is sin: but yet omit not duty, for though in performing duty thou sinnest, yet not to perform duty is a double sin.

To perform duty, whilst thou art in thy natural condition, is sin for the manner, because, though thou mayest do the duty for substance, as pray, hear, confer, or the like, yet because thou dost want a principle of grace, nothing is done aright, and so wanteth acceptance: but to neglect duty is a sin, in regard of matter and manner also; for as it is sinfulness itself not to do the duty, so it is sin to have the heart not rightly disposed for the manner of performance. It is with you as it was with the lepers; they said among themselves thus: "Why sit we

here till we die? If we say we will enter into the city, then the famine is in the city, and we shall die there; and if we sit still here, we die also. Now therefore let us come and fall unto the host of the Syrians; if they save us alive, we shall live, and if they kill us, we shall but die." (2 Kings vii. 3, 4.) So say thou with thyself, If I do duty, I sin; and if I do not perform duty, I commit a double sin; but I will go to duty: if God will save me, I shall live; if not, I can but perish: and for thy comfort, consider, it may be God will cast an eye of pity upon thee; thou art in the way; that is the means God hath appointed to bring you home to Christ: but yet, until thy condition be changed, all thou dost is sin; for, "The very thoughts of the wicked are an abomination unto the Lord." (Prov. xv. 26.)

But, O, strange! though firebrands out of hell be spitted in your faces, yet you are not affected. But it may be some of you think to do it when you are sick, or upon your death bed; but it may be too late then, when God openeth and awakeneth your conscience, and if you be not awakened here, you shall be sure to be awakened in hell. I remember I heard of a young prodigal, when he was dying, looked on the fire and said, As that fire burneth there, so shall my soul burn in hell. Another said on his death bed, O that I might live, though it were but the life of a toad. God is very careful to send his angels for the godly; but for the wicked the devils stand ready at his bedside to fetch him into hell as soon as his breath goeth out of his body; and then they will cry out, O the time of mercy that I have had! but now it is past; the gate of mercy is shut, never more to be opened.

But it may be some will say, Thanks be to God, I am not in hell yet, and as long as there is life there is hope.

O, fearful! what! hope still? Read that place, and tremble in reading of it: "The Lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh

not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware [[295]] of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Matt. xxiv. 50, 51.)

O, consider this against the day of judgment; it is a sad day for all such, when mercy, and patience, and Christ shall plead against them; yea, "The dust of ministers' feet shall rise up against them." (Luke x. 11.) O, but if so, then what will their condition be, when drops of blood and sweat shall rise up against them? yea, more, the husband shall rejoice to see the damnation of the wife. "The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth vengeance on the wicked," (Luke xxii. 44; Ps. lviii. 10,) because God hath gotten the glory of his enemies.

The fourth use is, An exhortation to the godly first, and, secondly, to the wicked.

In the first place, to the godly, that complain they can not lay hold on the promise. Go to God to enable you; and that you may so do, --

Consider, in the first place, that not to believe and lay hold on the promise is a sin of unbelief; "and he that believeth not is damned." (John iii. 13.) See the evil of this sin of unbelief in these particulars: -

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First. "Hereby we grieve the Holy Spirit of God, whereby we are sealed to the day of redemption." (Eph. iv. 30.) What a grievous thing is it for thee, who desirest to be assured that the promise is thine, that thou, by unbelief, shouldst grieve that Holy Spirit, which sealeth up the promise to thy soul! See that place, "Hear ye now, O house of David: Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but you must weary my God also?" (Is. iii. 17.) If a man promise to do another man a courtesy, and, after some delay, that man comes to him and saith, Will you do as you promised me? he saith, Yes. Hut

saith he, Will you indeed? and thus he pleadeth with him a whole day, and doth not believe him: will not that exceedingly grieve his friend, who promised him so to do, and fully intended no less? Even so is it with all those that are God's people, and will not believe what God hath said unto them, but stand and plead with God two or three years or more. As those that believe glorify God, so those that will not come in rob God of his honor and glory, and grieve him.

It argueth a great deal of pride of heart in them, that they will not believe because they have not what they would; but something they must have of themselves, like women that will not go to a feast, because they have nothing to carry.

Here is a great deal of unthankfulness for all that God hath done for them, yea, even for Christ himself. Where we love, [[296]] we are very thankful; and where we desire to be thankful, we will be willing to take a kindness.

It argueth a great deal of impatience, when we will not wait in a way of believing upon the promises of grace, and cheerfully attend God's leisure.

He that will not believe gives God the lie; for, "He that believeth," etc. (1 John v. 10.) He that believeth not in every ordinance he comes to, be maketh God a liar, because every ordinance beareth record of Christ. Not to believe is a denying of God's power, for they will not trust God, especially in a great strait; and by this we may see what a many sins even God's people may commit in this case.

Consider again, in the second place, what a safe thing it is to believe; I speak to God's people. As surgeons, when they let a man blood, bid him look another way, so when the devil letteth you blood, that is, holds you poring on your corruptions, look another way, -- I mean on

God, -- and then you shall be safe from the devil, and the world, and your own corruptions. And that you may lay hold on the promises of God, take heed of those lets and impediments that might hinder you.

Sin is a let; for it will wrest the promise out of our hands. "But your iniquities," etc. (Is. lix. 2.)

The second impediment is, our doubting and wandering in our prayers; for "we must pray, lifting up holy hands," etc. (James i. 6.)

The third impediment to believing is slavish fear, when we fear man more than God, contrary to that counsel, "Fear not their fear, nor be afraid," etc. (Is. viii. 12.)

The fourth let is, when we lay down one thing that might afford us help, and draw ourselves to God, and, in the mean time, take up another which can no way help us; as, when we lay down the promise, and take up the threatening.

Fifthly, when we set our mind too much on the creature, or honors, and seek our own baseness, or worldly pleasures.

In the next place, take these helps to lay hold on the promise.

Labor to live by faith in all straits and conditions, and by faith fetch a supply for all your wants, by the promise from Christ.

Secondly, mark the promise well, which is the ground of all comfort, and read them over often.

Do not flutter up and down, from one promise to another, but lie a great while on some one, and wring and squeeze it by meditation upon it.

Thirdly, apply the promise aright; do not think it belongeth not to you, because you have not that presently which is [[297]] proposed in it: you must know that God setteth not down the time when it shall be fulfilled.

Fourthly, we are to wait patiently and humbly under our present condition; until God grant our desire, God's time is the best time.

Bless God for all his promises, but especially when they are made good to us.

In the next place, to those that yet stand out, and are not closed with the promise, I entreat you, come in to God, take his gracious offer, lay hold on the promise; which that you may do, take heed of those things that will be lets, and hinder you. (Ps. ciii.)

Take heed of all sin; for the Lord saith, "Your sins have kept back good things from you."

Take heed of setting your mind too much upon the creatures, for they will shut out God the Creator. Old men, do you come home to God; young men, do you remember your Creator in the days of your youth. God this day calleth you; it may be he will never call more. How many hath the Lord struck with death and sickness! and how soon it may be any of our turns, I know not. Sickness is an unfit time to get Christ, and to make our peace with God. If you stand still, you die; if you go on in sin, you die: therefore turn from all your sin, and come in and lay hold by faith on the promise, that so ye may live, and this that I have spoken unto you may not be in vain.

Certain Select Cases Resolved.

Dear Sir: I dare not multiply many words in acknowledging and professing my own unfitness and insufficiency to yield your loving and most welcome letter that satisfaction which both yourself desire and it deserves. Neither yet will I be so unfaithful to you, (seeing your expectation puts me to reply,) neither ought I, I think, be so unserviceable to Jesus Christ, who in you, and by you, beckons to me to take this call to write to you, and not to neglect so fair a season; seeing especially it may be possible my dying letter to you, before I depart from hence and return to him, as not knowing but our last disasters and sea straits (of which I wrote to you) may be but preparations for the execution of this next approaching voyage. Yet our eyes are to the hills, and our desires are your prayers; and at this time my endeavor shall be in respect of yourself, to break open that light to you, and to prepare it to you, with that brevity I may, and with what plainness I am able; beseeching the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who must be, when all fails, the Wonderful Counselor, to give you the Spirit of revelation, and that after you have suffered a while by these outward temptations, doubts, fears, desertions, distractions, which the letter mentions, he would make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, and settle you. And this I verily think will be the unexpected, yet happy, joyful, and most glorious end of them; for since I have observed and seen the lamentable ruins of the soul, and seeming graces of many men, by being rocked asleep in a quiet, still, calm, easy performance of duties, without such awakening temptations and tumults within which itself complains of; I say, since I have observed what a deal of mud is in the bottom of such standing pools, and what a deal of filth is in such moats, which are inwardly at ease, and not emptied from vessel to vessel, next unto the donation of the Lord Jesus to a man, I have accounted

tumultuous heart storms [[304]] and uproars, together with the fruitful strange effects, of them, the second mercy. For I never saw that man kept from secret putrefaction and corruption that was not usually salted with such temptations (especially in a Christian's first apprenticeship) which usually preserve him entire till death. And therefore, dear sir, faint not, for Jesus Christ will raise a world of blessings out of your present chaos and confusions. But I make haste to answer. Before your reply to my first letter, your complaints are many.

Your first trouble is, concerning your disturbances in civil affairs, by the secret injection of religious thoughts, so that you know not how to follow the one without hazard of grieving the Spirit, and breaking your peace in not maintaining and nourishing, the same time, the other; and hence being drawn to go two ways at the same time, (which you can not well do.) your heart is disquieted, and your peace much interrupted.

This of yours puts me in mind of the complaint of an honest, yet plain man, to an able minister once, who in bewailing his condition to him, among other miseries, that was not the least, viz., that he was exceedingly troubled with good thoughts, so that he could not follow his place, unless very oft he did stand still and pray, for fear of grieving the Spirit, (as he thought.) and losing his season of being heard in heaven; for said conscience oft unto him, How dost thou know but this may be thy accepted time, and if thou dost not take it, it may be thou shalt never have it again? I have forgot the minister's answer, but I am sure in these complaints you go not alone; I have lately known one very able, wise, and godly, put upon the rack in these kind of thoughts by him that, envying God's people's peace, knows how to change himself into an angel of light. For it being his usual course, in the time of his health, to make a diary of his hourly

life, and finding much benefit by it, he was in conscience pressed, by the power and delusion of Satan, to make and take the same daily survey of his life in the time of his sickness, by means of which he spent his enfeebled spirits, cast on fuel to fire his sickness, and had not a friend of his convinced him of his erroneous conscience misleading him at that time, he had murdered his body, out of conscience to save his soul and to preserve his grace; and do you think these were the motions of God's Spirit, which, like those locusts, (Rev. ix. 9, 10,) had faces like men, but had tails like scorpions, and stings in their tails?

Your thoughts, I know, are not likely to produce the same effects, although you have the same efficient; and because you say your peace is hereby disturbed by ignorance, as not knowing [[305]] what to do in the midst of these civil actions and these religious thoughts, I conceive that two things are to be sadly considered of for the cure of them.

First. How to know when such religious, pious thoughts come from God's Spirit, and when from the devil transforming himself into an angel of light, or from a well-mettled stirring conscience, yet blind. For when you know they come from God's Spirit, you are bound to nourish them; hut when not, you are bound not to embrace nor comply with them.

Secondly. Learn how your soul is to behave and carry itself in civil employments. For when you see how you do, and may honor God in following them, your spirit will not be so unquiet, if at any time you embrace not the suggestions of the other.

1. For the first briefly, ail good motions and thoughts are not the Spirit's motions, as may thus appear: --

There be three things chiefly by which we may discern the motions, suggestions, and thoughts which come from God's Spirit; all which concurring together in a good action, or thought, or word, (not one alone,) will make discovery whether they are from God's Spirit or not.

1. If it be suggested for God's ends, it is from God's Spirit; to act so high as for a supernatural end must rise from a super-natural principle, which only is God's Spirit. Pharisaical actions were for a double, selfish end, and hence not from God's Spirit, but nature, and their own spirit.

1. To be seen of men.

2. If they did any of them abhor this, yet it was to purchase and gender in their own minds an opinion of holiness before God; and hence Christ gives them this item, in giving alms, that they should not let the right hand know what their left hand doth; for many men will do good acts, lest they should, by the neglect of them, think them hypocrites, and so be troubled for them. Christ would have us not to take notice of what we do for such an end.

If they be animated and quickened from God's command; for the higher measure of holiness for glorious ends, without a warrant from the word, is the more sordid superstition: Christ healed the leper; when he charged him with anger to tell no man, he (no question for a good end) published the miracle the more; this was a good motion, but it was sinful in him, being cross to Christ's command. When Christ would have washed Peter's feet, he had many thoughts that came into his head concerning his own vileness and Christ's glory, and had a good end and meaning in his answers; yet his humility crossing Christ's [[306]] command, the Lord professed against it, and him for it, that he had no part in him, it' he should go on in it.

God's Spirit sets a man on work in due season; for let the duty he commanded and rightly directed, yet if it be not done in season, it is not from God's Spirit: hence, (Ps. i.) "The righteous bring forth fruit in its season; "and hence Solomon speaks of "words spoken in season are as apples of gold;" and hence we read in Ecclesiastes of "a time and season for every thing under the sun;" and therefore, when there is a season of God's appointing for civil things or business, it is not season now to be molested or perplexed in it, by the injection and evocation of those thoughts which we think to proceed from the Spirit of God. I know, indeed, that the Spirit of God doth enable a man to do whatever good he doth; but as grace makes nature sometimes to serve, so sinful nature brings grace into captivity, 'which Paul complains of, (Rom. vii.,) and makes grace to serve it. To exhort and reprove another for sin. is from God's Spirit that it is done; but to reprove at an unseasonable time, it is from sinful corruption, abusing God's grace, and making Samson to grind. It is from the excellence of a knife to cut well, but to cut my finger with it when I should be cutting of my meat with it, ariseth not from the end of the knife, nor from the intention of him that made it; so to think of good things, it is from the Spirit, I grant, but to think of them in such a season that God sets you a work to mind and follow other occasions, it is from the enemy of God's Spirit and your own peace; for as it is a sin to nourish worldly thoughts when God sets you a work in spiritual, heavenly employments, so it is, in some respects, as great a sin to suffer yourself to be distracted by spiritual thoughts, when God sets you on work in civil (yet lawful) employments. Such thoughts, I conceive, are but the leaven of monkish holiness, if they divert you from your lawful affairs when the Lord calls you to follow them. For the Lord never calls you to two divers employments at the same time, unless you make the one to be a means to further the good of the other; which such pious thoughts in some civil employments do; it being no piece of Christian wisdom or honesty to

turn round in worldly employments so long till by giddiness we fall down, but by secret steps ever and anon to look up to heaven, and to behold the face of God, to whom only therein we are to approve ourselves. But yet it seems your thoughts are so far from being subservient the one to the other, that you are distracted and molested, and your peace interrupted, and your Christian course made troublesome, and a heavy burden, which surely can not be by the yoke of Jesus [[307]] Christ; therefore you must first bring your troubles in this particular to this issue -- either you may follow your civil affairs, and nourish these thoughts as helps to maintain your peace, and make you heavenly-minded in them, (and if they serve sufficiently to such an end, why are you troubled with them?) or else you can not follow God comfortably in civil actions, unless you banish from you thoughts which do so miserably distract you; and then why do you fear you shall grieve God's Spirit, if at the same time you do not give entertainment to (hem? the unreasonableness of which speaks plainly they came not from the Spirit's suggestions, besides their hindrance of comfortably walking with God, which the employments themselves can never hinder.

But you will say, When is the season of nourishing such thoughts?

I answer, Entertain those thoughts as (it may be) you have done friends who came to you at that time you have business with strangers, (whom you love not so well as your friends;) you have desired them to stay a while, until you have done with the other, and then you have returned to your friends; and when the other hath been shut out of the doors, the other hath had the welcome, and hath lodged with you all night, and thus you have grieved neither, but pleased both. It is so in this case; worldly employments are our strangers, yet they must be spoke with. Religious thoughts and practices are our friends; these come unto us while God calls us to

parley with the other; you can not speak with both at one time, in one place, without much perplexity: take, therefore, this course; make much of the good thoughts, but parley not with them till your business is done with strangers; and toward evening, which is your season, set some time apart every day for meditation, and then make them welcome; then consider and ponder well what was suggested to you in the daytime, and sift every good thought to this bran, for then is your season, and after that let them sup and lodge with you all night, and keep the house with you every day. And surely, when the Lord Jesus shall see what a friend you shall make of his Spirit, and how wisely you walk therein, you shall not need to fear any grieving of it, or unseasonable times: nay, (I say,) you will must fearfully grieve his Spirit if you parley with the conceived suggestions of it at unseasonable times. "What thou dost, do it with all thine heart," saith Solomon. (Eccl, ix.)

Therefore, when you are to pray, confer, or meditate, do it with all your mind, and all your thoughts, and all your strength. [[308]] So, when God calls you to worldly employments, do them with all your mind and might; and when the season of meditation comes, take it, which glorious ordinance of God, although many Christians use it occasionally, and against some good time, or when they have leisure meeting with them, yet to set some time apart for it in a solemn manner every day, and that in conscience, as we do for prayer generally, where is the man to be found that does thus 't Those men that thus neglect their season of musing and entering into parley with God's Spirit daily, may be well said to grieve the Spirit, through the neglect of which ordinance, God's Spirit is as much grieved by professors in England as by any course I know. The Lord awaken us. But I have run too far already in this first part of my answer.

For the second means, viz., how the soul is to carry itself in civil employments, that so you may not think you do for better, when you listen to good thoughts as you mention.

I say two things: 1. Learn to follow them out of an awful respect to the eye, presence, and command of Jesus Christ, and to do what you do in civil businesses as the work of Christ; when you are riding, or making up breaches between man and man, then think, I am now about the work of Jesus Christ.

Secondly. Seeing yourself thus working in worldly employments for him, you may easily apprehend that for that time God calls you to them, and you attend upon the work of Jesus Christ in them, that you honor God as much, nay, more, by the meanest servile worldly act, than if you should have spent all that time in meditation, prayer, or any other spiritual employment, to which you had no call at that time. It is noted, therefore, by some, of Peter's wife's mother, that when Christ had healed her of her fever, she sat not down at table with Christ in communion with him, which (no question) was sweet, but ministered at the table, and ran to and fro, and so served him, and acted for him, wherein she showed more love, and gave him more honor, viz., in that mean service, and in acting for him, than in having communion with him: now, if the Lord would, out of his abundant goodness, set the soul in such an acting frame for him, and if it could do its worldly employments, as the work of Christ, and see how greatly it honors Christ in attending on him, O, what peace should a Christian enjoy, notwithstanding all his distractions every day! And how easily would such devout thoughts j'ou speak of be repelled, like darkness before the light! for the nobleness of those good thoughts you speak of, presenting themselves against the mean and base outsides of civil affairs, [[309]] makes you ready to honor the one, when you are called to serve the other; but now, by seeing,

you do the work of Christ Jesus in them, you shall hereby see a glory in the meanest service you perform in civil affairs, and this will make you cleave unto them. But I have said too much about repelling of good thoughts, in these times, wherein men have so few, though (it may be) little enough to satisfy you.

Your second trouble is this, viz., that your heart is kept from being bumbled for sinful distractions, that hinder and interrupt the spiritual performance of holy duties, and that for two reasons: First. Because they be involuntary and accidental. Secondly. Because they can not break the covenant between God and your soul, being but infirmities.

For the latter clause concerning breach of covenant, together with the other, 1. I say, not only infirmities do not, but the greatest sins can not, make a breach of covenant between God and the soul that is once really (not rationally) wrapped up in the covenant of grace. Indeed, gross scandalous sins, nay, infirmities, when they are given way to, and not resisted, may keep the soul from the fruition, for a time, of God's covenant, but never from the eternal jus and right unto it; for as the habit of faith or grace gives a man a constant right to the promise and covenant, (which seed ever remains, which habit ever lasts, Jer. iii. 9,) so the act of faith or grace gives a man fruition of the covenant and the benefit of the promise, and hence by the acting and venting of some sins wherein there is included the neglect of the exercise of grace. He that is really in covenant with God may be deprived of the fruition of it; yet seeing the seed of God and the habit of grace ever remain, he can not by any sin break his covenant, for the covenant of grace is absolute, wherein the Lord doth not only promise the good, but to begin, and perfect, and fulfill the condition absolutely, without respect of sin, ex parte creaturæ. Indeed, if God's covenant of grace did (as that of works) depend upon man to fulfill

the condition, having sufficient grace to fulfill it, then gross sin might well break the covenant; but seeing God hath undertaken to fulfill the covenant absolutely, notwithstanding all the evils and sins of the soul, no sin can possibly break that knot and covenant which so firm and resolute love hath once knit. And therefore, if this be a good argument, infirmities can not break covenant. What cause have I to be humbled for them? so as to say, It is thy mercy, Lord, that I am not consumed for them, (as you write;) you may upon the same ground say so, if the Lord should desert you, or you forsake the Lord, and so fall into the foulest sin, which I suppose corrupt conscience dares not be so bold as to think or allow of.

[[310]] Secondly. I say least sins or infirmities do break the first covenant of works: and hence you do not only deserve, but are under the sentence of death and curse of God, immediately after the least hair's breadth swerving from the law by the smallest sin, and most involuntary accidental infirmity. According to the tenor of the law, the soul that sinneth shall die; and "cursed is he that continueth not in all things of the law," (Gal. iii. 10;) the least sin being (ex parte objecti) in respect of God, against whom it is committed, as horrible and as great as the greatest. For it being an infinite wrong, being the dishonor of an infinite majesty, there can be no greater wrong than an infinite one, unless you can imagine a greater thing than that which is infinite; and therefore in this respect there is as much venom and mischief done against God in the least as in the greatest sin; and therefore it, and whosoever commits it, deserves death for it, as if they had committed the foulest sin in the world; and therefore, after the least and smallest infirmities, you may from hence see what cause you have freely to be humbled, and to confess for them how worthy you are to be destroyed; yea, even to look upon yourself as lying under the sentence of the law and death, immediately after the commission of them, and so to mourn bitterly for them.

But you will say, A Christian that is under the covenant of grace is not within the covenant of works; that bond is cancelled; the law must stand; and therefore he being out of that covenant, no sins of his can be said to break the covenant; for no man can be said to break that law under which he is not, and which he is not bound to keep.

In answer: Every believer hath a double being or standing, and so there may be put upon him a double respect.

First, he may be considered as united to and having a spiritual being on Christ; and so it is true, he is under grace, and the covenant of grace, and not under the law, nor the covenant of works; and hence not being under the law, nor bound to keep it as a covenant of life, (though it be a rule of life,) no sin can condemn him, there being no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. (Rom. viii. 1.) As Christ is above, condemnation, and law, and death, and curse, so is he. And this, truly understood, is the foundation of a Christian's joy, and peace, and glory every day; yet so, as though sin doth not condemn him, yet he hath good reason to say, it is mercy, and mere mercy, Lord, that I am not consumed, that I am not condemned. For sin is the same, nay, grace and God's love aggravate sin; for to sin against the law deserves death without recovery, but to sin when grace [[311]] hath received me, and loved me; when the blood of Christ hath been shed abundantly to deliver me from sin; O, this makes the most secret silent sin a crying one! So that if you do consider this well, you may see what little cause there is to have your heart rising against the deepest humiliation for the least sin, though you be in Christ, and under grace. For, as Daniel, when he was put into the lions' den, had not he cause to wonder that he was not torn in pieces by them? And why? Because it was not from any defect on their part to tear him in pieces, but from the omnipotent power, and

mercy, and grace of his God, that muzzled their mouths: so though no lion can tear, though no sins can hurt or condemn a Christian, as he is considered in Christ, yet hath not he cause to confess and wonder, and say, Lord, it is thy mere grace and mercy that it is not so? (which is the act of humiliation your letter saith you can hardly come unto.) And why? Not because God's grace puts any less evil in sin, but because it is merely grace that keeps it from spitting that venom which otherwise it would.

Secondly. A Christian may be considered in respect of his natural being in himself, and thus he is ever under the law, and as oft as he sinneth, under the sentence of death; and (as the apostle speaks) by nature even we (justified, quickened) are the children of wrath as well as others. And thus, after the least involuntary accidental sin, you may easily see what cause you have to lie down deeply humbled, mourning under the sentence of death, and God's eternal curse, as a condemned man going to the execution; to feel that fire that shall never go out; looking upon yourself as you are in yourself, a forlorn castaway, every moment: and this, truly understood, is the foundation of a Christian's sorrow, shame, and confusion of face, self-loathing, self-forgetting, self-forsaking, and condemning every day. And, believe it, sir, it is no small piece of a Christian's skill and work to put a difference between himself and himself, himself as he is in Christ, and so to joy and triumph, and himself as he is growing on his first root, and so to sorrow, and loathe and condemn himself; so that, (to wind up all that I have said,) look upon yourself as in Christ, you may say, these involuntary infirmities do not, shall not, condemn me.

But, Lord, it is grace, grace that it is not so, and this is evangelical humiliation. Look again upon yourself, as you stand on your own bottom, and live in your own nature, and so you may say, after the

least infirmity, I have now broken a most holy and righteous law, and therefore I am already condemned: O, woe is me! I have already undone myself by mine iniquity; and this is [[312]] legal humiliation, which serves for mortification, as the first for vivification. I know it is very difficult to bring the heart to acknowledge freely it deserves death after so small an involuntary offense; but when the Lord reveals two things, first, himself in his glory, secondly, how the least sin strikes him, I persuade myself the vilest heart can not but be forced to confess how just God should be in his severest proceedings against him. And withal consider, the more involuntary any sin is, the more strong and natural it is, and the more natural the more horrible, as to be a natural thief is far worse than to be a deliberate thief, who sometimes steals; and therefore, good sir, take heed of looking no deeper, nor seeing no further, than the bare act, and involuntariness, and accidentalness, and suddenness of your infirmities; for if you do, you look through the wrong end of the glass, and they will appear so small that you will find it a very rough work to bring your heart consentively to say, (if I may say and use your own phrase,) It is a mercy, Lord, that I am not consumed for them; but look upon them as indeed they are, in respect of that infinite glory you strike, doing the greatest mischiefs to God by them, and (which makes them the viler) as they are so strong you can not remove them, and so horrible as that it is natural to you to commit them. etc. And surely you will not (through grace) find such thoughts haunt you long; not but that they will be, haply, rising and tempting, but never always vexing and prevailing. Satan's ground reaching as far as the minds of God's people, and therefore so far he may come, and there he may walk, (for he came into the mind of innocent Adam, nay, Jesus Christ, by his suggesting temptations;) but the heart is Christ's peculiar possession and purchase; and if he shall still there offer to come in and vex you, and prevail against you, and to lodge his suggestions this or any other way with you, you have law

and Christ on your side, by this little light now given you, to cast him out.

The third thing that troubles you is the disranking of the persons in the Trinity; for though you think the Holy Ghost is God, yet you have not so high a repute of him as of the Father and the Son, because the Son addresseth himself to God the Father in all his prayers and acknowledgments, in a more im-mediate manner than unto the Holy Ghost, and therefore you would know if the word Father, as in the Lord's Prayer, includes not the Unity in Trinity.

To this briefly consider three things: --

1. Without all question, the same God which lies under that relative property of Father, is the same God with the Godhead [[313]] of the Son and the Godhead of the Holy Ghost, there being not three Gods; and therefore the Godhead of the Son and Spirit are not excluded, but included in the Godhead of the Father, when we look upon the Father as God, in the Lord's Prayer, or any where else.

But, secondly, the Father, as Father, is never taken for the same Holy Ghost in Scripture, nor the Son, as Son, is taken for the Father, nor the Holy Ghost, as Holy Ghost, is at any time taken for the Son; for it is a rule in theology, though the res substrata, the thing that lies under the relative property (viz., the Godhead) of every person, be common and communicated, yet the same Godhead, considered as clothed with his relative property, (as Father, Son, and Spirit.) it is not common, but peculiar. For the Godhead of the Father, as Father, is not the Godhead of the Son, as Son, etc.

Hence it follows, that when Christ addresseth himself to the Father, as Father, in Scripture, it is not because he is either a diverse or greater God than the Holy Ghost, but it is for two other reasons:--

1. Because the Father, as Father, received primarily the wrong that sin did against his work of creation. For the Father being the first person in order, and creation the first transient act, (as election and reprobation were the first immanent,) hence this work is attributed chiefly to God the Father, in respect of our orderly apprehension; and hence man sinning then when he was only made, this is chiefly attributed to be against the Father, because his work appeared to be chiefly there, and not against the Son, for his work chiefly appears in redemption, he being the second person, and this the second main and wonderful work; neither against the Holy Ghost, for his work chiefly appears to us in application, being the third person, and this the third main act that ever God will do or show forth to the world in this life: hence God the Father receiving to our apprehension the wrong in creation by sin, he is the person that is to be satisfied, and not the Holy Ghost. And hence Jesus Christ in all his prayers had a most special eye to him, and not to the Holy Ghost, as Holy Ghost, because he came into the world by his death, and intercession, and strong cries, to satisfy God the Father, and not God the Holy Ghost as a third person. And hence it is said, (1 John ii. 1, 2,) "If any man sin, we have an advocate with God the Father," (not God the Holy Ghost,) because he was (to our apprehension) the person wronged; and hence we are after sins committed chiefly to address the Father in our prayers, and to go to him for pardon with our advocate with us, because to whom [[314]] offense is chiefly offered, from him chiefly pardon and reconciliation is to be expected.

2. Therefore Christ addresseth himself chiefly in his prayers to God the Father, because he is the original and first cause of all good; because he is the first person in order of subsisting, and therefore first too in the manner of conveying. I know the Godhead is the original of all good; but consider the persons one with another, and so the Father is ever the first in operation, as the Holy Ghost is the

last in consummation, for all good comes from the Father, (James i. 17,) through the Son, by the Holy Ghost. And hence, in all our prayers we are to look for all good from the Father, for his Son's sake to be conveyed us by the Holy Ghost; and hence it is said, (John vi. 10,) "No man comes to me but whom the Father draws." Why? It is the immediate office and work of the Holy Ghost to draw and apply the soul unto Christ. Why, then, is it said, "unless the Father draw"? The reason is, because that which was perfected and consummated by the Holy Ghost was intentionally and by way of purpose and decree begun originally by the Father; and this is that which Christ's words have chiefly reference unto, viz., the Father, through the Son, by the Holy Ghost, draws.

But I have waded too far in this divinity, the clear knowledge of which is reserved for us in heaven: but thus much to satisfy you. Yet the word Father, in the Lord's Prayer, I conceive, under correction, as it doth not exclude any person of the Godhead, so it is chiefly set down there, not so much to denote the person of the Father, as the affection of God, as a Father, to us his sons by Christ, which we are to believe, in our first approaching to your prayers, to be as, nay, to transcend, the affection of any father to his son; when we come to call upon him for those six things which the petitions set down, for those three ends, kingdom, power, and glory, which the prayer concludes withal.

Your fourth trouble is, your aptness to go to God immediately, especially when his graces are most striving in his ordinances, contrary to that of Christ, "Y'e believe in God, believe also in me."

So indeed it is usual for religious nature often to outrun and get the start of grace; as it appears in many other, so in this case you put. Look as it is with every man when God awakens him effectually; he

first seeks to his kitchen physic to save himself, by his duties, praying, mourning, reforming, endeavoring, repenting, working, before he will seek out to the physician and to Christ to save him. Because it was natural to Adam to seek to live by his working, it is natural to every son and branch of [[315]] that root to seek to save himself by doing as well as he can, or as God gives him the strength and grace. So it is here. It was natural to Adam to depend upon, and go to God immediately, as a creature to a creator, as a son to go nakedly to God as a father. Christ was not then known, nor seen: so it is natural to every man, when rectified nature is stirred up, to go immediately to God. It is grace in the second covenant that reveals and draws to Jesus Christ, and to God by Christ. (Heb. vii. 25.)

For cure of this distemper, ponder but these three things: -- 1. Clearly convince the soul, that the immortal, invisible, and most holy God, that dwelleth in an unapproachable light, hath set out himself to be seen, or made himself only visible in Jesus Christ, so that he would have no man look upon him any other ways than as he hath revealed himself in his Son; in whom, (though in all other creatures his vestigia and footsteps are to be seen,) as he is God, the face of God is to be seen, which no creature is able to behold, but there, being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, (Heb. i. 3;) and as he is man, the very heart of God, both in respect of affection and will to be seen; so that in and through Jesus Christ, especially his human nature, the glory of the great God breaks out like the sun through the clouds most brightly, in respect of us, and therefore in and through his human nature we are only to behold God, in whom all that a Christian desires to know is to be seen, which is the face and heart of so dear a friend. (1 Cor. iv. 6. John xiv. 9, 10.) For we know, by too lamentable experience, how the whole world, vanishing in their smoky thoughts of the glory of God, as he is considered in himself, and not able to conceive or retain the

knowledge of him, did hence invent and set up images as fit objects for their drunken, staggering understanding to fasten upon, and to be limited with, and hence adored God before these, (as our Popish hypocrites do before the altar,) and in these, and at these, as Papists do in respect of their images. Hence the Lord, to cure this inveterate natural malady, hath, in the second person, united himself to man Christ Jesus, through whom we are both able, to our everlasting wonderment, to see him, and also here bound only to behold him, who, as he is a fit handle for our faith, so he is a fit object for our weak minds to behold the glory of the most high God in. Wherefore, then, do you offer to go unto God without Christ, when as you are not so much as to look upon God, but as he appears in Christ? Is not the human nature of the Lord Jesus more easy to be seen and conceived of than the invisible, unlimited, eternal Godhead?

[[316]] 2. Secondly: See evidently that there is not any dram or drop of God you have, especially in God's ordinances, but it issues from the blood, and is purchased by the intercession, and delivered unto you by the hand, of Jesus Christ. (Eph. i. 7. Heb. vii. 25. John v. 22.) You should never have heard the sound of the gospel, nor never have had day of patience, nor never have heard of God's ordinances to find him in, nor never have been comforted, quickened, enlarged, affected by God's ordinances, were it not for Jesus Christ, the efficacy of whose blood, and power of whose glorious intercession, doth, at the very instant you feel any good in God's ordinances, prevail with God the Father for what you feel; for the Father loveth the Son, and "hath put all things into his hands," (John iv. 35,) that all men might honor the Son; all the three persons plotting chiefly for the honor of the second; so that you may see, nay, you are bound to believe, at the time you feel your heart savingly affected in any ordinance now, the Lord Jesus, who is at the right hand of God in heaven, who is now in his glory; now he remembering me, a poor worm on earth; now I feel

the fruit of his death. O, what a miserable, forlorn wretch had I been, were it not for Jesus Christ! Mercy could never have helped, enlightened, comforted, quickened, assured, enlarged me, and justice could never have relieved my dead, bloody, perishing, lost soul, had it not been for Jesus Christ, whose Spirit, power, grace, comfort, presence, sweetness, I taste, drink, and am satisfied abundantly with, and now do enjoy.

O, sir, methinks the sad meditation of this should make you, in all God's ordinances, where you are apt to say you go immediately to God, to hasten suddenly in your thoughts, affections, praises, to Jesus Christ. Nay, methinks you should speedily have your heart elevated and lifted up to Jesus Christ, and say, I receive this, and taste this from Jesus Christ. O, but this is but a taste of the honeycomb with the end of my rod, and if this presence of Christ's Spirit I feel now be so sweet, what is himself then?

3. Thirdly: Labor for increase of love and familiarity with Jesus Christ, by taking notice of him, by coming often to him, by musing daily on his love, as on a fresh thing, by banishing slavish false fears of his forgetfulness of you, and want of everlasting love toward you; and then you know love will carry you speedily to him; *omne meum pondus meum*; nay, grant that you have been a stranger to Christ, yet restore the love of Christ to life again in your soul, and when you come to his ordinances, where he dwells, your soul will make its first inquiry for him, neither will [\[\[317\]\]](#) it be satisfied till it hath seen him, as we do them we love, toward whom we have been greatest strangers.

Your fifth trouble is, you know not how to apply absolute promises to yourself, as in Heb. viii., because they are made indefinitely, without condition. Conditional promises you say you can, if you can find the

qualification that gives you right to the good of the promise within you.

This useful, fruitful question, how to apply absolute promises to one's particular, deserves a larger time and answer than now, in the midst of perplexities, I am able, yet willing, to give. For when the Lord saith absolutely, without condition, that he will take away the stony heart, and he will put his fear into his people's hearts, etc., and these kinds of promises are made to some, not to all, to those only whom the Lord will, and in general to his people, hereupon the souls of many Christians, especially such as question God's love toward them, are most in suspense. And, therefore, when they complain of the vileness of their hearts, and strength of their lusts, let any man tell them that the Lord hath undertaken, in the second covenant, to heal their backslidings, and to subdue their iniquities, they will hereupon reply, It is true he hath promised indeed to do thus for some absolutely, though they have no good in them; but I that feel so vile a heart, so rebellious a nature, will he do this for me, or no? And thus the soul floats above water, yet fears it shall sink at last, notwithstanding all that God hath said. I will answer therefore, briefly, these two things in general.

I shall show you to what end, and for what use and purpose, God hath made absolute promises; not only to them that be for the present his people, but to them that in respect of their estates and condition are not.

I shall show you how every Christian is to make use of them, and how and when he ought to apply them. For the first of these: --

1. First, I conceive that, as in respect of God himself, there are many ends which I shall not mention, as being needless, so in respect of

man, there are principally these two ends, for which the Lord hath made absolute promises: --

1. To raise up the soul of a helpless, sinful, cursed, lost sinner in his own eyes, to some hope (at least) of mercy and help from the Lord. For thus usually every man's soul is wrought, to whom the Lord doth intend grace and mercy. He first turns his eyes inward, and makes him to see he is stark naught, and that he hath not one dram of grace in him, who thought himself rich and wanting nothing before, and, consequently, that he is [[318]] under the curse and wrath of God for the present, and that if the Lord should but stop his breath, and cover his face, and take him away, which he may easily do, and it is to be feared he will, that he is undone forever. Hereupon the soul is awakened, and falls to his kitchen physic, as I spake before; prays, and hears, and amends, and strives to grow better, and to stop up ever)' hole, and to amend itself of every sin; but finding itself to grow worse and worse, and perceiving thereby that he doth but stir, and not cleanse, the puddle, and that it is not amending of nature that he must attain to, but he must believe, and make a long arm to heaven, and apprehend the Lord Jesus, (which so few know, or ever shall enjoy,) and hereby quench the wrath of God. I say, finding he can not do thus, no, nor no means of themselves can help him to this, hereupon he is forsaken of all his self-wisdom, and of all his vain hopes, and now sits down like a desolate widow, comfortless, and "sorrowful, and thinks there is no way but death and hell, and the wrath of a displeased God to be expected. And if any come and tell this soul of God's mercy and pity to sinners, saith he, It is true, he is even infinitely merciful unto them who are rent for their sins, and that can believe; but that I can not do, and am sure shall never be able for to do , and therefore what cause have I but to lie down in my sorrow, and to expect my fatal stroke every moment? Reply again upon this soul, and tell him, that though he can not believe, or loosen

his heart from sin. yet that the Lord hath promised to do it -- that he will subdue all his iniquities, and he will pardon all his sin, and that he will cause men to walk in his ways, etc. True, saith the soul again, he will do thus for his own people, and for them he hath chosen; but I never had a dram of grace in my heart, and there is no evidence that the Lord is mine own, or that I am his. Here again the soul lies down, until the Lord discovers to the soul that he will do these things for some that have no grace, or never had grace, for these promises were made to such.

Hereupon the soul thinks thus: These promises are made for some that are filthy; for why should God pour clean water upon them? for some that be hard hearted; for why should he promise to take away the stony heart from them? etc. And if unto some such, and I being such a one, why may not the Lord possibly intend and include me, seeing he hath not by his promise excluded nor shut me out? Indeed, I dare not say he will; but yet how do I, or men, or angels know, but yet I may be one? Hereupon hope is raised to life again; seeing God hath undertaken the work for the vilest, it is possible he may do it for me, now when I am vile, and can do nothing for myself. And thus you [[319]] may see the first end and use of absolute promises to be, as it were, twigs to uphold the sinking spirits of hopeless, helpless, distressed souls.

2. The second end and use of them is this: to create and draw out faith in Jesus Christ in the promises. For as the law begets terror, so the promises beget faith. Now, no conditional promise firstly begets faith, because he that is under any condition of the gospel, in that man there is a presupposed faith. It is God's absolute promise that firstly begets faith, for faith is not assurance, but the coining of the whole soul to Christ in a promise. (John vi. 35.) And then the soul believes in Christ, when it comes to Christ; now this God works in

the gospel. First, the soul is raised up by hope. And being raised, it secondly comes to Christ, which is faith, by vehement, unutterable desire. And being come to him, it thirdly embraceth Christ by love; and thus the march is made, and the everlasting knot is tied.

Now, as you have heard, the absolute promise works hope of relief from Christ; and if it works hope, it also works a desire, or coming to Christ by desire. O that thou, Lord, wouldest honor thy grace, thy power, thy love, thy promise, in helping me, a poor castaway. And thus faith is created (as it were) by this absolute promise; for it can not but move the heart of any one, that ever felt his want, to cry mightily to the Lord for help, if he hath any hope, seeing the Lord hath promised to do it for some. O, saith the soul, that thou wouldest do it for me. And surely, were it not for this absolute promise of God, no soul would desire, because he would have no hope to be saved, or to seek for any thing as from the hands of God. And thus you see to what end God makes, and to what use a Christian may put, these absolute promises.

2. For the second thing, viz., how and when a Christian may apply these promises,--

I answer: Every Christian is either,

1. Within covenant with God, and knows it; or,
2. Within covenant with God, and knows it not; or,
3. Out of covenant indeed, for his present estate and condition; yet he is in fieri, or making toward it.

1. If he be in covenant, and knows it, then you may easily perceive how and when he ought to apply promises unto himself; for he may boldly conclude, if God be his God, then all the promises of God shall be made good unto him; if he be a son of God, he may boldly

challenge at all times, at the hands of God, (nay, in some respects, at the hands of justice itself,) the fulfilling of God the Father's will, delivered in the several [[320]] legacies of the promise bought by the blood, and sealed by the same blood of Jesus Christ, that they may and shall be made good unto him, that is clear.

2. Secondly, if he be in covenant, and knows it not, and questions hence whether God is his or not, and consequently whether the promises belong unto him, then the rule is to be observed: let him so sue and seek for the good of the absolute promise, until, by reflecting upon his own acts, herein he perceive himself adorned and dignified with the qualification of some conditional promise; and then if he can find the condition or qualification within himself, then, as you judge and write, he may conclude that the conditional promise belongs to him; and if one promise, then all God's promises; and therefore that absolute promises are his own, because at least one conditional promise is. For no unregenerate man is within the compass of any one conditional promise of grace, unless you will say he is under the everlasting love of God, the promises of grace being but the midway between the eternal purpose and decree of love, and the glorious, certain execution of that love in time -- the promise being the break- J day of God's most glorious love, which must shine out in time.

But here you will say is the difficulty, viz., how I should so seek for the good of absolute promises, as therein to find myself within the compass of some conditional one.

I answer, it is done chiefly by three acts.

1. By being humbly contented, that seeing the Lord hath absolutely promised to work and do all for the soul he intends for to save, even when it can do nothing for itself, and that he hath taken the work

into his own hands; so that it is his promise, offer, office, and honor to do all; that therefore you lie down, not sluggishly, but humbly, at the feet of God, and contented to have him to be your God, and forever to be disposed of in any thing by God, if he will fulfill his covenant in you; contented to part with any sin, if he will rend it from you, -- contented to know any truth, if he will reveal it to you, --- contented to do any duty, if he will enable you, -- contented to shine bright with all his glorious graces, if he will create and maintain them in you, -- contented to bear any evil, if he may lay his hand under your head, and thereunto strengthen you. And so, seeing the Lord promised to undertake the work for some, put out the work, and put over your soul to him, that he would fulfill the good that his covenant promiseth in yourself. Now, when you do thus, which (no question) you and many a soul doth, many times reflect upon this act, and see if you can not or may not find yourself by it under the condition of some conditional promise; and if you do, [[321]] then are you bound to believe all God's promises are and will be yea and amen unto you. Now that you do so by this act, itself speaks plainly, for how many conditional promises are made to the meek. -- "Blessed are the meek," (Matt, v.,) -- and to the humble, whom God will raise up! For this is not saving meekness, to be quietly contented to be, or to do, or to bear an)- thing that the Lord will have me from mine own strength and feeling, but to be, to do, or to bear any thing that the Lord will have me, if the Lord enable me. Many a stout heart would gladly have Christ, but if he can not have him in his own terms, viz., Christ and his lusts, Christ and the world too, or by his own strength and power, he will have none of him, but desperately casts him away, and saith, What, shall I look after him any more? I can not pray, I can not believe, I can not break this vile and unruly will, this stony, adamant heart. Thus the pride of a man's heart works. Now, he that is truly meekened and humbled, he is contented gladly to have God his God, and Christ his Redeemer, and that upon Jesus Christ's own terms.

First, on his own covenant. Now, what is that? Why, it is this: I will give you the good, and work in you the condition too; I will give you Lay-self, and therefore will not stick to give you an eye to see, and a heart to receive too. This is the covenant. Now, hereupon a humbled soul accepts of Christ according to his covenant, on his own terms, thus, viz., upon that condition, Lord, that thou wilt humble me, teach me, persuade me, cause me to believe, and in every thing to honor thee; Lord, I am contented gladly and joyfully to have thee; do therefore what thou wilt with me. Just as a sick man tells his physician, who comes not to him on these terms, If you will make yourself half-whole, then I will cure you, and do the rest for you; but being utterly unable .to cure, or to know how to cure himself, he tells his physician, I am content you should begin and perfect the cure, and so honor your skill and love in me, to be contented to take any thing if you will give it me, and if I offer to resist that, you should bind me, and so do any thing with me.

The second act is, earnestly to long and come to Christ, to cleave unto Jesus Christ by fervent and ardent desire that he would make good those absolute promises to you, seeing that they are made to some, and that they do not exclude you; for when you ponder well, and see what wonderful great things the Lord promiseth to some, whose heart can not but be stirred up to say, as that woman in another case, "Lord, give me of that water to drink;" and as they in the fifth of John, "Lord, evermore give us that bread." Now, doing this, reflect upon the second act, and [[322]] see if unto it no conditional promise belongs, and you shall find an affirmative answer from the word. For what is this longing after the good, not of some, (which many hypocrites do,) but of all the promises, but that which the Scripture calls thirsting? who are commanded to "come and drink of the waters of life freely," (Is. lv. 1, 2;) and hungering? to which all good things are promised, (Matt. v. 6,) and which, coming

to Christ, (as I spake even now,) who hath given this as the first fruit of eternal elec-tion, and which kind of people he will never cast away. (John vi. 37.) Now, when you see these promises belonging unto you, why dare you not conclude but that all these absolute ones are yours also?

3. The third act is this: Seeing God hath promised absolutely such good things in the second covenant, but hath not set down the time when, or how much grace he will give, and seeing only he can help, therefore look up, and wait upon the Lord in the use of all known means, until he makes good what he hath promised to do, and perform, and work for you. Say, as beggars, that have but one door to go to for bread, if none hear, or, hearing, help not, lay themselves down at the door, and say, I will wait here, I am sure I perish if I go away, or quarrel with them in the house, because they help me not so soon as I would, and therefore I will wait, for it may be their compassions may move them as they pass by to help me. So do you. Many a soul comes and longs for the good of the promises; but if the Lord do not speedily help him, he goes with discouragements, fears, and discontents, or despair, or sin, away, and saith one of these two things; either, I shall never have help, or, I come not truly, and hence I feel no help. O, remember that bread is only to be had at the door, to be distributed when the Lord seeth need, not when we would, or think we have need; and therefore wait here and say, If I perish, here I will, at the feet of God, and at the feet of the promises and covenant of God, etc.

Now, reflect upon this act, and see if you may not find some conditional promise annexed unto it, which surely you may, and I will name you but two -- Is. xlix. 29-31, and Is. lxiv. 4; and if the conditional promise belongs to such a soul, you may easily conclude the absolute promises are your own, and the chiefest use you are to

make of them when you know them that they are your own, is to press God to make them good daily to you, and to believe as verily and really as if you had the performance of them, that they shall. It may be you will ask me, How shall I know whether I have these conditions truly in me? I answer, Sincerity is a very witnessing grace; the frequent meditation of the [[323]] Scripture will give you much light to judge of the sincerity of them, and that which St. Paul speaks, (1 Cor. xii.) I say unto you, "We have not received the spirit of the world, but of God, whereby we know (or may know) the things that are freely given to us of God."

3. Thirdly. If he be out of the covenant, but yet God begins to work with some common work of his grace upon him: all that I would say unto him, and all the use he can make of such abso-lute promises, consists in these things: --

Let him consider the freeness of God's promise, whereby he may be stirred up to conceive some hope it may be made good to him in time. For the promise is very free and large, excluding none, (except those that sin unpardonable,) be their sins and natures never so vile before God, and yet not including any by name, for that is in the conditional promise; and hence such a one is to make this use of it, Who knows but the Lord may have pity upon me in time? and so hang thy hope upon him.

Let him consider the worth and price of God's promise bought by blood, and for which some men would give a thousand worlds for the benefit and comfort of, and hereby raise up his heart, as by the freeness of it to hope, so by the price of it to esteem of the thing promised, above pearls, and all the honor and pomp of the world.

Let him consider the fullness of the promise, which is a plaster as big as his sore, just answerable to all his wants, nay, infinitely more large

than his wants. And surely these three things will draw his heart to long for the promise, and then you know what is conditionally promised and bequeathed to them that thirst; for similitude is the ground of love. Now, when the fullness of the promise is seen, there will appear such a suitableness and fitness of the promise to his soul, that he can not but long for it. Thus much for the fifth trouble.

Your sixth trouble set down in two heads, put into one for brevity, viz., secret unwillingness to seek God in the strictest solemn services, before you enter into them, weariness of them while they last, and glad when they are gone. The reasons which you mention are partly fear of not using them aright, together with melancholy, and lastly, the strictness of them.

It is very true, there is abundance of wildness in our hearts, which naturally seek to have their liberty abroad, and can not endure to be pent in the narrow room of holy performances, extraordinary duties, etc., no more than children can be pent up from their play. And hence it is weary of them, and glad to think of their departures and ends. And truly it is one of the [[324]] most grievous miseries that a holy heart can feel; and I beseech the Lord of heaven and earth to keep you and me. and all his forever, while we are here in our valley, under the sense of such distempers, as our greatest misery. And therefore me-thought it was a solemn sweet speech of an honest man to his friend, who seeing him oppressed with such distempers as you mention, and perceiving him to droop under them, he came cheerfully to him, and suddenly said unto him, I can tell you good news, the best that ever)'OU heard, viz.: As soon as ever you are in heaven, you shall serve Christ without weariness; which words, well thought on, revived the man. That which I would speak with as much tenderness of compassion as I am able to you, I refer to these things.

That a child of God is never usually weary of the duty, but rather of his vile heart, to think of, and to look upon, that in the duty Christ's yoke is easy, and his burden light, to him that takes it on his neck, and puts his soul under it. The duty, nakedly considered in itself, is glorious in his eyes and sweet to his soul, and hence sometimes never well, but when he considers his dead, blind, barren, and senseless heart that he is to carry to the duty, and that he fears, and hath felt, will abide with him in the duty. O, this grieves; here the soul pincheth. A hypocrite is weary of the duty; a child of God rejoiceth in it, but he is weary of his sin, and unsavoriness and weariness in the duty. I persuade myself, sir, that you may soon mistake your spirit herein: you think you are unwilling to come to the duty, and are weary of it, when indeed it is your glory, joy, and love; but it is because you fear you can do it no better that troubles you, that you have such a vile heart in it. And if your trouble be from hence, the good Lord increase it in you daily; and withal, bless the Lord, and say, Lord, though I am weary of my vile heart, in these days of humiliation, in these Sabbaths, yet I bless thee, the days and duties themselves thou knowest are dear unto me; it is not, Lord, because I am weary of thy word, but because I can do it no better; I am weary of myself, and this vile heart; here is much love in such a spirit to the Lord. And believe it, sir, your love wants not its recompenses; and remember, that the Lord respects you not according to your duties done, but according to your love in them and to them. And therefore those duties you are ashamed to own, the Lord will not be ashamed to crown.

Consider, you must and shall be baited with these distempers of heart, sometimes more, and sometimes less, as long as you live. It is part of Paul's body of death, which he must carry with him till he come to bury himself.

[[325]] 3. Those means which may help you to be freed from them (a little at least) are these, among many: --

Be but truly and really, not by fits and darkly, sensible of them; men in deep miseries are not unwilling to be helped out.

Judge ye not rigorously of God, as though he were a bloody, austere God, as he did of his master whose talent he had, and hence never improved it. But look upon God as having a father's heart and affection toward you, in the meanest and greatest performances; which is double, either to give you strength to do what you can not, (I can do all things through Christ,) or having come to him for it, to accept of what you would do for him, as if it were done; and this will make you joy in the poorest performance, that though it be never so full of vileness, yet the Lord, out of his fatherly love, accepts of it as glorious.

Renew, morning and evening, by sad and solemn meditation, the sense of God's love to you in Christ, and in every duty that he sets you about; and love will love and like the yoke, and make the commandments that they shall not be grievous to you.

Thus, I have briefly done with your new troubles, which you mention, you say, because you may not have the like opportunity of writing again. It may be so, and therefore I have desired to satisfy you, which I beseech the Lord himself to do.

Next you come to reply to my first letter, of which I have kept no copy, as I never did of any, and hence may and do forget what I writ then unto you. So much light as your letter lends me to bring things to mind I will gladly take, and be more brief in answer.

You find the strength of grace to be got in you rather by argumentation than inward communication and influence arising from the union to Christ. And this troubles you.

To which I answer these three things: --

That, as the old sinful nature is communicated from Adam the first to us, without any argumentation, so the new nature, which is the seed, foundation, and plot of all grace, is diffused into us by the second Adam when we are united to him, without argumentation. It is only by divine operation. The Lord leave not me, nor any friend I have, to a naked Armenian illumination and persuasion.

That to the increase of those labors, and drawing out the acts of the new creature, the Lord is pleased to use moral and rational persuasions, as in the instance you gave: Christ died for us, then hence the love of Christ constrains. But remember, withal, it is not the bare meditation, or strength of reason or [[326]] persuasion, that elicits such divine and noble acts in the heart and affection; but it is the blood of Christ, sprinkling these serious meditations, that makes them work such graces in the soul -- which I might show at large; which blood is the salve, though argumentation is the cloth or leather to which it sticks, and by which it is applied; but from such leather comes no virtue; all of it is from the blood of Christ, which by argumentation heals the soul. For if it were nakedly in the argumentation to stir your heart, and to work strength of grace, what should be the reason that sometimes you are no more moved by all your argumentations than a mountain of brass is by the winds? Why should the same truth affect you at one time and not at another, when you are as fitly disposed to be affected as at the first? Therefore, consider, it is not your reason and argumentation, but

Christ's blood, that doth all, by as admirable and yet secret operation.

3. Your union to Christ on your part is begun and partly wrought by the understanding, and hence the good that you get by it at any time, it is from your union, or part of it at least.

Again you ask me, whether Calvin doth not express fully my thoughts about our spiritual union, in his lib. 4, cap. xvii.

I answer, I have forgot what he hath wrote and myself have read long since out of him, and for the present I have no books about me where I am, and therefore can not satisfy you in this, neither know I when I shall seek to find out the book and place; if I have leisure, I will write to you, or tell some of your friends before I am gone, what he hath said or writ that way, etc.

Again, thirdly, you desire me to tell you how myself came to the cure of atheistical thoughts, and whether they did wear out, or whether they were rationally overthrown.

I answer, at first they did wear out, meeting with fruitless and dead-hearted company, which was at the university.

The Lord awakened me again, and bid me beware lest an old sore broke out again. And this I found, that strength of reason would commonly convince my understanding that there was a God, but I felt it utterly insufficient to persuade my will of it unless it was by fits, when, as I thought, God's Spirit moved upon the chaos of those horrible thoughts; and this, I think, will be found a truth.

I did groan under the bondage of those unbelieving thoughts, looking up, and sighing to the Lord, that if he were as his works and word

declared him to be, he would be pleased to reveal himself by his own beams, and persuade my heart by his own Spirit of his essence and being, which if he would do, I should account [[327]] it the greatest mercy that ever he showed me. And after grievous and heavy perplexities, when I was by them almost forced to make an end of myself and sinful life, and to be mine own executioner, the Lord came between the bridge and the water, and set me out of anguish of spirit, (as she prayed for a child,) to pray unto him for light in the midst of so great darkness. In which time he revealed himself, manifested his love, stilled all those raging thoughts, gave return in great measure of them; so that, though I could not. read the Scripture without blasphemous thoughts before, now I saw a glory, a majesty, a mystery, a depth in it, which fully persuaded, and which light (I desire to speak it to the glory of his free grace, seeing you call me to it) is not wholly put out, but remains, while I desire to walk closely with him, unto this day. And thus the Lord opened mine eyes, and cured me of this misery; and if any such base thoughts come (like beggars to my door) to my mind, and put these scruples to me, I used to send them away with this answer: Why shall I question that truth which I have both known and seen?

But you say this remedy is good, viz., of prayer, but that you can not use it, especially because you question the truth of God.

Yet (dear sir) give not over this trade; you will doubtless find it gainful, when it may be God bath laden you more with these thoughts, and made you loathe yourself for them. But the thing seems strange to me, if I mistake you not, viz., that your heart will not be persuaded, but that you must resolve your doubts concerning the perfection of Scripture, not by seeking to harmonize those passages that seem to cross one another, but by ascribing some humanity or error (if I may interpret you) to the penmen, seeing St.

Paul saith, "We prophesy but in part," and seeing one of the evangelists leaves out the doxology in the Lord's Prayer.

Sir, if you take these thoughts, arising from these and the like grounds, as your burden, I do not blame you, but pity you in that respect; but if your judgment indeed think so, I am sorry you should harbor such thoughts one hour within doors; for you know that holy men writ the Scriptures (but so far they might err, but it is added) as they were inspired, or (as the original hath it) as they were moved or carried in the arms of the Holy Ghost, and so how could they err? how could God lie? It is true, Paul did prophesy but in part; and is this an argument, because he did not prophesy fully, therefore in some things he did not prophesy truly? I am persuaded you will say there are many things my poor thoughts have suggested to you, as true; and yet I am persuaded I do in them prophesy (if I may so say) but in part.

[[328]] The Spirit of God directed the four evangelists to write; yet so as they did not all write what another writ, but in great wisdom left some things doubtful, and short in one, which are more clear and full in another. And hence the doxology is fully set down in one, and not in another; and many reasons I could set you down why, but that it is needless. I grant you ought not to put up all with a charitable opinion of Scripture; but if you can, by reason, reading, and comparing, help your heart to a full persuasion, this is Scripture. But many things you cannot get satisfaction for, by that way and means, but still your spirit will be left dark and doubtful. What course will you here take for resolution, which is Scripture? The Papists say it is so, because the church hath christened it for Scripture; you say you will see reason for it that it is so, or else you cannot be satisfied; then I fear you will never be satisfied. I think, in this case, therefore, these two things you are to do: --

1. To go to God by prayer, to give you a resolution of all your doubts, and by some means or other some light, to see whether this is his word or not. Secondly, if this be his word, that he would persuade your heart of it that it is so. For the least resolution which is Scripture, and which is not, is made by the same persuasion, and sole persuasion, of the same Spirit that writ the Scripture. Concerning the angels that appeared to Mary, see Gerard, and he briefly (I think) will satisfy you. In your answer to the particular scruples about the Scripture sense, and the dissonancy of them, only this I will add to the last clause about these things, that if the Scripture be inspired by the Holy Ghost, and that not in the sum and substance of it, but to every word and sentence of it, which I think you will not doubt of, when you have considered it, then I think it will un-deniably follow, that the same Spirit of truth is also a Spirit of order; and hence the method of various penning of it is from the Spirit too, which you say you stick at.

Again, to your third thing, concerning your spirit being burdened with involuntary infirmities, as burdens, but not as sins. I say nothing now, because I perceive, by one part of your reply, that the Lord hath done you some good by the first answer, only it is your grief you can not fear them, nor condemn yourself for them, as damning sins. For satisfaction of which, I hope this reply to your second trouble will give you some satisfaction.

Again, to your fourth question, to know whether these changes you have sometimes, and these movings of the Spirit, are not of natural temper, or God's Spirit. It seems I did a little mistake the meaning, because you meant not the main work of grace, but [[329]] occasional stirrings and movings of the heart, as by reading some pathetical letter, your spirit is moved with joy or sorrow, which it may be will not be stirred at some other time, as by drinking a cup of

wine the spirit is made more cheerful and lively, etc. I answer these three things:--•

First. That it is very useful for natural affections to be raised by a natural temper, as by drinking, eating, novelty of the gospel, John's candle flies were ravished with the gospel: people are naturally moved sometimes by a thundering minister, yet never a whit the more grace, etc.; and it is a good speech of Dr. Ames, Arminian universal grace (as they describe it) may be the effect of a good dinner sometimes.

That though the being of grace depends not upon the temper of the body, yet the exercise of grace, and many gifts of grace, together with the feeling of it, doth. And hence a good dinner, and sometimes wine to a sad, melancholy (if gracious) heart, may remove reprehentem, that may keep grace, as joy and thankfulness, from working, and so take the grace and draw it out, not create and diffuse the grace. The prophet called (you know) for a minstrel, which some think (and that upon good grounds) was' to raise up his heavy heart, and make him cheerful and fit to speak. The body is the instrument, which if it be broken, the best grace will hardly sound, but if whole, then they will.

If you would know when these things only draw out grace, or make a thing like unto grace in the soul, I answer, by these two things chiefly: --

If it be true grace, it ever makes you more humble and vile in your own eyes, and say, Lord, why dost thou give me any desire to thee, any cheerfulness in serving thee?

It makes you more thankful, and to bless the Lord that he thus remembers you; for this is a standing rule, whatever comes from

nature and a man's self, it ever builds up itself, and returns to self again; whatever grace comes from Christ, it drives a man out of himself, by making him humble, and draws him unto Christ that sent him, by making him thankful. I think all grace, and stirrings, and movings, that have not this double effect in some measure, are to be suspected, and if they have, it is dangerous to doubt whether they are true or no.

5. Again: your fifth thing about providence. You say you can not see a positive providence, although you do see a negative providence in all your occasions, and comforts, and crosses you meet withal, as, namely, you can thank God for not taking away your life, etc., but you can not see God giving it.

[[330]] I answer: 1. Consider what I writ to you at first about this question in general.

Ponder sadly whether any creature, or appurtenance to it, hath its being from itself, or from the will and word of God, viz., I will have such a man to be, and such a memory to be, etc. I think you will sa}', Nothing can make itself, therefore here is a positive providence in having life, liberty, etc.

Consider whether the same will and word that gives it a being, together with all the appurtenances to it, doth not also give it act and motion. That it is so. I thus demonstrate it. 1. Every creature is made for an end, for no wise efficient, but works for some wise end. 2. That no creature can lead itself to its end, if sinful or irrational. 3. God must and doth lead it by its several acts and movings to that end. Hence, 4. Every act is determined by God.

And although I grant some creatures move freely, some necessarily, yet it is from a positive will and providence that they move, act, and

see. Therefore you see what cause there is to see a positive providence in every thing.

Concerning the rest of your letter, O that I had time and heart to write more! Yet I hope I have writ enough for this time, and the Lord knows whether ever more or no. However, I thank you heartily for improving me this way of writing, who have my mouth stopped from speaking. I wish I had more such friends to deal thus with me, and myself more time, and a more fruitful head and heart to improve myself, this, or any other like way for them; for who knows what breathings of God's Spirit are lost for want of writing, especially when there is no season of speaking? Truly, sir, I meet with few that are much troubled in that manner as yourself, but they go on in an easy, quiet, and very dangerous way; which troubles (I persuade myself) keep you awaking when other virgins are slumbering, and after which (I am persuaded) the Lord intends to use you for more than common service, if you wade well through them; however, as I said before, be not discouraged, or too much perplexed in sorrow for them. For surely, as far as I can guess, the Lord is pre-paring you for himself by them. I shall not forget you, though I never saw you: and I beseech you, if you have any spark of affection toward me, kindled by these few lines, remember when you are best able to pray for yourself, to remember to look after me and mine, and all that go with me on the mighty waters, and then to look up and sigh to Heaven for me, that the Lord would out of his free grace hut bring me to that good land, and those glorious ordinances, and that there I may but behold the face of [[331]] the Lord in his temple, though he never delight to use me there, though I and mine should possibly beg there, and that if the Lord should call me to my solemn work and service for the good of his church and people and company that go with me, or are gone before me, that then the Lord Jesus would reveal his secrets to me, and enable me, the little time I have to live, to be

fruitful to him, and to have a larger heart than ever for him. As for yourself, I shall desire the Lord to keep you blameless and unspotted in an evil world, and that as he hath begun, so he would perfect and crown his divine graces and work in you, and that you may be preserved from national sins, which shortly bring national and most heavy plagues.

And the presence of the Lord may abide with you, and in you, until the Lord call for you. Remember my kind love to your father, whose name I have forgot, and by whom I could not send these lines, being then hindered by business. Now, the peace of Jesus Christ be with you, and keep you upright and blameless till death. And if I never see you more till the last and great day, then farewell, farewell.

Yours in Jesus Christ,

T. S.

**Specially Tending. To the Right Ordering
of the Heart, that "We may Comfortably
Walk with God in our General and
Particular Callings.**

In A Letter To A Pious Friend In England.

TO THE
CHRISTIAN READER.

This holy letter of that ready scribe of Christ's kingdom is so full of grace and truth, that it needs no other epistle commendatory than

itself.

Yet seeing the lot is unexpectedly fallen upon my pen to give it a superscription, that it may pass current from hand to hand, I do heartily, in the first place, dedicate it to thee, thou bleeding, troubled spirit, as a choice, cordial friend; an interpreter-- one of a thousand - - that doth not only speak thy heart, but by the Comforter (whom Christ hath promised to send) to thy heart.

It may be this paper present is sent on embassy from heaven, on purpose to set thy house in order, to untie thy bosom knots, to bind the strong man, and cast him out of thy doors, that thy heart may be once again set at liberty, to serve the Lord thy God in thy general and particular calling, whose service is thy freedom. What is here sent by this ambassador of Christ (who is now the voice of one crying in the wilderness) to a weary and heavy-laden soul in this island, I had rather it should appear to thy judgment in the serious reading, and to thy conscience in the home application thereof, than from my opinion of it. Therefore I shall only add (as the contents of this letter) certain select cases, proposed and resolved in the several paragraphs thereof) as they lie in order in the pages following, viz.: --

- Trouble of mind in civil affairs by the secret injection of religious thoughts.
- From what spirit such suggestions do arise.
- How to entertain them when they crowd in.
- Concerning the not being humbled for sinful distractions that hinder and interrupt the spiritual performance of holy duties.
- How a Christian may he said to be under the covenant of works.

- How to conceive aright of that mystery of mysteries, the blessed persons in the Trinity.
- The soul's aptness to go to God immediately in holy duties, without taking Christ Jesus by the hand.
- How to apply absolute promises to thyself, though they are made in definitely, without condition.
- A notable discovery of a secret unwillingness in the soul to seek God in the strictest solemn services, before it entereth into them; weariness of them while they last, and a gladness when they are ended
- A sound confutation of that heretical Arminian tenet, viz, that the strength of grace is to be got rather by argumentation than inward communication and influence, arising from union with Christ.
- The experiences of this tried servant of Christ, (who is the penman hereof,) how he was cured of atheistical thoughts -- whether they did wear out, or whether by the dint of arguments they were rationally overthrown.
- Lastly, whether those changes which a child of God hath sometimes, and those movings of the Spirit, are caused by a natural temper, or God's Spirit.
- All which select cases (and many more that collaterally issue from their sides) are judiciously resolved with much perspicuity and brevity in these few sheets, by the only Judge of all controversies, the two-edged sword of the Spirit, the word of God.

Thus humbly beseeching thee to read over this epistle of Christ to thee, with the same spirit of love and of a sound mind which indited

every line in it, I do desire to leave thee at the throne of grace, in the arms of Christ, with the Father of all comfort, that thou mayest receive the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, and be crowned with joy unspeakable and full of glory. I subscribe myself, friend,

Thine in any spiritual furtherance of thy faith,

William Adderlet.

Charter House,
London.

Feb. 1, 1647.

The First Principles the Oracles of God.

Heb. v. 12. -- "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat."

[[333]]

To the
Christian Reader.

It is no disparagement at all for this wise master-builder to labor sometimes, by the hammer of the word, to fasten these nails of truth in a sure place, -- even in the heads and hearts of infant Christians.

Neither is it below the highest scholar in Christ's school to hold fast the form of wholesome words.

The great apostle himself, (who was rapt up into the third heaven,) although he had received a commission of Christ, his Master, to make disciples, yet he was a disciple still; for he not only catechized others, but learned -- and that again and again -- the first principles of the oracles of God, which are called the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, and the depths of God; that is, in plain English, those doctrinal truths which are truly fundamental, and absolutely necessary unto salvation; that we may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convince the gainsayers; and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh us a reason of the hope that is in us.

Thus heartily beseeching thee, in the name of Christ, to search the Scriptures, and to give thyself continually to prayer, and the ministry of the word, that you may grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, I now commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified. So be it.

Friend, I am thine, if thou dost love the truth, and our Lord Jesus Christ, in sincerity.

William Adderley.

Charter House, London,
February 1, 1647.

[[336]]

To the
Christian Reader

Being desired to peruse and give our opinion of the resolutions in this letter now presented to thy view, we must confess they appeared to us very precious; for we have seldom seen acuteness, profoundness, and godliness so eminently, equally, and happily matched. There are in Christ's school divers forms, elementaries, and men of exercised wits. The scholar proposing these cases was no puny, and he was happy in meeting with a teacher so able for resolution. Therefore whoever reads and heeds will not repent of his labor. But the more knowing the reader is, and the more experienced in the ways of Christ, the more delight may he take in, and the more profit may he reap by, these pious and profound resolutions. So we are

Thine, in Christ Jesus,

John Geree,
Wm. Greenhill.

March 27, 1648.

The Sum of Christian Religion, in Way of Question and Answer.

Question. What is the best and last end of man?

Answer. To live to God. (Rom. vi. 10, 11. Gal. iii. 9. 2 Cor. v. 3, 15.)

Q. How is man to live unto God?

A. Two ways. First, by faith in God. (Ps. xxxvii. 3.) Secondly, by observance of God. (Eccl. xii. 13.)

Q. What is faith in God?

A. It is the first act of our spiritual life, whereby the soul believing God believeth in God, and there resteth, as in the only author and principle of life. (Heb. iv. 3; x. 38; xi. 13. John iii. 33, 3G. Rom. iv. 3. Dent. xxx. 20.)

Q. What is God?

A. God only knoweth himself; no man can so know him and live. Yet he hath manifested himself unto us in his back parts, according to our manner or measure of knowing things; and we need know no more than these, that we may live. (1 Tim. vi. 16. Ex. xxxiii. 19, 23.)

Q. What are God's back parts?

A. They are two. First, his sufficiency. (Ps. xxxvi. 9.) Secondly, his efficiency. (Rom. iv. 21.)

Q. What is God's sufficiency?

A. It is his perfect fullness of all good, whereby he is all-sufficient for us in himself. (Ps. xvi. 13. Gen. xvii. 1.)

Q. Wherein stands and appears God's sufficiency?

A. First, in his essence. (Ps. lxxviii. 19.) Secondly, in his subsistence or persons. (2 Sam. vii. 20, 25.)

Q. What is God's essence?

[[338]] A. Whereby he is that absolute first being. (Rev. i. 8. Is. xlv. 6. Ex. iii. 14.)

Q. Can you sufficiently conceive of the glory of this one most pure essence by one act of faith?

A. No; and therefore the Lord hath manifested it unto us by divers attributes. (Deut. xxix. 29. Ex. xxxiv. G, 7.)

Q. What are God's attributes?

A. That one most pure essence diversely apprehended of us, as it is diversely made known unto us. (1 John iv. 16. Is. xliii. 25.)

Q. How many kinds of attributes are there?

A. There are two sorts of them. First, some showing what God is. Secondly, some showing who God is.

Q. By what attributes know you what God

A. By these: God is a Spirit living of himself. (John iv. 24; v. 26.)

Q. By what attributes do you understand who God is?

A. By his essential properties, which show to us, First, how great a God he is. (Ps. lxxvii. 13.) Secondly, what a manner of God he is. (Matt. vi. 17.)

Q. What attributes show how great a God he is?

A. First, his infiniteness, whereby he is without all limits of essence. (2. Chron. ii. 5, 6.) Secondly, his eternity, whereby he is without all limits of beginning, succession, or end of time. (Ps. cii. 25-27. 1 Tim. i. 17.)

Q. What are those attributes which show what a manner of God he is?

A. His qualities, whereby he acteth with, are of two sorts. First, his faculties, whereby he is able to act. (Is. lx. 16; lxiii. 1.) Secondly, his virtues of those faculties, whereby he is prompt and ready to act. (Ps. lxxxvi. 5.)

Q. What are his faculties?

A. First, his understanding, whereby he understandeth together and at once all truth. (Heb. iv. 13. Acts xv. 8.) Secondly, his will, whereby he purely willeth all good. (Ps. cxix. 68.)

Q. What are the virtues of those faculties?

A. First, they are intellectual; the virtues of his understanding, as wisdom, knowledge, and the rest. Secondly, moral; the virtue of his will, as love, holiness, mercy. In the acting of both which consists God's happiness.

Thus much have you seen of God's sufficiency, in regard of his essence. Now follows his subsistence.

Q. What are his subsistences or persons?

A. That one most pure essence, with its relative properties.

[[339]] Q. What are those relative properties?

A. They are three. First, to beget. Secondly, to be begotten. Thirdly, to proceed from both.

Q. How many persons learn you from hence to be in God?

A. Three. First, the first is the Father, the first person in order, begetting the Son. (Ps. ii. 7.) Secondly, the Son, the second person, begotten of the Father. (John iii. 6. Heb. i. 3.) Thirdly, the Spirit, the third person, proceeding from them both. (John xv. 26.)

Q. Are these three persons three distinct Gods?

A. No. For they are that one pure essence, and therefore but one God. (John i. 1. Rom. ix. 5. 1 Cor. vi. 16; ii. 10.)

Q. If every person be God, how can they be distinct persons and not distinct Gods?

A. Yes; because one and the same thing may have many relative properties and respects of being, which in the Godhead makes distinct persons. As one and the same man may be a father in one respect, a master in another respect, and a scholar in another respect.

Q. If these three persons be but one God, what follows from hence?

A. That all the three persons are coequal, coeternal, subsisting in, not separating from each other, and therefore delighting in each other, glorifying each other. (Prov. viii. 30.)

Thus much concerning God.

Now concerning the Works of God.

Q. Thus much concerning God's sufficiency. What is his efficiency?

A. Whereby he worketh all things, and all in all things. (Rom. xi. 36. Is. xlv. 7.)

Q. What of God shines forth, and are you to behold, in his efficiency?

A. Two things. First, God's omnipotency, in respect of his essence. Secondly, the cooperation and distinct manner of working of the three persons. (Rom. i. 20. John v. 17.)

Q. What is God's omnipotency?

A. It is his almighty power, whereby he is able to bring to pass all that he doth will, or whatever he can will, or decree. (2 Chron. xx. 6. Phil. iii. 21. Matt. iii. 9. Ps. cxv. 7.)

Q. What is God's decree?

A. It is his eternal and determinate purpose concerning the effecting of all things by his mighty power, according to his counsel. (Eph. i. 11.)

[[340]] Q. What attributes or glory of God appear in his decree?

A. First, his constancy, whereby his decree remains unchangeable. (Num. iii. 19.) Secondly, his truth, whereby he delivereth nothing but

what he hath decreed. (Jer. x. 10.) Thirdly, his faithfulness, whereby he effecteth whatever he decreeth according thereunto. (Is. xlvi. 10.)

Q. What is God's counsel?

A. His deliberation, as it were, for the best effecting of every thing according to his wisdom. (Acts iv. 24. Ps. xl. 24.)

Q. What is God's wisdom?

A. It is the idea or perfect platform of all things in the mind of God, which either can be known, or shall be done, according to the good pleasure of his will. (Heb. xi. 3. Prov. viii. 12, 13.)

Q. What is the good pleasure of God's will?

A. It is the most free act of his will, whereby he willeth himself directly, as the greatest good, and all other things for himself, according to his good pleasure. (Matt. xi. 25. Prov. xvi. 4.)

Q. What learn you from hence?

A. That God's good pleasure is the first and best cause of all things. (Ps. cxv. 3; xxxiii. 8-11.)

Q. What is the cooperation of the three persons in God's efficiency?

A. Whereby they work the same thing together inseparably. (John v. 17, 19, and xvi. 13, 14.)

Q. If they work the same thing together, how is it that some works are attributed to God the Father, as creation; some to the Son, as redemption; some to the Holy Spirit, as application?

A. This is not because the same work is not common to all the three persons, but because that work is principally attributed in Scripture to that person whose distinct manner of working appears chiefly in the work.

Q. What is God the Father's distinct manner of working?

A. His working is from himself by the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. (Ps. xxxiii. 6. John i. 3.) And hence the beginning, and so the creation of all things is attributed to him.

Q. What is God the Son's manner of working?

A. His working is from the Father, by the Holy Ghost, (John xiv. 16;) and hence the dispensation of all things, and so redemption, is attributed to him.

Q. What is the Holy Ghost's manner of working?

A. His working is from the Father and the Son, (John xiv. 26,) and hence the consummation of all things; and so application is attributed unto him.

Q. Wherein doth God's efficiency or working appear?

[[341]] A. In two things. First, in his creation of the world. Secondly, in his providence over the world. (Is. xxxvii. 16.)

Q. What is his creation?

A. It is God's efficiency, whereby he made the whole world of nothing, originally exceeding good. (Ps. xxxiii. 9. Gen. i. 31.)

Q. Did the Lord make the world in an instant?

A. No, but by parts, in the space of six days, described at large by Moses. (Gen. i.)

Q. When did the Lord make the third heaven, with the angels their inhabitants?

A. In the first day, in the first beginning of it. (Gen. i. 1. Job xxxviii. 6, 7.)

Q. What is the creation of the third heaven?

A. Whereby he made it to be the heaven of heavens, a most glorious place, replenished with all pleasure which belongs to eternal happiness, wherein his majesty is seen face to face, and therefore called the habitation of God. (2 Chron. ii. 5, 6. Ps. xvi. 11; lxiii. 15.)

Q. What is the creation of the angels?

A. Whereby he created an innumerable number of them, in holiness, to be ministering spirits, with most acuteness of understanding, liberty of will, great strength, and speedy in motion, to celebrate his praises and execute his commands, specially to the heirs of salvation. (Heb. xi. 22. John viii. 44. Heb. i. 14. 2 Sam. xiv. 20. Jude 6. 2 Pet. ii. 11. Is. vi. 2. Ps. cxxx. 20.)

Q. When did God create man?

A. The sixth day. (Gen. i. 27.)

Q. How did God create man?

A. He made him a reasonable creature, consisting of body and an immortal soul, in the image of God. (Gen. ii. 7; i. 28.)

Q. What is the image of God, wherein he was made?

A. That hability of man to resemble God, and wherein he was like unto God, in wisdom, holiness, righteousness, both in his nature, and in his government of himself and all creatures. (Col. iii. 10. Eph. iv. 24. Gen. i. 26.)

Q. What became of man, being thus made

A. He was placed in the garden of Eden, as in his princely court, to live unto God, together with the woman which God gave him. (Gen. ii. 15.)

Thus much of God's creation.

Q. What is his providence?

A. Whereby he provideth for his creatures, being made, even to the least circumstance. (Ps. cxlv. 16. Prov. xvi. 33.)

Q. How is God's providence distinguished?

[[342]] A. It is either, First, ordinary and mediate, whereby he provideth for his creatures by ordinary and usual means. (Hos. ii. 22.) Secondly, extraordinary and immediate, whereby he provides for his creatures by miracles, or immediately by himself. (Ps. xxxvi. 4. Dan. iii. 17.)

Q. Wherein is his providence seen?

A. First, in conversation, whereby he upholdeth things in their being and power of working. (Acts xvii. 28. Ps. civ. 29, 30. Neh. ix. 6.) Secondly, in gubernation, whereby he guides, directs, and brings all creatures to their ends. (Ps. xx. 10; xxxiii. 11.)

Q. Doth God govern all creatures alike?

A. No; but some he governs by a common providence, and others by a special providence, to wit, angels and men, to an eternal estate of happiness in pleasing him, or of misery in displeasing him. (Deut. xxx. 15, 16.)

Q. What of God's providence appears in his special government of man?

A. Two things. 1. Man's apostasy, or fall. 2. His recovery, or rising again.

Q. Concerning man's fall, what are you to observe therein?

A. Two things. 1. His transgression, in eating the forbidden fruit. (Gen. ii. 17.) 2. The propagation of this unto all Adam's posterity.

Q. Was this so great a sin, to eat of the forbidden fruit?

A. Yes, exceedingly great, this tree being a sacrament of the covenant; also he had a special charge not to eat of it; and in it the whole man did strike against the whole law, even when God had so highly advanced him.

Q. What are the causes of this transgression?

A. The blameless cause was the law of God. (Rom. v. 13.) And hence, as the law did it, so God did it, holily, justly, and blamelessly. (Rom. vii. 10-12.)

Q. What are the blamable causes?

A. Two, principally. 1. The devil abusing the serpent to deceive the woman. (Gen. iii. 1.) 2. Man himself, in abusing his own free will, in receiving the temptations which he might have resisted. (Eph. vii. 29.)

Q. What is the devil?

A. That great number of apostate and rebellious angels, which, through pride and blasphemy against God, and malice against man, became liars and murderers of man, by bringing him into that sin. (Luke xi. 18. 1 Tim. iii. 6. 1 John iii. 12; viii. 44.)

Q. What are the effects and fruits of this transgression?

A. They are two. 1. Guilt, whereby they are tied to undergo [[343]] due punishment for the fault. (Rom. iii. 19.) 2. Punishment, which is the just anger of God upon them for the filth of sin. (Rom. i. 18.)

Q. "What are the particular punishments inflicted on the causes of this sin?

A. Besides the fearful punishment of the devils, mentioned Jude vi., and that of the serpent and the woman, (Gen. iii. 14, 16,) the punishment of man was, First, sin original and actual. Secondly, death. (Gen. v. 5.)

Q. What is sin?

A. The transgression of God's law. (John iii. 4.)

Q. What is original and actual sin?

A. First, original sin is the contrariety of the whole nature of man to the law of God, whereby it, being averse from all good, is inclined to

all evil. (Eccl. viii. 11. Gen. vi. 5. Rom. vi. 20.) Secondly, actual sin is the continual jarring of the actions of man from the law of God, by reason of original sin, and so man hath no free will to any spiritual good. (Is. lxxv. 2, 3. James i. 14, 15. Is. i. 11.)

Q. What death is that God inflicts on man for sin?

A. A double death. 1. The first death of the body, together with the beginnings of it in this world, as grief, shame, losses, sicknesses. (Deut. xxviii. 21, 22, 25.) 2. The second death of the soul, which is the eternal separation and ejection of the soul after death, and soul and body after judgment, from God, into ever-lasting torments in hell.

Q. Is there no beginning of this death, as there is of the other in this life?

A. Yes, at first security and hardness of heart, which can not feel sin its greatest evil. 2. Terrors of conscience. (Heb. ii. 15.) 3. Bondage of Satan. (Eph. ii. 2.) 4. The curse of God in all blessings, whereby they are fitted for destruction. (Rom. ix. 22.)

Q. What of God's attributes shine forth here?

A. His holiness, whereby he, being pure from all sin, can not away with the least sin in the best of his creatures. (Heb. i. 13.) 2. His justice, whereby he, being most just in himself, can not but punish man for sin, as well as reward him for well doing. (2 Thess. i. G.) 3. His patience, whereby he useth pity, patience, and bounty to his creatures offending. (Rom. ii. 3.)

Q. Is this sin, and the punishment of it, derived to all men's posterity?

A. Yes. (John iii. 3. Eph. ii. 3.)

Q. How is it propagated?

A. By the imputation of Adam's sin unto us, and so the punishment must needs follow upon it. (Rom. v. 13.)

[[344]] Q. Why should Adam's sin be imputed to all his posterity?

A. Because we were in him as the members in the head, as children in his loins, as debtors in their surety, as branches in their roots, it being just, that as if he standing, all had stood, by imputation of his righteousness, so he falling, all should fall, by the imputation of his sin.

Q. Thus have you seen man's apostasy from God. What is his recovery?

A. It is the return of man to the favor of God again, merely out of favor, and the exceeding riches of his free grace. (Eph. ii. 12, 13. Rom. v. 8.)

Q. How are we brought into favor, and what are the parts of this recovery?

A. Two-ways. First, by redemption. (2 Cor. v. 19, 20.) Secondly, by application hereof. (Tit. iii. 6.)

Q. What is redemption?

A. The satisfaction made, or the price paid, to the justice of God for the life and deliverance of man out of the captivity of sin, Satan, and death, by a Redeemer, according to the covenant made between him and the Father. (1 Cor. vi. 20. Luke i. 74. Is. lv. 10, 11.)

Q. Who is this Redeemer?

A. Jesus Christ, God and Man. (Matt. i. 23. John i. 14. Col. ii. 19.)

Q. Why is he God-Man?

A. That so he might be a fit Mediator, to transact all businesses between God and man, in the execution of his three offices, whereunto he was anointed of the Father. (1 Tim. ii. 5. Is. xlii. 12.)

Q. What are those three offices of Christ?

A. 1. His prophetic office, whereby he doth reveal the will of the Father. (Acts iii. 22. Col. ii. 3.) 2. His priestly office, whereby he makes full atonement with the Father for us. (Col. i. 20.) 3. His kingly office, whereby he governs his people whom he had taught and reconciled, subduing their enemies, and procuring their eternal peace. (Ps. ii. 6. Is. ix. 6.)

Q. How hath Christ Jesus made satisfaction?

A. By his humiliation, whereby he was made subject, throughout his whole life and death, to the strict justice of God, to perform whatever the same might require for the redemption of man. (Gal. iv. 4. 5.)

Q. What did God's justice require of man?

A. 1. Death, for the breach of the law, and that Christ tasted, in his bitter sufferings, both of body and soul, by being made sin, [[345]] and so abolishing sin; and this is called his passive obedience. (Heb. ii. 9. Eph. i. 7; 2 Cor. v. 21. Gal. iii. 13.) 2. Perfect obedience, in fulfilling the law perfectly, both in his nature and actions, for the procuring and meriting of life; and this is called his active obedience. (Heb. vii. 20.)

Q. What follows Christ's humiliation?

A. His exaltation, which is his glorious victory and open triumph over all his and our enemies, sin, Satan, and death, in the several degrees of it. (Luke xxiv. 20. Phil. ii. 8, 9. 1 Cor. xv. 5, 7.)

Q. What is the first degree of Christ's exaltation?

A. His resurrection the third day, whereby his soul and body, by the power of the Godhead, were brought together again, and so rose again from death, appearing to his disciples for the space of forty days. (1 Cor. xv. 4. John ii. 19. Acts i. 3.)

Q. What is the second degree of Christ's exaltation?

A. His ascension into heaven, which was the going up of the manhood into the third heaven, by the power of the Godhead, from Mount Olivet, in the sight of his disciples. (Acts i. 11,12.)

Q. What is the third degree of his exaltation?

A. His sitting at the right hand of God, whereby he, being advanced to the fullness of all glory, in both natures, governeth and ruleth all things, together with the Father, as Lord over all, for the good of his people. (Mark xvi. 9. Ps. ex. 1. 1 Cor. xv. 25. Eph. i. 20-22. 1 Pet. iii. 22.)

Q. What is the fourth and last degree of his exaltation?

A. His return to judgment, which is his second coming into this world with great glory and majesty, to judge the quick and the dead, to the confusion of all them that would not have him rule over them, and to the unspeakable good of his people. (Matt, xix. 28. 2 Tim. iv. 1. Acts xvii. 31. 2 Thess. i. 1, 7-9.)

Q. Thus much of redemption, the first part of his recovery. What is application?

A. Whereby the Spirit, by the word and ministry thereof, makes all that which Christ, as Mediator, hath done for the church, efficacious to the church as her own. (John xvi. 14. Tit. iii. 5-7. John x. 16. Rom. x. 14, 17. Eph. v. 25,. 20.)

Q. What is the church?

A. The number of God's elect. (Heb. xii. 23. John xvii. 9-11; x. 16. Eph. i. 22, 23.)

Q. How doth the Spirit make application to the church?

A. 1. By union of the soul to Christ. (Phil. iii. 9,10.) 2. By communion of the benefits of Christ to the soul.

Q. What is this union?

[[346]] A. Whereby the Lord, joining the soul to Christ, makes it one spirit with Christ, and so gives it possession of Christ, and right unto all the benefits and blessings of Christ. (1 Cor. vi. 17. John xvii. 21. Rom. viii. 32. 1 John v. 12.)

Q. How doth the Spirit make this union?

A. Two ways. 1. By cutting off the soul from the old Adam, or the wild olive tree, in the work of preparation. (Rom. xi. 23, 24.) 2. By putting or engrafting the soul into the second Adam, Christ Jesus, by the work of vocation. (Acts xxvi. 18.)

Q. What are the parts of the preparation of the soul to Christ?

A. They are two. 1. Contrition, whereby the Spirit immediately cuts off the soul from its security in sin, by making it to mourn for it, and separating the soul from it, as the greatest evil. (Is. lxi. 1, 3. Jer. iv. 3, 4. Matt. xi. 20, 28.) 2. Humiliation, whereby the Spirit cuts the soul off from self-confidence in any good it hath or doth; especially by making it to feel its want and unworthiness of Christ, and hence submitteth to be disposed of as God pleaseth. (Phil. iii. 7, 8. Luke xvi. 9; xv. 17-19.)

Q. What are the parts of vocation of the soul to Christ?

A. 1. The Lord's call and invitation of the soul to come to Christ, in the revelation and offer of Christ and his rich grace. (2 Cor. v. 10.) 2. The receiving of Christ, or the coming of the whole soul out of itself unto Christ, for Christ, by virtue of the irresistible power of the Spirit in the call; and this is faith. (Jer. iii. 32. John vi. 44, 45; x. 16. Is. Iv. 5.)

Q. Thus much of our union. What is the communion of Christ's benefits unto the soul?

A. Whereby the soul possessed with Christ, and right unto him, hath by the same Spirit fruition of him, and all his benefits. (John iv. 10, 14.)

Q. What is the first of those benefits we do enjoy from Christ?

A. Justification, which is the gracious sentence of God the Father, whereby for the satisfaction of Christ apprehended by faith, and imputed to the faithful, he absolves them from the guilt and condemnation of all sins, and accepts them as perfectly righteous to eternal life. (Rom. iii. 24, 25; iv. 6-8; viii. 33, 34.)

Q. What difference is there between justification and sanctification?

A. Justification is by Christ's righteousness, inherent in Christ only; sanctification is by a righteousness from Christ inherent in ourselves. (2 Cor. v. 21. Phil. iii. 9.) 2. Justification is perfected at once, and admits of no degrees, because it is by Christ [[347]] his perfect righteousness. Sanctification is imperfect, being begun in this life. (Rev. xii. 1. Phil. iii. 11.)

Q. What is the second benefit next in order to justification, which the faithful receive from Christ?

A. Reconciliation, whereby a Christian justified is actually reconciled, and at peace with God. (Rom. v. 1. John ii. 12.) And hence follows his peace with all creatures.

Q. What is the third benefit next unto reconciliation?

A. Adoption, whereby the Lord accounts the faithful his sons, crowns them with privileges of sons, and gives them the Spirit of adoption -- the same Spirit which is in his only-begotten Son. (1 John iii. 2. Rom. viii. 11. 14-17.)

Q. What is the fourth benefit next to adoption?

A. Sanctification, whereby the sons of God are renewed in the whole man, unto the image of their heavenly Father in Christ Jesus, by mortification, or their daily dying to sin by virtue of Christ's death; and by vivification, their daily rising to newness of life, by Christ's resurrection. (1 Thess. v. 23. Eph. iv. 24. Jer. xxxi. 22. Rom. vi. 8.)

Q. What follows from this mortification and vivification?

A. A continual war and combat between the renewed part, assisted by Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and the unrenewed part, assisted by Satan and this evil world. (Rom. vii. 21-23.)

Q. What is the fifth and last benefit next unto sanctification?

A. Glorification, which hath two degrees -- the one in this life, and the other in the world to come.

Q. What is the first degree of glorification in this life?

A. A lively expectation of glory, from the assurance and shedding abroad God's love in our hearts, working joy unspeakable. (Rom. v. 2, 5. Tit. ii. 13.)

Q. What is the second degree in the world to come?

A. Full fruition of glory, whereby being made complete and perfect in holiness and happiness, we enjoy all that good eye hath not seen, nor ear hath heard, in our immediate and eternal communion with God in Christ. (Heb. xii. 23. 1 Cor. xv. 28.)

Thus much of the first part, of living to God by faith in God.

Q. What is the second part, viz., our observance?

A. It is the duty that, is to be performed to God of us, through the power of his Holy Spirit, working in us by faith, according to the will of God. (Eph. vi. G, 7. Ps. cxxxix. 24. Rom. vi. 1. Luke i. 74.)

Q. Wherein consists our observance of God?

A. It is either moral or ceremonial.

Q. Wherein consists our moral observance of God?

[[318]] A. In two things. 1. In suffering his will, whereby a believer, for the sake of Christ, chooseth rather to suffer any misery than to commit the least sin. (Heb. xi. 20. Acts xxi. 13.) 2. In doing his will, whereby a believer, in sense of Christ's love, per-formeth universal obedience to the law of God. (Rom. vii. 22. 1 John v. 3. Luke i. 6. Phil. iii. 12.)

Q. Is there any use of the law to a Christian?

A. Although it be abolished to a Christian in Christ, as a covenant of life, (for so Adam and his posterity are still under it,) yet it remains as a rule of life, when he is in Christ, and to prepare the heart for Christ. (Rom. vi. 14, 15. Matt. v. 17-20. Ezek. x. 11. Rom. ix.)

Q. Why is not a Christian so under the law as a covenant of life, so as if he breaks it by the least sin, he shall die for it?

A. Because Jesus Christ hath kept it perfectly for him. (Rom. viii. 3, 4; v. 20, 21.)

Q. Can any man keep the law perfectly in this life?

A. No, for the unregenerate, wanting the Spirit of life, can not perfect an act of life in obedience to it. The regenerate, having the Spirit but in part, perform it only imperfectly. (Rom. viii. 7; vii. 21.)

Q. What befalls the unregenerate upon their disobedience unto it?

A. The eternal curse of God for the least sin, and the increase of God's fierce and fearful secret wrath as they increase in sin. (Gal. hi. 10. Rom. ii. 5.)

Q. What befalls the regenerate after their breach of the law, and imperfect obedience unto it?

A. The Lord may threaten and correct them, but his loving kindness (in covering their sins in their best duties by Christ, and accepting their meanest services so far as they are quickened by his Spirit) is never taken from them. (Ps. lxxxix. 81-33. Zech. iii. 1-8. Is. lvi. 7. Rom. vii. 20.)

Q. What is that imperfect obedience of believers which is accepted?

A. When they observe the will of Christ, as that therein, -- 1. They confess and lament their sins. (1 John i. 9. Rom. vii. 24.) 2. They desire mercy in the blood of Christ, and more of his Spirit. (Phil. iii. 9-11.) 3. They return him the praise of the least ability to do his will. (Ps. 1. 23. 1 Cor. xv. 10.)

Q. How is the law or ten commandments divided?

A. Into two tables. The first showing our duty to God immediately, in the four first commandments. The second, our duty to man, in the six last commandments.

[[319]] Q. What rules are you to observe to understand the moral law?

A. These: 1. That in whatsoever commandment any duty is enjoined, there the contrary sin is forbidden; and where any sin is forbidden, there the contrary duty is commanded. 2. That the law is spiritual, and hence requires not only outward, but inward and spiritual obedience. 3. Where any gross sin is forbidden, there all the signs, degrees, means, and provocations to that sin are forbidden also, and are in God's account that sin. And so, where any duty is commanded, there all the signs, means, and provocations to that duty are commanded also. 4. That the law is perfect, and therefore there is no

sin in all the Scripture but is forbidden in it; nor no duty required (if moral) but it is commanded in it.

Thus much of our moral observance of God.

Q. What is our ceremonial observance?

A. The celebration of the two sacraments, baptism and the Lord's supper.

Q. What is a sacrament?

A. It is a holy ceremony, wherein external sensible things, by the appointment of Christ, are separate from common use; to signify, exhibit, and seal to us that assurance of eternal life by Christ Jesus, according to the covenant of his grace. (Gen. xvii. 9, 10.)

Q. Which are the sacraments?

A. They are two, baptism and the Lord's supper.

Q. What is the external sensible part of baptism?

A. Water. (John iii. 23.)

Q. What is the inward and spiritual part of baptism, signified, exhibited, and sealed thereby?

A. Christ's righteousness and his Spirit. 1. Washing away our sin, and so delivering us from death. 2. Presenting us clear before the Father, and so restoring us again to life. (Rom. iv. 1 Cor. ii. 11. Matt. iii. 11.)

Q. What follows from hence?

A. 1. That it is a sacrament of our new birth, and engrafting into Christ. (John iii. 5.) 2. That as we are perfectly justified at once, and being new born once, shall never die again. Hence this seal is to be administered but once.

Q. What is the external and sensible part of the Lord's supper?

A. Bread and wine, with the sacramental actions about the same.

Q. What is the inward and spiritual part of it, signified, sealed, and exhibited thereby?

[[350]] A. The body and blood of Christ crucified, offered and given to nourish and strengthen believers, renewing their faith unto eternal life. (1 Cor. xi. 24. John vi. 54, 55.)

Q. What follows from hence?

A. 1. That it is the sacrament of our growth in Christ, being new born, because it is food given to nourish us, having received life. 2. That therefore it is to be administered and received often, that we may grow. 3. That children and fools, and wicked, ought not to partake of the sacrament, because they can not examine themselves, and so renew their faith. (1 Cor. xi. 28.)

Q. Ought not the sacrament to be administered to carnal people, if they have been baptized?

A. No, because such as are not within the covenant have no right to the seal of the covenant.

Q. Where are believers, who have right unto this sacrament, to seek fruition from it?

A. Because it ought not to be administered privately, (as the Papists would;) hence God's people are to seek to enjoy their right to it in some particular visible church, in joining with them, as fellow-members of the same body. (1 Cor. xi. 20, 22. 1 Chron. x. 17. Acts ii. 42.)

Q. What members ought every particular visible church to consist of?

A. Christ being head of every particular church, and it his body, hence none are to be members of the church but such as are members of Christ by faith. (1 Cor. i. 2. 1 Thess. i.)

Q. But do not hypocrites, and no true members of Christ, creep in?

A. Yes; but if they could have been known to be such, they ought to be kept out; and when they are known, they are orderly to be cast out. (Matt. xxv. 1. 2 Tim. iii. 5. Rev. ii. 20. Tit. iii. 20.)

Q. Are these members bound only to cleave to Christ, their head, by faith?

A. Yes; and to one another also by brotherly love, which they are bound to strengthen and confirm (as well as their faith) by a solemn covenant. (Eph. iv. 15, 10. Col. i. 4. Jer. 1. 4. Is. hi. 45. Zech. xi. 14. Zeph. iii. 9. Ps. cxix. 106.)

Q. What benefits are there by joining thus to a particular church?

A. 1. Hereby they come to be under the special government of Christ in his church, and the officers thereof. (Is. xxx. 20.) 2. Hereby they have the promise of special blessing, and on their children also. (Ps. cxxxiii. 3. Exod. xx. 6.) 3. Herein [[351]] they have the promise of God's special presence: 1. Revealing unto them his will. (Ps. xxvii. 4;

lxiii. 2, 3.) 2. Protecting them. (Is. xlv. 6.) 3. Hearing all their prayers. (Deut. iv. 7. Matt, xviii. 19.)

Q. Are there not some who never find these benefits?

A. Yes. Because many knowing not how to make use of God's ordinances, not feeling a need of God's presence only in them, their sin also blinding, and partly hardening their hearts, and polluting God's house, they then become worse when they have best means. (Matt. xi. 23. Jer. xvii. 5, G. Heb. vi. 8. 1 Sam. v. 8, 9. Ezek. xiv. 4. 1 Kings viii. 21.)

O. What are the miseries of those who carelessly and willfully despise, and so refuse to join to God's church?

A. Besides the loss of God's presence in the fellowship of his people, it is a fearful sign (continuing so) God never intends to save their souls. (Acts ii. 47. Is. lx. 12. Rev. ii. 23, 24.)

Q. What therefore ought people chiefly to labor for, and to hold forth unto the church, that so they may be joined to it?

A. A threefold work. 1. Of humiliation, under their misery, death, and sin, as their greatest evil. (Acts ii. 37. Matt. iii. 6.) 2. Of vocation, or their drawing to Christ, out of this misery, as to their greatest and only good. (Acts i. 38, 41.) 3. Of new obedience; how they have walked in Christ since called. (Acts ix. 26, 27. Matt. iii. 8.)

END OF VOLUME I.