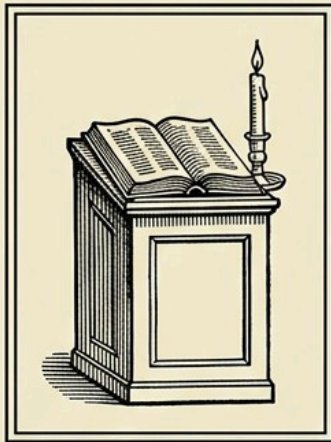


# DISCOURSES ON VARIOUS IMPORTANT SUBJECTS

JONATHAN EDWARDS



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*Jonathan Edwards*



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## ABOUT THIS BOOK



Five powerful sermons delivered during the **Great Awakening** in Northampton, Massachusetts, together with Edwards' celebrated account of that revival. The discourses expound **justification by faith alone**, the urgency of pressing into the kingdom, Ruth's wholehearted resolution, God's **justice in the damnation of sinners**, and the surpassing excellency of Christ. Each sermon carries the weight of a community under divine conviction, blending rigorous doctrinal argument with searching application. Includes the *Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God*.



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## PREFACE



THE following Discourses were all, excepting the last, delivered in the Time of the late wonderful Work of God's Power and Grace in this Place, and are published on the earnest Desire of those to whom they were preached. These particular Discourses are fixed upon, and designed for the Press, rather than others that were delivered in that remarkable Season, by their Election. What has determined them in their Choice, is the Experience they hope they have had of special Benefit to their Souls from these Discourses. Their Desire to have them in their Hands from the Press has been long manifested, and often expressed to me; Their Earnestness in it is evident from this, that though it be a Year of the greatest public Charge to them that over has been, by reason of the Expense of building a new Meeting House, yet they chose rather to be at this additional Expense now, though it be very considerable, than to have it delayed another Year. I am fully sensible that their Value for these Discourses has arisen more from the Frame in which they heard them, and the Good which they hope they, through the sovereign Blessing of God, have received by them, than any real Worth in them. And whatever the Discourses are in themselves, yet those that heard them are not to be blamed or wondered at, if that is dear to them, that they hope

God has made a Means of saving and everlasting Benefit to them. They have much insisted on this Argument with me, to induce me to comply with their Desire, that they hoped that the reading these Discourses would have a Tendency in some Measure to renew the same Effect in them that was wrought in the hearing, and revive the Memory of that great Work of God, which this Town has so much Cause ever to remember.

With respect to the Discourse on Justification, besides the desire of my People to make it public, I have been advised to it by certain Reverend Gentlemen, my Fathers, that happened to be the Hearers of it; (or, at least, Part of it,) when preached, whose Opinion and Advice, in such an Affair, I thought should be of as great Weight with me as of most that I was acquainted with.

The Beginning of the late Work of God in this Place was so circumstanced, that I could not but look upon it as a remarkable Testimony of God's Approbation of the Doctrine of Justification by Faith alone, here asserted and vindicated. By the noise that had a little before been raised in this County, concerning that Doctrine, People here seemed to have their Minds put into an unusual Ruffle; some were brought to doubt of that Way of Acceptance with God, which from their Infancy they had been taught to be the only Way. The following Discourse of Justification, that was preached, (though not so fully as it is here printed,) at two public Lectures, seemed to be remarkably blessed, not only to establish the Judgments of many in this Truth, but to engage their Hearts in a more earnest pursuit of Justification, in that Way that had been explained and defended. And at that Time, while I was greatly reproached for defending this Doctrine in the Pulpit, and just upon

my suffering a very open Abuse for it, God's Work wonderfully broke forth amongst us, and Souls began to flock to Christ, as the Saviour in whose Righteousness alone they hoped to be justified.

A great Objection that is made against the old Protestant Doctrine of Justification by Faith alone, and the Scheme of those Divines that have chiefly defended it, by those that value themselves upon the new fashioned Divinity, is, That the Scheme is too much encumbered with speculative Niceties, and subtle Distinctions, that, they say, serve only to involve the Subject in endless Controversy and Dispute. But their Prejudice against Distinctions in Divinity, I humbly conceive, is carried to a great Extreme. So great, and general, and loud a cry has been raised by modern Philosophers and Divines, against the subtle Distinctions of the Schoolmen, for their learned Impertinence, that many are ready to start at any Thing that looks like nice Distinction, and to condemn it for Nonsense without Examination.

Our discovering the Absurdity of the impertinent and abstruse Distinctions of the School Divines, may justly give us a Distaste of such Distinctions as have a Show of Learning in obscure Words, but convey no Light to the Mind. So much of the Scripture Scheme of Justification as is absolutely necessary to Salvation, may be very plain and level with the Understandings of the weakest Christians; but it does not therefore follow that the Scripture teaches us no more about it, that it would be exceeding profitable for us to know. 'Tis so in most of the great Doctrines of Christianity, that are looked upon as first Principles of the Christian Faith, that though they contain something that is easy, yet they also contain great Mysteries, and there is room for Progress in the Knowledge of them, and doubtless will be to the End of the World. 'Tis also un-

reasonable to think that this Doctrine of the Justification of a Sinner by a Mediator, should be without Mysteries. We all own it to be a Matter of pure Revelation, above the Light of natural Reason, and that 'tis what the infinite Wisdom of God revealed in the Gospel mainly appears in, That he hath found out such a Way of Reconciliation, that neither Men nor Angels could have thought of. If there be any Part of the Scheme here laid down, or any Distinction here made use of, not warranted by Scripture, let it be rejected; and if any opposite Scheme can be found that is more easy and plain, having fewer and more rational Distinctions, and not demonstrably inconsistent with itself, and with the Word of God, let it be received. Let the Arminian Scheme of Justification by our own Virtue, be as plain and natural as it will, if at the same Time 'tis plainly contrary to the certain and demonstrable Doctrine of the Gospel, as contained in the Scriptures, we are bound to reject it. This Discourse on Justification is printed much larger than it was preached; but the practical Discourses that follow have but little added to them, and now appear in that very plain and unpolished Dress, in which they were first prepared and delivered. However unable I am to preach or write politely, if I would, yet I have this to comfort me under such a Defect, that God has showed us that he does not need such Talents in Men to carry on his own Work, and that he has been pleased to smile upon and bless a very plain, unfashionable Way of Preaching. What is published at the End, concerning the Excellency of Christ, is added on my own Motion; thinking that a Discourse on such an evangelical Subject, would properly follow others that were chiefly legal and awakening, and that something of the Excellency of the Saviour, was proper to succeed those Things that were to show the Necessity of

Salvation. I request every Reader's candid Acceptance, and due Improvement of what is here offered, and especially would earnestly beseech the People of my own Charge, not to fail of improving those Discourses to those Purposes that they have mentioned to me as the Ends for which they desired to have them published. Happy would it be for us, and an unspeakable Mercy of Heaven, if God should bless what is here printed, so to revive the Memory of the past great Work of God amongst us, and the lively Impressions and Sense of divine Things that Persons then had on their Minds, and to cause us to lament our Declensions, as that the same Work might renewedly break forth and go on amongst us!

'Tis so in most of the great Doctrines of Christianity, that are looked upon as first Principles of the Christian Faith, that though they contain something that is easy, yet they also contain great Mysteries, and there is room for Progress in the Knowledge of them, and doubtless will be to the End of the World. But 'tis unreasonable to expect that this Progress should be made, in the Knowledge of Things that are high and mysterious, without accurate Distinction, and close Application of Thought. And 'tis also unreasonable to think that this Doctrine of the Justification of a Sinner by a Mediator, should be without Mysteries. We all own it to be a Matter of pure Revelation, above the Light of natural Reason, and that 'tis what the infinite Wisdom of God revealed in the Gospel mainly appears in, That he hath found out such a Way of Reconciliation, that neither Men nor Angels could have thought of. And after all, shall we expect that this Way when found out and declared, shall contain nothing but what is obvious to the most cursory and superficial View, and may be fully and clearly comprehended without some Diligence, Accuracy, and careful Distinction?

If the Distinctions I have made use of in handling this Subject are found to be inconsistent, trivial, and unscriptural Niceties, tending only to cloud the Subject, I ought to be willing that they should be rejected.

But if on due Examination they are found both scriptural and rational, I humbly conceive that it will be unjust to condemn them, merely because they are Distinctions, under a Notion that Niceness in Divinity never helps it, but always perplexes and darkens it. 'Tis to God's own Revelation that I make my Appeal, by which alone we can know in what Way he will be pleased again to receive into Favour, those that have offended him, and incurred his Displeasure. If there be any Part of the Scheme here laid down, or any Distinction here made use of, not warranted by Scripture, let it be rejected; and if any opposite Scheme can be found that is more easy and plain, having fewer and more rational Distinctions, and not demonstrably inconsistent with itself, and with the Word of God, let it be received. Let the Arminian Scheme of Justification by our own Virtue, be as plain and natural as it will, if at the same Time 'tis plainly contrary to the certain and demonstrable Doctrine of the Gospel, as contained in the Scriptures, we are bound to reject it, unless we reject the Scriptures themselves, as perplexed and absurd, and make ourselves wiser than God, and pretend to know his Mind better than Himself.

This Discourse on Justification is printed much larger than it was preached; but the practical Discourses that follow have but little added to them, and now appear in that very plain and unpolished Dress, in which they were first prepared and delivered. Which was mostly at a Time, when the Circumstances of the Auditory they were preached to, were enough to make a Minister

neglect, forget, and despise such Ornaments as Politeness and Modishness of Style and Method, when coming as a Messenger from God to Souls, deeply impressed with a Sense of their Danger of God's everlasting Wrath, to treat with them about their eternal Salvation. However unable I am to preach or write politely, if I would, yet I have this to comfort me under such a Defect, that God has showed us that he does not need such Talents in Men to carry on his own Work, and that he has been pleased to smile upon and bless a very plain, unfashionable Way of Preaching. And have we not Reason to think that it ever has been, and ever will be, God's Manner to bless the Foolishness of Preaching to save them that believe, let the Elegance of Language, and Excellency of Style, be carried to never so great a Height, by the Learning and Wit of the present and future Ages?

What is published at the End, concerning the Excellency of Christ, is added on my own Motion; thinking that a Discourse on such an evangelical Subject, would properly follow others that were chiefly legal and awakening, and that something of the Excellency of the Saviour, was proper to succeed those Things that were to show the Necessity of Salvation. I pitched upon that particular Discourse, partly, because I had been earnestly importuned for a Copy of it for the Press, by some in another Town, in whose hearing it was occasionally preached.

I request every Reader's candid Acceptance, and due Improvement of what is here offered, and especially would earnestly beseech the People of my own Charge, not to fail of improving those Discourses to those Purposes that they have mentioned to me as the Ends for which they desired to have them published. Happy would it be for us, and an unspeakable Mercy of

Heaven, if God should bless what is here printed, so to revive the Memory of the past great Work of God amongst us, and the lively Impressions and Sense of divine Things that Persons then had on their Minds, and to cause us to lament our Declensions, as that the same Work might renewedly break forth and go on amongst us! Surely we have seen much to excite our Longings after such a Mercy, and to encourage us to cry to God for it!

## JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH ALONE



**B**ut to him that does not work, but believes on him that justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. (Romans 4:5)

The following things may be noted in this verse. First, that justification respects a man as ungodly: this is evident by those words — that justifies the ungodly. Which words cannot imply less than that God in the act of justification has no regard to any thing in the person justified, as godliness, or any goodness in him; but that immediately before this act, God beholds him only as an ungodly or wicked creature; so that godliness in the person to be justified is not so antecedent to his justification as to be the ground of it. When it is said that God justifies the ungodly, it is as absurd to suppose that our godliness, taken as some goodness in us, is the ground of our justification, as when it is said that Christ gave sight to the blind, to suppose that sight was prior to, and the ground of that act of mercy in Christ, or as if it should be said that such a one by his bounty has made a poor man rich, to suppose that it was the wealth of this poor man that was the ground of this bounty towards him, and was the price by which it was procured.

Second, it appears that by him that does not work in this verse, is not meant only one that does not conform to the ceremonial law, because he that does not work, and the ungodly are evidently synonymous expressions, or what signify the same; it appears by the manner of their connection; if it is not so, to what purpose is the latter expression the ungodly brought in? The context gives no other occasion for it, but only to show that the grace of the gospel appears in that God in justification has no regard to any godliness of ours: the foregoing verse is, Now to him that works is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt: in that verse it is evident, that gospel grace consists in the rewards being given without works; and in this verse which immediately follows it and in sense is connected with it, it is evident that gospel grace consists in a man's being justified that is ungodly; by which it is most plain that by him that does not work, and him that is ungodly, are meant the same thing; and that therefore not only works of the ceremonial law are excluded in this business of justification, but works of morality and godliness.

Third, it is evident in the words, that by that faith that is here spoken of, by which we are justified, is not meant the same thing as a course of obedience, or righteousness, by the expression, by which this faith is here denoted, namely believing on him that justifies the ungodly — they that oppose the Solifidians, as they call them, do greatly insist on it, that we should take the words of Scripture concerning this doctrine, in their most natural and obvious meaning; and how do they cry out of our clouding this doctrine with obscure metaphors, and unintelligible figures of speech! But is this to interpret Scripture according to its most obvious meaning, when the Scripture speaks of our believing on him that justi-

fies the ungodly, or the breakers of his law, to say that the meaning of it is performing a course of obedience to his law, and avoiding the breaches of it? Believing on God as a justifier, certainly is a different thing from submitting to God as a lawgiver; especially a believing on him as a justifier of the ungodly, or rebels against the lawgiver.

Fourth, it is evident that the subject of justification is looked upon as destitute of any righteousness in himself, by that expression, it is counted, or imputed to him for righteousness; the phrase, as the Apostle uses it here, and in the context, manifestly imports, that God of his sovereign grace is pleased in his dealings with the sinner, to take and regard, that which indeed is not righteousness, and in one that has no righteousness, so that the consequence shall be the same as if he had righteousness; (which may be from the respect that it bears to something that is indeed righteousness.) It is plain that this is the force of the expression in the preceding verses: in the last verse but one, it is manifest that the Apostle lays the stress of his argument for the free grace of God, from that text that he cites out of the Old Testament about Abraham, on that word counted or imputed, and that this is the thing that he supposed God to show his grace in, namely in his counting something for righteousness, in his consequential dealings with Abraham, that was no righteousness in itself. And in the next verse which immediately precedes the text, Now to him that works is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt; the word there translated reckoned, is the same that in the other verses is rendered imputed, and counted: and it is as much as if the Apostle had said, As to him that works, there is no need of any gracious reckoning, or counting it for righteousness, and causing the re-

ward to follow as if it were a righteousness; for if he has works he has that which is a righteousness in itself, to which the reward properly belongs. This is further evident by the words that follow, verse 6: Even as David also described the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness without works; what can here be meant by imputing righteousness without works, but imputing righteousness to him that has none of his own? Verse 7 and 8: Saying blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered: blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. How are these words of David to the Apostle's purpose? Or how do they prove any such thing, as that righteousness is imputed without works, unless it be because the word imputed is used, and the subject of the imputation is mentioned, as a sinner, and consequently destitute of a moral righteousness? For David says no such thing, as that he is forgiven without the works of the ceremonial law; there is no hint of the ceremonial law, or reference to it, in the words. I will therefore venture to infer this doctrine from the words, for the subject of my present discourse.

**DOCTRINE:** We are justified only by faith in Christ, and not by any manner of virtue or goodness of our own.

Such an assertion as this, I am sensible, many would be ready to cry out of as absurd, betraying a great deal of ignorance, and containing much inconsistency; but I desire everyone's patience until I have done.

In handling this doctrine I would: first, explain the meaning of it, and show how I would be understood by such an assertion; second, proceed to the consideration of the evidence of the truth of it;

third, show how evangelical obedience is concerned in this affair; fourth, answer objections; fifth, consider the importance of the doctrine.

First, I would explain the meaning of the doctrine, or show in what sense I assert it, and would endeavor to demonstrate the truth of it: which may be done in answer to these two inquiries, namely, what is meant by being justified, and what is meant when it is said that this is by faith alone, without any manner of virtue or goodness of our own?

First, I would show what justification is, or what I suppose is meant in Scripture by being justified. And here I would not enlarge, and therefore to answer in short.

A person is said to be justified when he is approved of God as free from the guilt of sin, and its deserved punishment, and as having that righteousness belonging to him that entitles to the reward of life. That we should take the word in such a sense, and understand it as the judges accepting a person as having both a negative, and positive righteousness belonging to him, and looking on him therefore, as not only acquitted, or free from any obligation to punishment but also as just and righteous, and so entitled to a positive reward, is not only most agreeable to the etymology, and natural import of the word, which signifies to make righteous, or to pass one for righteous in judgment, but also manifestly agreeable to the force of the word, as used in Scripture.

Some suppose that nothing more is intended in Scripture by justification than merely the remission of sins: if it be so it is very strange, if we consider the nature of the case; for it is most evident, and none will deny, that it is with respect to the rule, or law of God

that we are under, that we are said in Scripture to be either justified or condemned: Now what is it to justify a person, as the subject of a law or rule, but to judge him, or look upon him, and approve him as standing right with respect to that rule? To justify a person in a particular case, is to approve of him as standing right, as subject to the law or rule in that case; and to justify in general, is to pass him in judgment, as standing right, in a state correspondent to the law or rule in general. But certainly in order to a person's being looked on as standing right with respect to the rule in general, or in a state corresponding with the law of God, more is needed than what is negative, or a not having the guilt of sin; for whatever that law is, whether a new one, or an old one, yet doubtless something positive is needed in order to its being answered. We are no more justified by the voice of the law, or of him that judges according to it, by a mere pardon of sin, than Adam our first surety, was justified by the law, at the first point of his existence, before he had done the work, or fulfilled the obedience of the law, or had had so much as any trial whether he would fulfill it or no. If Adam had finished his course of perfect obedience, he would have been justified; and certainly his justification would have implied something more than what is merely negative; he would have been approved of, as having fulfilled the righteousness of the law, and accordingly would have been adjudged to the reward of it. So Christ our second surety, (in whose justification all who believe in him, and whose surety he is, are virtually justified,) was not justified until he had done the work the Father had appointed him, and kept the Father's commandments, through all trials, and then in his resurrection he was justified. When he that had been put to death in the flesh was quickened by the Spirit (1

Peter 3:18), then he that was manifest in the flesh was justified in the Spirit (1 Timothy 3:16). But God when he justified him in raising him from the dead, did not only release him from his humiliation for sin, and acquit him from any further suffering or abasement for it, but admitted him to that eternal and immortal life, and to the beginning of that exaltation, that was the reward of what he had done. And indeed the justification of a believer is no other than his being admitted to communion in, or participation of the justification of this head and surety of all believers; for as Christ suffered the punishment of sin, not as a private person, but as our surety, so when after this suffering he was raised from the dead, he was therein justified, not as a private person, but as the surety and representative of all that should believe in him; so that he was raised again not only for his own, but also for our justification, according to the Apostle (Romans 4:25): Who was delivered for our offenses, and raised again for our justification. And therefore it is that the Apostle says as he does in Romans 8:34: Who is he that condemns, it is Christ that died, indeed rather that is risen again.

But that a believer's justification implies not only remission of sins, or acquittance from the wrath due to it, but also an admittance to a title to that glory that is the reward of righteousness, is more directly taught in the Scripture, as particularly in Romans 5:1, 2, where the Apostle mentions both these, as joint benefits implied in justification: Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also we have access into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. So remission of sins, and inheritance among them that are sanctified, are mentioned together as what are jointly obtained by faith in Christ, Acts 26:18: That they may re-

ceive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them that are sanctified, through faith that is in me. Both these are without doubt implied in that passing from death to life, which Christ speaks of as the fruit of faith, and which he opposes to condemnation, John 5:24: Verily I say to you, he that hears my word, and believes on him that sent me, has everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death to life. I proceed now.

Second, to show what is meant when it is said that this justification is by faith only, and not by any virtue or goodness of our own.

This inquiry may be subdivided into two, namely: first, how it is by faith; second, how it is by faith alone, without any manner of goodness of ours.

First, how justification is by faith. Here the great difficulty has been about the import and force of the particle 'by', or what is that influence that faith has in the affair of justification that is expressed in Scripture by being justified by faith.

Here, if I may humbly express what seems evident to me, though faith be indeed the condition of justification so as nothing else is, yet this matter is not clearly and sufficiently explained by saying that faith is the condition of justification; and that because the word seems ambiguous, both in common use, and also as used in divinity: in one sense Christ alone performs the condition of our justification and salvation; in another sense, faith is the condition of justification; in another sense, other qualifications and acts are conditions of salvation and justification too. Faith is not the only thing, in us, that is the condition of justification; for by the word condition, as it is very often used, we mean anything that may have

the place of a condition in a conditional proposition, and as such is truly connected with the consequent, especially if the proposition holds both in the affirmative and negative, as the condition is either affirmed or denied; if it be that with which, or which being supposed, a thing shall be, and without which, or it being denied, a thing shall not be, we in such a case call it a condition of that thing: but in this sense faith is not the only condition of salvation or justification, for there are many things that accompany and flow from faith, that are things with which justification shall be, and without which it will not be, and therefore are found to be put in Scripture in conditional propositions with justification and salvation in multitudes of places; such are love to God, and love to our brethren, forgiving men their trespasses, and many other good qualifications and acts. And there are many other things besides faith, which are directly proposed to us, to be pursued or performed by us, in order to eternal life, as those which if they are done, or obtained we shall have eternal life, and if not done or not obtained, we shall surely perish. And if it were so, that faith was the only condition of justification in this sense, yet I don't apprehend that to say that faith was the condition of justification, would express the sense of that phrase of Scripture of being justified by faith: there is a difference between being justified by a thing, and that thing universally, and necessarily, and inseparably attending, or going with justification; for so do a great many things that we are not said to be justified by. It is not the inseparable connection with justification that the Holy Spirit would signify, or that is naturally signified, by such a phrase, but some particular influence that faith has in the affair, or some certain dependance that that effect has on its influence.

Some that have been aware of this have supposed that the influence or dependance might well be expressed by faith's being the instrument of our justification; which has been misunderstood, and injuriously represented, and ridiculed by those that have denied the doctrine of justification by faith alone, as though they had supposed that faith was used as an instrument in the hand of God, whereby he performed, and brought to pass that act of his, namely, approving and justifying the believer: whereas it was not intended that faith was the instrument wherewith God justifies, but the instrument wherewith we receive justification; not the instrument wherewith the justifier acts in justifying, but wherewith the receiver of justification acts in accepting justification. But yet it must be owned that this is an obscure way of speaking, and there must certainly be some impropriety in calling it an instrument wherewith we receive or accept justification; for the very persons that thus explain the matter speak of faith as being the reception or acceptance itself; and if so how can it be the instrument of reception or acceptance? Certainly there is difference between the act and the instrument. And besides by their own descriptions of faith, Christ the Mediator, by whom, and his righteousness, by which we are justified, is more directly the object of this acceptance, and justification which is the benefit arising therefrom, more indirectly: and therefore if faith be an instrument, it is more properly the instrument by which we receive Christ, than the instrument by which we receive justification.

But I humbly conceive we have been ready to look too far to find out what that influence of faith in our justification is, overlooking that which is most obviously pointed forth in the expression, namely, that faith in this Mediator is that which renders it a

meet and suitable thing, in the sight of God, that he rather than others should have this purchased benefit assigned to him. There is this benefit purchased, which God sees it to be a more meet and suitable thing that it should be assigned to some than others, because he sees them differently qualified; that qualification wherein the meetness to this benefit consists, is that, in us, by which we are justified. If Christ had not come into the world and died to purchase justification, no qualification whatever, in us, could render it a meet or fit thing that we should be justified; but the case being as it now stands, that Christ has actually purchased justification by his own blood, for infinitely unworthy creatures, there may be some certain qualification found in some persons, that is the thing that in the sight of God renders it a meet and fitting thing that they should have an interest in this purchased benefit. The wisdom of God in his constitutions, doubtless appears much in the fitness and beauty of them, so that those things are established to be done that are fit to be done, and that these things are connected in his constitution, that are agreeable one to another. To be justified is to be approved of God as a proper subject of pardon, and a right to eternal life; and therefore when it is said that we are justified by faith, what else can be understood by it than that faith is that by which we are rendered approvable, fitly so, and indeed, as the case stands, proper subjects of this benefit?

This is something different from faith's being the condition of justification, only so as to be inseparably connected with justification; so are many other things besides faith, and yet nothing in us, but faith, renders it meet that we should have justification assigned to us; as I shall presently show how, in answer to the next inquiry.

How this is said to be by faith alone, without any manner of virtue or goodness of our own — this may seem to some to be attended with two difficulties. How this can be said to be by faith alone, without any virtue or goodness of ours, when faith itself is a virtue, and one part of our goodness, and is not only some manner of goodness of ours, but is a very excellent qualification, and one chief part of the inherent holiness of a Christian? If it be a part of our inherent goodness or excellency, that renders it a fitting or congruous thing that we should have this benefit of Christ assigned to us, what is this less than what they mean that talk of a merit of congruity?

When it is said that we are not justified by any righteousness or goodness of our own, what is meant is that it is not out of respect to the excellency or goodness of any qualifications, or acts, in us whatsoever, that God judges it meet that this benefit of Christ should be ours. And it is not, in any wise, on account of any excellency, or value that is in faith, that it appears, in the sight of God, a meet thing, that he that believes should have this benefit of Christ assigned to him, but purely from the relation faith has to the person in whom this benefit is to be had, or as it unites to that Mediator, in and by whom we are justified.

It is certain that there is some union or relation that the people of Christ stand in to him, that is expressed in Scripture, from time to time, by being in Christ, and is represented frequently by those metaphors of being members of Christ, or being united to him as members to the head, and branches to the stock, and is compared to a marriage union between husband and wife. There is a peculiar relation between true Christians and Christ, or a certain relation

between him and them, that there is not between him and others; which is signified by those metaphorical expressions in Scripture, of being in Christ, being members of Christ.

This relation or union to Christ, whereby Christians are said to be in Christ, is the ground of their right to his benefits. He that has the Son has life, and he that has not the Son has not life. Of him are you in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us righteousness: first we must be in him, and then he will be made righteousness, or justification to us. Who has made us accepted in the Beloved: our being in him is the ground of our being accepted. So it is in those unions which the Holy Spirit has thought fit to compare this union to; the union of the members of the body with the head is the ground of their partaking of the life of the head. It is the union of the branches to the stock, which is the ground of their partaking of the sap and life of the stock; it is the relation of the wife to the husband, that is the ground of her joint interest in his estate. So there is a legal union between Christ and true Christians; so that one, in some respects, is accepted for the other, by the supreme Judge.

And thus it is that faith is that qualification in any person, that renders it meet in the sight of God that he should be looked upon as having Christ's satisfaction and righteousness belonging to him, namely, because it is that in him, which, on his part, makes up this union between him and Christ. It is a person's being, according to Scripture phrase, in Christ, that is the ground of having his satisfaction and merits belonging to him, and a right to the benefits procured thereby. It is easy to see how a having Christ's merits and benefits belonging to us, follows from our having, if I may so speak, Christ himself belonging to us, or a being united to him. It is a very different thing, for God to assign to a particular person, a

right to Christ's merits and benefits, from regard to any qualification in him, in this respect, from his doing of it for him, out of respect to the value or loveliness of that qualification, or as a reward of the excellency of it.

As there is nobody but what will allow that there is a peculiar relation between Christ and his true disciples, by which they are in some sense in Scripture said to be one; so I suppose there is nobody but what will allow, that there may be something that the true Christian does on his part, whereby he is active in coming into this relation or union. Now faith I suppose to be this act.

I don't now pretend to define justifying faith, or to determine precisely how much is contained in it, but only to determine thus much concerning it, namely, that it is that by which the soul, that before was separate, and alienated from Christ, unites itself to him, or ceases to be any longer in that state of alienation, and comes into that before mentioned union or relation to him; or to use the Scripture phrase, that it is that by which the soul comes to Christ, and receives him. And this is evident by the Scriptures using these very expressions to signify faith (John 6:35-40): 'He that comes to me shall never hunger, and he that believes on me shall never thirst. But I said unto you that you also have seen me and believe not. All that the Father gives me shall come to me, and him that comes to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the will of him that sent me, that everyone which sees the Son and believes on him, may have everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day.' John 5:38-40, 43-44: 'Whom he has sent, him you believe not. Search the Scriptures — they are they which testify of me: and you will not come to me, that you might

have life. I am come in my Father's name, and you receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him you will receive. How can you believe which receive honor one of another?' John 1:12: 'But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.' If it be said that these are obscure figures of speech, yet so much at least is certainly plain in them, namely, that faith is that by which those that before were separated, and at a distance from Christ, do cease to be any longer at such a distance, and do come into that relation and nearness; unless they are so unintelligible, that nothing at all can be understood by them.

God does not give those that believe, an Union with, or an interest in the Saviour, in reward for Faith, but only because Faith is the Soul's active uniting with Christ, or is itself the very act of Union, on their Part. God sees it fit, that in order to an Union's being established between two intelligent active Beings or Persons, so as that they should be looked upon as one, there should be the mutual Act of both, that each should receive the other, as actively joining themselves one to another. God in requiring this in order to a union with Christ as one of his People, treats Men as reasonable Creatures, capable of Act, and Choice; and hence sees it fit that they only, that are one with Christ by their own Act, should be looked upon as one in Law. What is real in the Union between Christ and his People, is the Foundation of what is legal; that is, it is something that is really in them, and between them, uniting them, that is the Ground of the Suitableness of their being accounted as one by the Judge.

And thus it is that Faith justifies, or gives an Interest in Christ's Satisfaction and Merits, and a Right to the Benefits procured thereby, namely, as it thus makes Christ and the Believer one in the Acceptance of the supreme Judge. 'Tis by Faith that we have a Title to eternal Life, because, 'tis by Faith that we have the Son of God, by whom Life is. He that hath the Son hath Life, and — He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting Life, and he that believeth not the Son shall not see Life. There is a wide Difference between its being looked on suitable that Christ's Satisfaction and Merits should be theirs that believe, because an Interest in that Satisfaction and Merit is but a fit Reward of Faith, or a suitable Testimony of God's Respect to the Amiability and Excellency of that Grace, and it's only being looked on suitable that Christ's Satisfaction and Merits should be theirs, because Christ and they are so united, that in the Eyes of the Judge they may suitably be looked upon, and taken, as one. Though, on the Account of Faith in the Believer, it is, in the Sight of God, fit and congruous, both that he that believes should be looked upon as in Christ, and also as having an Interest in his Merits, in the way that has been now explained, yet it appears that this is very wide from a merit of Congruity, or indeed any moral Congruity at all to either.

There is a twofold Fitness to a State; I know not how to give them distinguishing Names otherwise than by calling the one a moral, and the other a natural Fitness. A Person has a moral Fitness for a State, when his moral Excellency commends him to it, or when his being put into such a good State, is but a fit or suitable Testimony of Regard or Love to the moral Excellency, or Value, or Amiability of any of his Qualifications or Acts. A Person has a natural Fitness for a State when it appears meet and condecant

that he should be in such a State or Circumstances, only from the natural concord or agreeableness there is between such Qualifications and such Circumstances; not because the Qualifications are lovely or unlovely, but only because the Qualifications, and the Circumstances are like one another, or do in their nature suit and agree or unite one to another. And 'tis on this latter Account only that God looks on it fit by a natural Fitness, that he whose Heart sincerely unites itself to Christ as his Saviour, should be looked upon as united to that Saviour, and so having an Interest in him; and not from any moral Fitness there is between the excellency of such a Qualification as Faith, and such a glorious Blessedness as the having an Interest in Christ. God's bestowing Christ and his Benefits on a Soul in consequence of Faith, out of Regard only to the natural Concord there is between such a Qualification of a Soul, and such a union with Christ, and Interest in him, makes the Case very widely different from what would be, if he bestowed this from regard to any moral Suitableness. God will neither look on Christ's Merits as ours, nor adjudge his Benefits to us, till we be in Christ: nor will he look upon us as being in him, without an active union of our Hearts and Souls to him; because he is a wise Being, and delights in Order, and not in Confusion, and that Things should be together or asunder according to their nature. This is plainly what our Divines intend when they say that Faith does not justify as a Work, or a Righteousness, namely, that it does not justify as a Part of our moral Goodness or Excellency. Faith does not justify as a Work, in the Sense that Man was to have been justified by his Works by the Covenant of Works, which was to have a Title to eternal Life, given him of God in Testimony of his pleasedness with his Works, or his regard to the inherent

Excellency and Beauty of his Obedience. The Apostles, from Time to Time, speaking of our not being justified by Works, as the Thing that excludes all boasting — what do Men use to boast of, but of something they suppose good or excellent? And on what Account do they boast of any Thing, but for the supposed Excellency that is in it?

This is plainly what our divines intend when they say that faith does not justify as a work, or a righteousness, namely, that it does not justify as a part of our moral goodness or excellency, or that it does not justify as a work, in the sense that man was to have been justified by his works by the covenant of works, which was to have a title to eternal life, given him of God in testimony of his approval of his works, or his regard to the inherent excellency and beauty of his obedience. And this is certainly what the Apostle Paul means, when he so much insists upon it that we are not justified by works, namely, that we are not justified by them as good works, or by any goodness, value, or excellency of our works. For the proof of this I shall at present mention but one thing, and that is, the Apostles, from time to time, speaking of our not being justified by works, as the thing that excludes all boasting (Ephesians 2:9; Romans 3:27; Romans 4:2): now which way do works give occasion for boasting, but as good? What do men use to boast of, but of something they suppose good or excellent? And on what account do they boast of any thing, but for the supposed excellency that is in it?

From these things we may learn in what manner faith is the only condition of justification and salvation; for though it is not the only condition, so as alone truly to have the place of a condition in a hypothetical proposition, in which justification and salvation are the consequent, yet it is the condition of justification in a

manner peculiar to it, and so that nothing else has a parallel influence with it; because faith includes the whole act of union to Christ as a Savior. The entire active uniting of the soul, or the whole of what is called coming to Christ, and receiving of him, is called faith in Scripture; and however other things may be no less excellent than faith, yet it is not the nature of any other graces or virtues directly to close with Christ as a mediator, any further than they enter into the constitution of justifying faith, and do belong to its nature.

Thus I have explained my meaning, in asserting it as a doctrine of the gospel, that we are justified by faith only, without any manner of goodness of our own.

I now proceed in the

second place, to the proof of it, which I shall endeavor to produce in the following arguments.

First: such is our case, and the state of things, that neither faith, nor any other qualification, or act, or course of acts does, or can render it suitable or fit that a person should have an interest in the Savior, and so a title to his benefits, on account of any excellency therein, or any other way than only as something in him may unite him to the Savior. It is not suitable that God should give fallen man an interest in Christ and his merits, as a testimony of his respect to any thing whatsoever as a loveliness in him; and that because it is not meet until a sinner is actually justified, that any thing in him should be accepted of God, as any excellency or amiableness of his person; or that God by any act, should in any manner or degree testify any approval of him, or favor towards him, on

the account of any thing inherent in him; and that for two reasons: first, because the nature of things will not admit of it; second, because an antecedent divine constitution stands in the way of it.

First, the nature of things will not admit of it. And this appears from the infinite guilt that the sinner until justified is under; which arises from the infinite evil or heinousness of sin. But because this is what some deny, I would therefore first establish that point, and show that sin is a thing that is indeed properly of infinite heinousness; and then show the consequence, and show that it being so, and so the sinner under infinite guilt in God's sight, it cannot be suitable, until the sinner is actually justified, that God should by any act testify any approval of, or acceptance of, any thing as any excellency or amiableness of his person, or indeed have any acceptance of him, or approval of him to testify.

That the evil and demerit of sin is infinitely great, is most demonstrably evident, because what the evil or iniquity of sin consists in, is the violating of an obligation, the doing contrary to what we are obliged to do, or doing what we should not do; and therefore by how much the greater the obligation is that is violated, by so much the greater is the iniquity of the violation. But certainly our obligation to love or honor any being is great in proportion to the greatness or excellency of that being, or his worthiness to be loved and honored: we are under greater obligations to love a more lovely being than a less lovely; and if a being is infinitely excellent and lovely, our obligations to love him are therein infinitely great. The matter is so plain it seems needless to say much about it.

Some have argued exceeding strangely against the infinite evil of Sin, from its being committed against an infinite Object, that if so, then it may as well be argued that there is also an infinite value

or worthiness in Holiness and Love to God, because that also has an infinite Object. The Sin of the Creature against God is ill deserving in proportion to the distance there is between God and the Creature, the greatness of the Object, and the meanness of the Subject aggravates it; but 'tis the reverse with regard to the worthiness of the respect of the Creature to God. The worthiness of respect to a Being is in proportion to the Obligation that lies on him who is the Object, or rather the Reason he has, to regard the Subject, which certainly is in proportion to the Subject's value or excellency. Hence the Love, Honour, and Obedience of Christ towards God, has infinite Value, from the excellency and dignity of the Person in whom these Qualifications were inherent.

The reason why we needed a Person of infinite Dignity to obey for us, was because of our infinite comparative Meanness, who had disobeyed, whereby our Disobedience was infinitely aggravated: We needed one, the worthiness of whose Obedience, might be answerable to the unworthiness of our Disobedience. Another Objection is, that to suppose Sin to be infinitely heinous is to make all Sins equally heinous; for how can any Sin be more than infinitely heinous?

All that can be argued hence is, that no Sin can be greater with respect to that aggravation the worthiness of the Object against whom it is committed: one Sin cannot be more aggravated than another in that respect, because in this respect the aggravation of every Sin is infinite; but that does not hinder but that some Sins may be more heinous than others in other respects. As if we should suppose a Cylinder infinitely long, it cannot be greater in that respect, namely, with respect to the length of it; but yet it may be doubled, and trebled, and made a thousand fold more, by the in-

crease of other Dimensions. Of Sins that are all infinitely heinous, some may be more heinous than others, as well as of diverse Punishments that are all infinitely dreadful Calamities, or all of them infinitely exceeding all finite Calamities, so that there is no finite Calamity however great but what is infinitely less dreadful, or more eligible than any of them, yet some of them may be a thousand Times more dreadful than others.

Having thus made it clear that all Sin is infinitely heinous, and consequently that the Sinner, before he is justified, is under infinite Guilt in God's Sight, it now remains that I show the Consequence: it is not suitable that God should give the Sinner an Interest in Christ's Merits, and so a title to his Benefits, from regard to any Qualification, or Act, in him, on the Account of any Excellency or Goodness whatsoever therein, but only as uniting to Christ. Before the Sinner is already interested in Christ, and justified, 'tis impossible God should have any acceptance of, or pleasedness with the Person of the Sinner, as in any Degree lovely in his Sight, or indeed less the Object of his Displeasure and Wrath. The Sinner still remains infinitely guilty in God's Sight — Guilt is not removed but by Pardon; but to suppose the Sinner already pardoned, is to suppose him already justified. If the Sinner still remains infinitely guilty in God's Sight, that is the same Thing as still to be beheld of God as infinitely the Object of his Displeasure and Wrath, or infinitely hateful in his Eyes; and if so, where is any room for any Thing in him, to be accepted as some valuableness or acceptableness of him in God's Sight? If it should be supposed that a Sinner could have Faith, or some other Grace in his Heart, and yet remain separate from Christ, it would not be meet that that true Grace should be accepted of God as any loveliness of his

Person in the Sight of God: If it should be accepted as the loveliness of the Person, that would be to accept the Person as in some Degree lovely to God, but this cannot be consistent with his still remaining under infinite Guilt. While God beholds the Man as separate from Christ, he must behold him as he is in himself; and so his Goodness cannot be beheld by God, but as taken with his Guilt and Hatefulness, and as put in the Scales with it; and being beheld so, his Goodness is nothing; because there is a finite on the balance against an infinite.

Hence may be more clearly seen, the Force of that Expression in the Text, of believing on him that justifieth the ungodly; for though there is indeed something in Man that is really and spiritually Good, that is prior to Justification, yet there is nothing that is accepted as any godliness or excellency of the Person, till after Justification. Goodness or Loveliness of the Person in the Acceptance of God, in any Degree, is not to be considered as prior but posterior in the Order and Method of God's proceeding in this Affair. Though a Respect to the natural Suitableness between such a Qualification, and such a State, does go before Justification, yet the Acceptance even of Faith as any Goodness or Loveliness of the Believer, follows Justification. The Man is respected in Justification, as in himself altogether hateful — Thus the Nature of Things will not admit of a Man's having an Interest given him in the Merits or Benefits of a Saviour, on the Account of any Thing as a Righteousness, or Virtue, or Excellency in him.

A divine constitution that is antecedent to that which establishes justification by a Savior, namely, that original constitution or law which man was put under, stands in the way of it; by which constitution the sinner is condemned, and stands condemned, till

he has actually an interest in the Savior, through whom he is set at liberty from that condemnation. To suppose that God gives a man an interest in Christ in reward for his righteousness or virtue, is inconsistent with his still remaining under condemnation till he has an interest in Christ; because it supposes that the sinner's virtue is accepted, and he accepted for it, before he has an interest in Christ. The very notion of a reward is some good bestowed in testimony of respect to and acceptance of virtue in the person rewarded. It does not consist with the honor of the majesty of the King of heaven and earth, to accept of anything from a condemned malefactor, condemned by the justice of his own holy law, till that condemnation be removed. How can a man continue under this condemnation, that is, continue utterly rejected and cast off of God, and yet his righteousness or virtue be accepted, and he himself accepted on the account of it, so as to have so glorious a reward as an interest in Christ bestowed as a testimony of that acceptance?

I know that the answer that will be ready for this is, that we now are not subject to that constitution that mankind were at first put under; but that God in mercy to mankind has abolished that rigorous constitution or law that they were under originally, and has put us under a new law, and introduced a more mild constitution; and that the constitution or law itself not remaining, there is no need of supposing that the condemnation of it remains, to stand in the way of the acceptance of our virtue. And indeed there is no other way of avoiding this difficulty; the condemnation of the law must stand in force against a man till he is actually interested in the Savior, that has satisfied and answered the law, effectually to prevent any acceptance of his virtue, before, or in order to such an

interest, unless the law or constitution itself be abolished. But the scheme of those modern divines by whom this is maintained seems to contain a great deal of absurdity and self-contradiction: they hold that the old law given to Adam, which requires perfect obedience is entirely repealed, and that instead of it we are put under a new law, which requires no more than imperfect, sincere obedience, in compliance with our poor, infirm, impotent circumstances since the fall, whereby we are unable to perform that perfect obedience that was required by the first law: for they strenuously maintain that it would be unjust in God to require anything of us that is beyond our present power and ability to perform; and yet they hold that Christ died to satisfy for the imperfections of our obedience, that so our imperfect obedience might be accepted instead of perfect — now how can these things hang together? I would ask what law these imperfections of our obedience are a breach of? if they are a breach of no law, then they are not sins; and if they are not sins, what need of Christ's dying to satisfy for them? but if they are sins, and so the breach of some law, what law is it? they can't be a breach of their new law, for that requires no other than imperfect obedience, or obedience with imperfections; and they can't be a breach of the old law, for that they say is entirely abolished, and we never were under it; and we can't break a law that we never were under. They say it would not be just in God to exact of us perfect obedience, because it would not be just in God to require more of us than we can perform in our present state, and to punish us for failing of it; and therefore by their own scheme the imperfections of our obedience don't deserve to be punished; what need therefore of Christ's dying to satisfy for them? What need of Christ's suffering to satisfy for that which is

no fault, and in its own nature deserves no suffering? What need of Christ's dying to purchase that our imperfect obedience should be accepted, when according to their scheme it would be unjust in itself that any other obedience than imperfect should be required? What need of Christ's dying to make way for God's accepting such an obedience, as it would in itself be unjust in him not to accept? Is there any need of Christ's dying to persuade God not to do unjustly? If it be said that Christ died to satisfy that law for us, that so we might not be under that law, but might be delivered from it, that so there might be room for us to be under a more mild law; still I would inquire what need of Christ's dying that we might not be under a law, that according to their scheme it would in itself be unjust that we should be under, because in our present state we are not able to keep it? What need of Christ's dying that we might not be under a law, that it would be unjust that we should be under, whether Christ died or not?

Thus far I have argued principally from reason, and the nature of things: I proceed now to the second argument, which is, that this is a doctrine that the holy Scriptures, the revelation that God has given us of his mind and will, by which alone we can come to know how those that have offended God can come to be accepted of him, and justified in his sight, is exceeding full in.

Particularly the apostle Paul is abundant in teaching that we are justified by faith alone without the works of the law: there is no one doctrine that he insists so much upon, and is so particular in, and that he handles with so much distinctness, explaining, and giving reasons, and answering objections.

Here it is not denied by any, that the Apostle does assert that we are justified by faith, without the works of the law, because the words are express; but only it is said that we take his words wrong, and understand by them that which never entered into his heart, in that when he excludes the works of the law, we understand him of the whole law of God, or the rule which he has given to mankind to walk by; whereas all that he intends is the ceremonial law.

Some that oppose this doctrine indeed say, that the Apostle sometimes means that it is by faith, that is, a hearty embracing of the gospel in its first act, only, or without any preceding holy life, that persons are admitted into a justified state; but, say they, it is by a persevering obedience that they are continued in a justified state, and it is by this that they are finally justified. But this is the same thing as to say that a man on his first embracing the gospel is conditionally justified and pardoned. To pardon sin, is to free the sinner from the punishment of it, or from that eternal misery that is due to it; and therefore if a person is pardoned, or freed from this misery, on his first embracing the gospel, and yet not finally freed, but his actual freedom still depends on some condition yet to be performed, it is inconceivable how he can be pardoned otherwise than conditionally: that is he is not properly actually pardoned, and freed from punishment, but only he has God's promise that he shall be pardoned on future conditions; God promises him that now, if he perseveres in obedience, he shall be finally pardoned, or actually freed from hell; which is to make just nothing at all of the Apostle's great doctrine of justification by faith alone. Such a conditional pardon is no pardon or justification at all, any more than all mankind have, whether they embrace the gospel or no; for they all have a promise of final justification on conditions

of future sincere obedience, as much as he that embraces the gospel. But not to dispute about this, we will suppose that there may be something or other at the sinner's first embracing the gospel, that may properly be called justification or pardon, and yet that final justification, or real freedom from the punishment of sin, is still suspended on conditions hitherto unfulfilled; yet they that hold that sinners are thus justified on embracing the gospel, they suppose that they are justified by this, no otherwise than as this is a leading act of obedience, or at least as virtue and moral goodness in them, and therefore would be excluded by the Apostle as much as any other virtue or obedience; if it be allowed that he means the moral law, when he excludes works of the law. And therefore if that point be yielded that the Apostle means the moral, and not only the ceremonial law, their whole scheme falls to the ground.

And because the issue of the whole argument from those texts in Saint Paul's epistles depends on the determination of this point, I would be particular in the discussion of it.

Some of our opponents in this doctrine of justification, when they deny that by the law, the Apostle means the moral law, or the whole rule of life which God has given to mankind, seem to choose to express themselves thus, that the Apostle only intends the Mosaic dispensation: but this comes to just the same thing as if they said that the Apostle only means to exclude the works of the ceremonial law; for when they say that it is intended only that we are not justified by the works of the Mosaic dispensation, if they mean any thing by it, it must be that we are not justified by attending, and observing what is Mosaic in that dispensation, or by what was peculiar to it, and wherein it differed from the Christian dispensation; which is the same as that which is ceremonial and posi-

tive, and not moral, in that administration. So that this is what I have to disprove, namely, that the Apostle when he speaks of works of the law in this affair, means only works of the ceremonial law, or those observances that were peculiar to the Mosaic administration.

And here it must be noted, that no one disputes with them, whether the works of the ceremonial law are not included or whether the Apostle does not particularly argue against justification by circumcision, and other ceremonial observances; but all that is in question is, whether when he denies justification by works of the law, he is to be understood only of the ceremonial law, or whether the moral law is not also implied and intended; and therefore those arguments that are brought to prove that the Apostle meant the ceremonial law are nothing to the purpose, unless they prove more than that, namely, that the Apostle meant those only.

What is much insisted on is, that it was the Judaizing Christians being so fond of circumcision, and other ceremonies of the law, and depending so much on them, which was the very occasion of the Apostle's writing as he does against justification by the works of the law. But supposing it were so, that their trusting in works of the ceremonial law, were the sole occasion of the Apostle's writing; (which yet there is no reason to allow, as may appear afterwards;) if their trusting in a particular work, as a work of righteousness was all that gave occasion to the Apostle to write, how does it follow that therefore the Apostle did not upon that occasion write against trusting in all works of righteousness whatsoever? Where is the absurdity of supposing that the Apostle might take occasion from his observing some to trust in a certain work as

a work of righteousness, to write to them against persons trusting in any work of righteousness at all, and that it was a very proper occasion too? Indeed it would have been unavoidable for the Apostle to have argued against trusting in a particular work in that quality of a work of righteousness, which quality was general, but he must therein argue against trusting in works of righteousness in general. Supposing it had been some other particular sort of works that was the occasion of the Apostle's writing, as for instance, works of charity, and the Apostle should hence take occasion to write to them not to trust in their works, could the Apostle by that be understood of no other works besides works of charity? Would it have been absurd to understand him as writing against trusting in any work at all, because it was their trusting to a particular work that gave occasion to his writing?

Another thing that is alleged as an evidence that the Apostle means the ceremonial law, when he says we cannot be justified by the works of the law, is that he uses that argument to prove it, namely, that this law that he speaks of was given so long after the covenant with Abraham, in Galatians 3:17: And this I say that the covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law that was four hundred and thirty years after cannot disannul. But say they, it was only the Mosaic administration, and not the covenant of works that was given so long after. But the Apostle's argument seems manifestly to be mistaken by them. The Apostle does not speak of a law that began first to have being four hundred and thirty years after; if he did, there would be some force in their objection; but he has respect to a certain solemn transaction, well known among the Jews, by the phrase of the giving of the law, which was that great transaction at Mount Sinai, that we have ac-

count of in the nineteenth and twentieth chapters of Exodus, consisting especially in God's giving the ten commandments, which is the moral law, with that terrible voice, which law he afterwards gave in tables of stone. This transaction the Jews in the Apostle's time misinterpreted; they looked upon it as God's establishing that law as a rule of justification. This conceit of theirs the Apostle brings this invincible argument against, namely, that God would never go about to disannul his covenant with Abraham, which was plainly a covenant of grace, by a transaction with his posterity, that was so long after it, and was plainly built upon it: he would not overthrow a covenant of grace that he had long before established with Abraham, for him, and his seed, (which is often mentioned as the ground of God's making them his people,) by now establishing a covenant of works with them at Mount Sinai, as the Jews and Judaizing Christians supposed.

But that the Apostle does not mean only works of the ceremonial law, when he excludes works of the law in justification, but also of the moral law, and all works of obedience, virtue, and righteousness whatsoever, may appear by the following things.

First, the Apostle does not only say, that we are not justified by the works of the law, but that we are not justified by works, using a general term; as in our text it is said, to him that does not work, but believes on him that justifies, etc. and in the sixth verse, God imputes righteousness without works (Romans 4:6). And Romans 11:6: And if by grace, then it is no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace: but if it be of works, then it is no more grace; otherwise grace is no more grace. And Ephesians 2:8, 9: For by grace you are saved, through faith — not of works. By which, there is no reason in the world to understand the Apostle of any other

than works in general, as correlates of a reward, or good works, or works of virtue and righteousness. When the Apostle says we are justified or saved not by works, without any such term annexed, as the law, or any other addition to limit the expression, what warrant have any to confine it to works of a particular law, or institution, excluding others? Are not observances of other divine laws works, as well as of that? It seems to be allowed by the divines in the Arminian scheme, in their interpretation of several of those texts where the Apostle only mentions works, without any addition, that he means our own good works in general; but then they say, he only means to exclude any proper merit in those works. But to say the Apostle means one thing when he says we are not justified by works, another when he says we are not justified by the works of the law, when we find the expressions mixed and used in the same discourse, and when the Apostle is evidently upon the same argument, is very unreasonable, it is to dodge, and fly from Scripture, rather than to open and yield ourselves to its teachings.

Second, in the third chapter of Romans, our having been guilty of breaches of the moral law, is an argument that the Apostle uses why we cannot be justified by the works of the law; beginning with the ninth verse there he proves out of the Old Testament, that all are under sin; There is none righteous, no not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre: with their tongues they have used deceit: their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness; and their feet swift to shed blood. And so he goes on mentioning only those things that are breaches of the moral law, and then when he has done, his conclusion is, in the nineteenth and twentieth verses: Now we know that whatever things the law says, it says to them that are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may be-

come guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law, shall no flesh be justified in his sight. This is most evidently his argument, because all had sinned (as it was said in the ninth verse) and been guilty of those breaches of the moral law, that he had mentioned, (and it is repeated over again, afterward verse 23:) For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Therefore none at all can be justified by the deeds of the law. Now if the Apostle meant only that we are not justified by the deeds of the ceremonial law, what kind of arguing would that be: Their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness, their feet are swift to shed blood, therefore, they cannot be justified by the deeds of the Mosaic administration? They are guilty of the breaches of the moral law, and therefore they cannot be justified by the deeds of the ceremonial law? Doubtless the Apostle's argument is, that the very same law that they have broken and sinned against, can never justify them as observers of it, because every law does not justify, but necessarily condemns its violators: and therefore our breaches of the moral law, argue no more, than that we cannot be justified by that law that we have broken.

And it may be noted, that the Apostle's argument here is the same that I have already used, namely, that as we are in ourselves, and out of Christ, we are under the condemnation of that original law, or constitution that God established with mankind; and therefore it is no way fit that any thing that we do, any virtue or obedience of ours, should be accepted on the account of it.

The Apostle, in all the preceding part of this Epistle, wherever he has the Phrase, the Law, evidently intends the moral Law principally. For as many as have sinned without Law, shall also perish without Law — For when the Gentiles, which have not the Law, do

by Nature the Things contained in the Law — that is, the moral Law that the Gentiles have by Nature. Which show the Work of the Law written in their Hearts — 'Tis the moral Law, and not the Ceremonial that is written in the Hearts of those that are destitute of Divine Revelation. Thou that sayest a Man should not commit Adultery, dost thou commit Adultery? Thou that abhorrest Idols, dost thou commit Sacrilege? Thou that makest thy boast of the Law, through breaking the Law dishonourest thou God. Adultery, Idolatry and Sacrilege, surely are the breaking of the moral, and not the ceremonial Law. So there is not one Place in all the preceding part of the Epistle, where the Apostle speaks of the Law, but that he most apparently intends principally the moral Law. And yet when the Apostle, in continuance of the same Discourse, comes to tell us that we cannot be justified by the Works of the Law, then they will needs have it, that he means only the ceremonial Law.

'Tis evident that when the Apostle says, we cannot be justified by the Deeds of the Law, he means the Moral as well as ceremonial Law, by his giving this Reason for it, that by the Law is the Knowledge of Sin: By the Deeds of the Law shall no Flesh be justified in his Sight, for by the Law is the knowledge of Sin. That Law by which we come to the knowledge of Sin, is the moral Law chiefly and primarily. The plain meaning of the Apostle is, that as the Law most strictly forbids Sin, it tends to convince us of Sin, and bring our own Consciences to condemn us, instead of justifying of us; that the Use of it is to declare to us our own Guilt and Unworthiness, which is the reverse of justifying and approving of us as virtuous or worthy. The Apostle himself in this very Epistle explains to us how it is that by the Law we have the Knowledge of Sin, and that 'tis by the Law's forbidding Sin: I had not known Sin,

but by the Law, for I had not known Lust, except the Law had said, thou shalt not covet. 'Tis the moral, and not the ceremonial Law, that says thou shalt not covet: Therefore when the Apostle argues that by the Deeds of the Law no Flesh living shall be justified, because by the Law is the knowledge of Sin, his Argument proves that we cannot be justified by the Deeds of the Moral Law.

'Tis evident that the Apostle does not mean only the ceremonial Law, because he gives this Reason why we have Righteousness not by the Law but by Faith, that the Law worketh Wrath — For the promise that he should be the Heir of the World, was not to Abraham, or to his Seed through the Law, but through the Righteousness of Faith. The way in which the Law works Wrath, by the Apostle's own Account, in the Reason he himself annexes, is by forbidding Sin, and aggravating the Guilt of the Transgression; for, says he, where no Law is there is no Transgression.

Sixth, it is evident that when the Apostle says, we are not justified by the works of the law, that he excludes all our own virtue, goodness, or excellency, by that reason that he gives for it, namely, that boasting might be excluded (Romans 3:26-28): To declare at this time his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believes in Jesus. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No; but by the law of faith. Therefore, we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. Ephesians 2:8, 9: For by grace you are saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God: not of works lest any man should boast. Now what are men accustomed to boast of, but what they esteem their own goodness, or excellency? If we are not justified by works of the ceremonial law, yet

how does that exclude boasting, as long as we are justified by our own excellency, or virtue and goodness of our own, or works of righteousness which we have done?

But it is said that boasting is excluded, as circumcision was excluded, which was what the Jews especially used to glory in, and value themselves upon, above other nations.

To this I answer, that the Jews were not only used to boast of circumcision, but were notorious for boasting of their moral righteousness. The Jews of those days were generally admirers, and followers of the Pharisees, who were full of their boasts of their moral righteousness, as we may see by the example of the Pharisee mentioned in the eighteenth of Luke, which Christ mentions as describing the general temper of that sect; Lord, says he, I thank you, that I am not as other men, an extortioner nor unjust, nor an adulterer. The works that he boasts of were chiefly moral works: he depended on the works of the law for justification; and therefore Christ tells us that the publican, that renounced all his own righteousness, went down to his house justified rather than he. And elsewhere we read of the Pharisees praying in the corners of the streets and sounding a trumpet before them when they did alms: but those works which they so vainly boasted of were moral works. And not only so, but what the Apostle, in this very epistle, is condemning the Jews for, is their boasting of the moral law (Romans 2:22, 23): You that say a man should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery! You that abhor idols, do you commit sacrilege. You that make your boast of the law, through breaking the law do you dishonor God. The law here mentioned that they made their boast of, was that of which adultery, idolatry, and sacrilege, were the breaches, which is the moral law: so that this is the boasting

which the Apostle condemns them for; and therefore if they were justified by the works of this law, then how does he say that their boasting is excluded? And besides, when they boasted of the rites of the ceremonial law, it was under a notion of its being a part of their own goodness or excellency, or what made them holier and more lovely in the sight of God than other people; and if they were not justified by this part of their own supposed goodness, or holiness, yet if they were by another, how did that exclude boasting? How was their boasting excluded, unless all goodness or excellency of their own was excluded?

Seventh, the reason given by the Apostle why we can be justified only by faith, and not by the works of the law, in the third chapter of Galatians, namely, that they that are under the law are under the curse, makes it evident that he does not mean only the ceremonial law. In that chapter the Apostle had particularly insisted upon it that Abraham was justified by faith, and that it is by faith only, and not by the works of the law, that we can be justified and become the children of Abraham, and be made partakers of the blessing of Abraham: and he gives this reason for it, in the tenth verse: For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written cursed is every one that continues not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. It is manifest that these words cited from Deuteronomy, are spoken not only with regard to the ceremonial law, but the whole law of God to mankind, and chiefly the moral law; and that all mankind are therefore as they are in themselves under that curse, not only while the ceremonial law lasted, but now since that has ceased. And therefore all that are justified, are redeemed from that curse, by Christ's bearing it for them; as there in the thirteenth verse:

Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, cursed is every one that hangs on a tree. Now therefore, either it being said so, that he is cursed that continues not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them, is a good reason why we cannot be justified by the works of that law, of which it is so said, or it is not; if it be, then it is a good reason why we cannot be justified by the works of the moral law, and of the whole rule which God has given to mankind to walk by; for the words are spoken of the moral as well as ceremonial law, and reach every command, or precept which God has given to mankind, and chiefly the moral precepts, which are most strictly enjoined, and the violations of which in both New Testament and Old, and in the books of Moses themselves, are threatened with the most dreadful curse.

Eighth, the apostle does in like manner argue against our being justified by our own righteousness, as he does against being justified by the works of the law; and evidently uses the expressions of our own righteousness, and works of the law, promiscuously, and as signifying the same thing. It is particularly evident by Romans 10:3: 'For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God.' Here it is plain that the same thing is asserted as in the preceding chapter. And it is very unreasonable, upon several accounts, to suppose that the apostle by their own righteousness, intends only their ceremonial righteousness. For when the apostle warns us against trusting in our own righteousness for justification, doubtless it is fair to interpret the expression in agreement with other Scriptures where we are warned not to think that it is for the sake of our own righteous-

ness, that we obtain God's favor and blessing; as particularly that in Deuteronomy 9:4-6: 'Speak not in your heart, after that the Lord your God has cast them out from before you, saying, For my righteousness the Lord has brought me in, to possess this land; but for the wickedness of these nations the Lord does drive them out from before you. Not for your righteousness, or for the uprightness of your heart, do you go to possess their land: understand therefore that the Lord your God gives you not this good land to possess it, for your righteousness; for you are a stiff-necked people.' None will pretend that here the expression 'your righteousness' signifies only a ceremonial righteousness, but all virtue or goodness of their own; yes and the inward goodness of the heart as well as the outward goodness of life. This is what I would argue from hence, that the expression of our own righteousness, when used in Scripture, with relation to the favor of God, and when we are warned against looking upon it as that by which that favor is obtained, does not signify only a ceremonial righteousness, but all manner of goodness of our own.

The Jews also in the New Testament are condemned for trusting in their own righteousness in this sense (Luke 18:9): 'And he spoke this parable unto certain that trusted in themselves that they were righteous.' This intends chiefly a moral righteousness, as appears by the parable itself, in which we have an account of the prayer of the Pharisee, wherein the things that he mentions, as what he trusts in, are chiefly moral qualifications and performances, namely, that he was not an extortioner, unjust, nor an adulterer, etc.

But we need not go to the writings of other penmen of the Scripture; but if we will allow the apostle Paul to be his own interpreter, he when he speaks of our own righteousness as that which we are not justified or saved by, does not mean only a ceremonial righteousness, nor does he only intend a way of religion, and serving God, of our own choosing and fixing on, without divine warrant or prescription; but by our own righteousness he means the same as a righteousness of our own doing, whether it be a service or righteousness of God's prescribing, or our own unwarranted performing. Let it be an obedience to the ceremonial law, or a gospel obedience, or what it will, if it be a righteousness of our own doing, it is excluded by the apostle in this affair, as is evident by Titus 3:5: 'Not by works of righteousness which we have done.' For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Savior, toward man, appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit.

Ninth argument, that the apostle when he denies justification by works, and by works of the law, and by our own righteousness, does not only mean works of the ceremonial law: what is said by the apostle in Titus 3:3-7: 'For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Savior, toward man, appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration,

and renewing of the Holy Spirit; which he shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Savior; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs, according to the hope of eternal life.' Works of righteousness that we have done, are here excluded, as what we are neither saved, nor justified by. The apostle expressly says, we are not saved by them; and it is evident that when he says this, he has respect to the affair of justification, and that he means, we are not saved by them in not being justified by them, by the next verse but one, which is part of the same sentence: 'That being justified by his grace we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.'

It is several ways manifest that the apostle in this text, by works of righteousness which we have done, does not mean only works of the ceremonial law. It appears by verse 3: 'For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.' These are breaches of the moral law, that the apostle observes they lived in before they were justified: and it is most plain that it is this that gives occasion to the apostle to observe as he does in verse 5, that it was not by works of righteousness which they had done, that they were saved or justified.

But we need not go to the context, it is most apparent from the words themselves, that the Apostle does not mean only works of the ceremonial law: if he had only said, it is not by our own works of righteousness; what could we understand by works of righteousness, but only righteous works, or which is the same thing, good works? And to say that it is by our own righteous works, that we are justified, though not by one particular kind of righteous works, would certainly be a contradiction to such an assertion. But the

words are rendered yet more strong, plain, and determined in their sense, by those additional words, which we have done; which shows that the Apostle intends to exclude all our own righteous or virtuous works universally. If it should be asserted concerning any commodity, treasure, or precious jewel, that it could not be procured by money, and not only so, but to make the assertion the more strong, it should be asserted with additional words, that it could not be procured by money that men possess; how unreasonable would it be after all to say, that all that was meant was, that it could not be procured with brass money?

And what renders the interpreting this text of works of the ceremonial law, yet more unreasonable is, that these works were indeed no works of righteousness at all, but were only falsely supposed to be so by the Jews; and that our opponents in this doctrine suppose is the very reason why we are not justified by them, because they are not works of righteousness, or because (the ceremonial law being now abrogated) there is no obedience in them. But how absurd is it to say that the Apostle when he says we are not justified by works of righteousness that we have done, meant only works of the ceremonial law, and that for that very reason because they are not works of righteousness. To illustrate this by the fore-mentioned comparison; if it should be asserted that such a thing could not be procured by money that men possess, how ridiculous would it be to say that the meaning only was, that it could not be procured by counterfeit money, and that for that reason, because it was not money. What Scripture will stand before men, if they will take liberty to manage Scripture thus? Or what one text is there in the Bible that may not at this rate be explained all away, and perverted to any sense men please.

But then further, if we should allow that the Apostle intends only to oppose justification by works of the ceremonial law in this text, yet it is evident by the expression he uses that he means to oppose it under that notion, or in that quality, of their being works of righteousness of our own doing. But if the Apostle argues against our being justified by works of the ceremonial law under the notion of their being of that nature and kind, namely works of our own doing; then it will follow that the Apostle's argument is strong against, not only those, but all of that nature and kind, even all that are of our own doing.

If there were no other text in the Bible about justification but this, this would clearly and invincibly prove that we are not justified by any of our own goodness, virtue, or righteousness or for the excellency or righteousness of any thing that we have done in religion; because it is here so fully and strongly asserted. But this text does abundantly confirm other texts of the Apostle, where he denies justification by works of the law: there is no doubt can be rationally made but that, when the Apostle here shows that God saves us according to his mercy, in that he does not save us by works of righteousness that we have done (verse 5), and that so we are justified by grace (verse 7), herein opposing salvation by works, and salvation by grace, he means the same works as he does in other places, where he in like manner opposes works and grace, the same works as in Romans 11:6: And if by grace then it is no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace: but if it be of works, then it is no more grace; otherwise work is no more work. And the same works as in Romans 4:4: Now to him that works, is the reward not reckoned of grace but of debt. And the same works that are spoken of in the context of the twenty-fourth verse of the

foregoing chapter, which the Apostle there calls works of the law: being justified freely by his grace. And of Romans 4:16: Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace. Where in the context, the righteousness of faith, is opposed to the righteousness of the law: for here God's saving us according to his mercy, and justifying us by grace, is opposed to saving us by works of righteousness that we have done, in the same manner as in those places justifying us by his grace, is opposed to justifying us by works of the law.

Tenth, the Apostle could not mean only works of the ceremonial law, when he says we are not justified by the works of the law, because it is asserted of the saints, under the Old Testament, as well as new. If men are justified by their sincere obedience, it will then follow that formerly, before the ceremonial law was abrogated, men were justified by the works of the ceremonial law, as well as the moral. For if we are justified by our sincere obedience then it alters not the case, whether the commands be moral, or positive, provided they be God's commands, and our obedience be obedience to God: and so the case must be just the same under the Old Testament, with the works of the moral law, and ceremonial, according to the measure of the virtue of obedience, there was in either. It is true their obedience to the ceremonial law would have nothing to do in the affair of justification, unless it was sincere; and so neither would the works of the moral law: obedience to the moral law would have been concerned in the affair of justification, if sincere; and so would obedience to the ceremonial. If obedience was the thing, then obedience to the ceremonial law, while that stood in force, and obedience to the moral law, had just the same sort of concern, according to the proportion of obedience that consists in each. As now under the New Testament, if obedience is

what we are justified by, that obedience must doubtless comprehend obedience to all God's commands now in force, to the positive precepts of attendance on baptism and the Lord's Supper, as well as moral precepts. If obedience be the thing, it is not because it is obedience to such a kind of commands, but because it is obedience. So that by this supposition, the saints under the Old Testament were justified, at least in part, by their obedience to the ceremonial law.

But it is evident that the saints under the Old Testament were not justified in any measure, by the works of the ceremonial law. This may be proved proceeding on the basis of our adversaries' own interpretation of the Apostle's phrase of the works of the law; and supposing him to mean by it only the works of the ceremonial law. To instance in David, it is evident that he was not justified in any way, by the works of the ceremonial law, by Romans 4:6-8: Even as David also described the blessedness of the man, to whom God imputes righteousness without works, saying, blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. It is plain that the Apostle is here speaking of justification, by the preceding verse, and by all the context; and the thing spoken of, namely forgiving iniquities, and covering sins, is what our adversaries themselves suppose to be justification, and even the whole of justification. This David speaking of himself, says (by the Apostle's interpretation,) that he had without works. For it is manifest that David in the words here cited, from the beginning of the thirty-second Psalm, has a special respect to himself: he speaks of his own sins being forgiven and not imputed to him: as appears by the words that immediately follow, When I kept silence, my bones grew old,

through my roaring all the day long; for day and night your hand was heavy upon me, my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. I acknowledged my sin to you, and my iniquity I have not hidden: I said I will confess my transgressions to the Lord; and you forgave the iniquity of my sin. Let us therefore understand the Apostle which way we will, by works, when he says, David describes the blessedness of the man to whom the Lord imputes righteousness without works, whether of all manner of works, or only works of the ceremonial law, yet it is evident at least, that David was not justified by works of the ceremonial law. Therefore here is the argument; if our own obedience be that by which men are justified, then under the Old Testament, men were justified partly by obedience to the ceremonial law, (as has been proved;) but the saints under the Old Testament were not justified partly by the works of the ceremonial law; therefore men's own obedience is not that by which they are justified.

Eleventh, another argument that the Apostle when he speaks of the two opposite ways of justification, one by the works of the law, and the other by faith, does not mean only the works of the ceremonial law, may be taken from that place, Romans 10:5, 6: For Moses describes the righteousness which is of the law, that the man which does those things shall live by them; but the righteousness which is of faith speaks on this wise, etc. Here two things are evident.

First, that the Apostle here speaks of the same two opposite ways of justification, one by the righteousness which is of the law, the other by faith, that he had treated of in the former part of the epistle; and therefore it must be the same law that is here spoken of: the same law is here meant as in the last verses of the foregoing

chapter, where he says the Jews had not attained to the law of righteousness: because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. As is plain, because the Apostle is still speaking of the same thing, the words are a continuation of the same discourse, as may be seen at first glance, by any one that looks on the context.

Second, it is manifest that Moses when he describes the righteousness which is of the law, or the way of justification by the law, in the words here cited, He that does those things shall live in them, does not speak only, nor chiefly, of the works of the ceremonial law; for none will pretend that God ever made such a covenant with man, that he that kept the ceremonial law should live in it, or that there ever was a time that it was chiefly by the works of the ceremonial law, that men lived and were justified. Indeed, it is manifest by the forementioned instance of David, mentioned in the fourth of Romans that there never was a time wherein men were justified in any measure, by the works of the ceremonial law, as has been just now shown. Moses therefore in those words, which the Apostle says, are a description of the righteousness which is of the law, cannot mean only the ceremonial law. And therefore it follows that when the Apostle speaks of justification by the works of the law, as opposite to justification by faith, he does not mean only the ceremonial law, but also the works of the moral law, which are the things spoken of by Moses, when he says he that does these things shall live in them; and which are the things the Apostle in this very place is arguing that we cannot be justified by; as is evident by the context, the last verses of the preceding chapter: But Israel which followed after the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness: because? Because they

sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law, etc. And in the third verse of this chapter: For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God.

And further, how can the Apostle's description that he here gives from Moses, of this rejected way of justification by the works of the law, consist with the Arminian scheme of a way of justification by the virtue of a sincere obedience, that still remains as the true and only way of justification, under the gospel? It is most apparent that it is the design of the Apostle to give a description of both the legal rejected, and the evangelical valid ways of justification, in that wherein they differ, or are distinguished the one from the other. But how is that, that he that does those things shall live in them, that wherein the way of justification by the works of the law, differs, or is distinguished from that in which Christians under the gospel are justified, according to their scheme; for still, according to them, it may be said, in the same manner, of the precepts of the gospel, he that does these things shall live in them: the difference lies only in the things to be done, but not at all, in that the doing of them is not the condition of living in them, just in the one case, as in the other. The words, He that does them shall live in them, will serve just as well for a description of the latter as the former. By the Apostle's saying, the righteousness of the law is described thus, he that does these things shall live in them, but the righteousness of faith speaks thus, plainly intimates that the righteousness of faith speaks otherwise, and in an opposite manner. But besides, if these words cited from Moses, are actually said by him of the moral law as well as ceremonial, as it is most evident

they are, it renders it still more absurd to suppose them mentioned by the Apostle, as the very note of distinction between justification by a ceremonial obedience, and a moral sincere obedience, as the Arminians must suppose.

Thus I have spoken to a second argument, to prove that we are not justified by any manner of virtue or goodness of our own, namely, that to suppose otherwise is contrary to the doctrine that is directly urged, and abundantly insisted on by the Apostle Paul, in his epistles.

I proceed now to a

third argument, namely that to suppose that we are justified by our own sincere obedience, or any of our own virtue or goodness, derogates from gospel grace.

That scheme of justification that manifestly takes from, or diminishes the grace of God, is undoubtedly to be rejected; for it is the declared design of God in the gospel to exalt the freedom and riches of his grace, in that method of justification of sinners, and way of admitting them to his favor, and the blessed fruits of it, which it declares. The Scripture teaches that the way of justification that is appointed in the gospel covenant, is appointed, as it is, for that end, that free grace might be expressed, and glorified (Romans 4:16): Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace. The exercising, and magnifying the free grace of God in the gospel contrivance for the justification and salvation of sinners, is evidently the chief design of it: and this freedom and riches of the grace of the gospel is everywhere spoken of in Scripture as the

chief glory of it. Therefore that doctrine that derogates from the free grace of God in justifying sinners, as it is most opposite to God's design, so it must be exceedingly offensive to him.

Those that maintain that we are justified by our own sincere obedience, do pretend that their scheme does not diminish the grace of the gospel; for they say that the grace of God is wonderfully manifested in appointing such a way and method of salvation, by sincere obedience, in assisting us to perform such an obedience, and in accepting our imperfect obedience, instead of perfect.

Let us therefore examine that matter, whether their scheme of a man's being justified by his own virtue, and sincere obedience, does derogate from the grace of God or no; or whether free grace is not more exalted, in supposing as we do, that we are justified without any manner of goodness of our own. In order to this, I lay down this self-evident

proposition, that whatever that be, by which the abundant benevolence of the giver is expressed, and gratitude in the receiver is obliged, that magnifies free grace. This I suppose none will ever contest or dispute.

And it is not much less evident, that it does both show a more abundant benevolence in the giver when he shows kindness without goodness or excellency in the object, to move him to it; and that it enhances the obligation to gratitude in the receiver.

First, it shows a more abundant goodness in the giver, when he shows kindness without any excellency in our persons or actions that should move the giver to love and beneficence. For it certainly shows the more abundant and overflowing goodness, or disposition, to communicate good, by how much the less loveliness or ex-

cellency there is to entice beneficence: the less there is in the receiver to draw good will and kindness, it argues the more of the principle of good will and kindness in the giver. For one that has but a little of a principle of love and benevolence, may be drawn to do good, and to show kindness, when there is a great deal to draw him, or when there is much excellency and loveliness in the object to move good will; when he whose goodness and benevolence is more abundant, will show kindness, where there is less to draw it forth; for he does not so much need to have it drawn from without, he has enough of the principle within to move him, of itself. Where there is most of the principle, there it is most sufficient for itself; and stands in least need of something without to excite it: for certainly a more abundant goodness, more easily flows forth, with less to impel or draw it. Or which is the same thing, the more any one is disposed of himself, the less he needs from without himself, to put him upon it, or stir him up to it. And therefore his kindness and goodness appears the more exceeding great, when it is bestowed without any excellency or loveliness at all in the receiver, or when the receiver is respected in the gift, as wholly without excellency. And much more still when the benevolence of the giver not only finds nothing in the receiver to draw it, but a great deal of hatefulness to repel it: the abundance of goodness is then manifested, not only in flowing forth without any thing extrinsic to put it forward, but in overcoming great repulsion in the object. And then does kindness and love appear most triumphant, and wonderfully great, when the receiver is respected in the gift, as not only wholly without all excellency or beauty to attract it, but altogether, indeed infinitely vile and hateful.

Second, it is apparent also that it enhances the obligation to gratitude in the receiver. This is agreeable to the common sense of mankind, that the less worthy or excellent the object of benevolence, or the receiver of kindness is, the more he is obliged, and the greater gratitude is due. He therefore is most of all obliged, that receives kindness without any goodness or excellency in himself, but with a total and universal hatefulness. And as it is agreeable to the common sense of mankind; so it is agreeable to the word of God: how often does God in the Scripture insist on this argument with men, to move them to love him, and to acknowledge his kindness? How much does he insist on this as an obligation to gratitude, that they are so sinful and ill-deserving.

Therefore it certainly follows, that that doctrine that teaches that God, when he justifies a man, and shows him that great kindness, as to give him a right to eternal life, does not do it for any obedience, or any manner of goodness of his; but that justification respects a man as ungodly, and wholly without any manner of virtue, beauty, or excellency. This doctrine does certainly more exalt the free grace of God in justification, and man's obligation to gratitude to him, for such a favor, than the contrary doctrine, namely, that God in showing this kindness to man, respects him as sincerely obedient and virtuous, and as having something in him that is truly excellent, and lovely, and acceptable in his sight, and that this goodness or excellency of man is the very fundamental condition of the bestowal of that kindness on him, or of the distinguishing him from others by that benefit. But I hasten to a

fourth argument for the truth of the doctrine, that to suppose that a man is justified by his own virtue or obedience, derogates from the honor of the Mediator, and ascribes that to man's virtue,

that belongs only to the righteousness of Christ: it puts man in Christ's stead, and makes him his own savior, in a respect, in which Christ only is his savior; and so it is a doctrine contrary to the nature, and design of the gospel which is to abase man, and to ascribe all the glory of our salvation to Christ the Redeemer. It is inconsistent with the doctrine of the imputation of Christ's righteousness, which is a gospel doctrine.

Here I would: first, explain what we mean by the imputation of Christ's righteousness; second, prove the thing intended by it to be true; third, show that this doctrine is utterly inconsistent with the doctrine of our being justified by our own virtue, or sincere obedience.

First, I would explain what we mean by the imputation of Christ's righteousness. Sometimes the expression is taken by our divines in a larger sense, for the imputation of all that Christ did and suffered for our redemption, whereby we are free from guilt, and stand righteous in the sight of God; and so implies the imputation both of Christ's satisfaction, and obedience. But here I intend it in a stricter sense, for the imputation of that righteousness, or moral goodness, that consists in the obedience of Christ. And by that righteousness being imputed to us, is meant no other than this, that that righteousness of Christ is accepted for us, and admitted instead of that perfect inherent righteousness that ought to be in ourselves: Christ's perfect obedience shall be reckoned to our account, so that we shall have the benefit of it, as though we had performed it ourselves: and so we suppose that a title to eternal life is given us as the reward of this righteousness. The Scripture uses the word impute in this sense, namely, for reckoning any thing belonging to any person, to another person's account: as Philemon

verse 18: If he has wronged you, or owes you anything, put that on my account. In the original it is impute that to me. It is a word of the same root with that which is translated impute, Romans 4:6: To whom God imputes righteousness without works. And it is the very same word that is used, Romans 5:13, that is translated impute: sin is not imputed, where there is no law.

The opposers of this doctrine suppose that there is an absurdity in it: they say that to suppose that God imputes Christ's obedience to us, is to suppose that God is mistaken, and thinks that we performed that obedience that Christ performed. But why cannot that righteousness be reckoned to our account, and be accepted for us, without any such absurdity? Why is there any more absurdity in it, than in a merchant's transferring debt or credit from one man's account to another, when one man pays a price for another, so that it shall be accepted as if that other had paid it? Why is there any more absurdity in supposing that Christ's obedience is imputed to us, than that his satisfaction is imputed? If Christ has suffered the penalty of the law for us, and in our stead, then it will follow, that his suffering that penalty is imputed to us, that is, that it is accepted for us, and in our stead, and is reckoned to our account, as though we had suffered it. But why may not his obeying the law of God be as rationally reckoned to our account, as his suffering the penalty of the law? Why may not a price to bring into debt, be as rationally transferred from one person's account to another, as a price to pay a debt. Having thus explained what we mean by the imputation of Christ's righteousness, I proceed.

Second, to prove that the righteousness of Christ is thus imputed.

First, there is the very same need of Christ's obeying the law in our stead, in order to the reward, as of his suffering the penalty of the law, in our stead, in order to our escaping the penalty; and the same reason why one should be accepted on our account, as the other. There is the same need of one as the other, that the law of God might be answered: one was as requisite to answer the law as the other. This is certain, that that was the reason why there was need that Christ suffer the penalty for us, even that the law might be answered; for this the Scripture plainly teaches: this is given as the reason why Christ was made a curse for us, that the law threatened a curse to us (Galatians 3:10, 13). But the same law that fixes the curse of God, as the consequent of not continuing in all things written in the law to do them (verse 10), has as much fixed doing those things as an antecedent of living in them (as in verse 12, the next verse but one); there is as much of a connection established in one case as in the other. There is therefore exactly the same need from the law of perfect obedience being fulfilled, in order to our obtaining the reward, as there is of death's being suffered, in order to our escaping the punishment, or the same necessity by the law, of perfect obedience preceding life, as there is of disobedience being succeeded by death: the law is without doubt, as much of an established rule in one case as in the other.

Christ by suffering the penalty, and so making atonement for us, only removes the guilt of our sins and so sets us in the same state that Adam was in the first moment of his creation: and it is no more fit, that we should obtain eternal life, only on that account, than that Adam should have the reward of eternal life, or of a confirmed and unalterable state of happiness, the first moment of his existence, without any obedience at all. Adam was not to

have the reward merely on the account of his being innocent; if so, he would have had it fixed upon him at once, as soon as ever he was created; for he was as innocent then as he could be: but he was to have the reward on the account of his activeness in obedience; not on the account merely of his not having done ill, but on the account of his doing well.

So on the same account we have not eternal life merely on the account of being void of guilt (as Adam was at first existence), which we have by the atonement of Christ; but on the account of Christ's activeness in obedience, and doing well. Christ is our second federal head, and is called the second Adam (1 Corinthians 15:22) because he acted the part for us, that the first Adam should have done. When he had undertaken for us to stand in our stead, he was looked upon, and treated as though he were guilty with our guilt; and by his satisfying, or bearing the penalty, he did as it were free himself from this guilt. But by this, the second Adam did only bring himself into the state that the first Adam was in on the first moment of his existence, namely a state of mere freedom from guilt; and hereby indeed was free from any obligation to suffer punishment: but this being supposed, there was need of something further, even a positive obedience, in order to his obtaining, as our second Adam, the reward of eternal life.

God saw fit to place man first in a state of trial, and not to give him a title to eternal life, as soon as he had made him: because it was his will that he should first give honor to his authority, by fully submitting to it, in will and act, and perfectly obeying his law. God insisted upon it that his holy majesty and law should have their due acknowledgment, and honor from man, such as became the relation he stood in to that being that created him, before he would

bestow the reward of confirmed and everlasting happiness upon him; and therefore God gave him a law when he created him, that he might have opportunity, by giving due honor to his authority in obeying it, to obtain this happiness. It therefore became Christ, seeing that in assuming man to himself, he sought a title to this eternal happiness for him, after he had broken the law, that he himself should become subject to God's authority, and be in the form of a servant, that he might do that honor to God's authority for him, by his obedience, which God at first required of man, as the condition of his having a title to that reward. Christ came into the world to that end, to render the honor of God's authority and law, consistent with the salvation and eternal life of sinners; he came to save them, and yet also to assert and vindicate the honor of the lawgiver, and his holy law. Now if the sinner after his sin was satisfied for, had eternal life bestowed upon him, without active righteousness, the honor of his law would not be sufficiently vindicated. Supposing this were possible, that the sinner himself could by suffering pay the debt, and afterwards be in the same state that he was in before his probation, that is to say, negatively righteous, or merely without guilt; if he now at last should have eternal life bestowed upon him, without performing that condition of obedience, then God would recede from his law, and would give the promised reward, and his law never have respect and honor shown to it, in that way of being obeyed. But now Christ by subjecting himself to the law and obeying of it, has done great honor to the law, and to the authority of God who gave it: that so glorious a person should become subject to the law, and fulfill it, has done much more to honor it, than if mere man had obeyed it. It was a thing infinitely honorable to God that a person of infinite dignity

was not ashamed to call him his God, and to adore and obey him as such: this was more to God's honor than if any mere creature, of any possible degree of excellency and dignity, had so done.

It is absolutely necessary that in order to a sinner's being justified, the righteousness of some other should be reckoned to his account; for it is declared that the person justified is looked upon as (in himself) ungodly; but God neither will nor can justify a person without a righteousness; for justification is manifestly a forensic term, as the word is used in Scripture, and the thing a judicial thing, or the act of a judge. So that if a person should be justified without a righteousness, the judgment would not be according to truth: the sentence of justification would be a false sentence, unless there be a righteousness performed that is by the judge properly looked upon as his. To say, that God does not justify the sinner without sincere, though an imperfect obedience, does not help the case; for an imperfect righteousness before a judge is no righteousness. To accept of something that falls short of the rule, instead of something else that answers the rule, is no judicial act, or act of a judge, but a pure act of sovereignty. An imperfect righteousness is no righteousness, before a judge; for righteousness is a relative thing, and has always relation to a law: the formal nature of righteousness, properly understood, lies in a conformity of actions to that which is the rule and measure of them. Therefore that only is righteousness in the sight of a judge that answers the law. The law is the judge's rule: if he pardons and hides what really is, and so does not pass sentence according to what things are in themselves, he either does not act the part of a judge, or else judges falsely. The very notion of judging, is to determine what is, and what is not, in any one's case. The judge's work is twofold, it is to determine first

what is fact, and then whether what is in fact be according to rule, or according to the law. If a judge has no rule or law established before hand, by which he should proceed in judging, he has no foundation to go upon in judging, he has no opportunity to be a judge; nor is it possible that he should do the part of a judge. To judge without a law or rule by which to judge, is impossible, for the very notion of judging is to determine whether the object of judgment be according to rule; and therefore God has declared that when he acts as a judge he will not justify the wicked, and cannot clear the guilty; and by parity of reason cannot justify without righteousness.

And the scheme of the old law's being abrogated, and a new law introduced, will not help at all in this difficulty; for an imperfect righteousness cannot answer the law of God that we are under, whether that be an old one or a new one; for every law requires perfect obedience to itself: every rule whatsoever requires perfect conformity to itself; it is a contradiction to suppose otherwise; for to say, that there is a law that does not require perfect obedience to itself, is to say that there is a law that does not require all that it requires. That law that now forbids sin, is certainly the law that we are now under, (let that be an old one, or a new one;) or else it is not sin: that which is not forbidden, and is the breach of no law, is no sin. But if we are now forbidden to commit sin, then it is by a law that we are now under, for surely we are neither under the forbiddings, nor commandings of a law that we are not under. Therefore if all sin is now forbidden, then we are now under a law that requires perfect obedience; and therefore nothing can be accepted as a righteousness in the sight of our judge, but perfect righteousness. So that our judge cannot justify us, unless he sees a

perfect righteousness, some way belonging to us, whether performed by ourselves, or by another, and justly and duly reckoned to our account.

God does in the sentence of justification pronounce a man perfectly righteous, or else he would need a further justification after he is justified: his sins being removed by Christ's atonement, is not sufficient for his justification; for justifying a man is not merely pronouncing him innocent or without guilt, but standing right, with regard to the rule that he is under, and righteous unto life. But this according to the established rule of nature, reason, and divine appointment, is a positive perfect righteousness.

As there is the same need that Christ's obedience should be reckoned to our account, as that his atonement should; so there is the same reason why it should. As if Adam had persevered, and finished his course of obedience, we should have received the benefit of his obedience, as much as now we have the mischief of his disobedience; so in like manner, there is reason that we should receive the benefit of the second Adam's obedience, as of his atonement of our disobedience. Believers are represented in Scripture as being so in Christ, as that they are legally one, or accepted as one, by the supreme Judge: Christ has assumed our nature, and has so assumed all, in that nature, that belong to him, into such a union with himself, that he is become their head, and has taken them to be his members. And therefore what Christ has done in our nature, whereby he did honor to the law and authority of God by his acts, as well as the reparation to the honor of the law, by his sufferings, is reckoned to the believer's account; so as that the believer should

be made happy, because it was so well, and worthily done by his head, as well as freed from being miserable, because he has done enough, as their surety, to answer for their disobedience.

When Christ had once undertaken with God, to stand for us, and put himself under our law, by that law he was obliged to suffer and by the same law he was obliged to obey: by the same law, after he had taken man's guilt upon him, he himself being our surety, could not be acquitted, till he had suffered, nor rewarded till he had obeyed. But he was not acquitted as a private person, but as our head, and believers are acquitted in his acquittance; nor was he accepted to a reward for his obedience as a private person, but as our head, and we are accepted to a reward in his acceptance. The Scripture teaches us, that when Christ was raised from the dead, he was justified; which justification, as I have already shown, implies, both his acquittance from our guilt, and his acceptance to the exaltation and glory that was the reward of his obedience. But believers, as soon as they believe, are admitted to partake with Christ in this his justification: hence we are told that he was raised again for our justification (Romans 4:25), which is true, not only of that part of his justification that consists in his acquittance; but also his acceptance to his reward. The Scripture teaches us that he is exalted, and gone to heaven, to take possession of glory in our name, as our forerunner (Hebrews 6:20). We are as it were both raised up together with Christ, and also made to sit together with Christ, in heavenly places, and in him (Ephesians 2:6).

Christ in his original circumstances, was in no subjection to the Father, being altogether equal with him: he was under no obligation to put himself in man's stead, and under man's law, or to put himself into any state of subjection to God whatsoever. There was

a transaction between the Father and the Son, that was antecedent to Christ's becoming man, and being made under the law, wherein he undertook to put himself under the law, and both to obey and to suffer — in which transaction these things were already virtually done in the sight of God. God acted on the ground of that transaction, justifying and saving sinners, as if the things undertaken had been actually performed long before they were performed indeed. If we look to that original transaction between the Father and the Son, wherein both these were undertaken and accepted, as virtually done in the sight of the Father, we shall find Christ acting with regard to both, as one perfectly in his own right, and under no manner of previous obligation, to hinder the validity of either.

Second, to suppose that all that Christ does is only to make atonement for us by suffering, is to make him our Savior in part only. It is to rob him of half his glory as a Savior. For if so, all that he does is to deliver us from hell; he does not purchase heaven for us. The opposing scheme supposes that he purchases heaven for us in this sense — that he satisfies for the imperfections of our obedience, and so purchases that our sincere imperfect obedience might be accepted as the condition of eternal life, and so purchases an opportunity for us to obtain heaven by our own obedience. But to purchase heaven for us only in this sense is to purchase it in no sense at all; for all of it comes to no more than a satisfaction for our sins, or removing the penalty by suffering in our stead. For all the purchasing they speak of, that imperfect obedience should be accepted, is only his satisfying for the sinful imperfection of our obedience, or, which is the same thing, making atonement for the sin that our obedience is attended with. But that is not purchasing heaven — merely to set us at liberty again so that we may go and

get heaven by what we do ourselves. All that Christ does in this scheme is only to pay a debt for us; there is no positive purchase of any good. We are taught in Scripture that heaven is purchased for us — it is called the purchased possession (Ephesians 1:14). The gospel proposes the eternal inheritance, not to be acquired, as the first covenant did, but as already acquired and purchased. But he who pays a man's debt for him, and so delivers him from slavery, cannot be said to purchase an estate for him, merely because he sets him at liberty, so that henceforth he has an opportunity to get an estate by his own labor. So that according to this scheme, the saints in heaven have no reason to thank Christ for purchasing heaven for them, or redeeming them to God and making them kings and priests, as we read that they do in Revelation 5:9.

Third, justification by the righteousness and obedience of Christ is a doctrine that the Scripture teaches in very full terms. Romans 5:18-19: 'By the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life; for as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.' Here in one verse we are told that we have justification by Christ's righteousness; and that there might be no room to understand the righteousness spoken of merely of Christ's atonement by suffering the penalty, in the next verse it is put in other terms, and asserted that it is by Christ's obedience that we are made righteous. It is scarcely possible anything should be more full and determined: the terms, taken singly, are such as fix their own meaning, and taken together, they fix the meaning of each other. The words show that we are justified by that righteous-

ness of Christ that consists in his obedience, and that we are made righteous or justified by that obedience of his that is his righteousness, or moral goodness before God.

Here possibly it may be objected that this text means only that we are justified by Christ's passive obedience.

To this I answer, whether we call it active or passive, it alters not the case as to the present argument, as long as it is evident by the words that it is not merely under the notion of an atonement for disobedience, or a satisfaction for unrighteousness, but under the notion of a positive obedience and a righteousness, or moral goodness, that it justifies us, or makes us righteous. For both the words righteousness and obedience are used, and used too as the opposites to sin and disobedience and an offense. Therefore, as by the offense of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation — even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men to justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. Now what can be meant by righteousness, when spoken of as the opposite to sin or moral evil, but only moral goodness? What is the righteousness that is the opposite of an offense, but only the behavior that is well pleasing? And what can be meant by obedience, when spoken of as the opposite of disobedience or going contrary to a command, but a positive obeying and an actual complying with the command? So that there is no room for any invented distinction of active and passive to hurt the argument from this scripture, as long as it is evident by it, as plainly as anything can be, that believers are justified by the righteousness and obedience of Christ under the notion of his moral goodness and his positive obeying and actual complying with the commands of God, and

that behavior of his that, because of its conformity to his commands, was well-pleasing in his sight. This is all that ever any need to desire to have granted in this dispute.

By this it appears that if Christ's dying be here included in the words righteousness and obedience, it is not merely as a propitiation or bearing the penalty of a broken law in our stead, but as his voluntary submitting and yielding himself to those sufferings was an act of obedience to the Father's commands, and so was a part of his positive righteousness, or moral goodness.

All obedience considered under the notion of obedience or righteousness, is something active, something that is done in active and voluntary compliance with a command; whether that which we do in obedience is something easy, and something that may be done without suffering, or whether it be something hard and difficult. If any one is commanded to go through difficulties, and sufferings, and he in compliance with this command voluntarily does it, he properly obeys in so doing; and as he voluntarily does it, in compliance with a command, his obedience is as active as any whatsoever. There is no appearance of any such distinction ever entering into the hearts of any of the penmen of Scripture.

It is true that of late, when a man refuses to obey the precept of a human law, but patiently yields himself up to suffer the penalty of the law, it is called passive obedience; but this I suppose is only a modern use of the word obedience; certainly it is a sense of the word, that the Scripture is a perfect stranger to; and it is improperly called obedience, unless there be such a precept in the law, that he shall yield himself patiently to suffer, to which his so doing shall be an active voluntary conformity. There may in some sense be said to be a conformity to the law in a person's suffering the

penalty of the law; but no other conformity to the law is properly called obedience to it, but an active voluntary conformity to the precepts of it: the word obey is often found in Scripture with respect to the law of God to man, but never in any other sense.

It is true that Christ's willingly undergoing those sufferings which he endured, is a great part of that obedience or righteousness by which we are justified. Christ underwent death in obedience to the command of the Father: 'Sacrifice and offering you did not desire: then said I, Behold, I come; in the volume of the book it is written of me: I delight to do your will, O my God, and your law is within my heart' (Psalm 40:6-8). John 10:17-18: 'I lay down my life that I may take it again: no man takes it from me; but I lay it down of myself: I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again: this commandment have I received of my Father.' And this is part, and indeed the principal part of that active obedience that we are justified by.

It can be no just objection against this, that that command of the Father to Christ that he should lay down his life, was no part of the law that we had broken, and therefore that his obeying this command could be no part of that obedience that he performed for us, because we needed that he should obey no other law for us, but only that which we had broken or failed of obeying. For although it must be the same legislative authority, whose honor is repaired by Christ's obedience, that we have injured by our disobedience; yet there is no need that the law that Christ obeys should be precisely the same that Adam was to have obeyed, in that sense that there should be no positive precepts wanting, nor any added. The thing required was perfect obedience: it is no matter whether the positive precepts were the same, if they were equivalent. The positive

precepts that Christ was to obey, were much more than equivalent to what was wanting, because infinitely more difficult, particularly the command that he had received to lay down his life, which was his principal act of obedience, and which above all others, is concerned in our justification. As that act of disobedience by which we fell, was disobedience to a positive precept that Christ never was under, namely that of abstaining from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, so that act of obedience by which principally we are redeemed, is obedience to a positive precept that Adam never was under, namely the precept of laying down his life. It was fitting that it should be a positive precept that should try both Adam's and Christ's obedience: such precepts are the greatest and most proper trial of obedience, because in them, the mere authority and will of the Legislator is the sole ground of the obligation, and nothing in the nature of the things themselves; and therefore they are the greatest trial of any person's respect to that authority and will.

The law that Christ was subject to, and obeyed, was in some sense the same that was given to Adam: there are innumerable particular duties that are required by the law only conditionally; and in such circumstances, are comprehended in some great and general rule of that law. Thus for instance, there are innumerable acts of respect and obedience to men, which are required by the law of nature, which was a law given to Adam, which yet are not required absolutely, but upon many prerequisite conditions; as that there be men standing in such relations to us, and that they give forth such commands, and the like. So many acts of respect and obedience to God, are included, in like manner, in the moral law conditionally, or such and such things being supposed, as Abraham's going about to sacrifice his son, the Jews circumcising

their children when eight days old, and Adam's not eating the forbidden fruit; they are virtually comprehended in that great general rule of the moral law, that we should obey God, and be subject to him in whatsoever he pleases to command us. Certainly the moral law does as much require us to obey God's positive commands, as it requires us to obey the positive commands of our parents. And thus all that Adam, and all that Christ was commanded, even his observing the rites and ceremonies of the Jewish worship, and his laying down his life, was virtually included in this same great law.

It is no objection against the last mentioned thing, even Christ's laying down his life, its being included in the moral law given to Adam, because that law itself allowed of no occasion for any such thing; for the moral law virtually includes all right acts, on all possible occasions, even occasions that the law itself allows not. Thus we are obliged by the moral law to mortify our lusts, and repent of our sins, though that law allows of no lust to mortify, or sin to repent of.

There is indeed but one great law of God, and that is the same law that says, if you sin you shall die, and cursed is everyone that continues not in all things contained in this law to do them. All duties of positive institution, are virtually comprehended in this law: and therefore if the Jews broke the ceremonial law, it exposed them to the penalty of the law, or covenant of works, which threatened, you shall surely die. The law is the eternal and unalterable rule of righteousness, between God and man, and therefore is the rule of judgment, by which all that a man does shall be either justified or condemned; and no sin exposes to damnation, but by the law. So now he that refuses to obey the precepts that require an attendance on the sacraments of the New Testament, is exposed to

damnation, by virtue of the law or covenant of works. It may moreover be argued, that all sins whatsoever, are breaches of the law or covenant of works, because all sins, even breaches of the positive precepts, as well as others, have atonement by the death of Christ: but what Christ died for, was to satisfy the law, or to bear the curse of the law; as appears by Galatians 3:10-13 and Romans 8:3-4.

So that Christ's laying down his life might be part of that obedience by which we are justified, though it was a positive precept, not given to Adam. It was doubtless Christ's main act of obedience, because it was obedience to a command that was attended with immensely the greatest difficulty, and so to a command that was the greatest trial of his obedience; his respect shown to God in it, and his honor to God's authority, was proportionably great. It is spoken of in Scripture as Christ's principal act of obedience (Philippians 2:7-8): 'But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man, and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.' (Hebrews 5:8): 'Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things that he suffered.' It was mainly by this act of obedience, that Christ purchased so glorious a reward for himself; as in Philippians 2:8-9: 'He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; wherefore God also has highly exalted him, and given him a name, which is above every name.' And it therefore follows from what has been already said, that it is mainly by this act of obedience, that believers in Christ also, have the reward of glory, or come to partake with Christ in his glory. We are as much saved by the death of Christ, as his yielding himself to die was an act of obedience, as we are, as it was a propitiation for our sins: for as it

was not the only act of obedience that merited, he having performed meritorious acts of obedience through the whole course of his life; so neither was it the only suffering that was propitiatory; all his sufferings through the whole course of his life being propitiatory, as well as every act of obedience meritorious. Indeed this was his principal suffering; and it was as much his principal act of obedience.

Hence we may see how that the death of Christ did not only make atonement, but also merited eternal life; and hence we may see how by the blood of Christ we are not only redeemed from sin, but redeemed unto God; and therefore the Scripture seems everywhere to attribute the whole of salvation to the blood of Christ. This precious blood is as much the main price by which heaven is purchased, as it is the main price by which we are redeemed from hell. The positive righteousness of Christ, or that price by which he merited, was of equal value with that by which he satisfied; for indeed it was the same price: he spilled his blood to satisfy, and by reason of the infinite dignity of his person, his sufferings were looked upon as of infinite value, and equivalent to the eternal sufferings of a finite creature. And he spilled his blood out of respect to the honor of God's majesty, and in submission to his authority, who had commanded him so to do, and his obedience therein was of infinite value; both because of the dignity of the person that performed it, and because he put himself to infinite expense to perform it, whereby the infinite degree of his regard to God's authority appeared.

One would wonder what Arminians mean by Christ's merits: they talk of Christ's merits as much as anyone, and yet deny the imputation of Christ's positive righteousness. What should there

be that anyone should merit or deserve anything by, besides righteousness or goodness? If anything that Christ did or suffered merited or deserved anything, it was by virtue of the goodness, or righteousness, or holiness of it. If Christ's sufferings and death merited heaven, it must be because there was an excellent righteousness and transcendent moral goodness in that act of laying down his life. And if by that excellent righteousness he merited heaven for us, then surely that righteousness is reckoned to our account, that we have the benefit of it — or, which is the same thing, it is imputed to us.

Thus I hope I have made it evident that the righteousness of Christ is indeed imputed to us. I proceed now to the

third and last thing under this argument, that this doctrine of the imputation of Christ's righteousness is utterly inconsistent with the doctrine of our being justified by our own virtue or sincere obedience. If acceptance to God's favor, and a title to life, be given to believers as the reward of Christ's obedience, then it is not given as the reward of our own obedience. In whatsoever respect Christ is our Savior, that doubtless excludes our being our own saviors in that same respect. If we can be our own saviors in the same respect that Christ is, it will then follow that the salvation of Christ is needless in that respect; according to the apostle's reasoning in Galatians 5:4: 'Christ is rendered of no effect to you, whoever of you are justified by the law.' Doubtless it is Christ's prerogative to be our Savior, in that sense in which he is our Savior; and therefore if it be by his obedience that we are justified, then it is not by our own obedience.

Here perhaps it may be said that a title to salvation is not directly given as the reward of our obedience, for that is not by anything of ours but only by Christ's satisfaction and righteousness; but yet an interest in that satisfaction and righteousness is given as a reward of our obedience.

But this does not at all help the case; for this is to ascribe as much to our obedience as if we ascribed salvation to it directly, without the intervention of Christ's righteousness. For it would be as great a thing for God to give us Christ and his satisfaction and righteousness in reward for our obedience, as to give us heaven immediately; it would be as great a reward and as great a testimony of respect to our obedience. And if God gives as great a thing as salvation for our obedience, why could he not as well give salvation itself directly? And then there would have been no need of Christ's righteousness. And indeed if God gives us Christ, or an interest in him, properly in reward of our obedience, he does really give us salvation in reward for our obedience; for the former implies the latter — yes, it implies it as the greater implies the less. So that indeed it exalts our virtue and obedience more to suppose that God gives us Christ in reward of that virtue and obedience, than if he should give salvation without Christ.

The thing that the Scripture guards against and militates against is our imagining that it is our own goodness, virtue, or excellency that instates us in God's acceptance and favor. But to suppose that God gives us an interest in Christ in reward for our virtue is as great an argument that it instates us in God's favor, as if he bestowed a title to eternal life as its direct reward. If God gives us an interest in Christ as a reward of our obedience, it will then follow that we are instated in God's acceptance and favor by our own

obedience, antecedent to our having an interest in Christ. For rewarding anyone's excellency evermore supposes favor and acceptance on the account of that excellency: it is the very notion of a reward, that it is a good thing bestowed in testimony of respect and favor for the virtue or excellency rewarded. So it is not by virtue of our interest in Christ and his merits that we first come into favor with God, according to this scheme; for we are in God's favor before we have any interest in those merits, in that we have an interest in those merits given as a fruit of God's favor for our own virtue. If our interest in Christ be the fruit of God's favor, then it cannot be the ground of it. If God did not accept us and had no favor for us for our own excellency, he would never bestow so great a reward upon us as a right in Christ's satisfaction and righteousness. So that such a scheme destroys itself, for it supposes that Christ's satisfaction and righteousness are necessary for us to recommend us to the favor of God, and yet supposes that we have God's favor and acceptance before we have Christ's satisfaction and righteousness, and have these given as a fruit of God's favor.

Indeed, neither salvation itself, nor Christ the Savior, are given as a reward of anything in man. They are not given as a reward of faith, nor of anything else of ours. We are not united to Christ as a reward of our faith, but have union with him by faith, only as faith is the very act of uniting, or closing on our part. As when a man offers himself to a woman in marriage, he does not give himself to her as a reward of her receiving him in marriage: her receiving him is not considered as a worthy deed in her for which he rewards her by giving himself to her; but it is by her receiving him that the union is made, by which she has him for her husband — it is on her part the union itself. By these things it appears how contrary to the

scheme of the gospel of Christ their scheme is, who say that faith justifies as a principle of obedience, or as a leading act of obedience, or as others say, the sum and comprehension of all evangelical obedience. For by this it is the obedience or virtue that is in faith that is the thing that gives it its justifying influence, and that is the same thing as to say that we are justified by our own obedience, virtue, or goodness.

Having thus considered the evidence of the truth of the doctrine, I proceed now to the

third thing proposed, namely, to show in what sense the acts of a Christian life, or of evangelical obedience, may be looked upon to be concerned in this affair.

From what has been said already, it is manifest that they cannot have any concern in this affair as good works, or by virtue of any moral goodness in them; not as works of the law, or as that moral excellency, or any part of it, that is the answering or fulfillment of that great, and universal, and everlasting law or covenant of works, that the great lawgiver has established, as the highest and unalterable rule of judgment; which Christ alone answers, or does any thing towards it.

And it having been shown, out of the Scripture, that it is only by faith, or the soul's receiving, and uniting to the Savior, that has worked out righteousness, that we are justified; it therefore remains that the acts of a Christian life cannot be concerned in this affair any otherwise, than as they imply, and are the expressions of faith, and may be looked upon as so many acts of reception of Christ the Savior.

But the determining what concern acts of Christian obedience can have in justification in this respect, will depend on the resolving of another point, namely, whether any other act of faith besides the first act, has any concern in our justification, or how far perseverance in faith, or the continued and renewed acts of faith, have influence in this affair.

And it seems manifest that justification is by the first act of faith, in some respects, in a peculiar manner, because a sinner is actually and finally justified as soon as he has performed one act of faith; and faith in its first act does, virtually at least, depend on God for perseverance, and entitles to this among other benefits. But yet the perseverance of faith is not excluded in this affair; it is not only certainly connected with justification, but it is not to be excluded from that on which the justification of a sinner has a dependence, or that by which he is justified.

I have shown that the way in which justification has a dependence on faith, is that it is the qualification on which the congruity of an interest in the righteousness of Christ depends, or wherein such a fitness consists. But the consideration of the perseverance of faith, cannot be excluded out of this congruity or fitness, for it is congruous that he that believes in Christ should have an interest in Christ's righteousness, and so in the eternal benefits purchased by it, because faith is that by which the soul has union or oneness with Christ, and there is a natural congruity in it, that they that are one with Christ, should have a joint interest with him in his eternal benefits; but yet this congruity depends on its being an abiding union. As it is needful that the branch should abide in the vine, in order to its receiving the lasting benefits of the root, so it is necessary that the soul should abide in Christ, in order to its receiving

those lasting benefits of God's final acceptance and favor (John 15:6, 7): If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, you shall ask what you will, and it shall be done to you. Verses 9 and 10: Continue in my love: if you keep my commandments, you shall abide in my love, even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. There is the same reason why it is necessary that the union with Christ should remain, as why it should be begun, why it should continue to be, as why it should once be: if it should be begun without remaining, the beginning would be in vain. In order to the soul's being now in a justified state, and now free from condemnation, it is necessary that it should now be in Christ, and not only that it should once have been in him (Romans 8:1): There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. The soul is saved in Christ, as being now in him, when the salvation is bestowed, and not merely as remembering that it once was in him (Philippians 3:9): That I may be found in him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith. 1 John 2:28: And now little children abide in him; that when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming. In order to persons being blessed after death, it is necessary not only that they should once be in him, but that they should die in him (Revelation 14:13): Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord.

And there is the same reason why faith, the uniting qualification, should remain, in order to the union's remaining, as why it should once be, in order to the union's once being.

So that although the sinner is actually, and finally justified on the first act of faith, yet the perseverance of faith, even then, comes into consideration, as one thing on which the fitness of acceptance to life depends. God in the act of justification, which is passed on a sinner's first believing, has respect to perseverance, as being virtually contained in that first act of faith; and it is looked upon and taken by him that justifies, as being as it were a property in that faith that then is: God has respect to the believer's continuance in faith, and he is justified by that, as though it already were, because by divine establishment it shall follow; and it being by divine constitution connected with that first faith, as much as if it were a property in it, it is then considered as such, and so justification is not suspended; but were it not for this it would be needful that it should be suspended, until the sinner had actually persevered in faith.

That God in that act of final justification that he passes at the sinner's conversion, has respect to perseverance in faith, and future acts of faith, as being virtually implied in that first act, is further manifest by this, namely, that in a sinner's justification at his conversion, there is virtually contained a forgiveness not only of all past sins, but also of all future infirmities and acts of sin, that they shall be guilty of; because that first justification is decisive and final. David in the beginning of Psalm 32 speaks of the forgiveness of sins that were doubtless committed long after he was first godly, as being consequent on those sins, and on his repentance and faith with respect to them; and yet this forgiveness is spoken of by the apostle in the fourth of Romans, as an instance of justification by faith.

If no other act of faith could be concerned in justification but the first act, it will then follow that Christians ought never to seek justification by any other act of faith: and so it can never be a duty for persons after they are once converted, by faith to seek to God, or believingly to look to him for the remission of sin. If it be not proper for converts by faith to look to God through Christ for remission, then it will follow that it is not proper for them to pray for it, for Christian prayer to God for a blessing is but an expression of faith in God for that blessing; prayer is only the voice of faith. If these things are so, it will follow that that petition of the Lord's prayer, 'Forgive us our debts,' is not proper to be put up by disciples of Christ, or to be used in Christian assemblies, and that Christ improperly directed his disciples to use that petition, when they were all of them, except Judas, converted before. The debt that Christ directs his disciples to pray for the forgiveness of, can mean nothing else, but the punishment that sin deserves, or the debt that we owe to divine justice; and releasing from obligation to the punishment due to sin, and forgiving the debt that we owe to divine justice, is what appertains to justification.

And then to suppose that no after acts of faith are concerned in the business of justification, and so that it is not proper for any ever to seek justification by such acts, would be forever to cut off those Christians, that are doubtful concerning their first act of faith, from the joy and peace of believing. As the business of a justifying faith is to obtain pardon and peace with God, by looking to God and trusting in him for these blessings, so the joy and peace of that faith, is in the apprehension of pardon and peace obtained by such a trust. This a Christian that is doubtful of his first act of faith, can't have from that act, because, by the supposition, he is

doubtful whether it be an act of faith, and so whether he did obtain pardon and peace by that act. The proper remedy, in such a case, is now by faith to look to God in Christ for these blessings; but he is cut off from this remedy, because he is uncertain whether he has warrant so to do, for he doesn't know but that he has believed already; and if so, then he has no warrant to look to God by faith for these blessings now, because by the supposition no new act of faith is a proper means of obtaining these blessings. And so he can never properly obtain the joy of faith; for there are acts of true faith, that are very weak acts, and the first act may be so as well as others; it may be so weak an act that the Christian by examining of it, may never be able to determine whether it was a true act of faith or not. And it is evident from fact, and abundant experience, that many Christians are forever at a loss to determine which was their first act of faith. And those saints that have had a good degree of satisfaction concerning their faith, may be subject to great declensions and falls, in which case they are liable to great fears of eternal punishment; and the proper way of deliverance is to forsake their sin by repentance, and by faith now to come to Christ for deliverance from the deserved eternal punishment; but this it would not be, if deliverance from that punishment, was not this way to be obtained.

That act of faith that Abraham exercised in the great promise of the covenant of grace that God made to him, of which it is expressly said, 'It was accounted to him for righteousness' — which is the grand instance and proof that the apostle so much insists upon throughout the fourth chapter of Romans and third chapter of

Galatians, to confirm his doctrine of justification by faith alone — was not Abraham's first act of faith, but was exercised long after he had by faith forsaken his own country.

Moreover, the Apostle Paul in the third chapter of Philippians, tells us how earnestly he sought justification by faith, or to win Christ and obtain that righteousness which was by the faith of him, in what he did after his conversion (verses 8, 9): For whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith. And in the two next verses he expresses the same thing in other words, and tells us how he went through sufferings, and became conformable to Christ's death, that he might be a partaker with Christ in the benefit of his resurrection; which the same Apostle elsewhere teaches us, is especially justification: Christ's resurrection was his justification; in this, he that was put to death in the flesh, was justified by the Spirit, and he that was delivered for our offenses, rose again for our justification. And the Apostle tells us in the verses that follow, in that third chapter of Philippians, that he thus fought to attain the righteousness which is through the faith of Christ, and so to partake of the benefit of his resurrection, still, as though he had not already attained, but that he continued to follow after it.

But inasmuch as a sinner, in his first justification, is forever justified and freed from all obligation to eternal punishment, it hence of necessity follows, that future faith and repentance are beheld in that justification, as virtually contained in that first faith and repentance; because repentance of those future sins, and faith in a Redeemer, with respect to them, or, at least, the continuance

of that habit and principle in the heart, that has such an actual repentance and faith, in its nature and tendency, is now made sure by God's promise.

If remission of sins, committed after conversion, in the order of nature, follows that faith and repentance that is after them, then it follows that future sins are respected in the first justification, no otherwise than as future faith and repentance are respected in it. And future repentance and faith are looked upon by him that justifies, as virtually implied in the first repentance and faith, in the same manner as justification from future sins, is virtually implied in the first justification; which is the thing that was to be proved.

On the whole, it appears that the perseverance of faith is necessary, even to the congruity of justification, and that not the less, because a sinner is justified, and perseverance promised on the first act of faith, but God in that justification has respect not only to the past act of faith, but to his own promise of future acts, and to the fitness of a qualification beheld as yet only in his own promise.

And, that perseverance in faith is thus necessary to salvation, not merely as a *sine qua non*, or as a universal accompaniment of it, but by reason of such an influence and dependence, seems manifest by many Scriptures; I would mention two or three: Hebrews 3:6: Whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence, and the rejoicing of the hope, firm to the end. Verse 14: For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence, steadfast to the end. Hebrews 5:12: Be you followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises. Romans 11:20: Well, because of unbelief they were broken off, but you stand by faith: be not high-minded, but fear.

And as the congruity to a final justification depends on perseverance in faith, as well as the first act, so often times the manifestation of justification in the conscience, arises a great deal more from after acts, than the first act. And all the difference whereby the first act of faith has a concern in this affair that is peculiar, seems to be as it were only an accidental difference, arising from the circumstance of time, or its being first in order of time; and not from any peculiar respect that God has to it, or any influence it has of a peculiar nature, in the affair of our salvation.

And thus it is that a truly Christian walk, and the acts of an evangelical, childlike, believing obedience, are concerned in the affair of our justification, and seem to be sometimes so spoken of in Scripture, namely as an expression of a persevering faith in the Son of God, the only Savior. Faith unites to Christ, and so gives a congruity to justification, not merely as remaining a dormant principle in the heart, but as being, and appearing in its active expressions.

The obedience of a Christian, so far as it is truly evangelical, and performed with the Spirit of the Son sent forth into the heart, has all relation to Christ the Mediator, and is but an expression of the soul's believing union to Christ: all evangelical works are works of that faith that works by love; and every such act of obedience, wherein it is inward, and the act of the soul, is only a new effective act of reception of Christ, and adherence to the glorious Savior. Hence that of the Apostle, Galatians 2:20: I live, yet not I; but Christ lives in me; and the life that I now live in the flesh, is by the faith of the Son of God. And hence we are directed, in whatever we do, whether in word or deed, to do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ (Colossians 3:17).

And that God in justification has respect, not only to the first act of faith, but also to future persevering acts, in this sense, namely as expressed in life, seems manifest by Romans 1:17: For therein is the righteousness of God revealed, from faith to faith: as it is written, the just shall live by faith. And Hebrews 10:38, 39: Now the just shall live by faith; but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them that draw back to perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.

So that as was before said of faith, so may it be said of a child-like, believing obedience, it has no concern in justification by any virtue, or excellency in it; but only as there is a reception of Christ in it. And this is no more contrary to the Apostle's frequent assertion of our being justified without the works of the law, than to say that we are justified by faith; for faith is as much a work or act of Christian obedience, as the expressions of faith, in spiritual life and walk. And therefore as we say that faith does not justify as a work, so we say of all these effective expressions of faith.

This is the reverse of the scheme of our modern divines, who hold that faith justifies only as an act, or expression of obedience; whereas in truth, obedience has no concern in justification, any otherwise than as an expression of faith.

I now proceed to the  
fourth thing proposed, namely, to answer objections.

Objection 1: We frequently find promises of eternal life and salvation, and sometimes of justification itself, made to our own virtue and obedience. Eternal life is promised to obedience, in Romans 2:7: To them who by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory, honor and immortality, eternal life. And the like in

innumerable other places. And justification itself is promised to that virtue of a forgiving spirit or temper in us, Matthew 6:14: For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. All allow that justification in great part consists in the forgiveness of sins.

To this I answer,

First, these things being promised to our virtue and obedience, argues no more, than that there is a connection between them and evangelical obedience; which I have already observed is not the thing in dispute. All that can be proved by obedience and salvation being connected in the promise, is that obedience and salvation are connected in fact; which no one denies, and whether it be owned or denied, is as has been shown, nothing to the purpose. There is no need that an admission to a title to salvation, should be given on the account of our obedience, in order to the promises being true. If we find such a promise, that he that obeys shall be saved, or he that is holy shall be justified, all that is needed in order to such promises being true, is that it be really so, that he that obeys shall be saved, and that holiness and justification shall indeed go together. That proposition may be a truth, that he that obeys shall be saved, because obedience and salvation are connected together in fact; and yet an acceptance to a title to salvation not be granted upon the account of any of our own virtue or obedience. What is a promise, but only a declaration of future truth, for the comfort and encouragement of the person to whom it is declared? Promises are conditional propositions; and as has been al-

ready observed, it is not the thing in dispute, whether other things besides faith may not have the place of the condition in such propositions wherein pardon and salvation are the consequent.

Second, promises may rationally be made to signs and evidences of faith, and yet the thing promised not be upon the account of the sign, but the thing signified. Thus for instance, human government may rationally make promises of such and such privileges, to those that can show such evidences of their being free of such a city, or members of such a corporation, or descended of such a family; when it is not at all for the sake of that which is the evidence or sign, in itself considered, that they are admitted to such a privilege, but only, and purely, for the sake of that which it is an evidence of.

And though God does not stand in need of signs to know whether we have true faith or not, yet our own consciences do; so that it is much for our comfort that promises are made to signs of faith. A finding in ourselves a forgiving temper and disposition, may be a most proper and natural evidence to our consciences that our hearts have, in a sense of our own utter unworthiness, truly closed, and fallen in, with the way of free, and infinitely gracious forgiveness of our sins, by Jesus Christ; from which we may be enabled, with the greater comfort to apply to ourselves the promises of forgiveness by Christ.

Third, it has been just now shown, how that acts of evangelical obedience are indeed concerned in our justification itself, and are not excluded from that condition that justification depends upon, without the least prejudice to that doctrine of justification by faith, without any goodness of our own, that has been maintained, and

therefore it can be no objection against this doctrine, that we have sometimes in Scripture, promises of pardon and acceptance, made to such acts of obedience.

Fourth, promises of particular benefits implied in justification and salvation, may especially be fitly made to such expressions and evidences of faith, as they have a peculiar natural likeness and suitableness to: as forgiveness is promised to a forgiving spirit in us; obtaining mercy is fitly promised to mercifulness in us, and the like. And that upon several accounts; they are the most natural evidences of our heart's closing with those benefits by faith; for they do especially show the sweet accord and consent that there is between the heart and these benefits; and by reason of the natural likeness that there is between the virtue and the benefit, the one has the greater tendency to bring the other to mind; the practice of the virtue tends the more to renew the sense, and refresh the hope of the blessing promised; and also to convince the conscience of the justice of being denied the benefit, if the duty be neglected.

And besides the sense and manifestation of divine forgiveness in our own consciences; indeed and many exercises of God's forgiving mercy, as it respects God's fatherly displeasure, that are granted after justification, through the course of a Christian's life, may be given as the proper rewards of the virtue of a forgiving spirit, and yet this not be at all to the prejudice of the doctrine we have maintained; as will more fully appear, when we come to answer another objection hereafter to be mentioned.

Objection 2: Our own obedience, and inherent holiness, is necessary to prepare men for heaven; and therefore is doubtless what recommends persons to God's acceptance, as the heirs of heaven.

To this I answer,

First, our own obedience being necessary, in order to a preparation for an actual bestowal of glory, is no argument that it is the thing, upon the account of which we are accepted to a right to it. God may, and does, do many things to prepare the saints for glory, after he has accepted them as the heirs of glory. A parent may do much to prepare a child for an inheritance in its education, after the child is an heir: indeed there are many things necessary to fit a child for the actual possession of the inheritance, that are not necessary in order to its having a right to the inheritance.

Second, if everything, that is necessary to prepare men for glory, must be the proper condition of justification, then perfect holiness is the condition of justification. Men must be made perfectly holy, before they are admitted to the enjoyment of the blessedness of heaven; for there must in no wise enter in there any spiritual defilement: and therefore when a saint dies he leaves all his sin and corruption, when he leaves the body.

Objection 3. Our obedience is not only indissolubly connected with salvation, and preparatory to it, but the Scripture expressly speaks of bestowing eternal blessings as rewards for the good deeds of the saints. Matthew 10:42: 'Whosoever shall give to drink, unto one of these little ones, a cup of cold water, only in the name of a disciple, he shall in no wise lose his reward.' 1 Corinthians 3:8: 'Every man shall receive his own reward, according to his own labor.' And in many other places. This seems to militate against the doctrine that has been maintained, two ways. First, the bestowing a reward carries in it a respect to a moral fitness, in the thing rewarded, to the reward: the very notion of a reward being a benefit bestowed in testimony of acceptance of, and respect to, the good-

ness or amiableness of some qualification or work, in the person rewarded. And besides the Scripture seems to explain itself in this matter, in Revelation 3:4: 'You have a few names, even in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white; for they are worthy.' This is here given as the reason why they should have such a reward, because they were worthy: which, though we suppose it to imply no proper merit, yet it at least implies a moral fitness, or that the excellency of their virtue in God's sight, recommends them to such a reward; which seems directly repugnant to what has been supposed, namely that we are accepted, and approved of God, as the heirs of salvation, not out of regard to the excellency of our own virtue or goodness, or any moral fitness therein to such a reward, but only on the account of the dignity, and moral fitness of Christ's righteousness. Second, our being eternally rewarded for our own holiness, and good works, necessarily supposes that our future happiness will be greater or smaller, in some proportion, as our own holiness and obedience is more or less; and that there are different degrees of glory, according to different degrees of virtue and good works, is a doctrine very expressly, and frequently taught us in Scripture. But this seems quite inconsistent with the saints all having their future blessedness as a reward of Christ's righteousness: for if Christ's righteousness be imputed to all, and this be what entitles each one to glory, then it is the same righteousness that entitles one to glory, which entitles another. But if all have glory as the reward of the same righteousness, why don't all have the same glory? Doesn't the same righteousness merit as much glory, when imputed to one, as when imputed to another?

In answer to the first part of this objection: I would observe, that it doesn't argue that we are justified by our good deeds, because we shall have eternal blessings in reward for them; for it is in consequence of our justification, that our good deeds become rewardable, with spiritual and eternal rewards. The acceptableness, and so the rewardableness of our virtue is not antecedent to justification, but follows it, and is built entirely upon it; which is the reverse of what those in the adverse scheme of justification suppose, namely that justification is built on the acceptableness and rewardableness of our virtue. They suppose that a saving interest in Christ is given as a reward of our virtue, or, which is the same thing, as a testimony of God's acceptance of our excellency, in our virtue. But the contrary is true; that God's respect to our virtue, as our amiableness in his sight, and his acceptance of it as rewardable, is entirely built on our interest in Christ already established. So that that relation to Christ, whereby believers in Scripture language, are said to be in Christ, is the very foundation of our virtues, and good deeds, being accepted of God, and so of their being rewarded; for a reward is a testimony of acceptance. For we, and all that we do, are accepted only in the beloved (Ephesians 1:6). Our sacrifices are acceptable, only through our interest in him, and through his worthiness, and preciousness, being as it were made ours (1 Peter 2:4-5): 'To whom coming as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious; you also as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.' Here a being actually built on this stone, precious to God, is mentioned as all the ground of the acceptableness of our good works to God, and their becoming also precious in his eyes.

So Hebrews 13:21: 'Make you perfect in every good work, to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ.' And hence we are directed, whatever we offer to God, to offer it in Christ's name, as expecting to have it accepted no other way, than from the value that God has to that name (Colossians 3:17): 'And whatsoever you do, in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God, and the Father by him.' To act in Christ's name, is to act under him, as our head, and as having him to stand for us, and represent us to God.

The reason that the saints' virtues pass for nothing out of Christ is that till then we stand condemned before God by his own holy law, and we are infinitely guilty before him, and the loveliness of our virtue bears no proportion to our guilt; and must therefore pass for nothing before a strict Judge. Our good deeds and virtuous acts themselves, are in a sense corrupt, and the hatefulness of the corruption of them, if we are beheld as we are in ourselves, or separate from Christ, infinitely outweighs the loveliness of the good that is in them: so that if no other sin was considered but only that which attends the act of virtue itself, the loveliness vanishes into nothing. Even the holy acts themselves, and the gracious exercises of the godly, though the act most simply considered is good, yet take the acts in their measure, and dimensions, and the manner in which they are exerted, and they are corrupt acts; that is, they are defectively corrupt, or sinfully defective. A negative expression of corruption may be as truly sin, and as just cause of provocation, as a positive: as if a man, a worthy and excellent person, should from mere generosity and goodness, exceedingly lay out himself, and should with great expense and suffering, save another's life; and when he had done all, that other person should

never thank him for it — this would be an expression of his ingratitude and baseness. So it is with respect to our exercise of love, and gratitude, and other graces towards God: they are defectively corrupt and sinful, and take them as they are in their manner and measure, might justly be odious, and provoking to God, and would necessarily be so, were we beheld out of Christ. Though it be true that the saints are rewarded for their good works, yet it is for Christ's sake only, and not for the excellency of their works in themselves considered, or beheld separately from Christ; for so they have no excellency in God's sight, or acceptableness to him, as has now been shown.

It is acknowledged that God in rewarding the holiness and good works of believers, does in some respect give them happiness as a testimony of his respect to the loveliness of their holiness and good works in his sight; for that is the very notion of a reward. But in a very different sense from what would have been if man had not fallen; which would have been to bestow eternal life on man, as a testimony of God's respect to the loveliness of what man did, considered as in itself, and as in man, separately by himself, and not beheld as a member of Christ. In which sense also, the scheme of justification we are opposing, necessarily supposes, the excellency of our virtue to be respected and rewarded; for it supposes a saving interest in Christ itself to be given as a reward of it.

Two Things come to pass, relating to the Saints' Reward for their inherent Righteousness, by Virtue of their Relation to Christ. First, the Guilt of their Persons is all done away, and the Pollution and Hatefulness that attends their good Works, is hid. Second, their Relation to Christ adds a positive Value and Dignity to their good Works, in God's Sight. That little Holiness, and those faint

and feeble Acts of Love, and other Grace, receive an exceeding Value in the Sight of God, by Virtue of God's beholding them as in Christ, and as it were Members of one so infinitely Worthy in his Eyes; because God looks upon the Persons, as Persons of greater Dignity on this Account. God, for Christ's Sake, and because they are Members of his own righteous and dear Son, sets an exceeding Value upon their Persons; and hence it follows, that he also sets a great Value upon their good Acts and Offerings. Believers are become immensely more honourable in God's Esteem, by Virtue of their Relation to Christ, than Man would have been considered as by himself, though he had been free from Sin; as a mean Person becomes more honourable when married to a King. God will probably reward the little weak Love, and poor and exceeding imperfect Obedience of Believers in Christ, with a more glorious Reward, than he would have done Adam's perfect Obedience. According to the Tenour of the first Covenant, the Person was to be accepted and rewarded, only for the Work's Sake; but by the Covenant of Grace, the Work is accepted and rewarded, only for the Person's Sake. Though the Saints inherent Holiness is rewarded, yet this very Reward is indeed not the less founded on the Worthiness and Righteousness of Christ: None of the Value that their Works have in his Sight, nor any of the Acceptance they have with him, is out of Christ and out of his Righteousness. God indeed does great Things out of Regard to the Saints' Loveliness, but 'tis only as a secondary and derivative Loveliness: When I speak of a derivative Loveliness, I don't mean only that the Qualifications themselves are derived from Christ; but that the Acceptance of them as a

Loveliness, and all the Value that is set upon them, and all their Connection with the Reward, is founded in, and derived from Christ's Righteousness and Worthiness.

If we suppose that not only higher Degrees of Glory in Heaven, but Heaven itself, is in some Respect given in Reward for the Holiness and good Works of the Saints, in this secondary and derivative Sense, it won't prejudice the Doctrine we have maintained: It is no Way impossible that God may bestow Heaven's Glory wholly out of Respect to Christ's Righteousness, and yet in Reward for Man's inherent Holiness, in different Respects. It may be only Christ's Righteousness that God has respect to, for its own Sake, the independent Acceptableness, and Dignity of it being sufficient of itself, to recommend all that believe in Christ, to a Title to this Glory; and so it may be only by this that Persons enter into a Title to Heaven, or have their prime Right to it. The Saints being beheld as Members of Christ, their Obedience is looked upon by God, as something of Christ's, it being the Obedience of the Members of Christ; as the Sufferings of the Members of Christ, are looked upon, in some Respect, as the Sufferings of Christ.

By the merit and righteousness of Christ, such favor of God towards the believer may be obtained, as that God may hereby be already, as it were disposed to make them perfectly and eternally happy: but yet this doesn't hinder, but that God in his wisdom, may choose to bestow this perfect and eternal happiness, in some respect, as a reward of their holiness and obedience. Our heavenly Father may already have that favor for a child, whereby he may be thoroughly ready to give the child an inheritance, because he is his child; which he is by the purchase of Christ's righteousness; and yet that doesn't hinder but that it should be possible, that the

Father may choose to bestow the inheritance on the child, in a way of reward for his dutifulness. So great a reward as heaven, may not be judged more than a fitting reward for the believer's dutifulness; but that so great a reward is judged fitting, doesn't arise from the excellency of the obedience absolutely considered, but from the believer's standing in so near and honorable a relation to God, as that of a child, which is obtained only by the righteousness of Christ.

Believers having a title to heaven by faith antecedent to their obedience, or its being absolutely promised to them before, doesn't hinder but that the actual bestowment of heaven may also be a testimony of God's regard to their obedience, though performed afterwards. Thus it was with Abraham, the father and pattern of all believers: God bestowed upon him that blessing of multiplying his seed as the stars of heaven, and causing that in his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed, in reward for his obedience, in offering up his son Isaac. And yet the very same blessings had been from time to time promised to Abraham, in the most positive terms, and the promise with great solemnity, confirmed and sealed to him in the covenant.

From what has been said we may easily solve the difficulty arising from that text: 'They shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy' — which is parallel with that in Luke: 'But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead.' I allow that this worthiness does doubtless denote a moral fitness to the reward. God looks on these glorious benefits as a fitting testimony of his regard to the value which their

persons have in his sight. But he sets this value upon their persons purely for Christ's sake: they are such jewels, and have such preciousness in his eyes, only because they are beheld in Christ.

First, God looks on these glorious benefits as a fitting testimony of his regard to the value which their persons have in his sight. But he sets this value upon their persons purely for Christ's sake: they are such jewels, and have such preciousness in his eyes, only because they are beheld in Christ, and by reason of the worthiness of the head, they are the members of, and the stock they are grafted into. And this value that God sets upon them on this account is so great, that God thinks fitting from regard to it to admit them to such exceeding glory. The saints on the account of their relation to Christ are such precious jewels in God's sight, that they are thought worthy of a place in his own crown (Malachi 3:17; Zechariah 9:16). So far as the saints are said to be valuable in God's sight, upon whatever account they are so, so far may they properly be said to be worthy, or fitting for that honor that is answerable to that value or price which God sets upon them. A child, or wife of a prince, is worthy to be treated with great honor, and therefore if a mean person should be adopted to be a child of a prince, or should be espoused to a prince, it would be proper to say that she was worthy of such and such honor and respect, and there would be no force upon the words in saying that she ought to have such respect paid her, for she is worthy, though it be only on the account of her relation to the prince that she is so.

Second, from the value God sets upon their persons, for the sake of Christ's worthiness, he also sets a high value on their virtue and performance. Their meek and quiet spirit is of great price in his sight. Their fruits are pleasant fruits, their offerings are an odor

of sweet smell to him: and that because of the value he sets on their persons, as has been already observed and explained. This preciousness, or high valuableness of believers is a moral fitness to a reward, and yet this valuableness is all in the righteousness of Christ, that is the foundation of it. The thing that respect is had to, is not the excellency that is in them, separately by themselves, or in their virtue by itself, but to the value that in God's account arises thereto on other considerations; which is the natural import of the manner of expression in Luke 20:35: They which shall be accounted worthy, to obtain that world, etc. And Luke 21:36: That you may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man. 2 Thessalonians 1:5: That you may be accounted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you also suffer.

There is a vast difference between this scheme, and what is supposed in the scheme of those that oppose the doctrine of justification by faith alone. This lays the foundation of first acceptance with God, and all actual salvation consequent upon it, wholly in Christ and his righteousness. On the contrary, in their scheme, a regard to man's own excellency or virtue is supposed to be first, and to have the place of the first foundation in actual salvation, though not in that ineffectual redemption, which they suppose common to all: they lay the foundation of all discriminating salvation in man's own virtue and moral excellency: this is the very bottom stone in this affair; for they suppose that it is from regard to our virtue, that even a special interest in Christ itself is given. The foundation being thus contrary, the whole scheme becomes ex-

ceedingly diverse and contrary; the one scheme is an evangelical scheme, the other a legal one; the one is utterly inconsistent with our being justified by Christ's righteousness, the other not at all.

From what has been said we may understand what has been before mentioned, namely, how that not only is that forgiveness of sin that is granted in justification indissolubly connected with a forgiving spirit in us, but there may be many exercises of forgiving mercy that may properly be granted in reward for our forgiving those that trespass against us. For none will deny but that there are many acts of divine forgiveness towards the saints, that do not presuppose an unjustified state immediately preceding that forgiveness; none will deny that saints, that never fell from grace or a justified state, do yet commit many sins which God forgives afterwards, by laying aside his fatherly displeasure. This forgiveness may be in reward of forgiveness, without any prejudice to the doctrine that has been maintained, as well as other mercies and blessings consequent on justification.

With respect to the second part of the objection, that relates to the different degrees of glory, and the seeming inconsistency there is in it, that the degrees of glory in different saints should be greater or lesser according to their inherent holiness and good works, and yet that every one's glory should be purchased with the price of the very same imputed righteousness.

Christ by his Righteousness purchased for every one complete and perfect Happiness, according to his Capacity: But this don't hinder but that the Saints being of various Capacities, may have various Degrees of Happiness, and yet all their Happiness be the Fruit of Christ's Purchase. Christ purchased eternal Life, or perfect Happiness for all, according to their several Capacities. The Saints

are as so many Vessels, of different Sizes, cast into a Sea of Happiness, where every Vessel is full; this Christ purchased for all: But after all 'tis left to God's sovereign Pleasure to determine the Largeness of the Vessel; Christ's Righteousness meddles not with this Matter. God may dispense in this Matter according to what Rule he pleases, not the less for what Christ has done: He may dispense either without Condition, or upon what Condition he pleases to fix. Christ's Righteousness meddles not with this Matter; for what Christ did, was to fulfil the Covenant of Works; but the Covenant of Works did not meddle at all with this. If Adam had persevered in perfect Obedience, he and his Posterity would have had perfect and full Happiness; but God would have been at Liberty to have made some of one Capacity, and others of another as he pleased. The Angels have obtained eternal Life, or a State of confirmed Glory by a Covenant of Works, and yet some are higher in Glory than others, according to the several Capacity that God has given them. God has been pleased to fix the Degree of Capacity, and so of Glory, by the Proportion of the Saints' Grace and Fruitfulness here: He gives higher Degrees of Glory, in Reward for higher Degrees of Holiness and good Works, because it pleases him; and yet all the Happiness of each Saint is indeed the Fruit of the Purchase of Christ's Obedience. Christ's Righteousness meddles not with the Degree of Happiness, any otherwise than as he merits that it should be full, and perfect, according to the Capacity: And so it may be said to be concerned in the Degree of Happiness, as perfect is a Degree, with Respect to imperfect; but it meddles not with Degrees of perfect Happiness.

Christ and the whole Church of Saints, are as it were, one Body, of which he is the Head and they Members, of different Place and Capacity: The whole Body, Head and Members, have Communion in Christ's Righteousness, they are all Partakers of the Benefit of it; but it does by no Means follow, that every Part should equally partake of the Benefit. As it is in a natural Body that enjoys perfect Health, the Head, and the Heart, and Lungs have a greater Share of this Health than the Hands and Feet, because they are Parts of greater Capacity; though the Hands and Feet are as much in perfect Health as those nobler Parts: So it is in the mystical Body of Christ, all the Members are Partakers of the Benefit of the Righteousness of the Head, but according to the different Capacity and Place they have in the Body. God determines the Place and Capacity of every Member as he pleases; he makes whom he pleases the Foot, and whom he pleases the Hand: Those that he intends for the highest Place in the Body, he gives them most of his Spirit, the greatest Share of the divine Nature, the Spirit and Nature of Christ Jesus the Head, and that Assistance whereby they perform the most excellent Works.

Objection 4. It may be objected against what has been supposed, namely, that rewards are given to our good works only in consequence of an interest in Christ, or in testimony of God's respect to the excellency or value of them in his sight, as built on an interest in Christ's righteousness already obtained, that the Scripture speaks of an interest in Christ itself, as being given out of respect to our moral fitness. Matthew 10:37-39: 'He that loves father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me: he that loves son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me: he that takes not up his cross, and follows after me, is not worthy of me. He that

finds his life shall lose it, etc.' Worthiness here, at least signifies a moral fitness, or an excellency or virtue that recommends: and this place seems to intimate as though it were from respect to a moral fitness that men are admitted, even to a union with Christ, and interest in him: and therefore this worthiness cannot be consequent on a being in Christ, and by the imputation of his worthiness, or from any value that is in us, or in our actions in God's sight, as beheld in Christ.

To this I answer, that though persons when they are accepted, are not accepted as worthy, yet when they are rejected, they are rejected as unworthy. He that does not love Christ above other things, that treats him with such indignity, as to set him below earthly things, shall be treated as unworthy of Christ. The fore-named words don't imply that if a man does love Christ above father and mother, that he would be worthy; the most they imply is, that such a visible Christian shall be treated, and thrust out, as unworthy. He that believes is not received for the worthiness, or moral fitness of faith; but yet the visible Christian is cast out by God, for the unworthiness and moral unfitness of unbelief. A being accepted as one of Christ's, is not the reward of believing; but being thrust out from being one of Christ's disciples, after a visible admission as such, is properly a punishment of unbelief. Salvation is promised to faith as a free gift, but damnation is threatened to unbelief as a debt, or punishment due to unbelief. The admitting a soul to a union with Christ is an act of free and sovereign grace; but an excluding at death, and at the day of judgment, those professors of Christianity that have enjoyed great privileges as God's people, is a judicial proceeding, and a just punishment of their unworthy treatment of Christ. If a beggar should be offered any great

and precious gift, but as soon as offered, should trample it under his feet, it might be taken from him, as unworthy to have it: or if a malefactor should have his pardon offered him, and should only scoff at it, his pardon might be refused him, as unworthy of it; though if he had received it, he would not have had it for his worthiness.

Repentance is evidently spoken of in Scripture as that which is in a special manner the condition of remission of sins: but remission of sins is by all allowed to be that wherein justification does, at least in great part, consist.

It must certainly arise from a misunderstanding of what the Scripture says about repentance, to suppose that faith and repentance are two distinct things, that in like manner are the conditions of justification: for it is most plain from the Scripture that the condition of justification, or that in us by which we are justified, is but one, and that is faith. Faith and repentance are not two distinct conditions of justification; but faith comprehends the whole of that by which we are justified, or by which we come to have an interest in Christ, and there is nothing else has a parallel concern with it, in the affair of our salvation.

When repentance is spoken of in Scripture as the condition of pardon, thereby is not intended any particular grace, or act, properly distinct from faith, that has a parallel influence with it, in the affair of our pardon or justification; but by repentance is intended nothing distinct from active conversion, or conversion actively considered, as it respects the term from which. Active conversion is a motion or exercise of the mind, that respects two terms, namely sin and God: and by repentance is meant this conversion, or active change of the mind, so far as it is conversant about the

term from which, or about sin. This is what the word repentance properly signifies; which in the original of the New Testament is *metanoia*, which signifies a change of the mind. Repentance is this turning, as it respects what is turned from: 'They should repent and turn to God' — both these are the same turning, but only with respect to opposite terms; in the former is expressed the exercise of mind that there is about sin in this turning, in the other the exercise of mind towards God.

If we look over the Scriptures that speak of evangelical repentance, we shall presently see that repentance is to be understood in this sense, as meaning conversion. Matthew 9:13: 'I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.' Luke 13:3: 'Except you repent, you shall all likewise perish.' Luke 15:7, 10: 'There is joy in heaven over one sinner that repents,' that is, over one sinner that is converted. Acts 11:18: 'Then has God, also to the Gentiles, granted repentance unto life.' This is said by the Christians of the circumcision at Jerusalem, upon Peter's giving an account of the conversion of Cornelius and his family, and their embracing the gospel, though Peter had said nothing expressly about their sorrow for sin. Acts 17:30: 'But now commandeth all men, everywhere, to repent.' Luke 16:30: 'Nay Father Abraham, but if one went to them from the dead, they would repent.' 2 Peter 3:9: 'The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness, but is long-suffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.' It is plain that in these and other places, by repentance is meant conversion.

Now, it is true, that conversion is the condition of pardon and justification: but if it be so, how absurd is it to say that conversion is one condition of justification, and faith another; as though they

were two distributively distinct and parallel conditions? Conversion is the condition of justification, because it is that great change by which we are brought from sin to Christ, and by which we become believers in him: agreeable to Matthew 21:32: 'And you when you had seen it, repented not afterwards that you might believe him.' When we are directed to repent that our sins may be blotted out, it is as much as to say, let your minds and hearts be changed that your sins may be blotted out. But if it be said, let your hearts be changed that you may be justified; and also said, believe that you may be justified; does it therefore follow that the heart's being changed is one condition of justification, and believing another? But our minds must be changed, that we may believe, and so may be justified.

Evangelical repentance, being active conversion, is not to be treated of as a particular grace, properly and entirely distinct from faith: what is conversion, but the sinful, alienated soul's closing with Christ, or the sinner's being brought to believe in Christ? That exercise of soul that there is in conversion, that respects sin, cannot be excluded out of the nature of faith in Christ. That repentance which in Scripture is called repentance for the remission of sins, is that very principle or operation of the mind itself, that is called faith, so far as it is conversant about sin. Justifying faith in a Mediator, is conversant about two things: it is conversant about sin or evil, to be rejected and to be delivered from by the Mediator, and about positive good to be accepted and obtained by the Mediator. They must be very ignorant, or at least very inconsiderate, of the whole tenor of the gospel, that think that that repentance by which remission of sins is obtained, can be completed, as to all that is essential to it, without any respect to Christ, or appli-

cation of the mind to the Mediator, who alone has made atonement for sin. Repentance in its more general abstracted nature, is only a sorrow for sin, and forsaking of it, which is a duty of natural religion; but evangelical repentance, or repentance for remission of sins, has more than this essential to it; a dependance of soul on the Mediator for deliverance from sin is of the essence of it.

That justifying repentance has the nature of faith seems evident by Acts 19:4: Then said Paul, John truly baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying to the people, that they should believe on him that should come after him, that is on Christ Jesus. The latter words, saying to the people, that they should believe on him etc., are evidently explanatory of the former, and explain how he preached repentance for the remission of sins: when it is said that he preached repentance for the remission of sin, saying that they should believe on Christ, it cannot be supposed but that it is intended, that his saying that they should believe on Christ, was as directing them what to do that they might obtain the remission of sins. So 2 Timothy 2:25: In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if God perhaps will give them repentance, to the acknowledging of the truth. That acknowledging of the truth which there is in believing, is here spoken of as what is attained in repentance. And on the other hand, that faith includes repentance in its nature, is evident by the Apostle's speaking of sin as destroyed in faith (Galatians 2:18). In the preceding verses, the Apostle mentions an objection against the doctrine of justification by faith alone, namely, that it tends to encourage men in sin, and so to make Christ the minister of sin: this objection he rejects with this, If I build again the things that I destroyed, I make myself a trans-

gressor. If sin be destroyed by faith, it must be by repentance of sin included in it; for we know that it is our repentance of sin, or the turning of the mind from sin, that is our destroying our sin.

That in justifying faith, that directly respects sin, or the evil to be delivered from by the Mediator, is as follows: a sense of our own sinfulness, and the hatefulness of it, and a heartfelt acknowledgment of its deserving of the threatened punishment, looking to the free mercy of God in a Redeemer, for deliverance from it and its punishment.

Concerning this, here described, three things may be noted: first, that it is the very same with that evangelical repentance to which remission of sins is promised in Scripture; second, that it is all of it of the essence of justifying faith, and is the same with that faith, so far as it is conversant about the evil to be delivered from by the Mediator; third, that this is indeed the proper and peculiar condition of remission of sins.

First, all of it is essential to evangelical repentance, and is indeed the very thing meant by that repentance, to which remission of sins is promised in the gospel. As to the former part of the description, namely, a sense of our own sinfulness, and the hatefulness of it, and a heartfelt acknowledgment of its deserving of wrath, none will deny it to be included in repentance. But this does not comprehend the whole essence of evangelical repentance; but what follows does also properly and essentially belong to its nature, looking to the free mercy of God in a Redeemer, for deliverance from it, and the punishment of it. That repentance to which remission is promised not only always has this with it, but it is contained in it, as what is of the proper nature and essence of it: and respect is ever had to this in the nature of repentance, when-

ever remission is promised to it; and it is especially from respect to this in the nature of repentance, that it has that promise made to it. If this latter part be missing, it fails of the nature of that evangelical repentance to which remission of sins is promised: if repentance remains in sorrow for sin, and does not reach to a looking to the free mercy of God in Christ for pardon, it is not that which is the condition of pardon, neither shall pardon be obtained by it. Evangelical repentance is a humiliation for sin before God; but the sinner never comes and humbles himself before God, in any other repentance, but that which includes a hoping in his mercy for remission: if his sorrow be not accompanied with that, there will be no coming to God in it, but a flying further from him. There is some worship of God in justifying repentance; but that there is not in any other repentance, but that which has a sense of, and faith in the divine mercy to forgive sin (Psalm 130:4): There is forgiveness with you, that you may be feared. The promise of mercy to a true penitent, in Proverbs 28:13, is expressed in these terms, Whoever confesses, and forsakes his sins, shall have mercy. But there is faith in God's mercy in that confessing. The Psalmist in Psalm 32 speaking of the blessedness of the men whose transgression is forgiven, and whose sin is covered, to whom the Lord imputes not sin, says, that while he kept silence, his bones grew old, but then he acknowledged his sin to God, his iniquity he did not hide, he said he would confess his transgression to the Lord, and then God forgave the iniquity of his sin. The manner of expression plainly holds forth that then he began to encourage himself in the mercy of God, when before his bones grew old, while he kept silence; and therefore the Apostle Paul in the fourth of Romans brings this instance, to confirm the doctrine of justification by faith alone, that he had

been insisting on. When sin is rightly confessed to God, there is always faith in that act: that confessing of sin that is joined with despair, such as was in Judas, is not the confession to which the promise is made. In Acts 2:38, the direction that was given to those that were stricken in their heart, with a sense of the guilt of sin, was to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of their sins. A being baptized in the name of Christ for the remission of sins, implied faith in Christ for the remission of sins. Repentance for the remission of sins, was typified of old by the priests confessing the sins of the people over the scapegoat, laying his hands on him (Leviticus 16:21), denoting that it is that repentance and confession of sin only that obtains remission, that is made over the scapegoat, over Christ the great sacrifice, and with dependence on him.

Second, all the aforementioned description is of the essence of justifying faith, and not different from it, so far as it is conversant about sin, or the evil to be delivered from, by the Mediator. For it is doubtless of the essence of justifying faith, to embrace Christ as a Savior from sin and its punishment, and all that is contained in that act is contained in the nature of faith itself. But in the act of embracing Christ as a Savior from our sin and its punishment, is implied a sense of our sinfulness, and a hatred of our sins, or a rejecting them with abhorrence, and a sense of our deserving of their punishment. An embracing Christ as a Savior from sin implies the contrary act towards sin, namely rejecting of sin: if we fly to the light to be delivered from darkness, the same act is contrary towards darkness, namely a rejecting of it. In proportion to the earnestness or appetite with which we embrace Christ as a Savior from sin, in the same proportion is the abhorrence with which we

reject sin, in the same act. Indeed if we suppose there to be in the nature of faith as conversant about sin, no more than the hearty embracing Christ as a Savior from the punishment of sin, this act will imply in it the whole of the above-mentioned description. It implies a sense of our own sinfulness: certainly in the hearty embracing a Savior from the punishment of our sinfulness, there is the exercise of a sense of our sinfulness, or that we are sinful: we cannot heartily embrace Christ as a Savior from the punishment of that which we are not sensible we are guilty of. There is also in the same act, a sense of our deserving of the threatened punishment: we cannot heartily embrace Christ as a Savior from that, which we are not sensible that we have deserved: for if we are not sensible that we have deserved the punishment, we should not be sensible that we have any need of a Savior from it, or at least, shall not be convinced but that the God that offers the Savior, unjustly makes him needful; and we cannot heartily embrace such an offer. And further, there is implied in a hearty embracing Christ as a Savior from punishment, not only a conviction of conscience, that we have deserved the punishment, such as the devils and damned have; but there is a hearty acknowledgment of it, with the submission of the soul, so as with the accord of the heart, to own that God might be just, and worthy in the punishment. If the heart rises against the act or judgment of God, in holding us obliged to the punishment, when he offers us his Son as a Savior from the punishment, we cannot with the consent of the heart receive him in that character: but if persons thus submit to the righteousness of so dreadful a punishment of sin, this carries in it a hatred of sin.

That such a sense of our sinfulness, and utter unworthiness, and deserving of punishment, belongs to the nature of saving faith, is what the Scripture from time to time seems to hold forth; as particularly in Matthew 15:26-28: But he answered and said, it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs. And she said, truth Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table. Then Jesus answered, and said to her, O woman, great is your faith. And Luke 7:6-9: The centurion sent friends to him, saying to him, Lord trouble not yourself, for I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof: wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come to you, but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed: for I am a man set under authority, etc. When Jesus heard these things, he marveled at him, and turned him about and said to the people that followed him, I say to you, I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel. And also verses 37 and 38: And behold a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, and stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment. Together with verse 50: He said to the woman, your faith has saved you; go in peace.

These things do not necessarily suppose that repentance and faith are words of just the same signification; for it is only so much in justifying faith, as respects the evil to be delivered from, by the Savior, that is called repentance. And besides, both repentance and faith, take them only in their general nature, and they are entirely distinct; repentance is a sorrow for sin, and forsaking of it; and faith is a trusting in God's sufficiency and truth. But faith and re-

pentance, as evangelical duties, or justifying faith, and repentance for remission of sins, contain more in them, and imply a respect to a Mediator, and involve each other's nature; though it be true, that they still bear the name of faith and repentance, from those general moral virtues, that repentance which is a duty of natural religion, and that faith that was a duty required under the first covenant, that are contained in this evangelical act; which severally appear, when this act is considered with respect to its different terms and objects, that it is conversant about.

It may be objected here, that the Scripture sometimes mentions faith and repentance together, as if they were entirely distinct things; as in Mark 1:15: Repent you, and believe the gospel. But there is no need of understanding these as two distinct conditions of salvation, but the words are explanatory one of another: it is to teach us after what manner we must repent, namely, as believing the gospel, and after what manner we must believe the gospel, namely, as repenting. These words no more prove faith and repentance to be entirely distinct, than those aforementioned Matthew 21:32: And you when you had seen it, repented not afterwards, that you might believe him. Or those 2 Timothy 2:25: If perhaps God will give them repentance, to the acknowledging of the truth. The Apostle in Acts 19:4 seems to have reference to these words of John the Baptist, John baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying to the people, that they should believe, etc., where the latter words, as we have already observed, are to explain how he preached repentance.

Another Scripture, where faith and repentance are mentioned together, is Acts 20:21: Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance towards God, and faith towards the Lord Jesus

Christ. It may be objected, that in this place, faith and repentance are not only spoken of as distinct things, but having distinct objects.

To this I answer, that it is true that faith and repentance in their general nature, are distinct things. And repentance for the remission of sins, or that in justifying faith that respects the evil to be delivered from, so far as it regards that term, which is what especially denominates it repentance, has respect to God as the object, because he is the being offended by sin, and to be reconciled, but that in this justifying act, from which it is denominates faith, does more especially respect Christ. But let us interpret it how we will, the objection of faith being here so distinguished from repentance, is as much of an objection against the scheme of those that oppose justification by faith alone, as against this scheme; for they hold that the justifying faith that the Apostle Paul speaks of, includes repentance, as has been already observed.

Third, this repentance that has been described, is indeed the special condition of remission of sin. This seems very evident by the Scripture, as particularly, Mark 1:4: John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance, for the remission of sins. So, Luke 3: And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. Luke 24:47: And that repentance, and remission of sins, should be preached in his name among all nations. Acts 5:31: Him has God exalted with his own right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. Acts 2:38: Repent, and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins. And, Acts 3:19: Repent you therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.

The like is evident by Leviticus 26:40-42, Job 33:27-28, Psalm 32:5, Proverbs 28:13, Jeremiah 3:13, and 1 John 1:9 and other places.

And the reason may be plain from what has been said. We need not wonder that that in faith, that especially respects sin, should be especially the condition of remission of sins; or that this motion, or exercise of the soul, as it rejects and flies from evil, and embraces Christ as a Savior from it, should especially be the condition of being free from that evil; in like manner as the same principle or motion, as it seeks good, and cleaves to Christ as the procurer of that good, should be the condition of obtaining that good. Faith with respect to good is accepting, and with respect to evil it is rejecting; indeed this rejecting evil, is itself an act of acceptance; it is accepting freedom or separation from that evil; and this freedom or separation is the benefit bestowed in remission. No wonder that that in faith which immediately respects this benefit, and is our acceptance of this benefit, should be the special condition of our having it: it is so with respect to all the benefits that Christ has purchased. Trusting in God through Christ for such a particular benefit that we need, is the special condition of obtaining that benefit. When we need protection from enemies, the exercise of faith with respect to such a benefit, or trusting in Christ for protection from enemies, is especially the way to obtain that particular benefit, rather than trusting in Christ for something else; and so of any other benefit that might be mentioned. So prayer, (which is the expression of faith) for a particular mercy needed, is especially the way to obtain that mercy.

So that we see that no argument can be drawn from hence against the doctrine of justification by faith alone. And there is that in the nature of repentance, which peculiarly tends to establish the contrary of justification by works: for nothing so much renounces our own worthiness and excellency, as repentance; the very nature of it is to acknowledge our own utter sinfulness and unworthiness, and to renounce our own goodness, and all confidence in self; and so to trust in the propitiation of the Mediator, and ascribe all the glory of forgiveness to him.

Objection 6: The last objection I shall mention, is that paragraph in the second chapter of James, where persons are said expressly to be justified by works; verse 21: Was not Abraham our father justified by works? Verse 24: You see then how that by works a man is justified and not by faith only. Verse 25: Was not Rahab the harlot justified by works?

In answer to this objection, I would

The great Unfairness of the Divines that oppose us in the use of this Passage is that they vary the Sense of the Word Faith: When the Apostle Paul uses the Word, and makes Faith that by which alone we are justified, they suppose by it is understood a Compliance with, and Practice of Christianity in general; but as the Apostle James uses the Word Faith in this Place, they suppose thereby is to be understood only an Assent of the Understanding to the Truth of Gospel Doctrines. We on the other hand suppose that the Word Justify is to be understood in a different Sense from the Apostle Paul. So that they are forced to go as far, in their Scheme, in altering the Sense of Terms from Paul's Use of them, as we: And yet they cry out of us for varying the Sense of Justify, though they freely vary the Sense of Faith. If the Sense of one of the Words

must be varied on either Scheme, to make the Apostle James's Doctrine consistent with the Apostle Paul's, and the varying the Sense of one Term or the other be all that stands in the Way of their agreeing with either Scheme, then the Text lies as fair for one Scheme as the other, and can no more fairly be an Objection against our Scheme than theirs.

If there be no more Difficulty in varying the Sense of one of these Terms than another, from any Thing in the Text itself, then certainly that is to be chosen, that is most agreeable to the Current of Scripture, and other Places where the same Matter is more particularly and fully treated of: and therefore we should understand the Word Justify, in this Passage of James, in a Sense in some Respect diverse from that in which St. Paul uses it. There is no one Doctrine in the whole Bible that is more fully asserted, explained, and urged than the Doctrine of Justification by Faith alone, without any of our own Righteousness.

There is a very fair interpretation of this passage of St James, that is no way inconsistent with the doctrine of justification by faith alone, which the words themselves will as well allow of, and much better agrees with the context; and that is, that works are here spoken of as justifying as evidences. A man may be said to be justified by that which clears him, or vindicates him, or makes the goodness of his cause manifest. When a man has a cause tried in a civil court, he may be said to be cleared by what evidences his cause to be good; but not in the same sense as he is by that which makes his cause to be good. That which renders his cause good, is the proper ground of his justification; but evidences justify, only as they manifest that his cause is good in fact. It is by works that our cause appears to be good; but by faith our cause not only appears

to be good, but becomes good; because thereby we are united to Christ. The word justify is sometimes used in the sense of manifesting or showing a cause to be good, in Scripture: 'For by your words you shall be justified, and by your words you shall be condemned.' It can't be meant that men are accepted before God, on the account of their words; for God has told us nothing more plainly, than that it is the heart that he looks at. Men can be justified by their words, no otherwise than as evidences or manifestations of what is in the heart. And it is thus that Christ speaks of words in this very place: 'Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart.'

God himself when he acts towards men as judge, in order to a declarative judgment, makes use of evidences, and so judges men by their works. And therefore at the day of judgment, God will judge men according to their works: for that day is called by the apostle, the day of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God.

To be justified is to be approved and accepted: but a man may be said to be approved and accepted in two respects; the one is to be approved really, and the other to be approved and accepted declaratively. If justification be understood in the former sense, for the approbation itself, that is only that by which we become fit to be approved. But if it be understood in the latter sense, for the manifestation of this approbation, it is by whatever is a proper evidence of that fitness. In the former sense, only faith is concerned; because it is by that only in us, that we become fit to be accepted and approved. In the latter, whatever is an evidence of our fitness, is alike concerned. And therefore take justification in this latter sense, and then faith, and all other graces, and good works, have a common and equal concern in it.

To justify has always, in common speech, signified indifferently, either simply approbation, or testifying that approbation; sometimes one, and sometimes the other: and that because they are both the same, only as one is outwardly, what the other is inwardly. So we, and it may be all nations, are accustomed to give the same names to two things, when one is only declarative of the other. Thus sometimes judging, intends only judging in our thoughts; at other times, testifying and declaring judgment. So such words as justify, condemn, accept, reject, prize, slight, approve, renounce, are sometimes put for mental acts, at other times for an outward treatment. So in the sense in which the apostle James seems to use the word justify, for manifestative justification, a man is justified not only by faith, but also by works; as a tree is manifested to be good, not only by immediately examining the tree, but also by the fruit (Proverbs 20:11: 'Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right.').

The drift of the Apostle does not require that he should be understood in any other sense: for all that he aims at, as appears by a view of the context, is to prove that good works are necessary. The error of those that he opposed was this, that good works were not necessary to salvation; that if they did but believe that there was but one God, and that Christ was the Son of God, and the like; and were baptized; that they were safe, let them live how they would: which doctrine greatly tended to licentiousness. The evincing the contrary of this, is evidently the Apostle's scope.

And that we should understand the Apostle of works justifying as an evidence, and in a declarative judgment, is what a due consideration of the context will naturally lead us to; for it is plain that

the Apostle is here insisting on works in the quality of a necessary manifestation and evidence of faith, or as what the truth of faith is showed or made to appear by. As verse 18: Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. And when he says, verse 26: As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also. It is much more rational and natural, to understand him as speaking of works as the proper signs and evidences of the reality, life and goodness of faith. Not that the very works or actions done are properly the life of faith, as the spirit in the body; but it is the active, working nature of faith, of which the actions or works done are the signs, that is itself the life and spirit of faith. The sign of a thing is often in Scripture language said to be that thing, as it is in that comparison by which the Apostle illustrates it. It is not the actions themselves of a body, that is properly the life or spirit of the body; but it is the active nature, of which those actions or motions are the signs, that are the life of the body. That which makes men call any thing alive, is that they observe that it has an active operative nature in it; which they observe no otherwise than by the actions or motions that are the signs of it. It is plainly the Apostle's aim to prove that works are necessary from that, that if faith has not works, it is a sign that it is not a good sort of faith; which would not have been to his purpose, if it was his design to show that it is not by faith alone, though of a right sort, that we have acceptance with God, but that we are accepted on the account of obedience as well as faith. It is evident by the Apostle's reasoning, that the necessity of works that he speaks of, is not as having a parallel concern in our salvation with faith; but he speaks of works only as related to faith, and expressive of it; which after all leaves faith the alone fundamental condition, with-

out any thing else having a parallel concern with it in this affair, and other things conditions, only as several expressions, and evidences of it.

That the Apostle speaks of works justifying only as a sign, or evidence, and in God's declarative judgment, is further confirmed by verse 21: Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered up Isaac his son upon the altar? Here the Apostle seems plainly to refer to that declarative judgment of God, concerning Abraham's sincerity, manifested to him, for the peace and assurance of his own conscience, after his offering up Isaac his son on the altar, that we have account of, Genesis 22:12: Now I know that you fear God; seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son from me. But here it is plain, and expressed in the very words of justification or approbation, that this work of Abraham's, his offering up his son on the altar, justified him as an evidence. When the Apostle James says we are justified by works, he may, and ought to be understood in a sense agreeable to the instance he brings for the proof of it: but justification in that instance appears by the words of justification themselves referred to, to be by works as an evidence. And where this instance of Abraham's obedience is elsewhere mentioned, in the New Testament, it is mentioned as a fruit and evidence of his faith (Hebrews 11:17): By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac, and he that had received the promises, offered up his only begotten son.

And in the other instance which the Apostle mentions, verse 25: Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way? The Apostle refers to a declarative judgment, in that particular testimony which was given of God's approbation of her

as a believer, in directing Joshua to save her, when the rest of Jericho was destroyed (Joshua 6:25): And Joshua saved Rahab the harlot alive, and her father's household, and all that she had; and she dwells in Israel even to this day; because she hid the messengers which Joshua sent to spy out Jericho. This was accepted as an evidence and expression of her faith (Hebrews 11:31): By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace. The Apostle in saying, Was not Rahab the harlot justified by works? by the manner of his speaking has reference to something in her history; but we have no account in her history of any other justification of her but this.

Fourth, if notwithstanding, any choose to take justification in Saint James, precisely as we do in Paul's epistles, for God's acceptance or approbation itself, and not any expression of that approbation, what has been already said concerning the manner in which acts of evangelical obedience are concerned in the affair of our justification, affords a very easy, clear, and full answer. For if we take works as acts or expressions of faith, they are not excluded; so a man is not justified by faith only, but also by works; that is, he is not justified only by faith as a principle in the heart, or in its first and more immanent acts, but also by the effective acts of it in life, which are the expressions of the life of faith, as the operations and actions of the body are of the life of that; agreeable to verse 26.

What has been said in answer to these objections, may also, I hope, abundantly serve for an answer to that objection, that is often made against this doctrine, namely, that it encourages licentiousness in life. For, from what has been said, we may see, that the Scripture doctrine of justification by faith alone, without any

manner of goodness or excellency of ours, does in no wise diminish, either the necessity, or benefit of a sincere evangelical universal obedience: in that man's salvation is not only indissolubly connected with it, and damnation with the want of it, in those that have opportunity for it, but that it depends upon it in many respects; as it is the way to it, and the necessary preparation for it, and also as eternal blessings are bestowed in reward for it, and as our justification in our own consciences, and at the day of judgment, depends on it, as the proper evidence of our acceptable state, and that, even in accepting of us as entitled to life in our justification, God has respect to this, as that on which the fitness of such an act of justification depends. So that our salvation does as truly depend upon it, as if we were justified for the moral excellency of it. And besides all this, the degree of our happiness to all eternity is suspended on, and determined by the degree of this. So that this gospel scheme of justification is as far from encouraging licentiousness, and contains as much to encourage and excite to strict and universal obedience, and the utmost possible eminence of holiness, as any scheme that can be devised, and indeed unspeakably more.

I come now to the

fifth and last thing proposed, which is to consider the importance of this doctrine.

I know there are many that make as though this controversy was of no great importance; that it is chiefly a matter of nice speculation, depending on certain subtle distinctions, which many that make use of them do not understand themselves; and that the dif-

ference is not of such consequence, as to be worth being zealous about; and that more hurt is done by raising disputes about it, than good.

Indeed I am far from thinking that it is of absolute necessity that persons should understand, and be agreed upon, all the distinctions needed particularly to explain and defend this doctrine, against all cavils and objections; (though all Christians should strive after an increase of knowledge; and none should content themselves without some clear and distinct understanding in this point:) but that we should believe in the general, according to the clear and abundant revelations of God's word, that it is none of our own excellency, virtue, or righteousness, that is the ground of our being received from a state of condemnation into a state of acceptance in God's sight, but only Jesus Christ, and his righteousness, and worthiness, received by faith. This I think to be of great importance, at least in application to ourselves; and that for the following reasons.

First, the Scripture treats of this doctrine, as a doctrine of very great importance. That there is a certain doctrine of justification by faith, in opposition to justification by the works of the law, that the Apostle Paul insists upon as of the greatest importance, none will deny; because there is nothing in the Bible more apparent. The Apostle under the infallible conduct of the Spirit of God, thought it worth his most strenuous and zealous disputing about and defending. He speaks of the contrary doctrine as fatal and ruinous to the souls of men, in the latter end of the ninth chapter of Romans, and beginning of the tenth. He speaks of it as subversive of the gospel of Christ, and calls it another gospel, and says concerning it, if any one, though an angel from heaven preach it, let him be accursed

(Galatians 1:6-9) compared with the following part of the epistle. Certainly we must allow the Apostles to be good judges of the importance and tendency of doctrines; at least the Holy Spirit in them. And doubtless we are safe, and in no danger of harshness and censoriousness, if we only follow him, and keep close to his express teachings, in what we believe and say of the hurtful and pernicious tendency of any error. Why are we to blame, or to be cried out of, for saying what the Bible has taught us to say, or for believing what the Holy Spirit has taught us to that end that we might believe it?

Second, the adverse scheme lays another foundation of man's salvation than God has laid. I do not now speak of that ineffectual redemption that they suppose to be universal, and what all mankind are equally the subjects of; but, I say, it lays entirely another foundation of man's actual, discriminating salvation, or that salvation wherein true Christians differ from wicked men. We suppose the foundation of this to be Christ's worthiness and righteousness: on the contrary, that scheme supposes it to be men's own virtue; even so, that this is the ground of a saving interest in Christ itself. It takes away Christ out of the place of the bottom stone, and puts in men's own virtue in the room of him: so that Christ himself in the affair of distinguishing actual salvation, is laid upon this foundation. And the foundation being so different, I leave it to every one to judge whether the difference between the two schemes consists only in small points of consequence. The foundations being contrary makes the whole scheme exceedingly diverse and opposite; the one is a gospel scheme, the other a legal one.

'Tis in this Doctrine, that the most essential Difference lies, between the Covenant of Grace, and the first Covenant. The adverse Scheme of Justification supposes that we are justified by our Works, in the very same Sense wherein Man was to have been justified by his Works under the first Covenant. By the first Covenant our first Parents were not to have had eternal Life given them, for any proper Merit in their Obedience, because their perfect Obedience was a Debt that they owed God: But a Title to eternal Life was to be given them, as a Testimony of God's Pleasedness with their Works, or his Regard to the inherent Beauty of their Virtue. The Divines on that Side entirely disclaim the Popish Doctrine of Merit; and are free to speak of our utter Unworthiness, and the great Imperfection of all our Services: But after all, 'tis our Virtue, as imperfect as it is, that recommends Men to God, by which good Men come to have a saving Interest in Christ and God's Favour, rather than others. Whether they will allow the Term Merit or no, yet they hold that we are accepted by our own Merit, in the same Sense, though not in the same Degree, as under the first Covenant. So that the Difference between the two Schemes consists not in Punctilios of small Consequence.

The great and most distinguishing Difference between the first Covenant and the Covenant of Grace is, that by the Covenant of Grace we are not thus justified by our own Works, but only by Faith in Jesus Christ. 'Tis on this Account chiefly that the new Covenant deserves the Name of a Covenant of Grace: Therefore it is of Faith, that it might be by Grace. And if by Grace, then it is no more of Works, otherwise Grace is no more Grace: But if it be of Works, then it is no more Grace. Whosoever of you are justified by the Law, ye are fallen from Grace. When the Apostle speaks of the

Doctrine of Justification by Works as another Gospel, he adds, which is not another — 'tis no Gospel at all; 'tis Law: 'tis no Covenant of Grace, but of Works: 'tis not an evangelical, but a legal Doctrine. Certainly that Doctrine wherein consists the greatest and most essential Difference between the Covenant of Grace and the first Covenant, must be a Doctrine of great Importance.

This is the main Thing that fallen Men stood in Need of divine Revelation for, to teach us how we that have sinned, may come to be again accepted of God; or which is the same Thing, How the Sinner may be justified. Something beyond the Light of Nature is necessary to Salvation, chiefly on this Account. This seems to be the great Drift of the Revelation that God has given, and of all those Mysteries it reveals, all those great Doctrines that are peculiarly Doctrines of Revelation, and above the Light of Nature. It seems to have been very much on this Account that it was requisite that the Doctrine of the Trinity itself should be revealed to us. What is the Gospel, but only the glad Tidings of a new Way of Acceptance with God, unto Life, a Way wherein Sinners may come to be free from the Guilt of Sin, and obtain a Title to eternal Life? And if when this Way is revealed, it is rejected, and another of Man's devising, be put in the Room of it, without Doubt it must be an Error of great Importance.

The contrary scheme of justification derogates much from the honor of God, and the Mediator. I have already shown how it diminishes the glory of the Mediator, in ascribing to man's virtue and goodness, which belongs alone to his worthiness and righteousness. By the apostle's sense of the matter it renders Christ needless: 'Christ is become of no effect to you, whosoever of you are justified by the law.' If that scheme of justification be followed

in its consequences, it utterly overthrows the glory of all the great things that have been contrived, and done, and suffered in the work of redemption: 'If righteousness come by the law, Christ is dead in vain.' It diminishes the glory of divine grace, which is the attribute God has especially set himself to glorify in the work of redemption, and so greatly diminishes the obligation to gratitude in the sinner that is saved: yes, in the sense of the apostle, it makes void the distinguishing grace of the gospel — 'Whosoever of you are justified by the law, are fallen from grace.' It is a scheme of things very unworthy of God, that supposes that God, when about to lift up a poor forlorn malefactor, condemned to eternal misery, for sinning against his majesty, sets all this to sale, for the price of his virtue and excellency. Seeing we are such infinitely sinful and abominable creatures in God's sight, and our righteousnesses are nothing, and ten thousand times worse than nothing — is it not immensely more worthy of the infinite majesty and glory of God, to deliver and make happy such poor filthy worms, such wretched vagabonds and captives, without any money or price of theirs, or any manner of expectation of any excellency or virtue in them, in any wise to recommend them?

The opposite scheme does most directly tend to lead men to trust in their own righteousness for justification, which is a thing fatal to the soul. This is what men are of themselves exceeding prone to do, and that though they are never so much taught the contrary, through the exceeding partial and high thoughts they have of themselves, and their exceeding dulness of apprehending any such mystery, as our being accepted for the righteousness of another. But this scheme does directly teach men to trust in their own righteousness for justification; in that it teaches them that

this is indeed what they must be justified by, being the way of justification that God himself has appointed. So that if a man had naturally no disposition to trust in his own righteousness, yet if he embraced this scheme, and acted consistent with it, it would lead him to it. But that trusting in our own righteousness, is a thing fatal to the soul, is what the Scripture plainly teaches us: it tells us that it will cause that Christ shall profit us nothing, and be of no effect to us (Galatians 5:2-4). Though the apostle speaks there particularly of circumcision, yet it is not merely being circumcised, but trusting in circumcision as a righteousness, that the apostle has respect to. He could not mean that merely being circumcised would render Christ of no profit or effect to a person; for we read that he himself for certain reasons, took Timothy and circumcised him (Acts 16:3). And the apostle speaks of trusting in their own righteousness, as fatal to the Jews (Romans 9:31-32): 'But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness: wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law; for they stumbled at that stumbling stone.' Together with Romans 10:3: 'For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.' And this is spoken of as fatal to the Pharisees, in the parable of the Pharisee and the publican, that Christ spoke to them, to reprove them for trusting in themselves, that they were righteous. The design of the parable is to show them that the very publicans shall be justified, rather than they; as appears by the reflection Christ makes upon it (Luke 18:14): 'I tell you this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other.' The fatal tendency of it might also be proved from its inconsistency with the

nature of justifying faith, and also its inconsistency with the nature of that humiliation that the Scripture often speaks of, as absolutely necessary to salvation.

How far a wonderful and mysterious Agency of God's Spirit, may so influence some Men's Hearts, that their Practice in this Regard may be contrary to their own Principles, so that they shall not trust in their own Righteousness, though they profess that Men are justified by their own Righteousness — this I won't fully determine. How far some may seem to maintain a Doctrine contrary to this Gospel Doctrine of Justification, that really do not, but only express themselves differently from others; or seem to oppose it through their Misunderstanding of our Expressions, or we of theirs, when indeed our real Sentiments are the same in the Main — great Allowances are to be made in innumerable Instances. Many may seem to be wide in their Sentiments from this Doctrine, for Want of a distinct Understanding of it; whose Hearts at the same Time entirely agree with it, and if once it was clearly explained to their Understandings, would immediately close with it, and embrace it. It is manifest from what has been said, that the teaching and propagating contrary Doctrines and Schemes is of a pernicious and fatal Tendency; though great Allowances are to be made for individuals in innumerable Instances.

## PRESSING INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD



**L**uke 16:16: 'The Law and the Prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presses into it.'

In these words two things may be observed: first, wherein the work and office of John the Baptist consisted, namely, preaching the kingdom of God, to prepare the way for its introduction to succeed the Law and the Prophets. By the Law and the Prophets, in the text, seems to be intended the ancient dispensation under the Old Testament, which was received from Moses and the Prophets. These are said to be until John; not that the revelations given by them are out of use since that time, but that the state of the church founded and regulated, under God, by them, fully continued till John; who first began to introduce the New Testament dispensation, or gospel-state of the church; which with its glorious spiritual and eternal privileges and blessings, is often called the kingdom of heaven, or kingdom of God. John the Baptist preached that the kingdom of God was at hand. John the Baptist first began to preach it; and then after him, Christ, and his disciples, preached the same. Thus Christ preached, Matthew 4:17: 'From that time

Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.' So the disciples were directed to preach, Matthew 10:7: 'And as you go preach, saying, the kingdom of heaven is at hand.' It was not John the Baptist, but Christ that fully brought in, and actually established this kingdom of God; but he as Christ's forerunner, to prepare his way before him, did the first thing that was done towards introducing it. The old dispensation was abolished, and the new brought in by degrees; as the night gradually ceases, and gives place to the increasing day: first the day star rises; next follows the light of the sun itself, but dimly reflected, in the dawning of the day; but this light increases, and shines more and more, and the stars that served for light during the foregoing night, gradually go out, and their light ceases, till at length the sun rises, and enlightens the world by his own direct light. This is agreeable to what John says of himself in John 3: 'He must increase; but I must decrease.' John was the forerunner of Christ, and harbinger of the gospel day; much as the morning star is the forerunner of the sun. He had the most honorable office of any of the prophets; when the other prophets foretold Christ to come, he revealed him as already come, and had the honor to be that servant that should come immediately before him and actually introduce him, and even to be the instrument concerned in his solemn inauguration, as he was in baptizing him. He was the greatest of the prophets that came before Christ, as the morning star is the brightest of all the stars (Matthew 11:11). He came to prepare men's hearts to receive that kingdom of God, that Christ was about more fully to reveal and erect (Luke 1:17): 'To make ready a people prepared for the Lord.'

Second, we may observe wherein his success appeared, namely, in that since he began his ministry, every man pressed into that kingdom of God that he preached. The greatness of his success appeared in two things:

First, in the generalness of it, with regard to the persons in whom the success appeared; every man: here is a term of universality; but it is not to be taken as universal with regard to individuals, but kinds; as such universal terms are often used in Scripture. When John preached there was an extraordinary pouring out of the Spirit of God, that attended his preaching; and an uncommon awakening, and concern for salvation, appeared on the minds of all sorts of persons; and even in the most unlikely persons, and those from whom such a thing might least be expected; as the Pharisees, who were exceeding proud, and self-sufficient, and conceited of their own wisdom and righteousness, and looked on themselves fit to be teachers of others, and used to scorn to be taught; and the Sadducees, who were a kind of infidels, that denied any resurrection, angel, or spirit, or any future state. So that John himself seems to be surprised to see them come to him, under such concern for their salvation; as in Matthew 3:7: 'But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who has warned you to flee from the wrath to come?' And besides these, the publicans who were some of the most infamous sort of men, came to him, inquiring what they should do to be saved. And the soldiers, that were doubtless a very profane, loose, and profligate sort of persons; they made the same inquiry (Luke 3:12, 14): 'Then came also publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do? And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do?'

Second, his success appeared in the manner in which his hearers sought the kingdom of God — they pressed into it: it is elsewhere set forth by their being violent for the kingdom of heaven, and taking it by force. Matthew 11:12: 'From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.'

The doctrine that I observe from the words is this.

It concerns everyone that would obtain the kingdom of God, to be pressing into it.

In discoursing on this subject, I would

first, show what is that way of seeking salvation that seems to be pointed forth, in the expression of pressing into the kingdom of God.

second, give the reasons why it concerns everyone that would obtain the kingdom of God, to seek it in this way.

And then make application.

First, I would show what manner of seeking salvation seems to be denoted by pressing into the kingdom of God.

First, this expression denotes strength of desire. Men in general who live under the light of the gospel, and are not atheists, do desire the kingdom of God — that is, they desire to go to heaven rather than to hell. But most of them are not much concerned about it, but on the contrary live a secure and careless life. And there are those many degrees above these who are under some degree of the awakenings of God's Spirit, who yet are not pressing into the kingdom of God. But those who may be truly said to be pressing have strong desires to get out of a natural condition, and

to get an interest in Christ. They have such a conviction of the misery of their present state and of the extreme necessity of obtaining a better, that their minds are as it were possessed with and wrapped up in concern about it. To obtain salvation is desired by them above all things in the world; this concern is so great that it very much shuts out other concerns. They used before to have the stream of their desires after other things, or perhaps had their concern divided between this and them; but when they come to answer the expression in the text, of pressing into the kingdom of God, this concern prevails above all others; it lays other things low and does in a manner engross the care of the mind. This seeking of eternal life should not only be one concern that our souls are taken up about alongside other things; but salvation should be sought as the one thing needful (Luke 10:42), and as the one thing that is desired (Psalm 27:4).

Second, pressing into the kingdom of heaven denotes earnestness and firmness of resolution. There should be strength of resolution accompanying strength of desire, as it was in the psalmist in the place just referred to: 'One thing have I desired, and that will I seek after.' In order to a thorough engagement of the mind in this affair, both these must meet together; besides desires after salvation, there should be an earnest resolution in persons to pursue this good as much as lies in their power — to do all that they are able to do in the use of their utmost strength, in an attendance on every duty and resisting and contending against all manner of sin, and to continue in such a pursuit.

There are two things needful in a person in order to these strong resolutions. There must be a sense of the great importance and necessity of the mercy sought, and there must also be a sense

of opportunity to obtain it, or the encouragement there is to seek it. The strength of resolution depends on the sense which God gives the heart of these things. Persons without such a sense may seem to themselves to take up resolutions; they may as it were force a promise to themselves and say within themselves, I will seek as long as I live, I will not give up until I obtain — when they only deceive themselves. Their hearts are not in it; neither do they in fact take up any such resolution as they seem to themselves to do. It is the resolution of the mouth more than of the heart; their hearts are not strongly bent to fulfill what their mouths say. The firmness of resolution lies in the fullness of the disposition of the heart to do what is resolved to be done. Those who are pressing into the kingdom of God have a disposition of heart to do everything that is required and that lies in their power, and to continue in it. They have not only earnestness but steadiness of resolution: they do not seek with a wavering and unsteady heart, by turns or fits, being off and on; but it is the constant bent of the soul, if possible, to obtain the kingdom of God.

Third, by pressing into the kingdom of God is signified greatness of effort. It is expressed in Ecclesiastes 9:10 by doing what our hand finds to do with all our might. And this is the natural and necessary consequence of the two things before mentioned; where there is strength of desire and firmness of resolution, there will be answerable endeavors. Persons thus engaged in their hearts will strive to enter in at the narrow gate, and will be urgent for heaven. Their practice will be agreeable to the counsel of the wise man in Proverbs 2 at the beginning: 'My son, if you will receive my words and treasure up my commandments with you, so that you incline your ear to wisdom and apply your heart to understanding — yes,

if you cry out for discernment and lift up your voice for understanding, if you seek her as silver and search for her as for hidden treasures — then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God.' Here the earnestness of desire and strength of resolution is signified by inclining the ear to wisdom and applying the heart to understanding; and the greatness of endeavor is denoted by crying out for knowledge and lifting up the voice for understanding, seeking her as silver and searching for her as for hidden treasures. Such desires and resolutions and such endeavors go together.

Pressing into the Kingdom of God denotes an Engagedness and Earnestness that is directly about that Business of getting into the Kingdom of God. Persons may be in very great Exercise and Distress of Mind about spiritual Things, and yet not be pressing into the Kingdom of God, because their Exercise is not directly about the Work of seeking Salvation. Many Persons that seem to be in great Distress about a future eternal State, get much into a Way of perplexing themselves with such Things as God's Decrees and secret Purposes, or distressing their Minds with Fears that they be not elected, or that they have committed the unpardonable Sin, or that their Day is past. When it is so, let them be never so much concerned and engaged in their Minds, they can't be said to be pressing towards the Kingdom of God; because their Exercise is not in their Work, but rather in that which tends to hinder them in their Work: Instead of fighting with the Giants that stand in the Way to keep them out of Canaan, they spend away their Time and Strength in conflicting with Shadows.

Hence we are not to judge of the Hopefulness of the Way that Persons are in, or of the Probability of their Success in seeking Salvation, only by the Greatness of the Concern and Distress that they are in; for many Persons have needless Distresses that they had much better be without. Persons are in the most likely Way to obtain the Kingdom of Heaven, when the Intent of their Minds, and the Engagedness of their Spirits, is about their proper Work and Business, and all the Bent of their Souls is to attend on God's Means, and to do what he commands and directs them to.

By pressing into the Kingdom of God is denoted a breaking through Opposition and Difficulties. There is in the Expression a plain Intimation of Difficulty. If there were no Opposition, but the Way was all clear and open, there would be no Need of pressing to get along. Persons ought to be so resolved for Heaven, that if by any Means they can use they can obtain, they will obtain. Whether those Means be difficult or easy, cross or agreeable, if they are requisite Means of Salvation, they should be complied with. When any Thing is presented to be done, the Question should not be, Is it easy, or hard? But is it a required Means of my obtaining an Interest in Jesus Christ, and eternal Salvation? He that is pressing into the Kingdom of God, commonly finds many Things in the Way that are against the Grain; but he is not stopped by the Cross that lies before him, but takes it up and carries it. Everything that is found to be a Weight that hinders him in running this Race, he casts from him, though it be a Weight of Gold or Pearls; yea, if it be a Right Hand or Foot that offends him, he'll cut them off.

He that is pressing into the kingdom of God commonly finds many things in the way that are against the grain; but he is not stopped by the cross that lies before him, but takes it up and car-

ries it. If there be something that is incumbent on him to do, as one that seeks salvation, that is against his natural temper and irksome to him on that account, or something that he cannot do without suffering in his estate, or that he apprehends will look odd and strange in the eyes of others and expose him to ridicule and reproach, or anything that will offend a neighbor and get his ill will, or something that will be very contrary to his own carnal appetite — he will press through such difficulties. Every thing that is found to be a weight that hinders him in running this race he casts from him, though it be a weight of gold or pearls; yes, if it be a right hand or foot that offends him, he will cut it off; and will not hesitate at plucking out a right eye with his own hands. These things are insuperable difficulties to those who are not thoroughly engaged in seeking their salvation; they stumble greatly at them; they are stumbling blocks that they never get over. But it is not so with him that presses into the kingdom of God: those things that before he was thoroughly roused from his security he used to stumble at, and was accustomed to have long parleys and disputes with his own conscience about, and set carnal reason to work to invent arguments and pleas to excuse himself from — he now no longer stumbles at. He has done with this endless disputing and reasoning, and presses violently through all difficulties; let what will be in the way, heaven is what he must and will obtain — not if he can without difficulty, but if it be possible. He meets with temptation; the devil is often whispering in his ear, setting allurements before him, magnifying the difficulties of the work he is engaged in, telling him they are insuperable and that he can never conquer them, and trying all ways in the world to discourage him; but still

he presses forward. God has given and maintains such an earnest spirit for heaven that the devil cannot stop him in his course; he is not at leisure to lend an ear to what he has to say.

I come now

to show why the kingdom of heaven should be sought in this manner.

It should be thus sought

first, on account of the extreme necessity we are in of getting into the kingdom of heaven. We are in a perishing necessity of it: without it we are utterly and eternally lost. Out of the kingdom of God there is no safety; there is no other hiding place; this is the only city of refuge in which we can be secure from the avenger that pursues all the ungodly. The vengeance of God will pursue, overtake, and eternally destroy those who are not in this kingdom. All that are without this enclosure will be swallowed up in an overwhelming fiery deluge of wrath. They may stand at the door and knock, and cry Lord, Lord, open to us — in vain; they will be thrust back. God will have no mercy on them; they shall be eternally forsaken by him; his fearful vengeance will seize them; the devils will lay hold on them; and all evil will come upon them, and there will be none to pity or help. Their case will be utterly desperate, and infinitely doleful. It will be a gone case with them; all offers of mercy and expressions of divine goodness will be finally withdrawn, and all hope will be lost. God will have no kind of regard to their well-being; will take no care of them to save them from any enemy or any evil; but himself will be their dreadful enemy, and will execute wrath with fury, and will take vengeance in an inexpressibly dreadful manner. Such as shall be in this case will be lost and undone in-

deed! They will be sunk down into perdition, infinitely below all that we can think; for who knows the power of God's anger? and who knows the misery of that poor creature on whom that anger is executed without mercy?

Second, on account of the shortness and uncertainty of the opportunity for getting into this kingdom. When a few days are past, all our opportunity for it will be gone. Our day is limited; God has set our bounds, and we know not where. While persons are out of this kingdom, they are in danger every hour of being overtaken with wrath. We know not how soon we shall pass that line beyond which there is no work, device, knowledge, or wisdom; and therefore we should do what we have to do with our might (Ecclesiastes 9:10).

Third, on account of the difficulty of getting into the kingdom of God. There are innumerable difficulties in the way, such as few conquer; most of those who try have not resolution, courage, earnestness, and constancy enough, but they fail, give out, and perish. The difficulties are too many and too great for those who do not press violently forward to grapple with; they never get along, but stick by the way, or are turned aside and turned back and ruined. Matthew 7:14: 'Narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.' Luke 13:24: 'Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able.'

Fourth, the possibility of obtaining. Though it is a thing attended with so much difficulty, yet it is not a thing impossible. Acts 8:22: 'If perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you.' 2 Timothy 2:25: 'If perhaps God will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth.' However sinful a person is, and what-

ever his circumstances, there is nonetheless a possibility of his salvation. He himself is capable of it; and God is able to accomplish it, and has mercy sufficient for it; and there is sufficient provision made through Christ, that God may do it consistent with the honor of his majesty, justice, and truth. So there is no want either of sufficiency in God or capacity in the sinner in order to this. The greatest and vilest, most blind, dead, hard-hearted sinner living, is a subject capable of saving light and grace. Seeing therefore there is such necessity of obtaining the kingdom of God, and so short a time, and such difficulty, and yet such a possibility, it may well induce us to press into it (Jonah 3:8-9).

Fifth, it is fitting that the kingdom of heaven should be thus sought, because of the great excellency of it. We are willing to seek earthly things, of trifling value, with great diligence, and through much difficulty; it therefore certainly becomes us to seek that with great earnestness which is of infinitely greater worth and excellence: and how well may God expect and require it of us, that we should seek it in such a manner, in order to our obtaining it!

Sixth, such a manner of seeking is needful to prepare persons for the kingdom of God. Such earnestness and thoroughness of endeavors is the ordinary means that God makes use of, to bring persons to an acquaintance with themselves, to a sight of their own hearts, to a sense of their own helplessness, and to a despair in their own strength and righteousness. And such engagedness and constancy in seeking the kingdom of heaven prepare the soul to receive it the more joyfully and thankfully, and the more highly to prize and value it when obtained. So that it is in mercy to us, as

well as for the glory of his own name, that God has appointed such earnest seeking, to be the way in which he will bestow the kingdom of heaven.

### APPLICATION.

The use I would make of this doctrine, is of exhortation to all Christless persons to press into the kingdom of God. Some of you are inquiring what you shall do. You seem to desire to know what is the way wherein salvation is to be sought, and how you may be likely to obtain it: you have now heard the way that the holy word of God directs to. Some are seeking, but it can't be said of them that they are pressing into the kingdom of heaven. There are many that in time past have sought salvation, but not in this manner, and so they never obtained, but are now gone to hell: some of them sought it year after year, but failed of it, and perished at last. They were overtaken with divine wrath, and are now suffering the fearful misery of damnation, and have no rest day nor night, having no more opportunity to seek, but must suffer and be miserable throughout the never ending ages of eternity. Be exhorted therefore not to seek salvation as they did, but let the kingdom of heaven suffer violence from you.

Here I would first answer an objection or two, and then proceed to give some directions how to press into the kingdom of God.

Objection 1. Some may be ready to say, We can't do this of ourselves, that strength of desire, and firmness of resolution, that have been spoken of, is out of our reach: if I endeavor to resolve

and to seek with engagedness of spirit, I find I fail: my thoughts are presently off from the business, and I feel myself dull, and my engagedness relaxed in spite of all I can do.

Answer 1. Though earnestness of mind be not immediately in your power, yet the consideration of what has been now said of the need of it, may be a means of stirring you up to it. It is true, persons never will be thoroughly engaged in this business unless it be by God's influence; but God influences persons by means: persons are not stirred up to a thorough earnestness without some considerations that move them to it: and if persons can but be made sensible of the necessity of salvation, and also do duly consider the exceeding difficulty of it, and the greatness of the opposition, and how short and uncertain the time is, but yet are sensible that they have an opportunity, and that there is a possibility of their obtaining, they will need no more in order to their being thoroughly engaged and resolved in this matter. If we see persons slack, and unresolved, and unsteady, it is because they don't enough consider these things.

Second, though strong desires and resolutions of mind be not in your power, yet painfulness of endeavors is in your power. It is in your power to take pains in the use of means, yes very great pains. You can be very painful and diligent in watching your own heart, and striving against sin; though there is all manner of corruption in the heart, that is continually ready to work, yet you can very laboriously watch and strive against these corruptions. And it is in your power, with great diligence to attend the matter of your duty towards God, and towards your neighbor. It is in your power to attend all ordinances, and all public and private duties of religion, and to do it with your might. It would be a contradiction to

suppose that a man can't do these things with all the might he has, though he can't do them with more might than he has. The dulness and deadness of the heart, and slothfulness of disposition, don't hinder men's being able to take pains; though it hinders their being willing. That is one thing wherein your laboriousness may appear, even striving against your own dulness. That men have a dead and sluggish heart, doesn't argue that they are not able to take pains; it is so far from that, that it gives occasion for pains: it is one of the difficulties in the way of duty, that persons have to strive with, and that gives occasion for struggling and labor. Earnestness of mind, and diligence of endeavor, tend to promote each other. He that has a heart earnestly engaged, will take pains; and he that is diligent and painful in all duty, probably won't be so long, before he finds the sensibleness of his heart, and earnestness of his spirit greatly increased.

Objection 2. Some may object that if they are earnest, and take a great deal of pains, they shall be in danger of trusting to what they do; they are afraid of doing their duty for fear of making a righteousness of it.

There is ordinarily no kind of seekers that trust so much to what they do, as slack and dull seekers. Though all that are seeking salvation who have never been the subjects of a thorough humiliation do trust in their own righteousness, yet some do it much more fully than others. Some, though they trust in their own righteousness, are yet not quiet in it. And those that are most disturbed in their self-confidence, and are therefore in the likeliest way to be wholly brought off from it, are not those that go on in a remiss way of seeking, but those that are most earnest and thoroughly engaged. This is partly because in such a way conscience is kept more

sensitive. A more awakened conscience will not rest so quietly in moral and religious duties as one that is less awakened. A dull seeker's conscience will be in a great measure satisfied and quieted with his own works and performances; but one who is thoroughly awakened cannot be stilled or pacified with such things. And partly because in this way persons gain much more knowledge of themselves and acquaintance with their own hearts than in a negligent and slight way of seeking, for they have a great deal more experience of themselves. It is experience of ourselves, and finding what we are, that God commonly makes use of as the means of bringing us off from all dependence on ourselves. But men never get acquaintance with themselves so fast as in the most earnest way of seeking. Those who are in this way have more to engage them to think of their sins, and strictly to observe themselves, and have much more to do with their own hearts than others. Such a person has much more experience of his own weakness than another who does not put forth and try his strength, and will therefore sooner see himself dead in sin. Such a person, though he has a disposition continually to be flying to his own righteousness, yet finds rest in nothing; he wanders about from one thing to another, seeking something to ease his troubled conscience; he is driven from one refuge to another, goes from mountain to hill, seeking rest and finding none; and therefore will the sooner prove that there is no rest to be found, nor trust to be placed, in any creature confidence whatsoever.

It is therefore quite a wrong notion that some entertain, that the more they do, the more they will depend on it: whereas the reverse is true; the more they do, or the more thorough they are in seeking, the less likely they are to rest in their doings, and the

sooner will they see the vanity of all that they do. So that they will exceedingly miss it, if ever they neglect any duty either to God or man, whether it be any duty of religion, justice, or charity, under the notion of its exposing them to trust in their own righteousness. It is very true that it is a common thing for persons when they earnestly seek salvation to trust in the pains they take. But yet commonly those who go on in a more slight way trust a great deal more to their dull services than he who is pressing into the kingdom of God does to his earnestness. Men's slackness in religion and their trust in their own righteousness strengthen and establish one another. Their trust in what they have done and what they now do settles them in a slothful rest and ease, and hinders their being sensible of their need of rousing themselves up and pressing forward. And on the other hand, their negligence tends so to numb them and keep them in such ignorance of themselves that the most miserable refugees are stupidly rested in as sufficient. Therefore we see that when persons have been going on for a long time in such a way, and God afterward comes more thoroughly to awaken them and to stir them up to be in earnest, he shakes all their old foundations and rouses them out of their old resting places, so that they cannot quiet themselves with those things that formerly kept them secure.

I would now proceed to give some directions how you should press into the kingdom of God.

First, be directed as it were to sacrifice every thing to your soul's eternal interest. Let seeking this be so much your bent, and what you are so resolved in, that you will make every thing give place to it. Let nothing stand before your resolution of seeking the kingdom of God. Whatever it be that you used to look upon as a

convenience, or comfort, or ease, or thing desirable on any account, if it stands in the way of this great concern, let it be dismissed without hesitation; and if it be of that nature that it is like always to be a hindrance, then wholly have done with it, and never entertain any expectation from it more. If in time past, you have, for the sake of worldly gain, involved yourself in more care and business than you find to be consistent with your being so thorough in the business of religion as you ought to be, then get into some other way, though you suffer in your worldly interest by it. Or if you have heretofore been conversant with company that you have reason to think have been, and will be a snare to you, and a hindrance to this great design, in any wise break off from their society, however it may expose you to reproach from your old companions. Or whatever it be that stands in the way of your most advantageously seeking salvation, if it be some dear sinful pleasure, or strong carnal appetite, or if it be credit and honor, or if it be the good will of some person whose friendship you desire, or a being accounted of by those whose esteem and liking you have highly valued, and there be danger if you do as you ought, you shall be looked upon by them as odd, and ridiculous, and become contemptible in their eyes; or if it be your ease and indolence, and aversion to continual labor; or if it be your outward convenience in any respect, whereby you might avoid difficulties of one kind or other — let all go; offer up all such things together, as it were in one sacrifice to the interest of your soul. Let nothing stand in competition with this, but make every thing to fall before it. If the flesh must be crossed, then cross it, spare it not, crucify it, and don't be afraid of being too cruel to it (Galatians 5:24: 'They that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.').

Have no dependence on any worldly enjoyment whatsoever. Let salvation be the one thing with you. This is what is certainly required of you: and this is what many stick at; this giving up other things for salvation, is a stumbling block that few get over. While others pressed into the kingdom of God, at the preaching of John the Baptist, there was Herod, one of his hearers, that was pretty much stirred up by his preaching; it is said, he heard him, and observed him, and did many things; but when he came to tell him that he must part with his beloved Herodias, here he stuck; this he never would yield to (Mark 6:18-20). The rich young man was considerably concerned for salvation; and accordingly was a very strict liver in many things; when Christ came to direct him to go and sell all that he had, and give to the poor, and come and follow him, he could not find in his heart to comply with it, but went away sorrowful; he had great possessions, and set his heart much on his estate, and could not bear to part with it. Herein the straitness of the gate very much consists, and it is on this account that so many seek to enter in, and are not able. There are many that have a great mind to have salvation, and spend great part of their time in wishing that they had it, but they will not comply with the necessary means of it.

Second, be directed to forget the things that are behind; that is, not to keep thinking and making much of what you have done, but let your mind be wholly intent on what you have to do. In some sense you ought to look back; you should look back on your sins (Jeremiah 2:23: 'See your way in the valley, know what you have done.'). You should look back on the wretchedness of your religious performances, and consider how you have fallen short in them, and how exceedingly polluted all your duties have been, and

how justly God might reject and loath them, and you for them. But you ought not to spend your time in looking back, as many persons do, thinking how much they have done for their salvation, what great pains they have taken and how that they have done what they can, and don't see how they can do more, how long a time they have been seeking, and how much more they have done than others; and so think with themselves how hardly God deals with them, that he doesn't extend mercy to them, but turns a deaf ear to their cries; and hence discourage themselves, and complain of God. Don't spend your time looking on what is past, but look forward, and consider what is before you, what it is that you can do, and what it is necessary that you should do, and what God calls you still to do, in order to your own salvation. The apostle in the third chapter to the Philippians, tells us what things he did while a Jew, how much he had to boast of, if any could have anything of their own to boast of; but he tells us that he forgot those things, and all others that were behind, and reached forth towards the things that were before, pressing forwards, towards the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Third, labor to get your heart thoroughly disposed to go on and hold out to the end. Many that seem to be earnest have not a heart thus disposed. It is a common thing for persons to appear greatly affected for a little while; but all is soon past away, and there is no more to be seen of it. Labor therefore to obtain a thorough willingness, and preparation of spirit, to continue seeking, in the use of your utmost endeavors, without limitation; and don't think your whole life too long. And in order to this be advised to two things.

First, remember that if ever God bestows mercy upon you, he will use his sovereign pleasure about the time when. He will bestow it on some in a little time, and on others not till they have sought it long. If other persons are soon enlightened and comforted, while you remain long in darkness, there is no other way but for you to wait. God will act arbitrarily in this matter, and you can't help it. You must be content to wait, in a way of laborious and earnest striving, till his time comes. If you refuse, you will but undo yourself; and when you shall hereafter find yourself undone, and see that your case is past remedy, how will you condemn yourself for foregoing a great probability of salvation, only because you had not patience to hold out, and was not willing to be at the trouble of a persevering labor? And what will it avail before God, or your own conscience, to say that you could not bear to be obliged to seek salvation so long, when God bestowed it on others that sought it but for a very short time? Though God may have bestowed the testimonies of his favor on others in a few days, or hours after they have begun earnestly to seek it, how does that alter the case as to you, if there proves to be a necessity of your laboriously seeking many years before you obtain them? Is salvation the less worth the taking a great deal of pains for, because, through the sovereign pleasure of God, others have obtained with comparatively but little pains? If there are two persons, the one of which has obtained converting grace with comparative ease, and another that has obtained it after continuing for many years in the greatest and most earnest labors after it, how little difference does it make at last, when once salvation is obtained! Put all the labor, and pains, and long continued difficulties and struggles of the one, in the scale against salvation, and how little does it subtract; and put

the ease with which the other has obtained, in the scale with salvation, and how little does it add? What is either added or subtracted, is lighter than vanity, and a thing worthy of no consideration, when compared with that infinite benefit that is obtained. Indeed if you were to live ten thousand years, and all that time should strive and press forward with as great earnestness as ever a person did for one day, all this would bear no proportion to the importance of the benefit, and would doubtless appear little to you, when once you come to be in actual possession of eternal glory, and to see what that eternal misery is that you have escaped. You must not think much of your pains, and of the length of time; you must press towards the kingdom of God, and do your utmost, and hold out to the end, and learn to make no account of it when you have done. You must undertake the business of seeking salvation upon these terms, and with no other expectation than this, that if ever God bestows mercy it will be in his own time, and not only so, but also that when you have done all, God will not hold himself obliged to show you mercy at last.

Second, endeavor now thoroughly to weigh in your mind the difficulty, and to count the cost of perseverance in seeking salvation. You that are now setting out in this business, be exhorted to attend this direction. Don't undertake in this affair, with any other thought, but of giving yourself wholly to it for the remaining part of your life, and going through many and great difficulties in it. Take heed that you don't engage secretly upon this condition, that you shall obtain in a little time, promising yourself that it shall be within this present season of the pouring out of God's Spirit, or with any other limitation of time whatsoever. Many when they begin, seeming to set out very earnestly, don't expect that they shall

need to seek very long; and so don't prepare themselves for it: and therefore when they come to find it otherwise, and meet with unexpected difficulty, they are found unguarded, and easily overthrown. But let me advise all that are now seeking their salvation, not to entertain any self-flattering thoughts; but weigh the utmost difficulties of perseverance, and be provided for them, having your mind fixed in it to go through them, let them be what they will. Consider now beforehand, how tedious it would be, with utmost earnestness and labor, to strive after salvation, for many years, in the meantime receiving no joyful or comfortable evidence of your having obtained. Consider what a great temptation to discouragement there probably would be in it; how apt you would be to yield the case; how ready to think that it is in vain for you to seek any longer, and that God never intends to show you mercy, in that he has not yet done it; how apt you would be to think with yourself, What an uncomfortable life do I live! how much more unpleasantly do I spend my time than others, that don't perplex their minds about the things of another world, but are at ease, and take the comfort of their worldly enjoyments! Consider what a temptation there would probably be in it, if you saw others brought in, that began to seek the kingdom of heaven long after you, rejoicing in a hope and sense of God's favor after but little pains, and a short time of awakening; while you from day to day, and from year to year, seemed to labor in vain. Prepare for such temptations now: lay in beforehand for such trials and difficulties, that you may not think any strange thing has happened when they come.

I hope that those that have given attention to what has been said, have by this time conceived in some measure what is signified by the expression in the text, and after what manner they

ought to press into the kingdom of God. Here is this to induce you to a compliance with what you have been directed to: if you sit still you die, if you go backward behold you shall surely die, if you go forward you may live. And though God has not bound himself to anything that a person does, while destitute of faith, and out of Christ, yet there is great probability, that in a way of hearkening to this counsel you will live, and that by pressing onward, and persevering, you will at last as it were by violence take the kingdom of heaven. Those of you that have now heard me, that have not only heard the directions that have been given, but shall, through God's merciful assistance, practice according to them, are those that probably will overcome, that we may well hope at last to see standing with the Lamb on Mount Zion, clothed in white robes, with palms in their hands; when all your labor and toil will be abundantly compensated, and you will not repent that you have taken so much pains, and denied yourself so much, and waited so long. This pains, this self-denial, this waiting, will then look little, and vanish into nothing in your eyes, being all swallowed up in the first minutes' enjoyment of that glory, that you will then be in possession of, and will uninterruptedly possess and enjoy to all eternity.

Fourth direction: improve the present season of the pouring out of the Spirit of God on this town. Prudence in any affair whatsoever consists very much in finding and improving our opportunities. If you would have spiritual prosperity, you must exercise prudence in the concerns of your souls, as well as in outward concerns, when you seek outward prosperity. The prudent husbandman will observe his opportunities; he will improve seed-time and harvest; he will make his advantage of the showers and shines of heaven. The prudent merchant will discern his opportunities; he

won't be idle on a market day; he is careful not to let slip his seasons for enriching himself: so will those that prudently seek the fruits of righteousness, and the merchandise of wisdom, improve their opportunities for their eternal wealth and happiness.

God is pleased at this time, in a very remarkable manner, to be pouring out his Spirit amongst us; glory be to his name therefor! You that have a mind to obtain converting grace, and to go to heaven when you die, now is your season! Now, if you have any sort of prudence for your own salvation, and have not a mind to go to hell, improve this opportunity! Now is the accepted time! Now is the day of salvation! You that in time past have been called upon, and have turned a deaf ear to God's voice, and long stood out and resisted his commands and counsels, hear God's voice today, while it is called today! Don't harden your hearts at such a day as this is! Now you have a special and remarkable price put into your hands to get wisdom, if you have but a heart to improve it.

God has his certain days, or appointed seasons of the exercise both of mercy and judgment. There are some seasons that are remarkable times of wrath, that are laid out by God for that purpose, for his awful visitation, and the executions of his anger; which times are called days of vengeance (Proverbs 6:34), and days wherein God will visit for sin (Exodus 32:34). And so on the contrary, there are some other times, that God has laid out in his sovereign counsels, for seasons of remarkable mercy, wherein he will appear, and manifest himself, in the exercises of his grace and lovingkindness, more than at other times: such times, in Scripture, are called by way of eminence, accepted times, and days of salvation, and also days of God's visitation; because they are days wherein God will visit in a way of mercy (Luke 19:44: 'And shall lay

you even with the ground, and your children within you, and they shall not leave in you one stone upon another; because you knew not the time of your visitation.'). It is such a time now in this town; it is with us a day of God's gracious visitation. It is indeed a day of grace with us as long as we live in this world, in the enjoyment of the means of grace; but such a time as this, is especially, and in a distinguishing manner, a day of grace. There is a door of mercy always standing open for sinners; but at such a day as this God opens an extraordinary door.

We are directed to seek the Lord while he may be found, and to call upon him while he is near (Isaiah 55:6). If you that are hitherto Christless, are not strangely besotted and infatuated, you will by all means improve such an opportunity as this to get heaven, when heaven is brought so near, when the fountain is opened in the midst of us in so extraordinary a manner. Now is the time to obtain a supply of the necessities of your poor perishing souls! This is the day for sinners that have a mind to be converted before they die, when God is dealing forth so liberally and bountifully amongst us, when conversion and salvation work is going on amongst us from sabbath to sabbath, and many are pressing into the kingdom of God! Now don't stay behind, but press in among the rest! Others have been stirred up to be in good earnest, and have taken heaven by violence; be entreated to follow their example, if you would have a part of the inheritance with them, and would not be left at the great day, when they are taken!

How should it move you to consider, that you have this opportunity now in your hands! You are in the actual possession of it! If it were past, it would not be in your power to recover it, or in the power of any creature to bring it back for you; but it is not past; it

is now, at this day; now is the accepted time, even while it is called today! Will you sit still at such a time? Will you sleep in such a harvest? Will you deal with a slack hand, and stay behind out of mere sloth, or love to some lust, or loathness to grapple with some small difficulty, or to put yourself a little out of your way, when so many are flocking to the goodness of the Lord? You are behind still! and so you will be in danger of being left behind, when the whole number is completed that are to enter in, if you don't earnestly bestir yourself! To be left behind, at the close of such a season as this, will be awful, next to the being left behind on that day when God's saints shall mount up as with wings to meet the Lord in the air.

God is now calling you in an extraordinary manner, and it is agreeable to the will and word of Christ that I should now, in his name, call you, as one set over you, and sent to you to that end; so it is his will that you should hearken to what I say, as his voice: I therefore beseech you in Christ's stead now to press into the kingdom of God! Whoever you are, whether young or old, small or great; if you are a great sinner, if you have been a backslider, if you have quenched the Spirit, let you be who you will, and whatever you have done, don't stand making objections, but arise, apply yourself to your work! Do what you have to do, with your might. Christ is calling you before, and holding forth his grace and everlasting benefits, and wrath is pursuing you behind; therefore fly for your life, and look not behind you!

But here I would particularly direct myself to several sorts of persons.

First, to those sinners that are in a measure awakened, and are concerned for their salvation. You have reason to be glad that you have such an opportunity, and to prize it above gold. To induce you

to prize and improve it, consider several things.

First, God has doubtless a design now to deal forth saving blessings to a number. God has done it to some already, as we have reason to think; and it is not probable that he has yet finished his work, that he at this time is come forth to do amongst us: we may well hope still to see others brought out of darkness into marvelous light. And therefore,

Second, God comes this day and knocks at many persons' doors, and at your door among the rest. God seems to be come in a very unusual manner amongst us, upon a gracious and merciful design, a design of saving a number of poor miserable souls out of a lost and perishing condition, and bringing them into a happy state, in safety from misery, and a title to eternal glory! This is offered to you, not only as it has always been in the word and ordinances, but by the particular influences of the Spirit of Christ awakening you! This special offer is made to many amongst us; and you are not passed over: Christ has not forgot or overlooked you; but has come to your door; and there as it were stands waiting for you to open to him. If you have wisdom and discretion to discern your own advantage, you will know that now is your opportunity.

Third, how much more easily converting grace is obtained at such a time, than at other times. The work is equally easy with God at all times; but there is far less difficulty in the way, as to men, at such a time, than at other times. It is, as I said before, a day of God's gracious visitation, a day that he has as it were set apart for the more liberally and bountifully dispensing his grace; a day wherein God's hand is opened wide. Experience shows it. God seems to be more ready to help, to give proper convictions, to help

against temptations, and let in divine light; he seems to carry on his work, with a more glorious display of his power, and Satan is more chained up than at other times. Those difficulties and temptations that persons before stuck at, from year to year, they are soon helped over. The work of God is carried on with greater speed and swiftness, and there are often instances of sudden conversion at such a time. So it was in the apostles' days, when there was a time of the most extraordinary pouring out of the Spirit that ever was: how quick and sudden were conversions in those days! Such instances as that of the jailer abounded then, in fulfillment of that prophecy (Isaiah 66:7-8): 'Before she travailed she brought forth; before her pain came she was delivered of a man child. Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things? For as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children.' So it is in some degree, whenever there is an extraordinary pouring out of the Spirit of God; more or less so, in proportion to the greatness of that effusion. There is seldom such quick work made of it at other times: persons are not so soon delivered from their various temptations, and entanglements; but are much longer wandering in a wilderness, and groping in darkness. And yet,

Fourth, there are probably some here present, that are now concerned about their salvation, that never will obtain. It is not to be supposed that all that are now moved and awakened, will ever be savingly converted: doubtless there are many now seeking that will not be able to enter. When has it been so in times past, when there have been times of great outpourings of God's Spirit, but that many that for a while, have inquired with others, what they should do to be saved, have failed, and afterwards grown hard and secure? All of you that are now awakened, have a mind to obtain salvation,

and probably hope to get a title to heaven, in the time of this present moving of God's Spirit: but yet, though it be awful to be spoken, and awful to be thought, we have no reason to think any other, than that some of you will burn in hell to all eternity. You all are afraid of hell, and seem at present disposed to take pains to be delivered from it; and yet it would be unreasonable to think any other, than that some of you will have your portion in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone. Though there are so many that seem to obtain so easily, having been but a little while under convictions, yet, for all that, some never will obtain. Some will soon lose the sense of things they now have; though their awakenings seem to be very considerable for the present, they won't hold; they have not hearts disposed to hold on through very many difficulties. Some that have set out for heaven, and hope as much as others to obtain, are indeed but slightly and slack, even now, in the midst of such a time as this: and others, that for the present seem to be more in earnest, will probably before long decline, and fail, and gradually return to be as they were before. The convictions of some seem to be great, while that which is the occasion of their convictions is new, which when that begins to grow old, will gradually decay, and wear off.

Though such a time as this be a time wherein God does more liberally bestow his grace than at other times, and so a time of greater advantage for obtaining it, yet there seems to be, upon some accounts, greater danger of backsliding, than when persons are awakened at other times. For commonly such extraordinary times don't last long; and then when they cease there are multi-

tudes that lose their convictions as it were together: as the Spirit of God departs, awakenings ease off from the minds of persons all over a town.

We speak of it as a happy thing, that God is pleased to be causing of it to be such a time amongst us; and so it is indeed: but there are some that it will be no benefit to; it will but be an occasion of their greater misery; they will wish they had never seen this time; it will be more tolerable for those that never saw it, or anything like it, in the day of judgment than for them. It is an awful consideration, that there are probably those here, that the great Judge will hereafter call to a strict account about this very thing, why they no better improved this opportunity, when he did so set open the fountain of his grace, and did so loudly call upon them, and came and strove with them in particular, by the awakening influences of his Spirit; and they will have no good account to give to the Judge, but their mouths will be stopped, and they will stand speechless before him.

You had need therefore to be earnest, and very thorough and resolved in this affair, that you may not be one of those that shall thus fail, that you may so fight, as not uncertainly, and so run, as that you may win the prize.

Fifth, consider what sad circumstances times of extraordinary effusion of God's Spirit commonly leave persons in, when they leave them unconverted. They find them in a doleful condition, because in a natural condition, but commonly leave them in a much more doleful condition. They are left dreadfully hardened, and with a great increase of guilt, and their souls under a more strong dominion and possession of Satan. And frequently, seasons of extraordinary advantage for salvation, when they pass over persons,

and they don't improve them, nor receive any good in them, seal their damnation. As such seasons leave them, God forever leaves them, and gives them up to judicial hardness (Luke 19:41-42: 'And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If you had known, even you, the things which belong to your peace! But now they are hid from your eyes.').

Sixth, consider, that it is very uncertain whether you will ever see such another time as this is. If there should be such another time, it is very uncertain whether you will live to see it. Many that are now concerned for their salvation amongst us, will probably be in their graves, and it may be in hell before that time; and if you should miss this opportunity, it may be so with you. And what good will that do you, to have the Spirit of God poured out upon earth, in the place where you once lived, while you are tormented in hell? What will it avail you, that others are crying, What shall I do to be saved? while you are shut up forever in the bottomless pit, and are wailing and gnashing your teeth in everlasting burnings?

Therefore improve this opportunity, while God is pouring out his Spirit on earth, and you are on earth, and while you dwell in that place where the Spirit of God is thus poured out, and you yourself have the awakening influences of it, that you may never wail and gnash your teeth in hell, but may sing in heaven forever, with others that are redeemed from amongst men, and redeemed amongst us.

If you should see another such time as this, it will be under far greater disadvantages than you now experience. You will probably then be much older, and will have hardened your heart; and so will be under less probability of receiving good. Some persons are so hardened in sin, and so left of God, that they can live through such

a time as this, and not be much awakened or affected by it; they can stand their ground, and be but little moved. And so may it be with you, by another such time, if there should be another among us, and you should live to see it. The case in all probability will be greatly altered with you by that time. If you should continue Christless and graceless until then, you will be much further from the kingdom of God, and much deeper involved in snares and misery; and the devil will probably have a vastly greater advantage against you, to tempt and confound you.

We do not know but that God is now gathering in his elect, before some great and sore judgment. It has been God's manner, before he casts off a visible people, or brings some great and destroying judgments upon them, first to gather in his elect, that they may be secure. So it was before the casting off of the Jews from being God's people: there was first a very remarkable pouring out of the Spirit, and gathering in of the elect, by the preaching of the apostles and evangelists, as we read in the beginning of Acts. But after this harvest and its gleanings were over, the rest were blinded and hardened; the gospel had little success among them, and the nation was given up, and cast off from being God's people, and their city and land was destroyed by the Romans in a terrible manner. And we read in the beginning of the 7th chapter of Revelation, that God, when about to bring destroying judgments on the earth, first sealed his servants in the forehead — he set his seal upon the hearts of the elect, gave them the saving influences and indwelling of his Spirit, by which they were sealed to the day of redemption (Revelation 7:1-3).

And we do not know but that this may be the case now — that God is about to forsake this land in a great measure, and give up this people, and to bring most awful and overwhelming judgments upon it, and that he is now gathering in his elect, to secure them from the calamity. The state of the nation and of this land never looked so threatening of such a thing as it does at this day. If it should be so, how awful will the case be with those who shall be left, and not brought in, while God continues the influences of his Spirit to gather in those who are to be redeemed from among us!

If you neglect the present opportunity, and are finally unbelieving, those who are converted in this time of the pouring out of God's Spirit will rise up in judgment against you. Your neighbors, your relations, acquaintances, or companions who are converted will that day appear against you. They will not only be taken while you are left, mounting up with joy to meet the Lord in the air, while you are left below with those who are to be destroyed, and will stand at the right hand with glorious saints and angels, while you are at the left with devils — but they will rise up in judgment against you. They will rise up as witnesses, and will declare what a precious opportunity you had, and did not improve; how you continued unbelieving, and rejecting the offers of a Savior, when those offers were made in so extraordinary a manner, and when so many others were prevailed upon to accept Christ. And not only so, but they shall be your judges, as assessors with the great Judge; they will be with him in passing sentence upon you (1 Corinthians 6:2). They shall sit with Christ in his throne of judgment, and shall be judges with him when you are judged, and as such shall condemn you.

And lastly, you do not know that you shall live through the present time of the pouring out of God's Spirit. You may be taken away in the midst of it, or you may be taken away at the beginning of it. God has of late been very solemn in his dealings with us, in the repeated deaths of young persons that have happened among us. This should stir every one up to be in the more haste to press into the kingdom of God, that so you may be safe whenever death comes. This is a blessed season and opportunity; but you do not know how little of it you may have. Therefore make haste and escape for your life: one moment's delay is dangerous, for wrath is pursuing, and divine vengeance is hanging over every unconverted person.

Let these considerations move every one to improve this opportunity, that while others receive saving good, and are made heirs of eternal glory, you may not be left behind, in the same miserable circumstances in which you came into the world — a poor captive to sin and Satan, a lost sheep, a perishing undone creature, sinking down into everlasting perdition. If you do not improve this opportunity, remember I have told you, you will hereafter lament it; and if you do not lament it in this world, then I will leave it with you to remember throughout a miserable eternity.

I would address myself to such as yet remain unawakened. It is an awful thing that there should be any one person remaining secure among us, at such a time as this; but yet it is to be feared that there are some of this sort. I would here a little expostulate with such persons.

I would put it to you:

First, when do you expect that it will be more likely that you should be awakened and worked upon than now? You are in a Christless condition; but yet without doubt intend to go to heaven; and therefore intend to be converted some time before you die. And when do you intend that this shall be? Is it ever so likely that a person will be awakened, as at such a time as this? How we see that many who before were secure are now roused out of their sleep, and are crying, What shall I do to be saved? But you are yet secure! Do you flatter yourself that it will be more likely that you should be awakened when it is a dull and dead time? Do you hope to see another such time of the pouring out of God's Spirit hereafter? And do you think that it will be more likely that you should be worked upon then, than now? And why do you think so? Is it because then you shall be so much older than you are now, and so your heart will be grown softer and more tender with age? Or because you will then have stood out so much longer against the calls of the gospel, and all means of grace? Do you think it more likely that God will give you needed influences of his Spirit then, than now, because then you will have provoked him so much more?

Second, what means do you expect to be awakened by? As to the awakening, awful things of the Word of God, those you have had set before you times without number, in the most moving manner. As to particular solemn warnings directed to those in your circumstances, those you have frequently had. Do you expect to be awakened by awful providences? Those also you have lately had, of the most awakening nature, one after another. Do you expect to be moved by the deaths of others? We have lately had repeated instances of these: the deaths of old and young, and some of them very sudden deaths. Will the conversion of others move

you? There is indeed scarcely anything found to have so great a tendency to stir persons up as this; but this you have been tried with of late in frequent instances, but are hitherto proof against it. Yea, you have all these things together — the solemn warnings of God's Word, and awful instances of death, and the conversion of others, and you see a general concern about salvation; but all together do not move you to any great concern about your own precious, immortal, and miserable soul. Therefore consider by what means it is that you expect ever to be awakened.

You have heard that it is probable that some who are now awakened will never obtain salvation; how dark then does it look upon you who remain stupidly unawakened! Those who are not moved at such a time as this, that have come to adult age, have reason to fear whether they may not be given up to judicial hardness. I do not say they have reason to conclude it, but they have reason to fear it. How dark does it look upon you, that God comes and knocks at so many persons' doors, and misses yours! that God is giving the strivings of his Spirit so generally among us, while you are left senseless!

Third, do you expect to obtain salvation without ever seeking it? If you are sensible that there is a necessity of your seeking in order to obtaining, and ever intend to seek, one would think you could not avoid it at such a time as this. Inquire therefore whether you intend to go to heaven, living all your days a secure, negligent, careless life.

Fourth, do you think you can bear the damnation of hell? Do you imagine that you can tolerably endure the devouring fire, and everlasting burnings? Do you hope that you shall be able to grapple with the vengeance of God Almighty, when he girds himself

with strength, and clothes himself with wrath? Do you think to strengthen yourself against God, and be able to make your part good with him? Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he (1 Corinthians 10:22)? Do you flatter yourself that you shall find out ways for your ease and support, and make it out tolerably well, to bear up your spirit in those everlasting burnings prepared for the devil and his angels? Can your heart endure, or can your hands be strong, in the days that I shall deal with you (Ezekiel 22:14)? It is a difficult thing to conceive what such Christless persons think, who are unconcerned at such a time as this.

I would direct myself to those who are grown considerably into years, and are yet in a natural condition. I would now earnestly exhort you to improve this extraordinary opportunity, and press into the kingdom of God. You have lost many advantages that once you had, and now have not the same advantages that others have. The case is very different with you from what it is with many of your neighbors. You above all have need to improve such an opportunity. Now is the time for you to bestir yourself, and take the kingdom of heaven!

Consider:

First, now there seems to be a door opened for old sinners. Now God is dealing forth freely to all sorts; his hand is opened wide, and he does not pass by old ones so much as he used to do. You are not under such advantages as others who are younger; but yet, so wonderfully has God ordered it, that now you are not destitute of great advantage. Though old in sin, God has put a new and extraordinary advantage into your hands. O, improve this price that you have to get wisdom! You who have been long seeking to

enter in at the strait gate, and yet remain without — now take your opportunity and press in! You who have been long in the wilderness, fighting with various temptations, and have been laboring under discouragements, and have been ready to give up the case, have been often tempted to despair — now behold the door that God opens for you! Do not give way to discouragements now; this is not a time for it. Do not spend time thinking that you have done what you can already, and that you see signs that you are not elected, and giving way to other perplexing, weakening, disheartening temptations. Do not waste away this precious opportunity in such a manner; you have no time to spare for such things as these. God calls you now to something else; improve this time in seeking and striving for salvation.

Some of you have often lamented the loss of past opportunities, and have been wishing that you had so good an opportunity again, have been ready to say, O if I were young again, how would I improve such an advantage! That opportunity which you had in time past is irrecoverable; you can never have it again; but God can give you other advantages of another sort, that are very great, and he is so doing at this day. He is now putting a new opportunity into your hands; though not of the same kind as that which you once had and have lost, yet in some respects as great of another kind. If you lament, and are ready to cry out of your folly in neglecting and losing past opportunities, then do not be guilty of the folly of neglecting the opportunity which God now gives you. This opportunity you could not have purchased, if you would have given all that you had in the world for it; but God is putting it into your hands, of himself, of his own free and sovereign mercy. Therefore when you have it, do not neglect it.

Second, it is a great deal more likely, with respect to such persons than others, that this is their last time. There will be a last time of any special offer of salvation to impenitent sinners. God's Spirit shall not always strive with man (Genesis 6:3). God sometimes continues long knocking at the doors of wicked men's hearts; but there are the last knocks, and the last calls, that ever they shall have. And sometimes God's last calls are the loudest, and then if sinners do not hearken, God finally leaves them. How long has God been knocking at many of your doors, you who are old in sin! It is a great deal more likely that these are his last knocks. You have resisted God's Spirit in times past, and have hardened your heart once and again; but God will not be thus dealt with always. There is danger that if now, after so long a time, you will not hearken, he will utterly desert you, and leave you to walk in your own counsels.

It seems, by God's providence, as though God had yet an elect number among old sinners in this place, that he is now perhaps about to bring in. It looks as though there were some who long lived under Mr. Stoddard's ministry, whom God has not utterly cast off, though they so stood it out under such great means as they then enjoyed. It is to be hoped that God will now bring in a remnant from among them. But it is the more likely that God is now about finishing with them, one way or the other, for their having been so long the subjects of such extraordinary means. You have seen former times of the pouring out of God's Spirit upon the town, when others were taken and you left, others were called out of darkness into marvelous light, and were brought into a glorious and happy state, and you were one who saw not good when good came. How dark will your circumstances appear, if you shall also

stand it out through this opportunity, and still be left behind! Take heed that you are not one of those spoken of in Hebrews 6:7-8 — that are like the earth that has rain coming upon it, and only bears briars and thorns. Of such ground the apostle says, it is rejected, and is near to cursing, whose end is to be burned. If you miss this opportunity, there is danger that you will be utterly rejected, and that your end will be to be burned.

Those of you that are already grown old in sin, and are now under awakenings — when you feel your convictions begin to go off, if ever that should be, then remember what you have now been told: it may well then strike you to the heart!

I would direct my advice to those who are young, and now under their first special convictions. I would earnestly urge such to improve this opportunity, and press into the kingdom of God.

Consider two things.

First, you have all manner of advantages now centering upon you. It is a time of great advantage for all; but your advantages are above others. There is no other sort of persons who have now so great and happy an opportunity as you have. You have the great advantage that is common to all who live in this place, namely, that now it is a time of the extraordinary pouring out of the Spirit of God; and you also have the great advantage that you have the awakening influences of the Spirit of God on you in particular; and besides that, you have this peculiar advantage, that you are now in your youth. And added to this, you have another unspeakable advantage, that you are now under your first convictions. Happy is he who has never hardened his heart, and blocked up his own way to heaven by backsliding, and has now the awakening influences of

God's Spirit, if God does but enable him thoroughly to improve them! Such above all in the world bid fair for the kingdom of God. God is accustomed, on such above any kind of persons, as it were easily and readily to bestow the saving grace and comforts of his Spirit. Instances of speedy and sudden conversion are most commonly found among such. Happy are they who have the Spirit of God with them, and have never quenched it, if they did but know the price they have in their hands!

If you have a sense of your necessity of salvation, and the great worth and value of it, you will be willing to take the surest way to it, or that which has the greatest probability of success; and that certainly is, thoroughly to improve your first convictions. If you do so, it is not likely that you will fail; there is the greatest probability that you will succeed. What is it not worth to have such an advantage in one's hands, for obtaining eternal life? The present season of the pouring out of God's Spirit is the first such season that many of you who are now under awakenings have ever seen, since you came to years of understanding. There are many here present who wish they had such an opportunity, but they never can obtain it; they cannot buy it for money; but you have it in your possession, and can improve it if you will.

But yet:

There is on some Accounts greater Danger that such as are in your Circumstances will fail of thoroughly improving their Convictions, with Respect to Steadfastness and Perseverance, than others. Those that are young are more unstable than elder Persons: They that never had Convictions before, have less Experience of the Difficulty of the Work they have engaged in; they are more ready to think that they shall obtain Salvation easily, and

are more easily discouraged by Disappointments. By all Means be thorough now! Make but one Work of seeking Salvation! Make thorough Work of it the first Time! There are vast Disadvantages that they bring themselves under, that have several Turns of Seeking with great Intermissions: By such a Course Persons exceedingly wound their own Souls, and entangle themselves in many Snares. Those that commonly meet with so many Difficulties, and are so long labouring in Darkness and Perplexity, are those that have had several Turns at seeking Salvation, who have one while had Convictions, and then have quenched them, and then have set about the Work again, and have backslidden again. The Children of Israel would not have been forty Years in the Wilderness, if they had held their Courage, and had gone on as they set out; but they were of an unstable Mind, and were for going back again into Egypt. If they had gone right forward, without Discouragement, they would have soon entered, and taken Possession of Canaan; but when they turned back, they were thirty-eight Years after that before they got through the Wilderness. As you regard the Interest of your Soul, don't run yourself into a like Difficulty, by Unsteadiness, Intermission, and Backsliding; but press right forward, from henceforth, and make but one Work of seeking converting and pardoning Grace, however great, and difficult, and long a Work that may be.

## RUTH'S RESOLUTION



**R**uth 1:16 — And Ruth said, Do not urge me to leave you or to return from following you. For where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God.

The things that we have the history of in this book of Ruth seem to be inserted into the canon of Scripture especially on two accounts.

First, because Christ was of Ruth's posterity. The Holy Ghost thought fit to take particular notice of that marriage of Boaz with Ruth, from which sprang the Savior of the world. We may often observe it, that the Holy Spirit who inspired the Scriptures often takes notice of little things, minute occurrences, that do but remotely relate to Jesus Christ.

Second, because this history seems to be typical of the calling of the Gentile church, and indeed of the conversion of every believer. Ruth was not originally of Israel, but was a Moabitess, an alien from the commonwealth of Israel; but she forsook her own people and the idols of the Gentiles to worship the God of Israel, and to join herself to that people. In this she seems to be a type of the Gentile church, and also of every sincere convert. Ruth was the

mother of Christ's line; he came of her posterity; so the church is Christ's mother, as she is represented in Revelation 12. Ruth forsook all her natural relations, and her own country, the land of her nativity, and all her former possessions there, for the sake of the God of Israel; as every true Christian forsakes all for Christ (Psalm 45:10).

Naomi was now returning out of the land of Moab into the land of Israel, with her two daughters-in-law, Orpah and Ruth; who represent well to us two sorts of professors of religion: Orpah the sort that indeed make a fair profession and seem to set out well, but endure but for a while and then turn back; Ruth the sort that are sound and sincere, and therefore are steadfast and persevering in the way they have set out in. Naomi, in the preceding verses, represents to these her daughters the difficulties of their leaving their own country to go with her. In this verse may be observed:

First, the remarkable conduct and behavior of Ruth on this occasion; with what inflexible resolution she cleaves to Naomi and follows her. When Naomi first arose to return from the country of Moab into the land of Israel, Orpah and Ruth both set out with her. Naomi exhorted them both to return; and they both wept, and seemed as if they could not bear the thoughts of leaving her, and appeared as if they were resolved to go with her (verse 10). Then Naomi spoke to them again, and Orpah went back. Now Ruth's steadfastness in her purpose had a greater trial, but was not overcome; she clung to her (verse 14). Then Naomi spoke to her again (verse 15), and Ruth showed her immovable resolution in the text and following verse.

Second, I would particularly observe that wherein the virtuosity of this resolution consists, namely, that it was for the sake of the God of Israel, and that she might be one of his people, that she was thus resolved to cleave to Naomi: Your people shall be my people, and your God my God. It was for God's sake that she did thus; and therefore her so doing is afterward spoken of as virtuous behavior in her (Ruth 2:11-12). She left her father and mother, and the land of her nativity, to come and trust under the shadow of God's wings; and she had indeed a full reward given her as Boaz wished — for besides immediate spiritual blessings to her own soul, and eternal rewards in another world, she was rewarded with plentiful and prosperous outward circumstances in the family of Boaz; and God raised up David and Solomon of her seed, and established the crown of Israel in her posterity, and — which is much more — of her seed he raised up Jesus Christ, in whom all the families of the earth are blessed.

From the words thus opened, I observe this for the subject of my present discourse:

When those that we have formerly been conversant with are turning to God, and joining themselves to his people, it ought to be our firm resolution that we will not leave them; but that their people shall be our people, and their God our God.

It is sometimes so, that of those who have been conversant with one another, who have dwelt together as neighbors, and have been often together as companions, or have been united in near relation, and have been together in darkness, bondage, and misery in the service of Satan — some are enlightened and have their minds changed, are made to see the great evil of sin, and have their hearts turned to God, and are influenced by the Holy Spirit of God to

leave the company that are on Satan's side, to go and join themselves with that blessed company that are with Jesus Christ. They are made willing to forsake the tents of wickedness, to dwell in the land of uprightness with the people of God.

And sometimes this proves a final parting or separation between them and those that they have been formerly conversant with. Though it may be no parting in outward respects — they may still dwell together and converse with one another — yet in other respects it sets them at a great distance from one another: one is a child of God, and the other the enemy of God; one is in a miserable, and the other in a happy condition; one is a citizen of the heavenly Zion, the other is under condemnation to hell. They are no longer together in those respects wherein they used to be together. They are separated as they are in different kingdoms; the one remains in the kingdom of darkness, the other is translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son. And sometimes they are finally separated in these respects; while one dwells in the land of Israel and in the house of God, the other, like Orpah, lives and dies in the land of Moab.

Now it is lamentable when it is thus; it is awful to be parted so. It should be our firm and inflexible resolution in such a case, that it shall be no parting, but that we will follow them, that their people shall be our people, and their God our God; and that for the following reasons.

First, because their God is a glorious God. There is none like him, who is infinite in glory and excellency: he is the most high God, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders; his name is excellent in all the earth, and his glory is above the earth and the heavens. Their God is the fountain of all good, and an in-

exhaustible fountain; he is an all-sufficient God; a God that is able to protect and defend them, and do all things for them; he is the King of glory, the Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. There is none like the God of Jeshurun, who rides on the heaven in their help, and in his excellency on the sky; the eternal God is their refuge, and underneath are everlasting arms. Their God is an infinitely holy God; there is none holy as the Lord. And he is infinitely good and merciful. Many that others worship and serve as gods are cruel beings, spirits that seek the ruin of souls; but this is a God that delights in mercy; his grace is infinite and endures forever; he is love itself, an infinite fountain and ocean of it.

Such a God is their God! Such is the excellency of Jacob! Such is the God of those who have forsaken their sins and are converted! They have made a wise choice, who have chosen this God for their God. They have made a happy exchange indeed, who have exchanged sin and the world for such a God!

They have an excellent and glorious Savior, who is the only begotten Son of God, the brightness of his Father's glory; one in whom God from eternity had infinite delight; a Savior of infinite love; one who has shed his own blood, and made his soul an offering for their sins; and one who is able to save them to the uttermost.

Second, their people are an excellent and happy people. God has renewed them, and stamped his own image upon them, and made them partakers of his holiness. They are more excellent than their neighbors (Proverbs 12:26); yes, they are the excellent of the earth (Psalm 16:3). They are lovely in the sight of the angels; and their souls are adorned with those graces that in the sight of God himself are of great price.

The people of God are the most excellent and happy society in the world. That God whom they have chosen for their God is their Father; he has pardoned all their sins, and they are at peace with him; and he has admitted them to all the privileges of his children. They are in a safe state, free from all possibility of perishing; Satan has no power to destroy them. God is with them in this world; they have his gracious presence. God is for them; who then can be against them? As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about them. God is their shield and their exceeding great reward; and their fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ; and they have the divine promise and oath, that in the world to come, they shall dwell forever in the glorious presence of God.

It may well be sufficient to induce us to resolve to cleave to those who forsake their sins and idols, to join themselves with this people, that God is with them (Zechariah 8:23). So should persons, as it were, take hold of the garment of their neighbors and companions who have turned to God, and resolve that they will go with them, because God is with them.

Third, happiness is nowhere else to be had, but in their God, and with their people. There are that are called gods many, and lords many. Some make gods of their pleasures; some choose money for their god; some make gods of their own supposed excellencies, or the outward advantages they have above their neighbors. But men can be happy in no other God but the God of Israel. He is the only fountain of happiness. Other gods cannot help in calamity; nor can any of them afford what the poor empty soul stands in need of. All other people are miserable, but that people whose God is the Lord. The world is divided into two societies:

there are the people of God, the little flock of Jesus Christ, that company we read of in Revelation 14:4; and there are those that belong to the kingdom of darkness, who are without Christ, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world. All who are of this latter company are wretched and undone; they are the enemies of God, and under his wrath and condemnation; they are the devil's slaves, who serve him blindfolded, ensnared by him, and hurried along in the broad way to eternal perdition.

Fourth, when those that we have formerly been conversant with are turning to God and to his people, their example ought to influence us. Their example should be looked upon as the call of God to us, to do as they have done. God, when he changes the heart of one, calls upon another; especially does he loudly call on those who have been their friends and acquaintances. We have been influenced by their examples in evil; and shall we cease to follow them, when they make the wisest choice they ever made, and do the best thing they ever did! If we have been companions with them in worldliness, in vanity, in unprofitable and sinful conversation, it will be a hard case if there must be a parting now, because we are not willing to be companions with them in holiness and true happiness. Men are greatly influenced by seeing one another's prosperity in other things; how much more should they be influenced and stirred up to follow them and be like them, when they obtain that spiritual and eternal happiness that is infinitely more worth than all the prosperity and glory of this world.

Fifth, our resolutions to cleave to and follow those who are turning to God and joining themselves to his people ought to be fixed and strong, because of the great difficulty of it. If we will

cleave to them, and have their God for our God and their people for our people, we must mortify and deny all our lusts, and cross every evil appetite and inclination, and forever part with all sin. But our lusts are many and violent. Sin is naturally exceedingly dear to us; to part with it is compared to plucking out our right eyes. It is heart-rending work, finally to part with all sin, and to give our dearest lusts a bill of divorce, utterly to send them away. But this we must do, if we would follow those who are truly turning to God. We must not only forsake sin, but must, in a sense, forsake all the world (Luke 14:33). That is, he must forsake all in his heart, and must come to a thorough disposition and readiness actually to quit all for God, and the glorious spiritual privileges of his people, whenever the case may require it.

Thus it was a hard thing for Ruth to forsake her native country, and her father and mother, her kindred and acquaintances, and all the pleasant things she had in the land of Moab, to dwell in the land of Israel, where she had never been. Naomi told her of the difficulties once and again. They were too hard for her sister Orpah; the consideration of them turned her back after she was set out; her resolution was not firm enough to overcome them. But so firmly resolved was Ruth that she broke through all; she was steadfast in it, that let the difficulty be what it would, she would not leave her mother-in-law. So persons need to be very firm in their resolution to conquer the difficulties that are in the way of cleaving to those who are indeed turning from sin to God.

Sixth, our cleaving to them, and having their God for our God and their people for our people, depends on our resolution and choice; and that in two respects.

First, the firmness of resolution in using means in order to it is the way to have means effectual. There are means appointed in order to our becoming some of the true Israel, and having their God for our God; and the thorough use of these means is the way to have success; but not a slack or slight use of them. That we may be thorough, there is need of strength of resolution, a firm and inflexible disposition and bent of mind to be universal in the use of means, and to do what we do with our might, and to persevere in it (Matthew 11:12).

Second, a choosing of their God and their people, with a full determination and with the whole soul, is the condition of a union with them. God gives every person his choice in this matter, as Orpah and Ruth had their choice, whether they would go with Naomi into the land of Israel or stay in the land of Moab. A natural man may choose deliverance from hell; but no man does ever heartily choose God, and Christ, and the spiritual benefits that Christ has purchased, and the happiness of God's people, until he is converted. On the contrary, he is averse to them; he has no relish of them; and is wholly ignorant of the inestimable worth and value of them.

Many carnal men do seem to choose these things, but do not really; as Orpah seemed at first to choose to forsake Moab to go into the land of Israel. But when Naomi came to set before her the difficulty of it, she went back; and thereby showed that she was not fully determined in her choice, and that her whole soul was not in it, as Ruth's was.

#### APPLICATION.

The use that I shall make of what has been said is to move sinners to this resolution, with respect to those among us who have lately turned to God, and joined themselves to the flock of Christ. It may be said of many of you, who are in a Christless condition, that you have lately been left by those who were formerly with you in such a state. There are those you have formerly been conversant with who have lately forsaken a life of sin and the service of Satan, and have turned to God, and fled to Christ, and joined themselves to that blessed company that are with him. They formerly were with you in sin and in misery, but now they are with you no more, in that state or manner of life. Many of you have seen those who live with you under the same roof turning from being any longer with you in sin, to be with the people of Jesus Christ. Some of you who are husbands have had your wives; and some of you who are wives have had your husbands; some of you who are children have had your parents; and parents have had your children; many of you have had your brothers and sisters; and many your near neighbors and acquaintances and special friends; many of you who are young have had your companions. God of his good pleasure and wonderful grace has caused it to be so in this place, that multitudes have been forsaking their old abodes in the land of Moab and under the gods of Moab, and going into the land of Israel, to put their trust under the wings of the Lord God of Israel. Though you and they have been nearly related, and have dwelt together, or have been often together, and intimately acquainted with one another, they have been taken and you hitherto left! O let it not be the foundation of a final parting! But earnestly follow them; be firm in your resolution in this matter. Do not do as Orpah did, who though at first she made as though she would follow Naomi, yet when she

had the difficulty of it set before her, went back; but say as Ruth, I will not leave you, but where you go, I will go; your people shall be my people, and your God my God. Consider the excellency of their God, and their Savior, and the happiness of their people, the blessed state that they are in, and the doleful state that you are in.

You who are old sinners, who have lived long in the service of Satan, have lately seen some who were with you, who traveled with you in the paths of sin these many years, who with you enjoyed great means and advantages, who have had calls and warnings with you, and have with you passed through remarkable times of the pouring out of God's Spirit in this place, and have hardened their hearts and stood it out with you, and have grown old in sin with you — I say, you have seen some of them turning to God. O! let it not be a final parting! You have been thus long together in sin and under condemnation; let it be your firm resolution that, if possible, you will be with them still, now that they are in a holy and happy state, and that you will follow them into the holy and pleasant land.

You who tell of your having been seeking salvation for many years, though without doubt in a poor, dull way in comparison of what you ought to have done — you have seen some who have been with you in that respect, old sinners and old seekers as you are, obtaining mercy. God has lately roused them from their dullness, and caused them to alter their course, and put them on more thorough endeavors; and they have now, after so long a time, heard God's voice, and have fled for refuge to the Rock of Ages. Let this awaken earnestness and resolution in you. Resolve that you will not leave them.

You who are in your youth — how many have you seen of your age and standing, who have of late hopefully chosen God for their God, and Christ for their Savior! You have followed them in sin, and have perhaps followed them into vain company; and will you not now follow them to Christ?

And you who are children — there have lately been some of your sort who have repented of their sins, and have loved the Lord Jesus Christ, and trusted in him, and have become God's children, as we have reason to hope. Let it stir you up to resolve with all your might to seek and cry to God, that you may have the like change made in your hearts, that their people may be your people, and their God your God.

You who are great sinners, who have made yourselves distinctively guilty by the wicked practices you have lived in — there are some of your sort who have lately, as we have reason to hope, had their hearts broken for sin, and have forsaken it, and have trusted in the blood of Christ for the pardon of it, and have chosen a holy life, and have betaken themselves to the ways of wisdom. Let it encourage and move you resolutely to cleave to them, and earnestly to follow them.

Let the following things be here considered.

First, that your soul is as precious as theirs. It is immortal as theirs is; and stands in as much need of happiness, and can as ill bear eternal misery. You were born in the same miserable condition that they were, having the same wrath of God abiding on you. You must stand before the same Judge, who will be as strict in judgment with you as with them; and your own righteousness will stand you in no more stead before him than theirs. You stand in as

absolute a necessity of a Savior as they. Carnal confidences can no more answer your end than theirs; nor can this world or its enjoyments serve to make you happy, without God and Christ, more than them. When the Bridegroom comes, the foolish virgins stand in as much need of oil as the wise (Matthew 25).

Second, unless you follow them in their turning to God, their conversion will be the foundation of an eternal separation between you and them. You will be in different interests, and in exceedingly different states, as long as you live; they the children of God, and you the children of Satan. And you will be parted in another world; when you come to die, there will be a vast separation made between you (Luke 16:26). And you will be parted at the day of judgment. You will be separated at Christ's first appearance in the clouds of heaven: while they are caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, to be ever with the Lord, you will remain below, confined to this cursed ground, kept in store, reserved to fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. You will appear separated from them while you stand before the great judgment seat, they being at the right hand while you are set at the left (Matthew 25:32-33). And you shall then appear in exceedingly different circumstances: while you stand with devils, in the image and deformity of devils, and in unspeakable horror and amazement, they shall appear in glory, sitting on thrones as assessors with Christ, and as such passing judgment upon you (1 Corinthians 6:2). And what shame and confusion will then cover you, when so many of your contemporaries, your equals, your neighbors, relations and companions, shall be honored and openly acknowledged by the glorious Judge of the universe, and you shall appear to have neglected your salvation, and not to have improved your opportu-

nities, and rejected the Lord Jesus Christ! What a wide separation will the sentence then passed and executed make between you and them? When you shall be sent away out of the presence of the Judge with indignation and abhorrence, as cursed and loathsome creatures, and they shall be sweetly invited into his glory as his dear friends and the blessed of his Father! Shall it be so, after you have been together a great while, each of you in sinful ways, that their so wisely changing their minds and course, and choosing such happiness for themselves, should now at length be the beginning of such an exceeding and everlasting separation between you and them? How awful will it be to be parted so!

Third, consider the great encouragement that God gives you, earnestly to strive for the same blessing that others have obtained. There is great encouragement in the Word of God to sinners, to seek salvation; in the revelation that we have of the abundant provision made for the salvation even of the chief of sinners, and in the appointment of so many means to be used with and by sinners, in order to their salvation; and by the blessing which God in his Word connects with the means of his appointment. There is hence great encouragement for all, at all times, that will be thorough in using these means. But now God gives extraordinary encouragement in his providence, by pouring out his Spirit so remarkably among us, and bringing savingly home to himself all sorts — young and old, rich and poor, wise and unwise, sober and vicious, old self-righteous seekers and profligate livers — no sort are exempt. There is now at this day among us the loudest call, and the greatest encouragement, and the widest door opened to sinners to escape out of a state of sin and condemnation, that perhaps God ever granted in New England. Who is there who has an immortal soul,

so foolish as not to improve such an opportunity, and who will not bestir himself with all his might now? How unreasonable is negligence, and how exceedingly unseasonable is discouragement, at such a day as this! Let every single person be thoroughly awake! Let every one encourage himself now to press forward, and fly for his life!

Fourth, consider how earnestly desirous they who have obtained are, that you should follow them, and that their people should be your people, and their God your God. They desire that you should partake of that great good that God has given them, and that unspeakable and eternal blessedness that he has promised them; they wish and long for it. If you do not go with them, and are not still of their company, it will not be for want of their willingness, but your own. That which Moses said to Hobab is the language of every true saint of your acquaintance to you: We are journeying to the place of which the Lord said, I will give it to you; come with us, and we will do you good; for the Lord has spoken good concerning Israel (Numbers 10:29). As Moses, when on his journey through the wilderness following the pillar of cloud and fire, invited Hobab, whom he had been acquainted with, and nearly allied to, out of the land of Midian, to go with him and his people to Canaan, to partake with them in the good that God had promised them; so do those of your friends and acquaintances invite you out of a land of darkness and wickedness, where they have formerly been with you, to go with them to the heavenly Canaan. The company of saints, the true church of Christ, invites you. The lovely bride calls you to the marriage supper. You are invited on all hands; all conspire to call you. God the Father invites you: this is the king who has made a marriage for his son, and he sends forth

his servants, the ministers of the gospel, to invite the guests. And the Son himself invites you; and God's ministers invite you; and all the church invites you; and there will be joy in the presence of the angels of God that hour when you accept the invitation (Revelation 22:17).

Consider how doleful the Condition of those will be that are left behind, when God's People are gathered in. When God's saving Work is over in this Place, and the special Season of Grace is past, how sorrowful will it be for those that are left out! They will stand, as it were, and see others entering into the Kingdom of God, and themselves left out. As it was with those that were shut out from Noah's Ark, when the Flood came: They saw others entering in, and the Door shut upon them, and then the Flood came and swept them away. So it may be with those that neglect this present Season of Grace. In the Prophet Ezekiel's Vision of the holy Waters, it is said, that the Waters were to the Ankles, and then to the Knees, and then to the Loins, and then they were a River that could not be passed over. But the Prophet takes Notice that in the miry Places and the Marshes, the Waters should not be healed; they should be given to Salt. So it seems now to be with us; the Waters of God's Spirit are rising among us; and some are already over Head and Ears in them, they are immersed and overwhelmed with them. But there are some miry Places and Marshes that the Waters don't reach; there are some that seem to remain unmoved, and untouched by this extraordinary Work of God's Spirit. Let not this be your unhappy Case. Let me once more entreat you to resolve, as Ruth did, that you will follow those that are turning to God, and that their God shall be your God, and their People your People. If you do thus, you shall be as Ruth was, who did not re-

pent of her Resolution; she found Favour in the Eyes of Boaz, and was advanced to great Honour. So if you will now resolve to follow God's People, and make their God your God, you shall find Favour in the Eyes of Christ, who is the true Boaz, the near Kinsman and Redeemer. You shall be advanced to glorious Honours; you shall reign with him in Glory to all Eternity.

## THE JUSTICE OF GOD IN THE DAMNATION OF SINNERS



**R**omans 3:19 — That every mouth may be stopped.

The main subject of the doctrinal part of this epistle is the free grace of God, in the salvation of men by Jesus Christ; especially as it appears in the doctrine of justification by faith alone. And the more clearly to demonstrate this doctrine, and show the reason of it, the apostle, in the first place, establishes that point, that no flesh living can be justified by the deeds of the law. And to prove it, he is very large and particular in showing, that all mankind, not only Gentiles, but Jews, are under sin, and so under the condemnation of the law; which is what he insists upon from the beginning of the epistle to this place. He first begins with the Gentiles; and in the first chapter, shows that they are under sin, by setting forth the exceeding corruptions and horrid wickedness that overspread the Gentile world. And then through the second chapter, and the former part of this third chapter, to the text and following verse, he shows the same of the Jews, that they also are in the same circumstances with the Gentiles in this regard. They had a high thought of themselves, because they were God's covenant people, and circumcised, and the children of Abraham. They de-

spised the Gentiles, as polluted, condemned, and accursed; but looked on themselves, on account of their external privileges, and ceremonial and moral righteousness, as a pure and holy people, and the children of God. It was therefore strange doctrine to them, that they also were unclean and guilty in God's sight, and under the condemnation and curse of the law. The apostle therefore, on account of their strong prejudices against such doctrine, the more particularly insists upon it, and shows that they are no better than the Gentiles (Romans 3:9). And to convince them of it, he then produces certain passages out of their own law, or the Old Testament, from the 9th verse to the verse wherein is our text. The apostle first cites certain passages to prove that mankind are all corrupt (verses 10-12): There is none righteous, no not one; there is none that understands; there is none that seeks after God; they are all gone out of the way. Second, the passages he cites next are to prove that not only are all corrupt, but each one is fully corrupt, all over unclean from the crown of his head to the soles of his feet; and therefore several particular parts of the body are mentioned, as the throat, tongue, lips, mouth, and feet (verses 13-15). And third, he quotes other passages to show that each one is not only all over corrupt, but corrupt to a desperate degree (verses 16-18). And then, lest the Jews should think these passages of their law do not concern them, the apostle shows in the verse of the text, not only that they are not exempt, but that they especially must be understood. So that the law shuts all up in universal and desperate wickedness, that every mouth may be stopped — the mouths of the Jews as well as of the Gentiles, notwithstanding all those privileges by which they were distinguished from the Gentiles.

The things that the law says are sufficient to stop the mouths of all mankind, in two respects.

First, to stop them from boasting of their righteousness, as the Jews were accustomed to do. That the apostle has respect to stopping their mouths in this respect, appears by the 27th verse of the context: Where is boasting then? It is excluded. The law stops our mouths from making any plea for life, or the favor of God, or any positive good, from our own righteousness.

Second, to stop them from making any excuse for themselves, or objection against the execution of the sentence of the law, or the infliction of the punishment that it threatens. That this is intended, appears by the words immediately following: that all the world may become guilty before God. That is, that they may appear to be guilty, and stand convicted before God, and justly liable to the condemnation of his law.

And thus the apostle proves that no flesh can be justified in God's sight by the deeds of the law; and so prepares the way for establishing the great doctrine of justification by faith alone, which he proceeds to do in the next verse and in the following part of the chapter and of the epistle.

Doctrine: It is just with God eternally to cast off and destroy sinners.

For this is the punishment which the law condemns to; which the things that the law says may well stop every mouth from all manner of objection against.

The truth of this doctrine may appear, by the joint consideration of two things, namely man's sinfulness, and God's sovereignty.

First, it appears from the consideration of man's sinfulness. And that whether we consider the infinitely evil nature of all sin, or how much sin men are guilty of.

First, if we consider the infinite evil and heinousness of sin in general. It is not unjust in God to inflict what punishment is deserved; because the very notion of deserving any punishment is, that it may be justly inflicted. A deserved punishment and a just punishment are the same thing. To say that one deserves such a punishment, and yet to say that he does not justly deserve it, is a contradiction; and if he justly deserves it, then it may be justly inflicted.

Every crime or fault deserves a greater or lesser punishment, in proportion as the crime itself is greater or less. If any fault deserves punishment, then so much the greater the fault, so much the greater is the punishment deserved. The faulty nature of any thing is the formal ground and reason of its desert of punishment; and therefore the more any thing has of this nature, the more punishment it deserves. And therefore the terribleness of the degree of punishment, let it be never so terrible, is no argument against the justice of it, if the proportion does but hold between the heinousness of the crime and the dreadfulness of the punishment. So that if there be any such thing as a fault infinitely heinous, it will follow that it is just to inflict a punishment for it that is infinitely dreadful.

A crime is more or less heinous, according as we are under greater or lesser obligations to the contrary. This is self-evident, because it is herein that the criminalness or faultiness of any thing consists, that it is contrary to what we are obliged or bound to, or what ought to be in us. So the faultiness of one being hating an-

other is in proportion to his obligation to love him. The fault of disobeying another is greater or less, as any one is under greater or lesser obligations to obey him. And therefore if there be any being that we are under infinite obligations to love, and honor, and obey, the contrary toward him must be infinitely faulty.

Our obligation to love, honor, and obey any being is in proportion to his loveliness, honorableness, and authority. For that is the very meaning of the words, when we say any one is very lovely — it is the same as to say, that he is one very much to be loved. If we say any one has great authority over us, it is the same as to say that he has great right to our subjection and obedience.

But God is a being infinitely lovely, because he has infinite excellency and beauty. He is a being of infinite greatness, majesty and glory; and therefore is infinitely honorable. He is infinitely exalted above the greatest potentates of the earth, and highest angels in heaven; and therefore is infinitely more honorable than they. His authority over us is infinite; and the ground of his right to our obedience is infinitely strong; for he is infinitely worthy to be obeyed in himself, and we have an absolute, universal, and infinite dependence upon him.

So that sin against God, being a violation of infinite obligations, must be a crime infinitely heinous; and so deserving of infinite punishment. Nothing is more agreeable to the common sense of mankind than that sins committed against any one must be proportionably heinous to the dignity of the being offended and abused. The eternity of the punishment of ungodly men renders it infinite; and it renders it no more than infinite; and therefore renders it no more than proportionable to the heinousness of what they are guilty of.

If there be any evil or faultiness in sin against God, there is certainly infinite evil; for if it be any fault at all, it has an infinite aggravation, namely, that it is against an infinite object. If it be ever so small upon other accounts; yet if it be anything, it has one infinite dimension; and so is an infinite evil. Which may be illustrated by this: if we suppose a thing to have infinite length, but no breadth and thickness, but to be only a mere mathematical line, it is nothing; but if it have any breadth and thickness at all, though never so small, yet if it have but one infinite dimension, namely that of length, the quantity of it is infinite; it exceeds the quantity of anything, however broad, thick and long, wherein these dimensions are all finite.

So that the objections that are made against the infinite punishment of sin, from the necessity, or rather previous certainty of the occurrence of sin, arising from the decree of God, or unavoidable original corruption of nature, if they argue anything, do not argue against the infiniteness of the degree of the faultiness of sin directly, and no otherwise than they argue against any faultiness at all. For if this necessity or certainty leaves any evil at all in sin, that fault must be infinite by reason of the infinite object.

But every such objector, as would argue from hence that there is no fault at all in sin, confutes himself, and shows his own insincerity in his objection. For at the same time that he objects that men's acts are necessary, from God's decrees and original sin, and that this kind of necessity is inconsistent with faultiness in the act, his own practice shows that he does not believe what he objects to be true. Otherwise why does he at all blame men? Or why are such persons at all displeased with men, for abusive, injurious, and ungrateful acts toward them? Whatever they pretend, by this they

show that indeed they do believe that there is no necessity in men's acts, from divine decrees or corruption of nature, that is inconsistent with blame. And if their objection is this, that this previous certainty is by God's own ordering, and that where God orders an antecedent certainty of acts, he transfers all the fault from the actor on himself; their practice shows that at the same time they do not believe this, but fully believe the contrary. For when they are abused by men, they are displeased with men, and not with God only.

The light of nature teaches all mankind, that when an injury is voluntary, it is faulty, without any manner of consideration of what there might be previously to determine the occurrence of that evil act of the will. And it really teaches this, as much to those that object and cavil most, as to others, as their universal practice shows. By which it appears that such objections are insincere and perverse. Men will mention others' corrupt nature in their own case, or when they are injured, as a thing that aggravates their crime, and that wherein their faultiness partly consists. How common is it for persons, when they look on themselves greatly injured by another, to inveigh against him, and aggravate his baseness, by saying, He is a man of a most perverse spirit; he is naturally of a selfish, niggardly, or proud and haughty temper; he is one of a base and vile disposition. And yet men's natural corrupt dispositions are mentioned as an excuse for them, with respect to their sins against God, as if they rendered them blameless.

Second, that it is just with God eternally to cast off wicked men, may more abundantly appear if we consider how much sin they are guilty of. From what has been already said, it appears that if men were guilty of sin but in one particular, that is sufficient

ground of their eternal rejection and condemnation. If they are sinners, that is enough. But sinful men are not only thus, but they are full of sin; full of principles of sin, and full of acts of sin. Their guilt is like great mountains, heaped one upon another, until the pile is grown up to heaven. They are totally corrupt, in every part, in all their faculties; and all the principles of their nature, their understandings and wills; and in all their dispositions and affections, their heads, their hearts, are totally depraved. All the members of their bodies are only instruments of sin; and all their senses — seeing, hearing, tasting, etc. — are only inlets and outlets of sin, channels of corruption. There is nothing but sin, no good at all (Romans 7:18). There are the seeds of the greatest and blackest crimes. There is pride; there is enmity; there is contempt; there is quarreling; there is atheism; there is blasphemy. There is hard-heartedness, hardness greater than that of a rock or an adamant stone. There is obstinacy and perverseness, incorrigibleness and inflexibleness in sin, that will not be overcome by threatenings or promises, by awakenings or encouragements, by judgments or mercies. The very blood of God will not win the heart of a wicked man.

And there is actual wickedness without number or measure. There are breaches of every command, in thought, word, and deed; a life full of sin; days and nights filled up with sin; mercies abused and frowns despised; mercy, and justice, and all the divine perfections trampled on; and the honor of each person in the Trinity trod in the dirt. Now if one sinful word or thought has so much evil in it as to deserve eternal destruction, how they deserve to be eternally cast off and destroyed, who are guilty of so much sin!

Second, if with man's sinfulness, we consider God's sovereignty, it may serve further to clear God's justice in the eternal rejection and condemnation of sinners, from men's cavils and objections. I shall not now pretend to determine precisely what things are, and what things are not, proper acts and exercises of God's holy sovereignty; but only that God's sovereignty extends to the following things.

First, such is God's sovereign power and right, that he is originally under no obligation to keep men from sinning; but may in his providence permit, and leave them to sin. It is unreasonable to suppose that God should be obliged, if he makes a reasonable creature capable of knowing his will, and receiving a law from him, and being subject to his moral government, at the same time to make it impossible for him to sin or break his law. For if God is obliged to this, it destroys all use of any commands, laws, promises, or threatenings, and the very notion of any moral government of God over those reasonable creatures. For to what purpose would it be for God to give such and such laws, and declare his holy will to a creature, and annex promises and threatenings to move him to his duty, and make him careful to perform it, if the creature at the same time has this to think of, that God is obliged to make it impossible for him to break his laws? If God is obliged never to permit a creature to fall, there is an end of all divine laws and government.

God may permit sin, though the occurrence of sin will certainly ensue on that permission. If there were any such thing as mere chance, it would have been very unfit that God should have left it to mere chance whether man should fall or not. For chance, if there should be any such thing, is undesigning and blind. And cer-

tainly it is more fit that an event of so great importance, attended with such an infinite train of great consequences, should be disposed and ordered by infinite wisdom, than that it should be left to blind chance.

If it is said that God need not have interposed to render it impossible for man to sin, and yet not leave it to mere contingency or blind chance neither, but might have left it with man's free will to determine whether to sin or not — I answer, if God did leave it to man's free will, without any sort of ordering in the case, whence it should be previously certain how that free will should determine, then still that first determination of the will must be merely contingent or by chance. It could not have any antecedent act of the will to determine it; for I speak now of the very first act or motion of the will, respecting the affair, which may be looked upon as the prime ground and highest source of the event. To suppose this to be determined by a foregoing act is a contradiction. God's ordering this determination of the will, by his permission, does not in any respect infringe the liberty of the creature. For if the determination of the will be from blind, undesigning chance, it is no more from the agent himself, or from the will itself, than if we suppose, in the case, a wise, divine disposal by permission.

Second, it was fit that it should be at the ordering of the divine wisdom and good pleasure, whether every particular man should stand for himself, or whether the first father of mankind should be appointed as the moral and federal head and representative of the rest. If God has not liberty in this matter to determine either of these two as he pleases, it must be because determining that the first father of men should represent the rest is injurious to mankind. For if it is not injurious to mankind, how is it unjust?

But it is not injurious to mankind; for there is nothing in the nature of the case itself that makes it better for mankind that each man should stand for himself, than that all should be represented by their common father. And if there is nothing in the nature of the thing that makes the former better for mankind than the latter, then it will follow that mankind are not hurt in God's choosing and appointing the latter rather than the former.

Third, when men are fallen, and become sinful, God by his sovereignty has a right to determine about their redemption as he pleases. He has a right to determine whether he will redeem any or no. He might, if he had pleased, have left all to perish, or might have redeemed all. Or, he may redeem some, and leave others; and if he does so, he may take whom he pleases, and leave whom he pleases. To suppose that all have forfeited his favor, and deserved to perish, and to suppose that he may not leave any one individual of them to perish, implies a contradiction; because it supposes that such a one has a claim to God's favor, and is not justly liable to perish; which is contrary to the supposition.

It is meet that God should order all these things, according to his own pleasure. By reason of his greatness and glory, by which he is infinitely above all, he is worthy to be sovereign, and that his pleasure should in all things take place. He is worthy that he should make himself his end, and that he should make nothing but his own wisdom his rule in pursuing that end, without asking leave or counsel of any, and without giving any account of any of his matters. It is fit that he who is absolutely perfect, and infinitely wise, and the fountain of all wisdom, should determine everything by his own will, even things of the greatest importance, such as the eternal salvation or damnation of sinners. It is meet that he should

be thus sovereign, because he is the first being, the eternal being, from whom all other beings are; he is the Creator of all things; and all are absolutely and universally dependent on him; and therefore it is meet that he should act as the sovereign possessor of heaven and earth.

#### APPLICATION.

In the improvement of this doctrine, I would first direct myself to sinners that are afraid of damnation, in a use of conviction. This may be matter of conviction to you, that it would be just and righteous with God eternally to reject and destroy you. This is what you are in danger of: you that are a Christless sinner are a poor condemned creature; God's wrath still abides upon you, and the sentence of condemnation lies upon you. You are in God's hands, and it is uncertain what he will do with you. You are afraid what will become of you; you are afraid that it will be your portion to suffer eternal burnings; and your fears are not without grounds; you have reason to tremble every moment. But let you be never so much afraid of it, let eternal damnation be never so dreadful, yet it is just; God may nevertheless do it, and be righteous and holy and glorious in it. Though eternal damnation is what you cannot bear; and however much your heart shrinks at the thoughts of it, yet God's justice may be glorious in it. The dreadfulness of the thing on your part, and the greatness of your dread of it, do not render it the less righteous on God's part. If you think otherwise, it is a sign that you do not see yourself, that you are not sensible what sin is, nor how much of it you have been guilty of. Therefore, for your conviction, be directed:

First, to look over your past life. Inquire at the mouth of conscience, and hear what that has to testify concerning it. Consider what sort of person you are, what light you have had, and what means you have lived under — and yet how have you behaved yourself! What have those many days and nights that you have lived been filled up with? How have those years that have rolled over your heads, one after another, been spent? What has the sun shone upon you for, from day to day, while you have used its light to serve Satan? What has God kept your breath in your nostrils for, and given you food and drink from day to day, that you have spent that life and strength that have been supported by them, in opposing God and rebellion against him?

How many sorts of wickedness have you been guilty of? How manifold have been the abominations of your life? What profaneness and contempt of God has been exercised by you? How little regard have you had to the Scriptures, to the Word preached, to Sabbaths, and sacraments? How profanely have you talked, many of you, about those things that are holy? After what manner have many of you kept God's holy day, not regarding the holiness of the time, not caring what you thought of in it? You have not only spent the time in worldly, vain, and unprofitable thoughts, but in immoral thoughts; pleasing yourself with the reflection on past acts of wickedness, and contriving new acts. Have you not spent much holy time, in gratifying your lusts in your imaginations; not only holy time, but the very time of God's public worship, when you have appeared in God's more immediate presence? How many Sabbaths have you spent, one after another, in a most wretched manner! Some of you not only in worldly and wicked thoughts, but also in very wicked outward behavior!

And how have you behaved yourself in the time of family prayer! And what a practice have many of you made of absenting yourselves from the worship of the families you belong to, for the sake of vain company! And how have you continued in the neglect of secret prayer — thereby willfully living in a known sin, going directly against as plain a command as any in the Bible! Have you not been one that has cast off fear, and restrained prayer before God?

What wicked carriage have some of you been guilty of toward your parents! How far have you been from paying that honor to them that God has required! Have you not even harbored ill will and malice toward them? And when they have displeased you, have you not wished evil to them? And shown your vile spirit in your behavior? Have not some of you mocked them behind their backs; and like the accursed Ham and Canaan, derided your parents' nakedness instead of covering it? Have not some of you often disobeyed your parents, and refused to be subject to them?

What revenge and malice have you been guilty of toward your neighbors? How have you indulged this spirit of the devil, hating others, and wishing evil to them, rejoicing when evil befell them, and grieving at others' prosperity, and living in such a way for a long time! Have not some of you allowed a passionate, furious spirit, and behaved yourselves in your anger more like wild beasts than like Christians?

What covetousness has been in many of you? Such has been your inordinate love of the world, and care about the things of it, that it has taken up your heart; you have allowed no room for God and religion. You have minded the world more than your eternal salvation. For the vanities of the world, you have neglected read-

ing, praying, and meditation. For the things of the world, you have broken the Sabbath. For the world you have spent a great deal of your time in quarreling. For the world you have cast God, and Christ, and heaven behind your back. For the world you have sold your own soul. You have been a mere earth-worm, that is never in its element but when groveling and buried in the earth.

How much of a spirit of pride has appeared in you, which is in a peculiar manner the spirit and condemnation of the devil! How have some of you boasted in your apparel! Others in their riches! Others in their knowledge and abilities! How it has galled you to see others above you! How much has it gone against the grain, for you to give others their due honor! And how have you shown your pride by setting up your wills, and opposing others, and stirring up and promoting division, and a party spirit in public affairs!

How sensual have you been! Are there not some here, that have debased themselves below the dignity of human nature, by wallowing in sensual filthiness, as swine in the mire, or as filthy vermin feeding with delight on rotten carrion? What intemperance have some of you been guilty of! How much of your precious time have you spent at the tavern, and in drinking companies, when you ought to have been at home seeking God, and your salvation in your families and closets!

And what abominable lasciviousness have some of you been guilty of! How have you indulged yourself, from day to day and from night to night, in all manner of unclean imaginations! Has not your soul been filled with them, until it has become a hold of foul spirits, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird? What foul-mouthed persons have some of you been, often in lewd and lascivious talk, and unclean songs, in which were things not fit to

be spoken! And such company, where such conversation has been carried on, has been your delight. And what unclean acts and practices have you defiled yourself with! God and your own consciences know what abominable lasciviousness you have practiced in things not fit to be named, when you have been alone; when you ought to have been reading, or meditating, or on your knees before God in secret prayer. And how have you corrupted others, as well as polluted yourselves! By your vile practices and examples, you have made room for Satan, and invited his presence, and established his interest, in the town where you have lived.

What lying have some of you been guilty of, especially in your childhood! And have not your heart and lips often disagreed, since you came to riper years? What fraud, and deceit, and unfaithfulness, have many of you practiced in your dealings with your neighbors, that your own heart is conscious to, if you have not been noted for it by others.

And how have some of you behaved yourselves in your family relations! How have you neglected your children's souls! And not only so, but have corrupted their minds by your bad examples; and instead of training them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, have rather brought them up in the devil's service!

How have some of you attended that sacred ordinance of the Lord's Supper, without any manner of serious preparation, and in a careless, slight frame of spirit, and chiefly to comply with custom! Have you not ventured to put the sacred symbols of the body and blood of Christ into your mouth, while at the same time you lived in ways of known sins, and intended no other than still to go on in the same wicked practices? And it may be you have sat at the Lord's table, with rancor in your heart against some of your

brethren that you have sat there with. You have come even to that holy feast of love among God's children, with the leaven of malice and envy in your heart; and so have eaten and drunk judgment to yourself.

What stupidity and sottishness has attended your course of wickedness! Which has appeared in your obstinacy under awakening dispensations of God's Word and providence. And how have some of you backslidden, after you have set out in religion, and quenched God's Spirit after he had been striving with you! And what unsteadiness, and slothfulness, and great misimprovement of God's strivings with you, have you been chargeable with, who have long been the subject of them!

Now, can you think when you have thus behaved yourself, that God is obliged to show you mercy? Are you not after all this ashamed to talk of its being hard with God to cast you off? Does it become one that has lived such a life to open his mouth to excuse himself, or object against God's justice in his condemnation, or to complain of it as hard in God not to give him converting and pardoning grace, and make him his child, and bestow on him eternal life! If this has been your manner, does it not show how little you have considered yourself, and how little a sense you have had of your own sinfulness?

Second, be directed to consider, if God should eternally reject and destroy you, what an agreeableness and exact mutual correspondence there would be between God's so dealing with you and your spirit and behavior. There would not only be an equality but a similarity. God declares that his dealings with men shall be suitable to their disposition and practice. Psalm 18:25-26: 'With the merciful man you will show yourself merciful; with an upright man

you will show yourself upright; with the pure you will show yourself pure; and with the perverse you will show yourself perverse.' How much soever you dread damnation, and are frightened and concerned at the thoughts of it, yet if God should indeed eternally damn you, you would but be met with in your own way; you would be dealt with exactly according to your own dealing. God would but measure to you in the same measure in which you measure. Surely it is but fair that you should be made to receive in the same measure in which you give.

Here I would particularly show: first, that if God should eternally destroy you, it would be agreeable to your treatment of God; second, that it would be agreeable to your treatment of Jesus Christ; third, that it would be agreeable to your behavior toward your neighbors; and fourth, that it would be according to your own foolish behavior toward yourself.

First, if God should forever cast you off, it would be exactly agreeable to your treatment of him. That you may be sensible of this, consider,

First, you never have exercised the least degree of love to God; and therefore it would be agreeable to your treatment of him, if he should never express any love to you. When God converts and saves a sinner, it is a wonderful and unspeakable manifestation of divine love. When a poor lost soul is brought home to Christ, and has all his sins forgiven him, and is made a child of God, it will take up a whole eternity to express and declare the greatness of that love. And why should God be obliged to express such wonderful love to you, who never exercised the least degree of love to him in all your life? You never have loved God, who is infinitely glorious and lovely; and why then is God under obligation to love you,

who are all over deformed and loathsome, as a filthy worm, or rather a hateful viper? You have no benevolence in your heart toward God; you never rejoiced in God's happiness; if he had been miserable, and that had been possible, you would have liked it as well as if he were happy. And why then should God be looked upon as obliged to take so much care for your happiness, as to do such great things for it as he does for those that are saved? Has it not been so, that if you could but promote your private interest, and gratify your own lusts, you cared not how much the glory of God suffered? And why may not God advance his own glory, in the ruin of your welfare, not caring how much your interest suffers by it? You never so much as stirred one step, sincerely making the glory of God your end, or acting from real respect to him. And why then is it hard, if God does not do such great things for you, as the changing of your nature, raising you from spiritual death to life, conquering the powers of darkness for you, translating you out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of his dear Son, delivering you from eternal misery, and bestowing eternal glory upon you?

Second, you have slighted, and made light of God; and why then may not God justly slight you? When sinners are sensible in some measure of their misery, they are ready to think it hard that God will take no more notice of them. But then ought they not to consider that as their souls are precious, so is God's honor precious? The honor of the infinite God, the great King of heaven and earth, is a thing of as great importance — and surely may justly be so esteemed by God — as the happiness of you, a poor little worm. But yet you have slighted that honor of God, and valued it no more than the dirt under your feet. You have been told that such and

such things were contrary to the will of a holy God, and against his honor; but you cared not for that. God called upon you, and exhorted you to be more tender of his honor; but you went on without regarding him. Thus have you slighted God! And yet, is it a heinous thing for God to slight you? Are you more honorable than God, that he must be obliged to make much of you, however lightly you make of him and his glory?

And you have not only slighted God in time past, but you slight him still. You indeed now make a pretense and show of honoring him, in your prayers, and attendance on other external duties, and by a sober countenance and seeming devoutness in your words and behavior; but it is all mere dissembling. That downcast look and seeming reverence is not from any honor you have to God in your heart; though you would have it go so, and would have God take it so. You who have not believed in Christ have not the least jot of honor to God; that show of it is merely forced, and what you are driven to by fear, like those mentioned in Psalm 66:3: Through the greatness of your power shall your enemies submit themselves to you — in the original, they shall lie to you; that is, yield feigned submission, and dissemble respect and honor. Sometimes it may be you weep in your prayers, and in hearing sermons, and hope God will take notice of it, and take it for some honor; but he sees it to be all hypocrisy. You weep for yourself; you are afraid of hell; and do you think that is worthy that God should take much notice of you, because you can cry when you are in danger of being damned, when at the same time you care nothing for God's honor?

Seeing you thus disregard so great a God, is it a heinous thing for God to slight you, a little, wretched, despicable creature; a worm, a mere nothing, and less than nothing; a vile insect that has

risen up in contempt against the majesty of heaven and earth?

Third, why should God be looked upon as obliged to bestow salvation upon you, when you have been so ungrateful for the mercies he has bestowed upon you already? God has tried you with a great deal of kindness, and he never has sincerely been thanked by you for any of it. God has watched over you, and preserved you, and provided for you, and followed you with mercy all your days; and yet you have continued sinning against him. He has given you food and clothing, but you have used both in the service of sin. He has preserved you while you slept; but when you awoke, it was to return to the old trade of sinning. God, notwithstanding this ingratitude, has still continued his mercy; but his kindness has never won your heart, or brought you to a more grateful behavior toward him. It may be you have received many remarkable mercies, recoveries from sickness, or preservations of your life, when at one time and another exposed by accidents, when if you had died, you would have gone directly to hell; but you never had any true thankfulness for any of these mercies. God has kept you out of hell, and continued your day of grace, and the offers of salvation, this so long a time. But what thanks has God received for it? What kind of returns have you made for all this kindness? As God has multiplied mercies, so have you multiplied provocations.

And yet now are you ready to quarrel for mercy, and to find fault with God, not only that he does not bestow more mercy, but to contend with him, because he does not bestow infinite mercy upon you — heaven with all it contains, and even himself, for your eternal portion? What ideas have you of yourself, that you think

God is obliged to do so much for you, though you treat him never so ungratefully for his kindness that you have been followed with all the days of your life?

Fourth, you have voluntarily chosen to be with Satan in his enmity and opposition to God; how justly therefore might you be with him in his punishment! You did not choose to be on God's side, but rather chose to side with the devil, and have obstinately continued in it, against God's often repeated calls and counsels. You have chosen rather to hearken to Satan than to God, and would be with him in his work. You have given yourself up to him, to be subject to his power and government, in opposition to God. How justly therefore may God also give you up to him, and leave you in his power, to accomplish your ruin? Seeing you have yielded yourself to his will, to do as he would have you, surely God may leave you in his hands to execute his will upon you. If men will be with God's enemy, and on his side, why is God obliged to redeem them out of his hands, when they have done his work? Doubtless you would be glad to serve the devil, and be God's enemy while you live, and then to have God your friend, and to deliver you from the devil, when you come to die. But will God be unjust if he deals otherwise by you? No, surely! It will be altogether and perfectly just, that you should have your portion with him with whom you have chosen your work; and that you should be in his possession to whose dominion you have yielded yourself. And if you cry to God for deliverance, he may most justly give you that answer: Go to the gods which you have chosen (Judges 10:14).

Fifth, consider how often you have refused to hear God's calls to you, and how just it would therefore be, if he should refuse to hear you when you call upon him. You are ready, it may be, to

complain that you have often prayed, and earnestly begged of God to show you mercy, and yet have no answer of prayer. But do you consider how often God has called, and you have denied him? God has called earnestly and for a long time; he has called again and again, in his Word and in his providence, and you have refused. You were not uneasy for fear you should not show regard enough to his calls. You let him call as loud and as long as he would; for your part, you had no leisure to attend to what he said; you had other business to mind; you had these and those lusts to gratify and please, and worldly concerns to attend. When the ministers of Christ that he sent on that errand have stood and pleaded with you in his name, Sabbath after Sabbath, how little were you moved by it! Was it no crime for you to refuse to hear when God called? And yet is it now very hard that God does not hear your earnest calls, and that though your calling on God is not from any respect to him, but merely from self-love? The devil would beg as earnestly as you, if he had any hope to get salvation by it, and yet be as much of a devil as he is now. What can have more justice in it than that in Proverbs 1:24-28: Because I have called, and you refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but you have set at nothing all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear comes; when your fear comes as desolation, and your destruction comes as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish come upon you: then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me.

Sixth, have you not taken encouragement to sin against God, on that very presumption that God would show you mercy when you sought it? And may not God justly refuse you that mercy that

you have so presumed upon? That has been what you have flattered yourself with, and that which has made you bold to disobey God, namely, that though you did so, yet God would show you mercy when you cried earnestly to him for it. How righteous therefore would it be in God, to disappoint such a wicked presumption! It was upon that very hope that you dared to affront the majesty of heaven, so dreadfully as you have done; and can you now be so foolish as to think that God is obliged not to frustrate that hope?

When a sinner takes encouragement to neglect that secret prayer that God has commanded, and to gratify his lusts, and to live a carnal vain life, and thwart God, and run upon him, and contemn him to his face, thinking with himself, If I do so, God will not damn me; he is a merciful God, and therefore when I seek his mercy he will bestow it upon me — must God be accounted hard because he will not do according to such a sinner's presumption? If this be the case, God has no liberty to vindicate his own honor and majesty; but must lay himself open to all manner of affronts, and yield himself up to the abuses of vile men, and let them disobey, despise, and dishonor him as much as they will; and when they have done, his mercy and pardoning grace must not be in his own power and at his own disposal, but he must be obliged to dispense it at their call. What mean, low, and strange thoughts have such men of God, who think thus of him?

Consider that you have injured God the more, and have been the worse enemy to him, for his being a merciful God. So have you treated that attribute of God's mercy! How just is it therefore that you should never have any benefit of that attribute!

There is something peculiarly heinous in sinning against the mercy of God more than other attributes. There is such base and horrid ingratitude, in being the worse to God because he is a being of infinite goodness and grace, that it above all things renders wickedness vile and detestable. This ought to win us, and engage us to serve God better; but instead of that, to sin against him the more, has something inexpressibly bad in it, and does in a peculiar manner enhance guilt and increase wrath; as seems to be intimated in Romans 2:4-5: Or do you despise the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? But after your hardness and impenitent heart, you are treasuring up for yourself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.

The greater the mercy of God is, the more should you be engaged to love him, and live to his glory. But it has been the contrary with you; the consideration of the mercies of God being so exceedingly great is the thing by which you have encouraged yourself in sin. You have heard that the mercy of God was without bounds, that it was sufficient to pardon the greatest sinner, and you have upon that very account ventured to be a very great sinner. Though it was very offensive to God, though you heard that God infinitely hated sin, and that such practices as you went on in were exceedingly contrary to his nature, will, and glory, yet that did not make you uneasy. You heard that he was a very merciful God, and had grace enough to pardon you, and so cared not how offensive your sins were to him. How long have some of you gone on in sin, and what great sins have some of you been guilty of, on

that presumption! Now, how righteous would it be if God should swear in his wrath, that you should never be the better for his being infinitely merciful!

Your ingratitude has been the greater, in that you have not only abused the attribute of God's mercy, taking encouragement from it to continue in sin, but you have thus abused this mercy under that very notion of its being exercised toward you, in a supposition that God would exercise infinite mercy to you in particular; which consideration should have especially endeared God to you. You have taken encouragement to sin the more, from that consideration that Christ came into the world and died to save sinners. That is the thanks Christ has had from you, for enduring such a tormenting death for his enemies! Now, how justly might it be that God should refuse that you should ever be the better for his Son's laying down his life! It was because of these things that you put off seeking salvation: you would take the pleasures of sin still longer, hardening yourself with the thought that mercy was infinite, and it would not be too late if you sought afterward. Now, how justly may God disappoint you in this, and order it so that it shall be too late!

Seventh, how have some of you risen up against God, and in the frame of your minds opposed him in his sovereign dispensations! And how justly upon that account might God oppose you, and set himself against you! You never yet would submit to God; you never could willingly accept that God should have dominion over the world, and govern it for his own glory, according to his own wisdom. You, a poor worm, a potsherd, a broken piece of an earthen vessel, have dared to find fault and quarrel with God (Isaiah 45:9). Yet you have ventured to do it: Who are you, O man, that reply against God (Romans 9:20)? Yet you have thought your-

self big enough. You have taken upon yourself to call God to account, why he does thus and thus; you have said to the Almighty, What are you doing?

If you have been restrained by fear from openly venting your opposition and enmity of heart against God's government, yet it has been in you; you have not been quiet in the frame of your mind; you have had the heart of a viper within, and have been ready to spit venom at God. And it is well if sometimes you have not actually done it, by tolerating blasphemous thoughts, and malignant risings of heart against him; yea, and the frame of your heart has in some measure appeared, in an impatient and fretful behavior.

Now, seeing you have thus opposed God, how just is it that God should oppose you! Or, is it because you are so much better, and so much greater than God, that it is a crime for God to make that opposition against you that you do against him? Do you think you ought to appropriate the liberty of making opposition to yourself, as being your prerogative, so that you may be an enemy to God, but God must by no means be an enemy to you, but must be looked upon under obligation nevertheless to help you and save you by his blood, and bestow his best blessings upon you?

Consider how in the frame of your mind, you have thwarted God, in those very exercises of mercy toward others, that you are seeking for yourself. God's exercising his infinite grace toward your neighbors has put you into an ill frame, and it may be set you into a tumult of mind. How justly therefore may God refuse ever to exercise that mercy toward you! Have you not thus opposed God's showing mercy to others, even at the very time when you pretended to be earnest with God for pity and help for yourself? And

will you look to God still with a claim of mercy, and contend with him for it notwithstanding? Can you who have such a heart, and have thus behaved yourself, come to God for anything other than mere sovereign mercy?

Second, if you should be forever cast off by God, it would be agreeable to your treatment of Jesus Christ. It would have been just with God if he had cast you off forever, without ever making you the offer of a Savior. But God has not done that; but has provided a Savior for sinners, and offered him to you, even his own Son Jesus Christ; who is the only Savior of men; all that are not forever cast off are saved by him. God offers men salvation through him, and has promised that if we come to him we shall not be cast off. But you have treated, and still treat this Savior after such a manner, that if you should be eternally cast off by God, it would be most agreeable to your behavior toward him; which appears by this:

That you reject Christ, and will not have him for your Savior.

If God offers you a Savior from deserved punishment, and you will not receive him, then surely it is just that you should go without a Savior. Or, is God obliged, because you do not like this Savior, to provide you another? If when he has given an infinitely honorable and glorious Person, even his only begotten Son, to be a sacrifice for sin in the fire of his wrath, and so provided salvation, and this Savior is offered to you, you are not suited in him, and refuse to accept of him — is God therefore unjust if he does not save you? Is he obliged to save you in a way of your own choosing, because you do not like the way of his choosing? Or will you charge

Christ with injustice because he does not become your Savior, when at the same time you will not have him, when he offers himself to you, and beseeches you to accept of him as your Savior?

I am sensible that by this time, many persons are ready to open their mouths in objection against this. If all should speak what they now think, we should hear a murmuring all over the meeting-house, and one and another would say, I cannot see how it can be that I am not willing that Christ should be my Savior, when I would give all the world that he were my Savior; how is it possible that I should not be willing to have Christ for my Savior, when this is what I am seeking after, and praying for, and striving for, as for my life?

Here therefore I would endeavor to convince you that you are under a gross mistake in this matter. And first, I would endeavor to show the weakness of the grounds of your mistake. And second, to demonstrate to you, that you have rejected, and do willfully reject Jesus Christ.

First, that you may see the weakness of the grounds of your mistake, consider:

First, there is a great deal of difference between a willingness not to be damned, and being willing to receive Christ for your Savior. You have the former; there is no doubt to be made of that; nobody supposes that you love misery so well as to choose an eternity of it. And so doubtless you are willing to be saved from eternal misery. But that is a very different thing from being willing to come to Christ. Persons very commonly mistake the one for the other, but they are quite two things. You may love the deliverance, but hate the Deliverer. You tell of a willingness; but consider what

is the object of that willingness. It does not respect Christ; the way of salvation by him is not at all the object of it; but it is wholly terminated on your escape from misery. The inclination of your will goes no further than self; it never reaches Christ. You are willing not to be miserable; that is, you love yourself; and there your choice terminates. And it is but a vain pretense and delusion to say or think that you are willing to accept of Christ.

Second, there is certainly a great deal of difference between a forced compliance, and a free willingness. Force and freedom cannot consist together. Now that willingness that you tell of, whereby you think you are willing to have Christ for a Savior, is merely a forced thing. Your heart does not go out after Christ of itself; but you are forced and driven to seek an interest in him. Christ has no share at all in your heart; there is no manner of closing of the heart with him. This forced compliance is not what Christ seeks of you; he seeks a free and willing acceptance (Psalm 110:3): 'Your people shall be willing in the day of your power.' He seeks not that you should receive him against your will, but with a free will; he seeks entertainment in your heart and choice.

If you refuse thus to receive Christ, how just is it that Christ should refuse to receive you! How reasonable are Christ's terms, who offers to save all those that willingly, or with a good will, accept of him for their Savior! Who can rationally expect that Christ should force himself upon any man to be his Savior? Or what can be looked for more reasonable, than that all who would be saved by Christ should heartily and freely entertain him? And surely it would be very dishonorable for Christ to offer himself upon lower terms.

But I would now proceed,

Second, to show that it is really so that you are not willing to have Christ for a Savior. To convince you of it, consider:

First, how is it possible that you should be willing to accept of Christ as a Savior from the desert of a punishment, that you are not sensible you have deserved? If you are truly willing to accept of Christ as a Savior, it must be as a sacrifice to make atonement for your guilt. Christ came into the world on this errand, to offer himself as an atonement, to answer for our desert of punishment. But how is it possible that you should be willing to accept of Christ, as an atonement for that guilt that you are not sensible that you have? If you have not really deserved everlasting burnings in hell, then the very offer of an atonement for such a desert is an imposition upon you. Now therefore it is impossible that a man who is not convinced of his guilt can be willing to accept of an offer; because he cannot be willing to accept the charge that the offer implies; that he looks upon as injurious. A man who is not convinced that he has deserved so dreadful a punishment cannot willingly submit to be charged with it. Therefore he cannot freely accept of Christ, under that notion, as a Savior from that guilt, and from the desert of such a punishment; for such an acceptance is an implicit owning that he does deserve such a punishment.

I do not say, but that men may be willing to be saved from an undeserved punishment; they may rather not suffer it than suffer it. But a man cannot be willing to accept one at God's hands, under the notion of a Savior from a punishment deserved from him, that he thinks he has not deserved. Such a one cannot like the way of salvation by Christ; for if he thinks he has not deserved hell, then he will think that freedom from hell is a debt; and therefore cannot willingly and heartily receive it as a free gift.

Now by this it is evident that you are not willing to accept of Christ as your Savior; because you never yet had such a sense of your own sinfulness, and such a conviction of your great guilt in God's sight, as to be indeed convinced that you lay justly condemned to the punishment of hell. You were never convinced that you had forfeited all favor, and were in God's hands, and at his sovereign and arbitrary disposal, to be either destroyed or saved, just as he pleased. You were never yet convinced of the sovereignty of God. Hence are there so many objections arising against the justice of your punishment, from original sin, and from God's decrees, from mercy shown to others, and the like.

Second, that you are not sincerely willing to accept of Christ as your Savior appears by this, that you have never been convinced that he is sufficient for the work of your salvation. You never had a sight or sense of any such excellency or worthiness in Christ, as should give such great value to his blood and his mediation with God, as that it was sufficient to be accepted for such exceedingly guilty creatures, and those who have so provoked God, and exposed themselves to such amazing wrath. A saying it is so, and a customary yielding and allowing it to be as others say, is a very different thing from being really convinced of it, and being made sensible of it in your own heart. The sufficiency of Christ depends upon, or rather consists in, his excellency. It is because he is so excellent a person, that his blood is of sufficient value to atone for sin, and it is hence that his obedience is so worthy in God's sight; it is also hence that his intercession is so prevalent. And therefore those who never had any spiritual sight or sense of Christ's excellency cannot be sensible of his sufficiency.

And that sinners are not convinced that Christ is sufficient for the work he has undertaken, appears most manifestly when they are under great convictions of their sin, and danger of God's wrath. Though it may be before they thought they could allow Christ to be sufficient — for it is easy to allow any one to be sufficient for our defense, at a time when we see no danger — yet when they come to be sensible of their guilt, and God's wrath, what discouraging thoughts do they entertain! How are they ready to draw toward despair, as if there were no hope or help for such wicked creatures as they! The reason is, they have no apprehension or sense of any other way that God's majesty can be vindicated but only in their misery. To tell them of the blood of Christ signifies nothing; it does not relieve their sinking, despairing hearts. This makes it most evident that they are not convinced that Christ is sufficient to be their mediator.

And as long as they are unconvinced of this, it is impossible they should be willing to accept of him as their mediator and Savior. A man in distressing fear will not willingly betake himself to a fort that he judges not sufficient to defend him from the enemy. A man will not willingly venture out into the ocean, in a ship that he suspects is leaky, and will sink before he gets through his voyage.

Third, it is evident that you are not willing to have Christ for your Savior, because you have so mean an opinion of him that you dare not trust his faithfulness. One who undertakes to be the Savior of souls needs to be faithful; for if he fails in such a trust, how great is the loss! But you are not convinced of Christ's faithfulness; as is evident, because at such times as when you are in a considerable measure sensible of your guilt and God's anger, you can-

not be convinced that Christ is willing to accept of you, or that he stands ready to receive you if you should come to him, though Christ so much invites you to come to him, and has so fully declared that he will not reject you if you do come; as particularly, John 6:37: He that comes to me I will in no wise cast out. Now, there is no man who can be heartily willing to trust his eternal welfare in the hands of an unfaithful person, or one whose faithfulness he suspects.

Fourth, you are not willing to be saved in that way by Christ, as is evident, because you are not willing that your own goodness should be set at nothing. In the way of salvation by Christ men's own goodness is wholly set at nothing; there is no account at all made of it. Now you cannot be willing to be saved in a way wherein your own goodness is set at nothing, as is evident by the fact that you make much of it yourself. You make much of your prayers and pains in religion, and are often thinking of them; how considerable do they appear to you, when you look back upon them! And how much are some of you in thinking how much more you have done than some others, and in expecting some respect or regard that God should manifest to what you do! Now, if you make so much of what you do yourself, it is impossible that you should be freely willing that God should make nothing of it.

Seeing therefore that it is so evident that you refuse to accept of Christ as your Savior, why is Christ to be blamed that he does not save you? Christ has offered himself to you to be your Savior in time past, and he continues offering himself still, and you continue to reject him, and yet complain that he does not save you. So strangely unreasonable, and inconsistent with themselves, are gospel sinners!

But I expect that there are many of you, that in your hearts still object; your mouths are not stopped. Such an objection as this is probably now in the hearts of many here present.

Objection: If it is so, that I am not willing to have Christ for my Savior, yet I cannot make myself willing.

But I would give an answer to this objection, by laying down two things, that must be acknowledged to be exceedingly evident.

First, it is no excuse that you cannot receive Christ of yourself, unless you would if you could. This is so evident of itself, that it scarcely needs any proof. Certainly if persons would not if they could, it is just the same thing as to the blame that lies upon them, whether they can or cannot. If you were willing, and then found that you could not, your being unable would alter the case, and might be some excuse; because then the defect would not be in your will, but only in your ability. But as long as you will not, it is no matter what the ability is, whether you have ability or no ability.

If you are not willing to accept of Christ, it will follow that you have no sincere willingness to be willing; because the will always necessarily approves of, and rests in, its own acts. To suppose the contrary would be to suppose a contradiction; it would be to suppose that a man's will is contrary to itself, or that he wills contrary to what he himself wills. So that as you are not willing to come to Christ, and cannot make yourself willing, so you have no sincere desire to be willing; and therefore may most justly perish without a Savior. There is no excuse at all for you; for say what you will about your inability, the seat of your blame lies in your perverse will, that is an enemy to the Savior. It is in vain for you to tell of your want of power, as long as your will is found defective.

Second, if you would be willing if you could, that is no excuse, unless your willingness to be willing be sincere. That which is hypocritical, and does not come from the heart, but is merely forced, ought wholly to be set aside, as worthy of no consideration, and that because common sense teaches that that which is not hearty but hypocritical is indeed nothing, being only a show of what is not. But if you set aside all that is not free, and call nothing a willingness but a free hearty willingness, then see how the case stands, and whether or not you have not lost all your excuse for standing out against the calls of the gospel. You say you would make yourself willing to accept if you could; but it is not from any good principle that you are willing for that; it is not from any free inclination, or true respect to Christ, or any love to your duty, or any spirit of obedience, or from the influence of any manner of real respect, or tendency in your heart, toward any thing that is good, or from any other principle than such as is in the hearts of devils, and would make them have the same sort of willingness in the same circumstances. It is therefore evident that there can be no goodness in that wishing to be willing to come to Christ. And that which has no goodness, cannot be an excuse for any badness.

Sinners therefore spend their time in foolish arguing and objecting, making much of that which is good for nothing, making those excuses that are not worth offering. It is in vain to keep making objections: you stand justly condemned; the blame lies all at your door. You continue willfully and wickedly rejecting Jesus Christ, and will not have him for your Savior, and therefore it is foolish madness in you to charge Christ with injustice because he does not save you.

Here is the sin of unbelief! Thus the guilt of that great sin lies upon you! If you had never thus treated a Savior, you might most justly have been damned to all eternity. But besides this, when God, notwithstanding, has offered you his own dear Son to save you from this endless misery you had deserved, and not only so, but to make you happy eternally in the enjoyment of himself, you refused him, and would not have him for your Savior, and still refuse to comply with the offers of the gospel. What can render any person more inexcusable? If you should now perish forever, what can you have to say?

Hereby the justice of God in your destruction appears in two respects:

First, it is more abundantly manifest that it is just that you should be destroyed. Justice never appears so conspicuous as it does after refused and abused mercy. Justice in damnation appears abundantly the more clear and bright, after a willful rejection of offered salvation. What can an offended prince do more than freely offer pardon to a condemned malefactor? And if he refuses to accept of it, will any one say that his execution is unjust?

Second, God's justice will appear in your greater destruction. Besides the guilt that you would have had if a Savior never had been offered, you bring that great additional guilt upon you, of most ungratefully refusing offered deliverance. What more base and vile treatment of God can there be, than for you, when justly condemned to eternal misery, and ready to be executed, and God graciously sends his own Son, who comes and knocks at your door with a pardon in his hand, and not only a pardon, but a deed of eternal glory — and you, out of dislike and enmity against God and his Son, refuse to accept those benefits at his hands! How justly

may the anger of God be greatly increased by it! When a sinner thus ungratefully rejects mercy, his last error is worse than the first; this is more heinous than all his former rebellion, and may justly bring down more fearful wrath upon him.

The heinousness of this sin of rejecting a Savior especially appears in two things:

First, the greatness of the benefits offered; which appears in the greatness of the deliverance, which is from inexpressible degrees of corruption and wickedness of heart and life, and from misery that is everlasting; and in the greatness and glory of the inheritance purchased and offered (Hebrews 2:3): How shall we escape, if we neglect so great a salvation?

Second, the wonderfulness of the way in which these benefits are procured and offered. That God should lay help on his own Son, when our case was so deplorable that help could be had in no mere creature; and that he should undertake for us, and should come into the world, and take upon him our nature, and should not only appear in a low state of life, but should die such a death, and endure such torments and contempt for sinners while enemies — how wonderful is it! And what tongue or pen can set forth the greatness of the ingratitude, baseness and perverseness that there is in it, when a perishing sinner who is in the most extreme necessity of salvation, rejects it, after it is procured in such a way as this! That so glorious a person should be thus treated, and that when he comes on so gracious an errand! That he should stand so long offering himself, and calling and inviting, as he has done to many of you, and all to no purpose, but all the while be set at nothing! Surely you might justly be cast into hell without one more offer of a Savior! Herein you have exceeded the very devils; for they never

rejected the offers of such glorious mercy; no, nor of any mercy at all. This will be the distinguishing condemnation of gospel sinners (John 3:18): He that has not believed is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

That outward smoothness of your carriage toward Christ, that appearance of respect to him in your looks, your speeches, and gestures, does not argue but that you set him at nothing in your heart. There may be much of these outward shows of respect, and yet you be like Judas that betrayed the Son of Man with a kiss; and like those mockers that bowed the knee before him, and at the same time spit in his face.

Third, if God should forever cast you off and destroy you, it would be agreeable to your treatment of others. It would be no other than what would be exactly answerable to your behavior toward your fellow creatures, who have the same human nature, and are naturally in the same circumstances with you, and whom you ought to love as yourself. And that appears especially in two things.

First, you have many of you been opposed in your spirit to the salvation of others. There are several ways that natural men manifest a spirit of opposition against the salvation of other souls. It sometimes appears by a fear that their companions, acquaintances, and equals will obtain mercy, and so become unspeakably happier than they. It is sometimes manifested by an uneasiness at the news of others having hopefully obtained. It appears when persons envy others for it, and dislike them the more, and disrelish their talk, and avoid their company, and cannot bear to hear their religious discourse, and especially to receive warnings and coun-

sels from them. And it often appears by their backwardness to entertain charitable thoughts of them, and their being hard to convince that it is really so that they have obtained mercy, and a forwardness to listen to anything that seems to contradict it. The devil hated to own Job's sincerity (Job 1:7 and Job 2:3-5). And there appears very often much of this spirit of the devil in natural men. Sometimes they are ready to make a ridicule of others' pretended godliness. There are many that join with Sanballat and Tobiah, and are of the same spirit with them. There always was, and always will be, an enmity between the seed of the serpent, and the seed of the woman. It appeared in Cain who hated his brother, because he was more acceptable to God than himself; and it appears still in these times, and in this place. There are many who are like the elder brother, who could not bear it that the prodigal when he returned should be received with such joy and good entertainment, and was put into a fret by it, both against his brother that had returned, and his father who made him so welcome (Luke 15).

Thus have many of you been opposed to the salvation of others, who stand in as much necessity of it as you. You have been against others being delivered from everlasting misery, who can bear it no better than you; not because their salvation would do you any hurt, or their damnation help you, any otherwise than as it would gratify that vile spirit that is so much like the spirit of the devil, who, because he is miserable himself, is unwilling that others should be happy. How just therefore is it that God should be opposed to your salvation! If you have so little love or mercy in you, as to begrudge your neighbor's salvation, whom you have no cause to hate, but the law of God and nature requires you to love, why is God bound to exercise such infinite love and mercy to you,

as to save you at the price of his own blood? You are not willing that others should be converted, that have behaved themselves injuriously toward you; and yet will you count it hard if God does not bestow converting grace upon you, who have deserved ten thousand times as ill of God, as ever any of your neighbors have of you? You are opposed to God's showing mercy to these and those, that you think have been vicious persons, and are very unworthy of such mercy. Is others' unworthiness a just reason why God should not bestow mercy on them? And yet will God be considered hard, if notwithstanding all your unworthiness, and the abominableness of your spirit and practice in his sight, he does not show you mercy? You would have God bestow liberally on you and not upbraid; but yet when he shows mercy to others, you are ready to upbraid as soon as you hear of it. You immediately think with yourself how ill they have behaved themselves; and it may be your mouths on this occasion are open, enumerating and aggravating the sins they have been guilty of. You would have God bury all your faults, and wholly blot out all your transgressions; but yet if he bestows mercy on others, it may be you will take that occasion to rake up all their old faults that you can think of. One would think that the consideration of these things should forever stop your mouth.

Second, consider how you have promoted others' damnation. Many of you, by the bad examples you have set, by corrupting the minds of others, by your sinful conversation, by leading them into sin, or strengthening them in sin, and by the mischief that you have done in human society in other ways, have been guilty of those things that have tended to others' damnation. You have heretofore appeared on the side of sin and Satan, and have be-

haved yourself so as to strengthen their interest, and have been in many ways accessory to others' sins, have hardened others' hearts, and thereby have done what has tended to the ruin of their souls.

And without doubt there are those here present, that have been in a great measure the means of others' damnation. Though it is true that it is determined by God who he will save, and who not, from all eternity, yet one man may really be a means of others' damnation, as well as salvation. Christ charges the scribes and Pharisees with this (Matthew 23:13): You shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in yourselves, neither do you allow those that are entering to go in. We have no reason to think that this congregation has none in it, who are cursed from day to day by poor souls that are crying out in hell, whose damnation they have been a means of, or have greatly contributed to.

There are many who contribute to their own children's damnation, by neglecting their education and setting them bad examples, and bringing them up in sinful ways. They take some care of their bodies, but take but little care of their poor souls; they provide for them bread to eat, but deny them the bread of life that their famishing souls stand in need of. And are there no such parents here who have thus treated their children? If their children are not gone to hell, it is no thanks to them; it is not because they have not done what has tended to their destruction. Seeing therefore you have had no more regard to others' salvation, and have promoted their damnation, how justly might God leave you to perish yourself?

Fourth, if God should eternally cast you off, it would but be agreeable to your own behavior toward yourself; and that in two respects:

First, in being so careless of your own salvation. You have refused to take care for your salvation, as God has counseled and commanded you, from time to time; and why may not God neglect it, now you seek it of him? Is God obliged to be more careful of your happiness, than you are, either of your own happiness, or his glory? Is God bound to take that care for you, out of love to you, that you will not take for yourself, either from love to yourself, or regard to his authority? How long, and how greatly, have you neglected the welfare of your precious soul, refusing to take pains and deny yourself, or put yourself a little out of your way for your salvation, while God has been calling upon you! Neither your duty to God, nor love to your own soul, were enough to induce you to do little things for your own eternal welfare; and yet do you now expect that God should do great things, putting forth almighty power, and exercising infinite mercy for it? You were urged to take care for your salvation, and not to put it off. You were told that that was the best time, before you grew older, and that it might be, if you put it off, God would not hear you afterward. But yet you would not hearken; you would run the risk of it. Now how justly might God order it so, that it should be too late, leaving you to seek in vain!

Second, you have not only neglected your salvation, but you have willfully taken direct courses to undo yourself. You have gone on in those ways and practices that have directly tended to your damnation, and have been perverse and obstinate in it. You cannot plead ignorance; you had all the light set before you that you could desire. God told you that you were undoing yourself; but yet you would do it. He told you that the path you were going in led to destruction, and counseled you to avoid it; but you would not hear-

ken. How justly therefore may God leave you to be undone! You have obstinately persisted in traveling in the way that leads to hell for a long time, contrary to God's continual counsels and commands, until it may be at length you have got almost to your journey's end, and are come near to hell's gate, and so begin to be sensible of your danger and misery. And now you account it unjust and hard, if God will not deliver you! You have destroyed yourself, and destroyed yourself willfully, contrary to God's repeated counsels, yes, and destroyed yourself in fighting against God. Now therefore why do you blame anyone but yourself, if you are destroyed? If you will undo yourself in opposing God, and while God opposes you by his calls and counsels, and it may be too by the convictions of his Spirit, what can you object against it, if God now leaves you to be undone?

Thus I have proposed some things to your consideration, which if you are not exceeding blind, senseless, and perverse, will stop your mouth, and convince you that you stand justly condemned before God, and that he would in no wise deal hardly with you, but altogether justly, in denying you any mercy, and in refusing to hear your prayers, let you pray never so earnestly, and never so often, and continue in it never so long; and that God may utterly disregard your tears and moans, your heavy heart, your earnest desires, and great endeavors, and that he may cast you into eternal destruction, without any regard to your welfare, denying you converting grace, and giving you over to Satan, and at last cast you into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, to be there to eternity, having no rest day nor night, forever glorifying his justice upon you, in the presence of the holy angels, and the presence of the Lamb.

Objection: But here many may still object — God shows mercy to others who have done these things as well as I, yes, who have done a great deal worse than I.

Answer: First, that does not prove that God is any way bound to show mercy to you, or to them either. If God does bestow it on others, he does not bestow it on them because he is bound to bestow it; he might, if he had pleased, with glorious justice have denied it to them. If God bestows it on some, that does not prove that he is bound to bestow it on any; and if he is bound to bestow it on none, then he is not bound to bestow it on you. God is in debt to none, and if he gives to some that he is not in debt to, because it is his pleasure, that does not bring him into debt to others. It alters not the case as to you at all, whether others have it or have it not. You do not deserve damnation the less, than if mercy had never been bestowed on any at all (Matthew 20:15): Is your eye evil, because mine is good?

Second, if this objection is good, then the exercise of God's mercy is not in his own right, and his grace is not his own to give. That which God may not dispose of as he pleases, is not his own; for that which is one's own, is at his own disposal. But if it is not God's own, then he is not capable of making a gift or present of it to any one; it is impossible to give a debt.

What is it that you would make of God? Must the great God be tied up to that, that he must not use his own pleasure in bestowing his own gifts, but if he bestows them on one, must be looked upon as obliged to bestow them on another? Is not God worthy to have the same right, with respect to the gifts of his grace, that a man has to his money or goods? If any of you see cause to show kindness to a neighbor, do all the rest of your neighbors come to you, and tell

you that you owe them so much as you have given to such a man? But this is the way you deal with God! as though God were not worthy to have as absolute a property in his goods, as you have in yours!

At this rate God cannot make a present of anything; he has nothing of his own to bestow. If God does not do fairly to deny it to you, because he bestows it on others, then it is not worth your while to pray for it, but you may go and tell him that he has bestowed it on these and those, as bad or worse than you, and so demand it of him as a debt. And at this rate persons need never thank God for salvation when it is bestowed; for what occasion is there to thank God for that which was not at his own disposal, and that he could not fairly have denied? The thing at bottom is, that men have low thoughts of God, and high thoughts of themselves; and therefore it is that they look upon God as having so little right, and themselves so much (Matthew 20:15): Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with my own?

Third, God may justly show greater respect to others than to you, for you have shown greater respect to others than to God. You have shown greater respect to men than to God; you have rather chosen to offend God than offend men. God only shows a greater respect to others that are by nature your equals, than to you; but you have shown a greater respect to those that are infinitely inferior to God, than to him. You have shown a greater regard to wicked men than to God; you have honored them more, loved them better, and adhered to them rather than to him. You have chosen the devil's will and his interest, rather than God's will and his glory. You have chosen a little worldly gain, rather than God; you have set more by a vile lust than by him. You have set your

heart on these things, and cast God behind your back. And where is the injustice if God is pleased to show greater respect to others than to you, or if he chooses others and rejects you?

And will you not be ashamed, notwithstanding all these things, still to open your mouth, to object and cavil about the decrees of God, and other things that you cannot fully understand? Let the decrees of God be what they will, that alters not the case as to your liberty, any more than if God had only foreknown. And why is God to blame for decreeing things? How unbecoming an infinitely wise being, would it have been to have made a world and let things run at random, without disposing events, or fore-ordering how they should come to pass? And what is that to you, how God has fore-ordered things, as long as your constant experience teaches you that that does not hinder your liberty, or your doing what you choose to do? This you know, and your daily practice and behavior among men declares that you are fully sensible of it, with respect to yourself and others. And still to object, because there are some things in God's dispensations above your understanding, is exceedingly unreasonable. Your own conscience charges you with great guilt, and with those things that have been mentioned, let the secret things of God be what they will. It is in vain for you to exalt yourself against an infinitely great, and holy, and just God: if you continue in it, it will be to your eternal shame and confusion, when hereafter you shall see at whose door all the blame of your misery lies.

Though it would be righteous in God forever to cast you off, and destroy you, yet it will also be just in God to save you, in and through Christ, who has made complete satisfaction for all sin. Romans 3:25-26: 'Whom God has set forth to be a Propitiation,

through Faith in his Blood, to declare his Righteousness, for the Remission of Sins that are past, through the Forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this Time his Righteousness, that he might be just, and the Justifier of him which believes in Jesus.' Yes, God may through this Mediator, not only justly, but honorably, show you mercy. The blood of Christ is so precious, that it is fully sufficient to pay that debt that you have contracted, and perfectly to vindicate the divine Majesty from all that dishonor that has been cast upon it by those many great sins of yours that have been mentioned. It was as great, and indeed a much greater thing, for Christ to die, than it would have been for you, and all mankind, to have burned in hell to all eternity. Of such dignity and excellency is Christ in the eyes of God, that seeing he has suffered so much for poor sinners, God is willing to be at peace with them, however vile and unworthy they have been, and on how many accounts soever the punishment would be just. So that you need not be at all discouraged from seeking mercy, for there is enough in Christ.

Indeed it would not become the glory of God's Majesty to show mercy to you, that have been so sinful and vile a creature, for anything that you have done, for such worthless and despicable things as your prayers, and other religious performances; it would be very dishonorable and unworthy of God so to do, and it is in vain to expect it. He will show mercy only on Christ's account, and that according to his sovereign pleasure, on whom he pleases, when he pleases, and in what manner he pleases: you cannot bring him under obligation by your works; do what you will, he will not look on himself obliged. But if it be his pleasure, he can honorably show mercy through Christ, to any sinner of you all, not one in this congregation excepted.

Therefore here is encouragement for you still to seek and wait, notwithstanding all your wickedness; agreeable to Samuel's speech to the children of Israel, when they were terrified with the thunder and rain that God sent, and their guilt stared them in the face: 1 Samuel 12:20 — 'Fear not; you have done all this wickedness; yet turn not aside from following the Lord; but serve the Lord with all your hearts.'

I would conclude this discourse, by improving the doctrine in the second place, very briefly to put the godly in mind of the freeness and wonderfulness of the grace of God towards them. For such were some of you. The case was just so with you, as you have heard; you had such a wicked heart, you lived such a wicked life, and it would have been most just with God forever to have cast you off: but he has had mercy upon you; he has made his glorious grace appear in your everlasting salvation. You behaved yourself so as you have heard towards God; you had no love to God, but yet he has exercised unspeakable love to you. You have contemned God, and set light by him; but so great a value has God's grace set on you, and your happiness, that you have been redeemed at the price of the blood of his own Son. You chose to be with Satan in his service; but yet God has made you a joint-heir with Christ, of his glory. You were ungrateful for past mercies, but yet God not only continued those mercies, but bestowed unspeakably greater mercies upon you. You refused to hear when God called; but yet God heard you, when you called. You abused the infiniteness of God's mercy to encourage yourself in sin against God; but yet God has manifested the infiniteness of that mercy, in the exercises of it towards you. You have rejected Christ, and set him at nothing; and yet he is your Savior. You have neglected your own salvation; but

God has not neglected it: you have destroyed yourself; but yet in God has been your help. God has magnified his free grace towards you and not to others; because he has chosen you, and it has pleased him to set his love upon you.

O, what cause is here for praise? What obligations are upon you to bless the Lord, who has dealt bountifully with you, and to magnify his holy name? What cause for you to praise him in humility, to walk humbly before God, and to be conformed to that in Ezekiel 16:63: 'That you may remember, and be confounded, and never open your mouth any more, because of your shame, when I am pacified toward you, for all that you have done, says the Lord God.' You should never open your mouth in boasting, or self-justification: you should lie the lower before God for his mercy to you. But you have reason, the more abundantly for your past sins, to open your mouth in God's praises, that they may be continually in your mouth, both here and to all eternity, for his rich, unspeakable, and sovereign mercy to you, whereby he, and he alone, has made you to differ from others.

## THE EXCELLENCY OF CHRIST



**R**evelation 5:5-6 — And one of the elders said to me, Weep not; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals. And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb, as though it had been slain.

The visions and revelations that the apostle John had of the future events of God's providence, are here introduced with a vision of the book of God's decrees, by which those events were foreordained; which is represented in the first verse of this chapter, as a book in the right hand of him that sat on the throne, written within, and on the back side, and sealed with seven seals. It is said to be sealed with seven seals, to signify that what was written in it was perfectly hidden and secret; or that God's decrees of future events are sealed, and shut up from all possibility of being discovered by creatures, until God is pleased to make them known. We find that seven is often used in Scripture as the number of perfection, to signify the superlative or most perfect degree of any thing.

When John saw this book, he tells us he saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. And John wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and read the book. And then he tells us how his tears were dried up, namely, that one of the elders said to him, Weep not; behold the Lion of the tribe of Judah has prevailed. Though no man nor angel, nor any mere creature, was found either able to loose the seals, or worthy to be admitted to the privilege of reading the book, yet this was declared for the comfort of this beloved disciple, that Christ was found both able and worthy. And we have an account in the succeeding chapters how he actually did it, opening the seals in order, first one, and then another, revealing what God had decreed should come to pass hereafter.

Many things might be observed in the words of the text; but it is to my present purpose only to take notice of the two distinct appellations here given to Christ.

First, he is called a Lion. He seems to be called the Lion of the tribe of Judah, in allusion to what Jacob said, in his blessing of the tribes on his deathbed, who when he came to bless Judah, compares him to a lion (Genesis 49:9). It is much on account of the valiant acts of David, that the tribe of Judah, of which David was, is in Jacob's prophetic blessing compared to a lion; but more especially with an eye to Jesus Christ, who also was of that tribe, and was descended of David, and is in our text called the Root of David.

Second, he is called a Lamb. John was told of a lion that had prevailed to open the book, and probably expected to see a lion in his vision; but while he is expecting, behold a lamb appears to open the book — an exceedingly diverse kind of creature from a lion! A lion is a devourer, one that is accustomed to make terrible slaughter of others; and no creature more easily falls a prey to him than a lamb. And Christ is here represented not only as a lamb, a creature very liable to be slain, but a lamb as it had been slain, that is, with the marks of its deadly wounds appearing on it.

That which I would observe from the words, for the subject of my present discourse is this:

There is an admirable conjunction of diverse excellencies in Jesus Christ.

The lion and the lamb, though very diverse kinds of creatures, yet have each their peculiar excellencies. The lion excels in strength, and in the majesty of his appearance and voice. The lamb excels in meekness and patience, besides the excellent nature of the creature as good for food, and yielding that which is fit for our clothing, and being suitable to be offered in sacrifice to God. But we see that Christ is in the text compared to both; because the diverse excellencies of both wonderfully meet in him.

In handling this subject, I would

First, show wherein there is an admirable conjunction of diverse excellencies in Christ.

Second, how this admirable conjunction of excellencies appears in Christ's acts.

And then make application.

First, I would show wherein there is an admirable conjunction of diverse excellencies in Jesus Christ. Which appears in three things:

First, there is a conjunction of such excellencies in Christ as, in our manner of conceiving, are very diverse one from another.

Second, there is in him a conjunction of such really diverse excellencies, as otherwise would have seemed to us utterly incompatible in the same subject.

Third, such diverse excellencies are exercised in him toward men, that otherwise would have seemed impossible to be exercised toward the same object.

First, there is a conjunction of such excellencies in Christ as, in our manner of conceiving, are very diverse one from another. Such are the various divine perfections and excellencies that Christ is possessed of. Christ is a divine person, or one that is God; and therefore has all the attributes of God. The difference there is between these is chiefly relative, and in our manner of conceiving of them. And those that in this sense are most diverse, do meet in the person of Christ. I shall mention two instances.

First, there do meet in Jesus Christ, infinite highness and infinite condescension. Christ, as he is God, is infinitely great and high above all. He is higher than the kings of the earth; for he is King of kings, and Lord of lords. He is higher than the heavens, and higher than the highest angels of heaven. So great is he, that all men, all kings and princes, are as worms of the dust before him, all nations are as the drop in a bucket, and the light dust of the balance; yes, and angels themselves are as nothing before him. He is so high, that he is infinitely above any need of us; above our reach, that we

cannot be profitable to him, and above our conceptions, that we cannot comprehend him (Proverbs 30:4). Christ is the Creator, and great possessor of heaven and earth; he is sovereign Lord of all. His knowledge is without bound; his wisdom is perfect, and what none can circumvent; his power is infinite, and none can resist him; his riches are immense and inexhaustible; his majesty is infinitely awesome.

And yet he is one of infinite condescension. None are so low, or so inferior, but Christ's condescension is sufficient to take a gracious notice of them. He condescends not only to the angels, humbling himself to behold the things that are done in heaven, but he also condescends to such poor creatures as men; and that not only so as to take notice of princes and great men, but of those who are of meanest rank and degree, the poor of the world (James 2:5). Such as are commonly despised by their fellow creatures, Christ does not despise (1 Corinthians 1:28). Christ condescends to take notice of beggars (Luke 16:22), and of servants, and people of the most despised nations. He that is thus high, condescends to take a gracious notice of little children (Matthew 19:14): Suffer little children to come to me. Yes, which is much more, his condescension is sufficient to take a gracious notice of the most unworthy, sinful creatures, those that have no good deservings, and those that have infinite ill deservings.

Yes, so great is his condescension, that it is not only sufficient to take some gracious notice of such as these, but sufficient for everything that is an act of condescension. His condescension is great enough to become their friend; it is great enough to become their companion, to unite their souls to him in spiritual marriage; it is great enough to take their nature upon him, to become one of

them, that he may be one with them. Yes, it is great enough to abase himself yet lower for them, even to expose himself to shame and spitting; yes, to yield up himself to an ignominious death for them. And what act of condescension can be conceived of greater? Yet such an act as this, has his condescension yielded to, for those that are so low and mean, despicable and unworthy!

Such a conjunction of infinite highness and low condescension, in the same person, is admirable. We see by manifold instances, what a tendency a high station has in men, to make them of a quite contrary disposition. If one worm is a little exalted above another, by having more dust, or a bigger dunghill, how much does he make of himself! What a distance does he keep from those that are below him! Christ condescends to wash our feet; but how would great men account themselves debased by acts of far less condescension!

Second, there meet in Jesus Christ, infinite justice and infinite grace. As Christ is a divine person he is infinitely holy and just, infinitely hating sin, and disposed to execute appropriate punishment for sin. He is the Judge of the world, and is the infinitely just Judge of it, and will not at all acquit the wicked, or by any means clear the guilty.

And yet he is one that is infinitely gracious and merciful. Though his justice be so strict with respect to all sin, and every breach of the law, yet he has grace sufficient for every sinner, and even the chief of sinners. And it is not only sufficient for the most unworthy to show them mercy, and bestow some good upon them, but to bestow the greatest good; yes, it is sufficient to bestow all good upon them, and to do all things for them. There is no benefit or blessing that they can receive so great, but the grace of Christ is sufficient to bestow it on the greatest sinner that ever lived. And

not only so, but so great is his grace, that nothing is too much as the means of this good. It is sufficient not only to do great things, but also to suffer in order to it; and not only to suffer, but to suffer most extremely, even to death, the most terrible of natural evils; and not only death, but the most ignominious and tormenting and every way the most terrible death that men could inflict; yes, and greater sufferings than men could inflict, who could only torment the body, but also those sufferings in his soul, that were the more immediate fruits of the wrath of God against the sins of those he undertook for.

Second, there do meet in the person of Christ, such really diverse excellencies, which otherwise would have been thought utterly incompatible in the same subject; such as are conjoined in no other person whatever, either divine, human, or angelical; and such as neither men nor angels would ever have imagined could have met together in the same person, had it not been seen in the person of Christ. I would give some instances.

First, in the person of Christ do meet together, infinite glory and the lowest humility. Infinite glory and the virtue of humility meet in no other person but Christ. They meet in no created person; for no created person has infinite glory. And they meet in no other divine person but Christ. For though the divine nature is infinitely abhorrent to pride, yet humility is not properly predicable of God the Father and the Holy Spirit, who exist only in the divine nature; because it is a proper excellency only of a created nature; for it consists radically in a sense of a comparative lowness and littleness before God, or the great distance between God and the subject of this virtue; but it would be a contradiction to suppose any such thing in God.

But in Jesus Christ, who is both God and man, these two diverse excellencies are sweetly united. He is a person infinitely exalted in glory and dignity (Philippians 2:6). There is equal honor due to him with the Father (John 5:23). God himself says to him, Your throne, O God, is forever and ever (Hebrews 1:8). And there is the same supreme respect, and divine worship, paid to him by the angels of heaven as to God the Father (verse 6): Let all the angels of God worship him.

But however he is thus above all, yet he is lowest of all in humility. There never was so great an instance of this virtue, among either men or angels, as Jesus. None ever was so sensible of the distance between God and himself, or had a heart so lowly before God, as the man Christ Jesus (Matthew 11:29). What a wonderful spirit of humility appeared in him, when he was here upon earth, in all his behavior! In his contentment in his mean outward condition, contentedly living in the family of Joseph the carpenter, and Mary his mother, for thirty years together, and afterward choosing outward meanness, poverty and contempt, rather than earthly greatness; in his washing his disciples' feet, and in all his speeches and deportment toward them; in his cheerfully sustaining the form of a servant through his whole life, and submitting to such immense humiliation at death!

Second, in the person of Christ do meet together, infinite majesty and transcendent meekness. These again are two qualifications that meet together in no other person but Christ. Meekness, properly so called, is a virtue proper only to the creature; we scarcely ever find meekness mentioned as a divine attribute in Scripture. But Christ being both God and man, has both infinite majesty and superlative meekness.

Christ was a person of infinite majesty. It is he that is spoken of in Psalm 45:3: Gird your sword upon your thigh, O most mighty, in your glory and your majesty. It is he that is mighty, that rides on the heavens, and in his excellency on the sky. It is he that is terrible out of his holy places; who is mightier than the noise of many waters, yes, than the mighty waves of the sea; before whom a fire goes, and burns up his enemies round about; at whose presence the earth quakes, and the hills melt; who sits on the circle of the earth, and all the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; who rebukes the sea and makes it dry, and dries up the rivers; whose eyes are as a flame of fire; who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, that has heaven for his throne, and the earth for his footstool, and is the high and lofty one who inhabits eternity, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom.

And yet he was the most marvelous instance of meekness, and humble quietness of spirit, that ever was, agreeable to the prophecies of him (Matthew 21:4-5): All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Tell the daughter of Zion, behold your king comes to you, meek, and sitting upon a donkey, and a colt the foal of a donkey. And agreeable to what Christ declares of himself (Matthew 11:29): I am meek and lowly in heart. For there never was such an instance seen on earth of a meek behavior, under injuries and reproaches, and toward enemies; who when he was reviled, reviled not again; who was of a wonderful spirit of forgiveness, was ready to forgive his worst enemies, and prayed for them with fervent and effectual prayers. With what meekness did he appear, when in the ring of soldiers that

were condemning and mocking him, when he was silent, and opened not his mouth, but went as a lamb to the slaughter. Thus is Christ a Lion in majesty, and a Lamb in meekness.

Third, there meet in the person of Christ, the deepest reverence toward God, and equality with God. Christ, when he was here on earth, appeared full of holy reverence toward the Father; he paid the most reverential worship to him, praying to him with postures of reverence. Thus we read of his kneeling down and praying (Matthew 22:41). This became Christ, as he was one that had taken on him the human nature. But at the same time he existed in the divine nature; whereby his person was in all respects equal to the person of the Father. God the Father has no attribute or perfection that the Son has not, in equal degree, and equal glory. These things meet in no other person but Jesus Christ.

Fourth, there are conjoined in the person of Christ, infinite worthiness of good, and the greatest patience under sufferings of evil. He was perfectly innocent, and deserved no suffering. He deserved nothing from God, by any guilt of his own; and he deserved no ill from men. Yes, he was not only harmless, and undeserving of suffering, but he was infinitely worthy — worthy of the infinite love of the Father, worthy of infinite and eternal happiness, and infinitely worthy of all possible esteem, love, and service from all men. And yet he was perfectly patient under the greatest sufferings that ever were endured in this world (Hebrews 6:15). He suffered not from his Father, for his own faults, but ours; and he suffered from men, not for his faults, but for those things on account of which he was infinitely worthy of their love and honor; which made his pa-

tience the more wonderful, and the more glorious (1 Peter 2:20-24). There is no such conjunction of innocence, worthiness, and patience under sufferings, as in the person of Christ.

Fifth, in the person of Christ are conjoined, an exceeding spirit of obedience, with supreme dominion over heaven and earth. Christ is the Lord of all things, in two respects. He is so as he is God-Man and Mediator; and so his dominion is appointed, and given of the Father, and is by delegation from God. But he is Lord of all things in another respect, namely, as he is, by his original nature, God. And so he is by natural right, the Lord of all, and supreme over all, as much as the Father. Thus he has dominion over the world, not by delegation, but in his own right; he is supreme God.

And yet, in the same person, is found the greatest spirit of obedience to the commands and law of God that ever was in the universe; which was manifest in his obedience here in this world (John 14:31): As the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. The greatness of his spirit of obedience appears in the perfection of his obedience, and in his obeying commands of such exceeding difficulty. Never any one received commands from God, of such difficulty, and that were so great a trial of obedience, as Jesus Christ. One of God's commands to him was, that he should yield himself to those dreadful sufferings that he underwent (John 10:18): No man takes it from me, but I lay it down of myself. This commandment I received of my Father. And Christ was thoroughly obedient to this command of God (Hebrews 5:8; Philippians 2:8). Never was there such an instance of obedience in man nor angel, as this; though he that obeyed was at the same time, supreme Lord of both angels and men.

Sixth, in the person of Christ are conjoined absolute sovereignty, and perfect resignation. This is another unparalleled conjunction. Christ as he is God, is the absolute sovereign of the world; he is the sovereign disposer of all events. The decrees of God are all his sovereign decrees; and the work of creation, and all God's works of providence, are his sovereign works. It is he that works all things according to the counsel of his own will (Colossians 1:16-17). By him, and through him, and to him, are all things. The Father works hitherto, and I work (John 5:17).

But yet Christ was the most wonderful instance of resignation that ever appeared in the world. He was absolutely and perfectly resigned, when he had a near and immediate prospect of his terrible sufferings, and the dreadful cup that he was to drink, the idea and expectation of which made his soul exceedingly sorrowful, even to death, and put him into such an agony, that his sweat was as it were great drops of blood, falling down to the ground. But in such circumstances, he was wholly resigned to the will of God (Matthew 26:39): O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me! Nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will. Verse 42: O my Father, if this cup may not pass from me, except I drink it, your will be done!

Seventh, in Christ do meet together, self-sufficiency and an entire trust and reliance on God; which is another conjunction peculiar to the person of Christ. As he is a divine person he is self-sufficient, standing in need of nothing; all creatures are dependent on him, but he is dependent on none, but is absolutely independent. But yet Christ entirely trusted in God. His enemies say that of him

(Matthew 27:43): He trusted in God that he would deliver him. And the apostle testifies (1 Peter 2:23): That he committed himself to God.

Third, such diverse excellencies are expressed in him toward men, that otherwise would have seemed impossible to be exercised toward the same object; as particularly these three: justice, mercy, and truth. The same that are mentioned in Psalm 85:10: Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other. The strict justice of God, and even his avenging justice, and that against the sins of men, never was so gloriously manifested as in Christ. He manifested an infinite regard to the attribute of God's justice, in that when he had a mind to save sinners, he was willing to undergo such extreme sufferings, rather than that their salvation should be to the injury of the honor of that attribute. And as he is the Judge of the world, he himself exercises strict justice; he will not clear the guilty, nor at all acquit the wicked in judgment. And yet, how wonderfully is infinite mercy toward sinners displayed in him! What glorious and ineffable grace and love have been, and are exercised by him, toward sinful men! Though he is the just judge of a sinful world, yet he is also the Savior of the world; though he is a consuming fire to sin, he is the light and life of sinners (Romans 3:25-26).

So the immutable truth of God, in the threatenings of his law against the sins of men, was never so manifested as it is in Jesus Christ; for there never was any other so great a trial of the unalterableness of the truth of God, in those threatenings, as when sin came to be imputed to his own Son. And then in Christ has been seen already, an actual, complete accomplishment of those threatenings; which never has been, nor will be seen in any other in-

stance; because the eternity that will be taken up in fulfilling those threatenings on others, never will be finished. Christ manifested an infinite regard to this truth of God in his sufferings. And in his judging the world, he makes the covenant of works that contains those dreadful threatenings his rule of judgment; he will see to it that it is not infringed in the least jot or tittle. And yet in him we have many great and precious promises, promises of perfect deliverance from the penalty of the law. And this is the promise that he has promised us, even eternal life. And in him are all the promises of God, yes and amen.

Having thus shown wherein there is an admirable conjunction of excellencies in Jesus Christ, I now proceed:

Second, to show how this admirable conjunction of excellencies appears in Christ's acts.

First, it appears in what Christ did in taking on him our nature. In this act his infinite condescension wonderfully appeared; that he that was God should become man; that the Word should be made flesh, and should take on him a nature infinitely below his original nature! And it appears yet more remarkably, in the low circumstances of his incarnation. He was conceived in the womb of a poor young woman; whose poverty appeared in that when she came to offer sacrifices for her purification, she brought what was allowed of in the law only in case of poverty (Luke 2:24; Leviticus 12:8).

And though his infinite condescension thus appeared in the manner of his incarnation, yet his divine dignity also appeared in it; for though he was conceived in the womb of a poor virgin, yet he was there conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit. And his divine

dignity also appeared in the holiness of his conception and birth. Though he was conceived in the womb of one of the corrupt race of mankind, yet he was conceived and born without sin; as the angel said to the blessed virgin (Luke 1:35): The Holy Spirit shall come upon you, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow you; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of you shall be called the Son of God.

His infinite condescension marvelously appeared in the manner of his birth. He was brought forth in a stable, because there was no room for them in the inn. The inn was taken up by others, that were looked upon as persons of greater account. The blessed virgin being poor and despised, was turned out; and therefore in the time of her travail she was forced to betake herself to a stable. And when the child was born, it was wrapped in swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger; and there Christ lay a little infant; and there he eminently appeared as a lamb. But yet this feeble infant that was born thus in a stable, and laid in a manger, was born to conquer and triumph over Satan, that roaring lion; he came to subdue the mighty powers of darkness, and make a show of them openly; and so to restore peace on earth, and to manifest God's good will toward men, and to bring glory to God in the highest; whereby his divine dignity was manifested.

Second, this admirable conjunction of excellencies appears in the acts and various passages of Christ's life. Though Christ dwelt on the earth in mean outward circumstances, whereby his condescension and humility especially appeared, and his majesty was veiled; yet his divine dignity and glory did in many of his acts shine through the veil, and it illustriously appeared that he was, not only the Son of Man, but the great God.

Thus in the circumstances of his infancy, his outward meanness appeared; yet there was something then to show forth his divine dignity, in the wise men's being stirred up to come from the East to give honor to him, their being led by a miraculous star, and coming and falling down and worshiping him, and presenting him with gold, frankincense, and myrrh. His humility and meekness wonderfully appeared in his subjection to his mother and reputed father, when he was a child; he appeared as a lamb. But his divine glory broke forth and shone, when at twelve years old, he disputed with the doctors in the temple; in that he appeared, in some measure, as the Lion of the tribe of Judah.

And so after he entered on his public ministry, his marvelous humility and meekness was manifested in his choosing to appear in such mean outward circumstances, and in being so contented in them, when he was so poor that he had not where to lay his head, and depended on the charity of some of his followers for his subsistence (Luke 8). Also in his meek, condescending, and familiar treatment of his disciples; in his discourses with them, treating them as a father his children, yes, as friends and companions. And in his patiently bearing such affliction and reproach, and so many injuries from the scribes and Pharisees, and others. In these things he appeared as a lamb. And yet he at the same time did many ways show forth his divine majesty and glory; particularly in the miracles that he worked, which were evidently divine works, and manifested omnipotent power, and so declared him to be the Lion of the tribe of Judah. His wonderful and miraculous works plainly showed him to be the God of nature; in that it appeared by them that he had all nature in his hands, and could lay an arrest upon it, and stop and change its course, as he pleased. In healing the sick,

and opening the eyes of the blind, and unstopping the ears of the deaf, and healing the lame, he showed that he was the God that framed the eye, and created the ear, and was the Author of the frame of man's body. By the dead's rising at his command, it appeared that he was the Author and fountain of life. By his walking on the sea in a storm, when the waves were raised, he showed himself to be that God spoken of in Job 9:8, that treads on the waves of the sea. By his stilling the storm, and calming the rage of the sea, by his powerful command, Peace, be still, he showed himself to be he that has the command of the universe, and to be that God that speaks and it is done, that commands and it stands fast. Christ by casting out devils remarkably appeared as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, and showed that he was stronger than that roaring lion, that seeks whom he may devour. He commanded them to come out, and they were forced to obey; they were terribly afraid of him; they fell down before him, and beseeched him not to torment them. He showed the glory of his omniscience, by telling the thoughts of men; as we have often an account. Thus in the midst of his meanness and humiliation, his divine glory appeared in his miracles (John 2:11): This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory.

And though Christ ordinarily appeared without outward glory, and in great obscurity, yet at a certain time he threw off the veil, and appeared in his divine majesty, so far as it could be outwardly manifested to men in this frail state, when he was transfigured in the mount. The apostle Peter speaks of it (2 Peter 1:16-17), speaking there of himself as one that was an eyewitness of his majesty,

when he received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.

And at the same time that Christ was accustomed to appear in such meekness, condescension, and humility in his familiar discourses with his disciples, appearing therein as the Lamb of God, he was also accustomed to appear as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, with divine authority and majesty, in his sharply rebuking the scribes and Pharisees, and other hypocrites.

Third, this admirable conjunction of excellencies remarkably appears, in his offering up himself a sacrifice for sinners in his last sufferings. As this was the greatest thing in all the work of redemption, the greatest act of Christ in that work; so in this act especially, does there appear that admirable conjunction of excellencies that has been spoken of. Christ never so much appeared as a lamb, as when he was slain; he came like a lamb to the slaughter (Isaiah 53:7). Then he was offered up to God as a lamb without blemish, and without spot. Then especially did he appear to be the antitype of the lamb of the Passover (1 Corinthians 5:7). And yet in that act, he did in an especial manner appear as the Lion of the tribe of Judah; yes, in this above all other acts, in many respects, as may appear in the following things.

First, then was Christ in the greatest degree of his humiliation, and yet by that, above all other things, his divine glory appears. Christ's humiliation was great, in being born in such a low condition, of a poor virgin, and in a stable. His humiliation was great, in being subject to Joseph the carpenter, and Mary his mother, and afterward in living in poverty, so as not to have where to lay his head, and in suffering such manifold and bitter reproaches as he

suffered, while he went about preaching and working miracles. But his humiliation was never so great, as it was in his last sufferings, beginning with his agony in the garden, until he expired on the cross. Never was he subject to such ignominy as then; never did he suffer so much pain in his body, or so much sorrow in his soul; never was he in so great an exercise of his condescension, humility, meekness, and patience, as he was in these last sufferings; never was his divine glory and majesty covered with so thick and dark a veil; never did he so empty himself, and make himself of no reputation, as at this time. And yet never was his divine glory so manifested, by any act of his, as in that act of yielding himself up to these sufferings. When the fruit of it came to appear, and the mystery and ends of it to be unfolded, in the issue of it, then did the glory of it appear; then did it appear as the most glorious act of Christ that ever he exercised toward the creature. This act of his is celebrated by the angels and hosts of heaven with peculiar praises, as that which is above all others glorious (Revelation 5:9): And they sang a new song, saying, You are worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof, for you were slain, and have redeemed us to God by your blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.

Second, he never in any act gave so great a manifestation of love to God, and yet never so manifested his love to those that were enemies to God, as in that act. Christ never did anything whereby his love to the Father was so eminently manifested, as in his laying down his life, under such inexpressible sufferings, in obedience to his command, and for the vindication of the honor of his authority and majesty. And yet this was the greatest expression of all, of his love to sinful men, that were enemies to God (Romans

5:10). The greatness of Christ's love to such appears in nothing so much, as in its being dying love. That blood of Christ that was sweat out, and fell in great drops to the ground, in his agony, was shed from love to God's enemies, and his own. That shame and spitting, that torment of body, and that exceeding sorrow, even to death, that he endured in his soul, was what he underwent from love to rebels against God, to save them from hell, and to purchase for them eternal glory. Never did Christ so eminently show his regard to God's honor, as in offering up himself a victim to avenging justice, to vindicate God's honor. And yet in this above all, he manifested his love to those that dishonored God, so as to bring such guilt on themselves, that nothing less than his blood could atone for it.

Third, Christ never so eminently appeared for divine justice, and yet never suffered so much from divine justice, as when he offered up himself a sacrifice for our sins. In Christ's great sufferings, did his infinite regard to the honor of God's justice distinguishingly appear; for it was from regard to that, that he thus humbled himself. And yet in these sufferings, Christ was the mark of the vindictive expressions of that very justice of God. Avenging justice then spent all its force upon him, on account of our guilt that was laid upon him; he was not spared at all; but God spent the arrows of his vengeance upon him, which made him sweat blood, and cry out upon the cross, and probably rent his vitals, broke his heart, the fountain of blood, or some other internal blood vessels, and by the violent fermentation turned his blood to water. For the blood and water that issued out of his side, when pierced by the spear, seems to have been extravasated blood; and so there might be a kind of literal fulfillment of that in Psalm 22:14: I am poured

out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. And this was the way and means by which Christ stood up for the honor of God's justice, namely, by thus suffering its terrible executions.

In this the diverse excellencies that met in the person of Christ appeared, namely, his infinite regard to God's justice, and such love to those that have exposed themselves to it, as induced him thus to yield himself a sacrifice to it.

Fourth, Christ's holiness never so illustriously shone forth, as it did in his last sufferings; and yet he never was to such a degree treated as guilty. Christ's holiness never had such a trial, as it had then; and therefore never had so great a manifestation. When it was tried in this furnace, it came forth as gold, or as silver purified seven times. His holiness then above all appeared in his steadfast pursuit of the honor of God, and in his obedience to him; for his yielding himself to death was transcendently the greatest act of obedience that ever was paid to God, by any one since the foundation of the world.

And yet then Christ was in the greatest degree treated as a wicked person. He was apprehended and bound as a malefactor. His accusers represented him as a most wicked wretch. In his sufferings before his crucifixion he was treated as if he had been the worst and vilest of mankind; and then, he was put to a kind of death that none but the worst sort of malefactors were accustomed to suffer, those that were most abject in their persons, and guilty of the blackest crimes. And he suffered as though guilty from God himself, by reason of our guilt imputed to him; for he was made sin for us, who knew no sin; he was made subject to wrath as if he had been sinful himself; he was made a curse for us.

Christ never so greatly manifested his hatred of sin, as against God, as in his dying to take away the dishonor that sin had done to God; and yet never was he to such a degree subject to the terrible effects of God's hatred of sin, and wrath against it, as he was then. In this appear those diverse excellencies meeting in Christ, namely his love to God, and grace to sinners.

Fifth, he never was so dealt with as unworthy as in his last sufferings, and yet it is chiefly on account of them that he is accounted worthy. He was then dealt with as if he had not been worthy to live: they cried out, Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him (John 19:15). And they preferred Barabbas before him. And he suffered from the Father, as one whose demerits were infinite, by reason of our demerits that were laid upon him. And yet it was especially by that act of his subjecting himself to those sufferings, that he merited, and on account of which chiefly he was accounted worthy of, the glory of his exaltation (Philippians 2:8-9). And we see that it is on this account chiefly, that he is extolled as worthy by saints and angels in the context: Worthy, say they, is the Lamb that was slain. This shows an admirable conjunction in him of infinite dignity, and infinite condescension and love to the infinitely unworthy.

Sixth, Christ in his last sufferings suffered most extremely from those whom he was then in his greatest act of love to. He never suffered so much from his Father — though not from any hatred toward him, but from hatred to our sins — for he then forsook him, as Christ on the cross expresses it, and it pleased the Lord to bruise him, and put him to grief (Isaiah 53:10). And yet never gave so great a manifestation of love to God as then, as has been already observed. So Christ never suffered so much from the hands of men

as he did then; and yet never was in so high an exercise of love to men. He never was so ill treated by his disciples; who were so unconcerned about his sufferings, that they would not watch with him one hour, in his agony; and when he was apprehended, all forsook him and fled, except Peter, who denied him with oaths and curses. And yet then he was suffering, shedding his blood, and pouring out his soul to death, for them. Yes, he probably was then shedding his blood for some of them that shed his blood; he was dying for some that killed him; whom he prayed for, while they were crucifying him; and were probably afterward brought home to Christ by Peter's preaching (Luke 23:34; Acts 2:23, 36-37, 41). This shows an admirable meeting of justice and grace in the redemption of Christ.

Seventh, it was in Christ's last sufferings, above all, that he was delivered up to the power of his enemies; and yet by these, above all, he obtained victory over his enemies. Christ never was so in his enemies' hands, as in the time of his last sufferings. They sought his life before; but from time to time they were restrained, and Christ escaped out of their hands; and this reason is given for it, that his time was not yet come. But now they were allowed to work their will upon him; he was in a great degree delivered up to the malice and cruelty of both wicked men and devils. And therefore when Christ's enemies came to apprehend him, he said to them (Luke 22:53): When I was daily with you in the temple, you stretched forth no hand against me; but this is your hour and the power of darkness.

And yet it was principally by means of those sufferings, that he conquered and overthrew his enemies. Christ never so effectually bruised Satan's head, as when Satan bruised his heel. The weapon

with which Christ warred against the devil, and obtained a most complete victory and glorious triumph over him, was the cross, the instrument and weapon with which the devil thought he had overthrown Christ, and brought on him shameful destruction (Colossians 2:14-15): Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances, nailing it to his cross; and having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it. In his last sufferings Christ sapped the very foundations of Satan's kingdom; he conquered his enemies in their own territories, and beat them with their own weapons; as David cut off Goliath's head with his own sword. The devil had as it were swallowed up Christ, as the whale did Jonah; but it was deadly poison to him; he gave him a mortal wound in his own bowels. In those sufferings of Christ, was laid the foundation of all that glorious victory that he has already obtained over Satan, in the overthrow of his heathenish kingdom, in the Roman Empire, and all the success the gospel has had since; and also of all his future and still more glorious victory that is to be obtained in all the earth. Thus Samson's riddle is most eminently fulfilled (Judges 14:14): Out of the eater came forth food, and out of the strong came forth sweetness. And thus the true Samson does more toward the destruction of his enemies at his death than in his life, in yielding up himself to death he pulls down the temple of Dagon, and destroys many thousands of his enemies even while they are making themselves sport in his sufferings.

Thus Christ appeared at the same time, and in the same act, as both a Lion and a Lamb. He appeared as a lamb in the hands of his cruel enemies; as a lamb in the paws, and between the devouring jaws of a roaring lion; yes, he was a lamb actually slain by this lion.

And yet at the same time, as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, he conquers and triumphs over Satan, destroying his own devourer; as Samson did the lion that roared upon him, when he tore him as he would a young goat. And in nothing has Christ appeared so much as a lion, in glorious strength destroying his enemies, as when he was brought as a lamb to the slaughter; in his greatest weakness, he was most strong; and when he suffered most from his enemies, he brought the greatest confusion on his enemies.

Thus this admirable conjunction of diverse excellencies was manifest in Christ, in his offering up himself to God in his last sufferings.

Fourth, this is still manifest in his acts, in his present state of exaltation in heaven. Indeed in his exalted state he most eminently appears in a manifestation of those excellencies on account of which he is compared to a lion; but still he appears as a lamb (Revelation 14:1). As in his state of humiliation, he chiefly appeared as a lamb, and yet did not appear without manifestations of his divine majesty and power, as the Lion of the tribe of Judah. Though Christ is now at the right hand of God, exalted as King of heaven, and Lord of the universe; yet as he still is in the human nature, he still excels in humility. Though the man Christ Jesus is the highest of all creatures in heaven, yet he as much excels them all in humility, as he does in glory and dignity; for none sees so much of the distance between God and himself, as he does. And though he now appears in such glorious majesty and dominion in heaven, yet he appears as a lamb in his condescending, mild and sweet treatment of his saints there; for he is a lamb still, even in the midst of the throne of his exaltation (Revelation 7:17). For the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them

to living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. Though in heaven every knee bows to him, and though the angels fall down before him, adoring him, yet he treats his saints with infinite condescension, mildness and endearment. And in his acts toward the saints on earth, he still appears as a lamb, manifesting exceeding love and tenderness, in his intercession for them, as one that has had experience of affliction and temptation. He has not forgotten what these things are; nor has he forgotten how to pity those that are subject to them. And he still manifests his lamb-like excellencies, in his dealings with his saints on earth, in admirable forbearance, love, gentleness, and compassions, instructing, supplying, supporting, and comforting them, often coming to them, and manifesting himself to them by his Spirit, that he may sup with them and they with him, admitting them to sweet communion with him.

Fifth and lastly, this admirable conjunction of excellencies will be manifest in Christ's acts at the last judgment. He then, above all other times, will appear as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, in infinite greatness and majesty, when he shall come in the glory of his Father, with all the holy angels, and the earth shall tremble before him, and the hills shall melt. This is he, spoken of in Revelation 20:11, that shall sit on a great white throne, before whose face the earth and heaven shall flee away. He will then appear in the most dreadful and amazing manner to the wicked; the devils tremble at the thoughts of that appearance. And none can declare or conceive of the amazing manifestations of wrath, in which he will then appear toward these; or the trembling and astonishment, the shrieking and gnashing of teeth, with which they shall stand before his judgment seat, and receive the terrible sentence of his wrath.

And yet he will at the same time appear as a lamb to his saints. He will receive them as friends and brethren, treating them with infinite mildness and love. There shall be nothing in him terrible to them; but toward them, he will clothe himself wholly with sweetness and endearment. The church shall then be admitted to him as his bride; that shall be her wedding day. The saints shall all be sweetly invited to come with him, to inherit the kingdom, and reign in it with him, to all eternity.

#### APPLICATION.

First, from this doctrine we may learn one reason why Christ is called by such a variety of names, and held forth under such a variety of representations in Scripture. It is the better to signify, and exhibit to us, that variety of excellencies that meet together, and are conjoined in him. Many appellations are mentioned together in one verse (Isaiah 9:6): For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. It shows a wonderful conjunction of excellencies, that the same person should be a son, born and given, and yet be the everlasting Father, without beginning or end; that he should be a child, and yet be he whose name is Counselor, and the Mighty God; and well may his name, in whom such things are conjoined, be called Wonderful.

By reason of the same wonderful conjunction, Christ is represented by a great variety of sensible things that are on some account excellent. Thus in some places he is called a Sun (Malachi 4:2); in others a Star (Numbers 24:17). And he is especially represented by the morning star, as being that which excels all other

stars in brightness, and is the forerunner of the day (Revelation 22:16). And as in our text he is compared to a lion in one verse and a lamb in the next, so sometimes he is compared to a roe or a young deer, another creature most unlike a lion. So in some places he is called a Rock; in others he is compared to a pearl. In some places he is called a Man of War and the Captain of our Salvation; in other places he is represented as a bridegroom. In Song of Solomon 2:1 he is compared to a rose and lily, sweet and beautiful flowers; in the very next verse he is compared to a tree bearing sweet fruit. In Isaiah 53:2 he is called a root out of dry ground; but elsewhere, instead of that, he is called the Tree of Life, that grows not in a dry or barren ground but in the midst of the Paradise of God (Revelation 2:7).

Let the consideration of this wonderful meeting of diverse excellencies in Christ induce you to accept of him and close with him as your Savior. As all manner of excellencies meet in him, so there are concurring in him all manner of arguments and motives to move you to choose him as your Savior, and everything that tends to encourage poor sinners to come and put their trust in him. His fullness and all-sufficiency as a Savior gloriously appear in that variety of excellencies that has been spoken of.

Fallen man is in a state of exceeding great misery and is helpless in it; he is a poor weak creature, like an infant cast out in its blood on the day it is born. But Christ is the Lion of the tribe of Judah; he is strong though we are weak; he has prevailed to do that for us which no other creature could do. Fallen man is a mean, despicable creature, a contemptible worm; but Christ, who has undertaken for us, is infinitely honorable and worthy. Fallen man is polluted, but Christ is infinitely holy. Fallen man is hateful, but

Christ is infinitely lovely. Fallen man is the object of God's indignation, but Christ is infinitely dear to him. We have dreadfully provoked God, but Christ has performed that righteousness which is infinitely precious in God's eyes.

And here is not only infinite strength and infinite worthiness, but infinite condescension, and love and mercy as great as power and dignity. If you are a poor, distressed sinner whose heart is ready to sink for fear that God will never have mercy on you, you need not be afraid to go to Christ, for fear that he is either unable or unwilling to help you. Here is a strong foundation and an inexhaustible treasure to answer the necessities of your poor soul, and here is infinite grace and gentleness to invite and embolden a poor, unworthy, fearful soul to come to it. If Christ accepts of you, you need not fear that you will be safe, for he is a strong Lion for your defense. And if you come, you need not fear but that you shall be accepted, for he is like a lamb to all that come to him, and receives them with infinite grace and tenderness. It is true he has awful majesty; he is the great God, and is infinitely high above you; but there is this to encourage and embolden the poor sinner, that Christ is man as well as God, a creature as well as the Creator, and he is the most humble and lowly in heart of any creature in heaven or earth. This may well make the poor unworthy creature bold in coming to him. You need not hesitate one moment, but may run to him and cast yourself upon him; you will certainly be graciously and meekly received by him. Though he be a Lion, he will only be a Lion to your enemies; but he will be a Lamb to you. It could not have been conceived, had it not been so in the person of Christ, that there could have been so much in any Savior that is inviting and tending to encourage sinners to trust in him. Whatever your

circumstances are, you need not be afraid to come to such a Savior as this. Be you never so wicked a creature, here is worthiness enough. Be you never so poor and mean and ignorant a creature, there is no danger of being despised; for though he be so much greater than you, he is also immensely more humble than you. Any one of you who is a father or mother will not despise one of your own children that comes to you in distress; much less danger is there of Christ despising you, if you in your heart come to him.

Here let me a little expostulate with the poor, burdened, distressed soul.

What are you afraid of, that you dare not venture your soul upon Christ? Are you afraid that he cannot save you, that he is not strong enough to conquer the enemies of your soul? But how can you desire one stronger than the mighty God, as Christ is called (Isaiah 9:6)? What need is there of greater than infinite strength? Are you afraid that he will not be willing to stoop so low as to take any gracious notice of you? Look on him as he stood in the ring of soldiers, exposing his blessed face to be buffeted and spit upon by them. Behold him bound, his back uncovered to those that smote him! And behold him hanging on the cross! Do you think that he who had condescension enough to stoop to these things, and that for his crucifiers, will be unwilling to accept of you if you come to him? Or are you afraid that if he does accept of you, God the Father will not accept of him for you? But consider: will God reject his own Son, in whom his infinite delight is and has been from all eternity, and who is so united to him that if he should reject him he would reject himself?

What is there that you can desire should be in a Savior that is not in Christ? Or, in what should you desire a Savior should be otherwise than Christ is? What excellency is there wanting? What is there that is great or good? What is there that is venerable or winning? What is there that is adorable or endearing? Or, what can you think of that would be encouraging, that is not to be found in the person of Christ? Would you have your Savior to be great and honorable, because you are not willing to be beholden to a mean person? And is not Christ a person honorable enough to be worthy that you should be dependent on him? Is he not a person high enough to be worthy to be appointed to so honorable a work as your salvation? Would you not only have a Savior that is of high degree, but would you have him, notwithstanding his exaltation and dignity, to be made also of low degree, that he might have experience of afflictions and trials, that he might learn by the things he has suffered to pity those that suffer and are tempted? And has not Christ been made low enough for you? And has he not suffered enough? Would you not only have him have experience of the afflictions you now suffer, but also of that amazing wrath that you fear hereafter, that he may know how to pity those who are in danger of it and afraid of it? This Christ has had experience of, which experience gave him a greater sense of it, a thousand times, than you have or any man living has. Would you have your Savior to be one that is near to God, so that his mediation might be powerful with him? And can you desire him to be nearer to God than Christ is, who is his only begotten Son, of the same essence with the Father? And would you not only have him near to God, but also near to you, that you may have free access to him? And would you have him nearer to you than to be in the same nature, and not only

so, but united to you by a spiritual union so close as to be fitly represented by the union of the wife to the husband, of the branch to the vine, of the member to the head — yes, so as to be looked upon as one and called one spirit? For so he will be united to you, if you accept of him. Would you have a Savior that has given some great and extraordinary testimony of mercy and love to sinners by something he has done, as well as by what he says? And can you think or conceive of greater things than Christ has done? Was it not a great thing for him, who was God, to take upon him human nature, to be not only God but man thenceforth to all eternity? But would you look upon suffering for sinners to be a yet greater testimony of love to sinners than merely doing, though it be never so extraordinary a thing that he has done? And would you desire that a Savior should suffer more than Christ has suffered for sinners? What is there wanting, or what would you add if you could, to make him more fit to be your Savior?

But further to induce you to accept of Christ as your Savior, consider two things particularly.

How much Christ appears as the Lamb of God, in his invitations to you to come to him and trust in him. With what sweet grace and kindness does he from time to time call and invite you: 'Unto you, O men, I call, and my voice is to the sons of men' (Proverbs 8:4). And Isaiah 55:1-3: 'Ho, everyone that thirsts, come to the waters, and he that has no money, come, buy and eat; yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.' How gracious is he here in inviting everyone that thirsts, and in so repeating his invitation over and over: Come to the waters, come, buy and eat — yes, come! And in declaring the excellency of that entertainment which he invites you to accept of: Come, buy wine

and milk! And in assuring you that your poverty and having nothing to pay shall be no objection: Come, he that has no money, come without money and without price! And in the gracious arguments and expostulations that he uses with you, as it follows: 'Why do you spend money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Hearken diligently to me, and eat what is good, and let your soul delight itself in abundance.' This is as much as to say: it is altogether needless for you to continue laboring and toiling for that which can never serve your need, seeking rest in the world and in your own righteousness — I have made abundant provision for you, of that which is really good and will fully satisfy your desires, and stand ready to accept of you. You need not be afraid; if you will come to me I will engage to see all your needs supplied and you made a happy creature. As he promises in the third verse: 'Incline your ear and come to me; hear, and your soul shall live, and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.' And so in Proverbs 9 at the beginning — how gracious and sweet is the invitation there! 'Whoever is simple, let him turn in here' — let you be never so poor, ignorant, and blind a creature, you shall be welcome. And in the following words Christ sets forth the provision he has made for you: 'Come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine which I have mingled.' You are in a poor, famishing state and have nothing with which to feed your perishing soul; you have been seeking something but yet remain destitute. Hear how Christ calls you to eat of his bread and to drink of the wine that he has prepared! And how much like a lamb does Christ appear in Matthew 11:28-30: 'Come to me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest; take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and

lowly in heart, and you shall find rest to your souls, for my yoke is easy and my burden is light.' O poor distressed soul, whoever you are that are afraid you will never be saved, consider that this very case Christ mentions when he calls to those who labor and are heavy laden. And how he repeatedly promises you rest if you come to him — in verse 28 he says, 'I will give you rest,' and in verse 29, 'You shall find rest to your souls.' This is what you want! This is the thing you have so long been vainly seeking after! O how sweet would rest be to you if you could but obtain it! Come to Christ, and you shall obtain it. And hear how Christ, to encourage you, represents himself as a lamb: he tells you that he is meek and lowly in heart — are you afraid to come to such a one? And again, Revelation 3:20: 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will sup with him, and he with me.' Christ condescends not only to call you to him but comes to you; he comes to your door and there knocks. He might send an officer and seize you as a rebel and vile criminal; but instead of that, he comes and knocks at your door, and seeks that you would receive him into your house as your Friend and Savior. And he not only knocks at your door but stands there waiting while you are backward and unwilling. And not only so, but he makes promises of what he will do for you if you will admit him, what privileges he will admit you to: he will sup with you, and you with him. And again, Revelation 22:16-17: 'I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright and morning star; and the Spirit and the bride say, Come; and let him who hears say, Come; and let him who is thirsty come; and whoever will, let him take the water of life freely.' How does Christ here graciously set before you his own winning, attractive excellency! And how does he conde-

scend to declare to you not only his own invitation but the invitation of the Spirit and the bride, if by any means he might encourage you to come! And how does he invite everyone who will, that they may take of the waters of life freely — that they may take it as a free gift, however precious it be, and though it be the water of life!

If you do come to Christ he will appear as a Lion, in his glorious power and dominion, to defend you. All those excellencies of his in which he appears as a Lion shall be yours and shall be employed for you, in your defense, for your safety, and to promote your glory; he will be as a Lion to fight against your enemies. He that touches you or offends you will provoke his wrath, as he that stirs up a lion. Unless your enemies can conquer this Lion, they shall not be able to destroy or hurt you; unless they are stronger than he, they shall not be able to hinder your happiness. Isaiah 31:4: 'For thus the Lord has spoken to me: like as the lion and the young lion roaring on his prey, when a multitude of shepherds is called forth against him, he will not be afraid of their voice, nor abase himself at the noise of them; so shall the Lord of hosts come down to fight for Mount Zion and for the hill thereof.'

Let what has been said be improved to induce you to love the Lord Jesus Christ, and choose him for your Friend and Portion. As there is such an admirable meeting of diverse excellencies in Christ, so there is everything in him to render him worthy of your love and choice, and to win and engage it. Whatever there is or can be that is desirable to be in a friend is in Christ, and that to the highest degree that can be desired.

Would you choose a friend that is a person of great dignity? It is a thing that takes with men to have those for their friends that are much above them, because they look upon themselves honored by the friendship of such. Thus how appealing would it be to an inferior young woman to be the object of the dear love of some great and excellent prince. But Christ is infinitely above you, and above all the princes of the earth, for he is the King of kings. So honorable a person as this offers himself to you in the nearest and dearest friendship.

And would you choose to have a friend not only great but good? In Christ, infinite greatness and infinite goodness meet together and receive luster and glory one from another. His greatness is rendered lovely by his goodness. The greater anyone is without goodness, so much the greater evil; but when infinite goodness is joined with greatness, it renders it a glorious and adorable greatness. So on the other hand, his infinite goodness receives luster from his greatness. He who is of great understanding and ability, and withal of a good and excellent disposition, is deservedly more esteemed than a lower and lesser being with the same kind inclination and goodwill. Indeed goodness is excellent in whatever subject it be found; it is beauty and excellency itself, and renders all excellent that are possessed of it, and yet more excellent when joined with greatness. And how glorious is the sight to see him who is the great Creator and supreme Lord of heaven and earth, full of condescension and tender pity and mercy toward the mean and unworthy! His almighty power and infinite majesty and self-sufficiency render his exceeding love and grace the more surprising. And how do his condescension and compassions endear his majesty, power, and dominion, and render those at-

tributes pleasant that would otherwise be only terrible! Would you not desire that your friend, though great and honorable, should be of such condescension and grace, that the way might be opened to free access to him, so that his exaltation above you might not hinder your free enjoyment of his friendship?

And would you choose not only that the infinite greatness and majesty of your friend should be as it were softened and sweetened with condescension and grace, but would you also desire to have your friend in your own nature, that he might be brought nearer to you? Would you choose a friend far above you, and yet as it were on a level with you too? Though it is pleasing to men to have a near and dear friend of superior dignity, yet there is also an inclination in them to have their friend share with them in circumstances. Thus is Christ. Though he is the great God, yet he has humbled himself down to be on a level with you, having become man as you are, that he might not only be your Lord but your Brother, and that he might be the more fit to be a companion for such a worm of the dust. This is one end of Christ's taking upon him man's nature, that his people might be under advantages for a more familiar converse with him than the infinite distance of the divine nature would allow of. And on this account the church longed for Christ's incarnation: 'O that you were like a brother to me, who nursed at my mother's breasts! If I found you outside, I would kiss you' (Song of Solomon 8:1). One design of God in the gospel is to bring us to make God the object of our undivided respect, that he may have all our regard every way, that whatever natural inclination there is in our souls, he may be the center of it, that God may be all in all. But there is an inclination in the creature not only to the adoration of a Lord and Sovereign, but to delight in some one as a

friend, to love and delight in some one that may be conversed with as a companion. Virtue and holiness do not destroy or weaken this inclination of our nature. But so has God contrived in the affair of our redemption, that a divine Person may be the object even of this inclination of our nature. And in order to this, such a one has come down to us and has taken our nature and become one of us, and calls himself our Friend, Brother, and Companion: 'For my brethren and companions' sake, I will now say, Peace be within you' (Psalm 122:8).

Is it not enough to invite and encourage free access to a friend so great and high, that he is one of infinite condescending grace and also has taken your own nature and become man? But would you further, to embolden and win you, have him a man of wonderful meekness and humility? Such a one is Christ! He is not only become man for you, but far the meekest and most humble of all men, the greatest instance of these sweet virtues that ever was or will be. And besides these, he has all other human excellencies in the highest perfection. These are no proper addition to his divine excellencies. Christ has no more excellency in his person since his incarnation than he had before, for divine excellency is infinite and cannot be added to. Yet his human excellencies are additional manifestations of his glory and excellency to us, and are additional recommendations of him to our esteem and love, who are of finite comprehension. Though his human excellencies are but communications and reflections of his divine, and though this light as reflected falls infinitely short of the divine fountain of light in its immediate glory, yet the reflection shines not without its proper advantages as presented to our view and affection. As the glory of Christ appears in the qualities of his human nature, it appears to

us in excellencies that are of our own kind, and are exercised in our own way and manner, and so in some respects are peculiarly suited to invite our acquaintance and draw our affection. The glory of Christ as it appears in his divinity, though it be far brighter, yet does it also more dazzle our eyes and exceeds the strength of comprehension of our sight; but as it shines in the human excellencies of Christ, it is brought more to a level with our conceptions and suited to our nature and manner, yet retaining a resemblance of the same divine beauty and a savor of the same divine sweetness. But as both divine and human excellencies meet together in Christ, they set off and recommend each other to us. It is what tends to endear the divine and infinite majesty and holiness of Christ to us, that these are attributes of a person who is in our nature, who is one of us, who has become our brother and is the meekest and humblest of men; it encourages us to look upon these divine perfections, however high and great, yet as what we have some near concern in, and more of a right to, and liberty freely to enjoy. And on the other hand, how much more glorious and surprising do the meekness, the humility, obedience and resignation, and other human excellencies of Christ appear, when we consider that they are in so great a person as the eternal Son of God, the Lord of heaven and earth!

By your choosing Christ for your Friend and Portion you will obtain these two infinite benefits.

Christ will give himself to you, with all those various excellencies that meet in him, to your full and everlasting enjoyment. He will ever after treat you as his dear friend, and you will before long be where he is and behold his glory, and dwell with him in most free and intimate communion and enjoyment.

When the saints get to heaven, they shall not merely see Christ and have to do with him as subjects and servants with a glorious and gracious Lord and Sovereign, but Christ will entertain them as friends and brothers. This we may learn from the manner of Christ's conversing with his disciples here on earth: though he was their sovereign Lord, and did not refuse but required their supreme respect and adoration, yet he did not treat them as earthly sovereigns are accustomed to do their subjects; he did not keep them at an awful distance, but all along conversed with them with the most friendly familiarity, as a father among a company of children, yes, as with brothers. So he did with the twelve, and so he did with Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. He told his disciples that he did not call them servants but friends, and we read of one of them who leaned on his breast. And doubtless he will not treat his disciples with less freedom and endearment in heaven. He will not keep them at a greater distance for his being in a state of exaltation, but will rather take them into a state of exaltation with him. This will be the use Christ will make of his own glory — to make his beloved friends partakers with him, to glorify them in his glory, as he says to his Father: 'The glory which you have given me I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one, I in them' (John 17:22-23). We are to consider that though Christ is greatly exalted, yet he is exalted not as a private person for himself only, but as his people's Head; he is exalted in their name and on their account, as the firstfruits, and as representing the whole harvest. He is not exalted that he may be at a greater distance from them, but that they may be exalted with him. The exaltation and honor of the head is not to make a greater distance between the head and the members; but the members have the same relation and union with the head

they had before, and are honored with the head. And instead of the distance being greater, the union shall be nearer and more perfect. When believers get to heaven, Christ will conform them to himself; as he is set down in his Father's throne, so they shall sit down with him on his throne, and shall in their measure be made like him.

When Christ was going to heaven, he comforted his disciples with the promise that after a while he would come again and take them to himself, that they might be with him again. And we are not to suppose that when the disciples got to heaven they found him keeping a greater distance than he used to do. No, doubtless he embraced them as friends and welcomed them to his and their Father's house, and to his and their glory. Those who had been his friends in this world, who had been together with him here and had together partaken of sorrows and troubles, are now welcomed by him to rest and to partake of glory with him. He took them and led them into his chambers and showed them all his glory, as he prayed: 'Father, I desire that they also whom you have given me may be with me where I am, to see my glory' (John 17:24). And he led them to his living fountains of waters and made them partake of his delights, as he prays in John 17:13 that his joy might be fulfilled in them. And he set them down with him at his table in his kingdom and made them partake with him of his delights, according to his promise in Luke 22:30. And he led them into his banqueting house and made them drink new wine with him in the kingdom of his heavenly Father, as he foretold them when he instituted the Lord's Supper (Matthew 26:29).

Yes, the saints' conversation with Christ in heaven shall not only be as intimate, and their access to him as free, as that of the disciples on earth, but in many respects much more so. For in

heaven that vital union shall be perfect which is exceeding imperfect here. While the saints are in this world, there are great remains of sin and darkness to separate or disunite them from Christ, which shall then all be removed. This is not a time for that full acquaintance and those glorious manifestations of love which Christ designs for his people hereafter, which seems to be signified by Christ's speech to Mary Magdalene when she was ready to embrace him after his resurrection: 'Jesus said to her, Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father' (John 20:17).

When the saints shall see Christ's glory and exaltation in heaven, it will indeed fill their hearts with the greater admiration and adoring respect, but will not result in any separation, but will serve only to heighten their surprise and joy when they find Christ condescending to admit them to such intimate access, and so freely and fully communicating himself to them.

So if we choose Christ for our Friend and Portion, we shall hereafter be so received to him that there shall be nothing to hinder the fullest enjoyment of him, to the satisfying of the utmost cravings of our souls. We may fully indulge our spiritual appetite after these holy pleasures. Christ will then say, as in Song of Solomon 5:1: 'Eat, O friends; drink, yes, drink abundantly, O beloved.' And this shall be our entertainment to all eternity! There shall never be any end of this happiness, or anything to interrupt our enjoyment of it, or in the least to disturb us in it!

By your being united to Christ, you will have a more glorious union with and enjoyment of God the Father than otherwise could be. For thereby the saints' relation to God becomes much nearer; they are the children of God in a higher manner than otherwise could be. For being members of God's own natural Son, they are in

a sort partakers of his relation to the Father. They are not only sons of God by regeneration, but by a kind of communion in the sonship of the eternal Son. This seems to be intended in Galatians 4:4-6: 'God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons; and because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.' The church is the daughter of God not only as he has begotten her by his Word and Spirit, but as she is the spouse of his eternal Son.

So we, being members of the Son, are partakers in our measure of the Father's love to the Son and delight in him. John 17:23: 'I in them and you in me — you have loved them as you have loved me.' And verse 26: 'That the love with which you have loved me may be in them.' And chapter 16:27: 'The Father himself loves you, because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God.' So we shall, according to our capacities, be partakers of the Son's enjoyment of God and have his joy fulfilled in ourselves (John 17:13). And by this means we shall come to an immensely higher, more intimate, and full enjoyment of God than otherwise could have been. For there is doubtless an infinite intimacy between the Father and the Son, which is expressed by his being in the bosom of the Father. And saints being in him shall, in their measure and manner, partake with him in it and of the blessedness of it.

And thus is the affair of our redemption ordered, that thereby we are brought to an immensely more exalted kind of union with God and enjoyment of him, both the Father and the Son, than otherwise could have been. For Christ being united to the human nature, we have advantage for a more free and full enjoyment of him than we could have had if he had remained only in the divine na-

ture. So again, we being united to a divine person as his members can have a more intimate union and intercourse with God the Father, who is also in the divine nature, than otherwise could be. Christ, who is a divine person, by taking on him our nature descends from the infinite distance and height above us and is brought near to us, whereby we have advantage for the full enjoyment of him. And on the other hand, we by being in Christ a divine person do as it were ascend up to God through the infinite distance, and have hereby advantage for the full enjoyment of him also.

This was the Design of Christ, to bring it to pass, that He, and his Father, and his People, might all be united in one. That they all may be one; as thou Father art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us. Christ has brought it to pass, that those that the Father has given him, should be brought into the Household of God; that He, and his Father, and his People, should be as it were one Society, one Family; that the Church should be as it were admitted into the Society of the blessed Trinity.

## THE PREFACE▪



**T**he friendly correspondence which we maintain with our brethren of New England gives us now and then the pleasure of hearing some remarkable instances of divine grace in the conversion of sinners, and some eminent examples of piety in that American part of the world. But never did we hear or read, since the first ages of Christianity, any event of this kind so surprising as the present narrative has set before us. The Reverend and worthy Dr. Colman of Boston had given us some short intimations of it in his letters; and upon our request of a more large and particular account, Mr. Edwards, the happy and successful minister of Northampton, which was one of the chief scenes of these wonders, drew up this history in an epistle to Dr. Colman.

There were some useful sermons of the venerable and aged Mr. William Williams published lately in New England, which were preached in that part of the country during this season of the glorious work of God in the conversion of men; to which Dr. Colman added a most judicious and accurate abridgement of this epistle. And a little after, he sent the original to our hands, to be communicated to the world under our care here in London.

We are abundantly satisfied of the truth of this narrative, not only from the pious character of the writer, but from the concurrent testimony of many other persons in New England; for this thing was not done in a corner. There is a spot of ground, as we are well informed, wherein there are twelve or fourteen towns and villages, chiefly situated in the county of Hampshire near the banks of the river Connecticut, within the compass of thirty miles, wherein it pleased God two years ago to display his free and sovereign mercy in the conversion of a great multitude of souls in a short space of time, turning them from a formal, cold, and careless profession of Christianity to the lively exercise of every Christian grace and the powerful practice of our holy religion. The great God has seemed to act over again the miracle of Gideon's fleece, which was plentifully watered with the dew of heaven while the rest of the earth round about it was dry and had no such remarkable blessing.

There has been a great and just complaint for many years among the ministers and churches in Old England and in New, that the work of conversion goes on very slowly, that the Spirit of God in his saving influences is much withdrawn from the ministrations of his Word, and there are few that receive the report of the gospel with any eminent success upon their hearts. But as the gospel is the same divine instrument of grace still as ever it was in the days of the apostles, so our ascended Savior now and then takes a special occasion to manifest the divinity of this gospel by a plentiful effusion of his Spirit where it is preached; then sinners are turned into saints in numbers, and there is a new face of things spread over a town or country. The wilderness and the solitary places are glad, the desert rejoices and blossoms as the rose; and

surely concerning this instance we may add that they have seen the glory of the Lord there, and the excellency of our God — they have seen the outgoings of God our King in his sanctuary.

Certainly it becomes us who profess the religion of Christ to take notice of such astonishing exercises of his power and mercy, and give him the glory which is due, when he begins to accomplish any of his promises concerning the latter days; and it gives us further encouragement to pray and wait and hope for the like display of his power in the midst of us. The hand of God is not shortened that it cannot save, but we have reason to fear that our iniquities, our coldness in religion, and the general worldliness of our spirits have raised a wall of separation between God and us. And we may add, the pride and perverse spirit of unbelief, degeneracy and apostasy from the Christian faith, which have of late years broken out among us, seem to have provoked the Spirit of Christ to absent himself much from our nation. Return, O Lord, and visit your churches, and revive your own work in the midst of us.

From such blessed instances of the success of the gospel as appear in this narrative, we may learn much of the way of the Spirit of God in his dealing with the souls of men, in order to convince sinners and restore them to his favor and his image by Jesus Christ his Son. We acknowledge that some particular appearances in the work of conversion among men may be occasioned by the ministry which they sit under, whether it be of a more or less evangelical character, whether it be more severe and frightening or more gentle and persuasive. But wherever God works with power for salvation upon the minds of men, there will be some discoveries of a sense of sin, of the danger of the wrath of God, of the all-sufficiency of his Son Jesus to relieve us under all our spiritual needs

and distresses, and a hearty consent of soul to receive him in the various offices of grace in which he is set forth in the holy Scriptures. And if our readers had opportunity, as we have had, to peruse several of the sermons which were preached during this glorious season, we should find that it is the common plain Protestant doctrine of the Reformation, without stretching toward the Antinomians on the one side or the Arminians on the other, that the Spirit of God has been pleased to honor with such illustrious success.

We are taught also by this happy event how easy it will be for our blessed Lord to make a full accomplishment of all his predictions concerning his kingdom, and to spread his dominion from sea to sea through all the nations of the earth. We see how easy it is for him, with one turn of his hand, with one word of his mouth, to awaken whole countries of stupid and sleeping sinners and kindle divine life in their souls. The heavenly influence shall run from door to door, filling the hearts and lips of every inhabitant with earnest inquiries: What shall we do to be saved? And how shall we escape the wrath to come? And the name of Christ the Savior shall spread itself like a rich and vital perfume to multitudes that were ready to sink and perish under the painful sense of their own guilt and danger. Salvation shall spread through all the tribes and ranks of mankind, as lightning from heaven in a few moments would communicate a living flame through ten thousand lamps or torches placed in a proper situation and proximity. Thus a nation shall be born in a day when our Redeemer pleases, and his faithful and obedient subjects shall become as numerous as the blades of

grass in a meadow newly mown and refreshed with the showers of heaven. But the pleasure of this agreeable thought carries the mind away from our theme.

Let us return to the present narrative. It is worthy of our observation that this great and surprising work does not seem to have taken its rise from any sudden and distressing calamity or public terror that might universally impress the minds of a people. Here was no storm, no earthquake, no inundation of water, no desolation by fire, no pestilence or any other sweeping disease, nor any cruel invasion by their Indian neighbors, that might force the inhabitants into a serious thoughtfulness and a religious temper by the fears of approaching death and judgment. Such scenes as these have sometimes been made happily effectual to awaken sinners in Zion, and the formal professor and the hypocrite have been terrified with the thoughts of divine wrath breaking in upon them. But in the present case the immediate hand of God in the work of his Spirit appears much more evident, because there is no such awful and threatening providence attending it.

It is worthy also of our further notice that when many profane sinners and formal professors of religion have been frightened out of their present carelessness and stupidity by some astonishing terrors approaching them, those religious appearances have not been so durable, nor the real change of heart so thoroughly effected. Many of these sudden converts have dropped their religious concerns in a great measure when their fears of the threatening calamity have vanished. But it is a blessed confirmation of the truth of this present work of grace that the persons who were divinely worked upon in this season continue still to profess serious religion and to practice it without returning to their former follies.

It may not be out of place to take notice that a very surprising and threatening providence attended the people of Northampton this past year, among whom this work of divine grace was so remarkable. This providence at first might have been construed by the unthinking world to be a signal token of God's displeasure against that town, or a judgment from heaven upon the people; but soon afterward, like Paul's shaking the viper off from his hand, it discovered the astonishing care and goodness of God expressed toward a place where such a multitude of his young converts were assembled. Nor can we give a better account of it than in the language of this very gentleman, the Reverend Mr. Edwards, minister of that town, who wrote the following letter, which was published in New England.

But it is time to conclude our preface. If there should be anything found in this narrative of the surprising conversion of such numbers of souls where the sentiments or the style of the narrator, or his inferences from matters of fact, do not appear so agreeable to every reader, we hope it will have no unhappy influence to discourage the belief of this glorious event. We must allow every writer his own way, and must allow him to choose what particular instances he would select from the numerous cases which came before him. And though he might have chosen others perhaps of more significance in the eyes of the world than the woman and the child whose experiences he relates at length, yet it is evident he chose that of the woman because she was dead and is thereby unable to know any honors or reproaches on this account. And as for the child, those who were present and saw and heard such a remarkable and lasting change in one so very young must necessarily receive a stronger impression from it and a more agreeable sur-

prise than the mere narration of it can communicate to others at a distance. Children's language always loses its striking beauties at second hand.

Upon the whole, we declare our opinion that this account of such an extraordinary and illustrious appearance of divine grace in the conversion of sinners is very likely, by the blessing of God, to have a happy effect toward the honor and enlargement of the kingdom of Christ.

May the worthy writer of this epistle, and all those his reverend brethren in the ministry who have been honored in this excellent and important service, go on to see their labors crowned with daily and persevering success! May the numerous subjects of this surprising work hold fast what they have received and increase in every Christian grace and blessing! May a plentiful effusion of the blessed Spirit also descend on the British Isles and all their American colonies, to renew the face of religion there! And we entreat our readers in both Englands to join with us in our hearty addresses to the throne of grace, that this wonderful discovery of the hand of God in saving sinners may encourage our faith and hope of the accomplishment of all his words of grace, which are written in the Old Testament and in the New, concerning the large extent of this salvation in the latter days of the world. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly, and spread your dominion through all the ends of the earth. Amen.

London, October 12, 1737. Isaac Watts. John Guyse.

## THE BOSTON PREFACE



When the disciples of our glorious Lord were filled with sorrow upon the heavy news of his departure from them, he cheered their drooping spirits with that good word in John 16:7: 'Nevertheless, I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send him to you.' And after his ascension, he fulfilled this great and precious promise by the extraordinary effusion of his Spirit, under whose conduct and influence the apostles went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them; so that when we read the Acts of the Apostles, we must say: Not by might, nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord of Hosts. And though, soon after the first days of Christianity, there was a dreadful apostasy, yet God did not wholly take his Spirit from his people, but raised up faithful witnesses to testify against the heresies and corruptions of the times in which they lived. And since Antichrist, that wicked one, has been revealed, our Lord, according to his Word, has been gradually consuming him with the Spirit of his mouth, in the Reformation.

Nor have we in these remote corners of the earth, where Satan had his seat from time immemorial, been left without a witness of the divine power and grace. Very remarkable was the work of

God's Spirit stirring up our forefathers to leave a pleasant land and transport themselves over a vast ocean into this then howling wilderness, that they might enjoy communion with Christ in the purity of his ordinances and leave their children in the quiet possession of the blessings of his kingdom. And God was eminently present with them by his Word and Spirit.

Yes, we need look no higher than our own times to find abundant occasion to celebrate the wonderful works of God. Thus when God arose and shook the earth, his loud call to us in that amazing providence was followed, so far as man can judge, with the still voice of his Spirit, in which he was present to awaken many and bring them to say trembling, What must we do to be saved? Yes, as we hope, to turn not a few from sin to God in a thorough conversion. But when the bitterness of death was past, much the greater part of those whom God's terrors frightened gave sad occasion to remember those words in Psalm 78:34-36: 'When he slew them, then they sought him; and they returned and inquired earnestly after God, and they remembered that God was their rock, and the Most High God their redeemer. Nevertheless, they flattered him with their mouths and lied to him with their tongues.' And there has since been great reason to complain of our speedy return to our former sins, notwithstanding some hopes given of a more general reformation. Yes, when more lately it pleased God to visit many of our towns with a very deadly disease, to that time in a manner unknown, whereby great numbers of our hopeful children and youth have been cut off, many very suddenly and with circumstances exceedingly distressing and awful — yet, alas, we have not generally seen nor duly considered God's hand stretched out against us, but have given him reason to complain as of his ancient

people: 'Why should you be stricken any more? You will revolt more and more.' And accordingly his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still. A plain proof of this awful truth: that the most awakening providences can no further humble and do us good than as it pleases God to accompany them with his Spirit and so command his blessing upon them. But when the Almighty will work by such means, or without them, who can hinder him? He acts with sovereign liberty and irresistible power. John 3:8: 'The wind blows where it pleases, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit.' Such was his wonderful work at Northampton, and the neighboring towns in the county of Hampshire, and some other places. The Holy Spirit was in a plentiful and extraordinary manner poured out on persons of every age and condition, without such remarkable providences going before to awaken them — as the dew falls in the night, and yet the effects appeared as the light which goes forth. So that we might well say with admiration, What has God wrought! Great was the number of those who published the wonders of the divine power and grace, declaring with humility what God had done for their souls. And others who went among them acknowledged that the work exceeded the report of it.

Now the psalmist observes that God has made his wonderful works to be remembered. We therefore believe that our reverend brother has done well to record and publish this surprising work of God; and the fidelity of his account would not have been at all doubted by us, though there had not been the concurrent testimony of others to it. It is also a pleasure to us to hear what acceptance the following narrative has found in the other England,

where it has had two printings already, and been honored with a recommendatory preface by two divines of eminent note in London, namely the Reverend Dr. Watts and Dr. Guyse; after whom it may seem presumption in us to attempt anything of this kind. But it having been thought proper to reprint this letter here and disperse it among our people, we thankfully embrace this opportunity to praise the Most High for the exceeding riches of his grace, and earnestly to recommend this epistle to the diligent reading and attentive consideration of all into whose hands it shall come. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. And indeed the particular and distinct account which the author has given of God's dealings with the souls of men at this remarkable season, in the variety of cases then set before him, and many of his observations upon them, we believe are written with that judgment and skill in divine things as declare him to be a scribe well instructed in the kingdom of heaven; and we judge they may be very useful to ministers in leading weary souls to Christ for rest, and for the direction and encouragement of all under the like operations of the Holy Spirit. Yes, as the author observes: 'There is no one thing I know of that God has made such a means of promoting his work among us as the news of others' conversion.' We hope that the further spreading of this narrative may, by the divine blessing, still promote the conversion of souls, and stir up God's children to labor after the clearer evidences of their adoption and to bring forth fruit worthy of repentance. And as this wonderful work may be considered as an earnest of what God will do toward the close of the gospel day, it affords great encouragement to our faith and prayer in pleading those promises which relate to the glorious extent and flourishing of the kingdom of Christ upon earth,

and have not yet had their full and final accomplishment. And surely the threatening degeneracy of our times calls aloud to us all to be earnest in prayer for this most needed blessing — the plentiful effusion of the Spirit of truth and holiness. Nor ought the sense of our own unworthiness discourage us when we go to our heavenly Father in the name of his dear Son, who has purchased and received this great gift for his people, and says to us in Luke 11:9-13: 'Ask and it shall be given you — if you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him.'

But we must draw to a close. May the worthy author be restored to health and long continue to be a rich blessing to his people! May he still see the pleasure of the Lord prospering in his hand, and in particular may the Spirit of grace accompany this pious endeavor to spread the knowledge of Christ for the everlasting advantage of many! May it please God to revive his work throughout this land, and may all the ends of the earth see his salvation!

Boston, November 4, 1738. Joseph Sewall. Thomas Prince. John Webb. William Cooper.

LETTER TO REVEREND BENJAMIN  
COLMAN



Westfield, October 11, 1738. Sir,

In your letter of August 19 you inform us that the Reverend Dr. Watts and Dr. Guyse desire that some other ministers, who were eye and ear witnesses to some of those numerous conversions in the other towns about Northampton, would attest to what the Reverend Mr. Edwards has written of them.

We take this opportunity to assure you that the account Mr. Edwards has given in his narrative of our several towns or parishes is true, and that much more of the like nature might have been added with respect to some of them.

We are, Reverend Sir, your brethren and servants. William Williams, Pastor of Hatfield. Ebenezer Devotion, of Suffield. Stephen Williams, of Long Meadow. Peter Raynolds, of Enfield. Nehemiah Bull, of Westfield. Samuel Hopkins, of West Springfield.

## A FAITHFUL NARRATIVE OF THE SURPRISING WORK OF GOD



**R**everend and honored sir,

Having seen your letter to my honored uncle Williams of Hatfield of July 20, wherein you inform him of the notice that has been taken of the late wonderful work of God in this and some other towns in this county, by the Reverend Dr. Watts and Dr. Guyse of London, and the congregation to which the last of these preached on a monthly day of solemn prayer; as also of your desire to be more perfectly acquainted with it by some of us on the spot — and having since been informed by my uncle Williams that you desire me to undertake it — I would now do it in as just and faithful a manner as I am able.

The people of the county in general, I suppose, are as sober and orderly and good a sort of people as in any part of New England; and I believe they have been preserved the freest by far of any part of the country from error and variety of sects and opinions. Our being so far within the land, at a distance from seaports and in a corner of the country, has doubtless been one reason why we have not been so much corrupted with vice as most other parts. But without question the religion and good order of the county, and

their purity in doctrine, has, under God, been very much owing to the great abilities and eminent piety of my venerable and honored grandfather Stoddard. I suppose we have been the freest of any part of the land from unhappy division and quarrels in our ecclesiastical and religious affairs, until the late lamentable Springfield contention.

We being much separated from other parts of the province, and having comparatively little intercourse with them, have from the beginning till now always managed our ecclesiastical affairs within ourselves. It is the way in which the county, from its infancy, has gone on by the practical agreement of all, and the way in which our peace and good order has hitherto been maintained.

The town of Northampton is of about eighty-two years' standing and has now about two hundred families, which mostly dwell more compactly together than any town of such a size in these parts of the country. This has probably been an occasion that both our corruptions and reformations have been, from time to time, the more swiftly propagated from one to another through the town. Taking the town in general, and so far as I can judge, they are as rational and understanding a people as most I have been acquainted with. Many of them have been noted for religion, and particularly have been remarkable for their distinct knowledge of things that relate to heart religion and Christian experience, and their great regard for them.

I am the third minister that has been settled in the town. The Reverend Mr. Eleazar Mather, who was the first, was ordained in July 1669. He was one whose heart was much in his work, abundant in labors for the good of precious souls; he had the high esteem and great love of his people, and was blessed with no small

success. The Reverend Mr. Stoddard, who succeeded him, came first to the town the November after his death, but was not ordained until September 11, 1672, and died February 11, 1728-9. So he continued in the work of the ministry here, from his first coming to town, nearly sixty years. And as he was eminent and renowned for his gifts and grace, so he was blessed from the beginning with extraordinary success in his ministry, in the conversion of many souls. He had five harvests, as he called them: the first was about fifty-seven years ago; the second about fifty-three years; the third about forty; the fourth about twenty-four; the fifth and last about eighteen years ago. Some of these times were much more remarkable than others, and the ingathering of souls more plentiful. Those that were about fifty-three, and forty, and twenty-four years ago were much greater than either the first or the last; but in each of them, I have heard my grandfather say, the greater part of the young people in the town seemed to be mainly concerned for their eternal salvation.

After the last of these came a far more degenerate time, at least among the young people, I suppose, than ever before. Mr. Stoddard indeed had the comfort before he died of seeing a time when there were no small appearances of a divine work among some, and a considerable ingathering of souls, even after I was settled with him in the ministry, which was about two years before his death; and I have reason to bless God for the great advantage I had by it. In these two years there were nearly twenty that Mr. Stoddard hoped to be savingly converted; but there was nothing of any general awakening. The greater part seemed to be at that time very insensible of the things of religion and engaged in other cares and pursuits. Just after my grandfather's death, it seemed to be a

time of extraordinary dullness in religion. Licentiousness for some years greatly prevailed among the youth of the town; they were many of them very much addicted to night-walking and frequenting the tavern and lewd practices, wherein some, by their example, exceedingly corrupted others. It was their manner very frequently to get together in gatherings of both sexes for mirth and jollity, which they called frolics; and they would often spend the greater part of the night in them, without regard to any order in the families they belonged to. And indeed family government did too much fail in the town. It had become very customary with many of our young people to be indecent in their behavior at meeting, which doubtless would not have prevailed to such a degree had it not been that my grandfather, through his great age — though he retained his powers surprisingly to the last — was not so able to observe them. There had also long prevailed in the town a spirit of contention between two parties, into which they had for many years been divided, by which a jealousy of one another was maintained and they were prepared to oppose one another in all public affairs.

But in two or three years after Mr. Stoddard's death, there began to be a sensible improvement of these evils. The young people showed more of a disposition to hearken to counsel, and by degrees left off their frolicking, and grew observably more decent in their attendance on public worship, and there were more that manifested a religious concern than there used to be.

At the latter end of the year 1733, there appeared a very unusual flexibility and yielding to advice in our young people. It had been too long their manner to make the evening after the Sabbath and after our public lecture especially the times of their mirth and

company-keeping. But a sermon was now preached on the Sabbath before the lecture to show the evil tendency of the practice and to persuade them to reform it; and it was urged on heads of families that it should be agreed among them to govern their families and keep their children at home at these times. And it was privately moved that they should meet together the next day in their several neighborhoods to know each other's minds; which was accordingly done, and the motion was complied with throughout the town. But parents found little or no occasion for the exercise of government in the case: the young people declared themselves convinced by what they had heard from the pulpit, and were willing of themselves to comply with the counsel that had been given. And it was immediately and almost universally complied with; and there was a thorough reformation of these disorders thenceforth, which has continued ever since.

Presently after this, there began to appear a remarkable religious concern at a little village belonging to the congregation, called Pascommuck, where a few families were settled about three miles from the main body of the town. At this place a number of persons seemed to be savingly worked upon. In the April following, in 1734, there happened a very sudden and awful death of a young man in the bloom of his youth; being violently seized with a pleurisy and taken immediately very delirious, he died in about two days; which, together with what was preached publicly on that occasion, much affected many young people. This was followed with another death, of a young married woman who had been considerably exercised in mind about the salvation of her soul before she was ill, and was in great distress at the beginning of her illness; but seemed to have satisfying evidences of God's saving mercy to

her before her death, so that she died very full of comfort, in a most earnest and moving manner warning and counseling others. This seemed much to contribute to the sobering of the spirits of many young persons, and there began evidently to appear more of a religious concern on people's minds.

In the fall of the year I proposed to the young people that they should agree among themselves to spend the evenings after lectures in social religion, and to that end divide themselves into several companies to meet in various parts of the town; which was accordingly done, and those meetings have been continued since, and the example imitated by older people. This was followed with the death of an elderly person, which was attended with many unusual circumstances, by which many were much moved and affected.

About this time began the great controversy that arose in this part of the country about Arminianism, which seemed to appear with a very threatening aspect upon the interest of religion here. The friends of vital piety trembled for fear of the outcome; but it seemed, contrary to their fear, to be strongly overruled for the promoting of religion. Many who looked on themselves as in a Christless condition seemed to be awakened by it, with fear that God was about to withdraw from the land and that we should be given up to heresy and corrupt principles, and that then their opportunity for obtaining salvation would be past. And many who were brought a little to doubt about the truth of the doctrines they had hitherto been taught seemed to have a kind of trembling fear with their doubts, lest they should be led into wrong paths to their eternal undoing. And they seemed with much concern and earnestness of mind to inquire what was indeed the way in which

they must come to be accepted with God. There were then some things said publicly on that occasion concerning justification by faith alone.

Although great fault was found with meddling with this controversy in the pulpit, by such a person and at that time, and though it was ridiculed by many elsewhere, yet it proved a word spoken in season here, and was most evidently attended with a very remarkable blessing of heaven to the souls of the people in this town. They received from it a general satisfaction with respect to the main thing in question, which they had been in trembling doubts and concern about; and their minds were engaged the more earnestly to seek that they might come to be accepted of God and saved in the way of the gospel, which had been made evident to them to be the true and only way. And it was then, in the latter part of December, that the Spirit of God began extraordinarily to move, and wonderfully to work among us; and there were, very suddenly, one after another, five or six persons who were to all appearance savingly converted, and some of them worked upon in a very remarkable manner.

Particularly, I was surprised by the account given by a young woman who had been one of the greatest company-keepers in the whole town. When she came to me, I had never heard that she had become in any way serious; but by the conversation I then had with her, it appeared to me that what she gave an account of was a glorious work of God's infinite power and sovereign grace, and that God had given her a new heart, truly broken and sanctified. I could not then doubt of it, and have seen much in my acquaintance with her since to confirm it.

Though the work was glorious, yet I was filled with concern about the effect it might have upon others. I was ready to conclude, though too rashly, that some would be hardened by it in carelessness and looseness of life, and would take occasion from it to open their mouths in reproaches of religion. But the event was the reverse, to a wonderful degree; God made it, I suppose, the greatest occasion of awakening to others of anything that ever came to pass in the town. I have had abundant opportunity to know the effect it had, by my private conversation with many. The news of it seemed to be almost like a flash of lightning upon the hearts of young people all over the town, and upon many others. Those persons among us who used to be farthest from seriousness, and that I most feared would make ill use of it, seemed greatly to be awakened by it; many went to talk with her concerning what she had experienced, and what appeared in her seemed to be to the satisfaction of all who did so.

Presently upon this, a great and earnest concern about the great things of religion and the eternal world became universal in all parts of the town and among persons of all degrees and all ages. The noise among the dry bones grew louder and louder. All other talk but about spiritual and eternal things was soon set aside; all the conversation in all companies and upon all occasions was upon these things only, unless so much as was necessary for people carrying on their ordinary secular business. Other discourse than of the things of religion would scarcely be tolerated in any company. The minds of people were wonderfully taken off from the world, which was treated among us as a thing of very little consequence. They seemed to follow their worldly business more as a part of their duty than from any disposition they had toward it. The temp-

tation now seemed to lie on that side — to neglect worldly affairs too much and to spend too much time in the immediate exercise of religion, which thing was exceedingly misrepresented by reports that spread in distant parts of the land, as though the people here had wholly thrown aside all worldly business and betook themselves entirely to reading and praying and such religious exercises.

But although people did not ordinarily neglect their worldly business, yet there was then the reverse of what commonly is: religion was with all sorts the great concern, and the world was a thing only by the way. The only thing in their view was to get the kingdom of heaven, and everyone appeared pressing into it. The earnestness of their hearts in this great concern could not be hidden; it appeared in their very countenances. It was then a dreadful thing among us to lie outside of Christ, in danger every day of dropping into hell; and what people's minds were intent upon was to escape for their lives and to flee from the wrath to come. All would eagerly lay hold of opportunities for their souls, and were accustomed very often to meet together in private houses for religious purposes; and such meetings when appointed were greatly attended.

There was scarcely a single person in the town, either old or young, that was left unconcerned about the great things of the eternal world. Those that were accustomed to be the vainest and loosest, and those that had been most disposed to think and speak slightly of vital and experimental religion, were now generally subject to great awakenings. And the work of conversion was carried on in a most astonishing manner and increased more and more; souls did as it were come by flocks to Jesus Christ. From day to day for many months together might be seen evident instances of sin-

ners brought out of darkness into marvelous light, and delivered out of a horrible pit and from the miry clay, and set upon a rock, with a new song of praise to God in their mouths.

This work of God, as it was carried on and the number of true saints multiplied, soon made a glorious change in the town; so that in the spring and summer following, in 1735, the town seemed to be full of the presence of God. It never was so full of love, nor so full of joy, and yet so full of distress, as it was then. There were remarkable tokens of God's presence in almost every house. It was a time of joy in families on account of salvation's being brought to them; parents rejoicing over their children as newborn, and husbands over their wives, and wives over their husbands. The going forth of God was then seen in his sanctuary; God's day was a delight, and his house was beloved. Our public assemblies were then beautiful; the congregation was alive in God's service, everyone earnestly intent on the public worship, every hearer eager to drink in the words of the minister as they came from his mouth. The assembly in general were from time to time in tears while the Word was preached; some weeping with sorrow and distress, others with joy and love, others with pity and concern for the souls of their neighbors.

Our public praises were then greatly enlivened; God was then served in our psalm-singing, in some measure, in the beauty of holiness. It has been observable that there has been scarcely any part of divine worship in which good men among us have had grace so drawn forth and their hearts so lifted up in the ways of God as in singing his praises. Our congregation excelled all that I have known in the outward part of the duty before, generally carrying regularly and well three parts of music, and the women a part by

themselves. But now they were evidently accustomed to sing with unusual elevation of heart and voice, which made the duty very pleasant.

In all companies on other days, on whatever occasions persons met together, Christ was to be heard of and seen in the midst of them. Our young people, when they met, were accustomed to spend the time in talking of the excellency and dying love of Jesus Christ, the gloriousness of the way of salvation, the wonderful, free, and sovereign grace of God, his glorious work in the conversion of a soul, the truth and certainty of the great things of God's Word, the sweetness of views of his perfections, and the like. And even at weddings, which formerly were merely occasions of mirth and jollity, there was now no discourse of anything but the things of religion, and no appearance of anything but spiritual joy.

Those among us who had been formerly converted were greatly enlivened and renewed with fresh and extraordinary workings of the Spirit of God, though some much more than others, according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Many that before had labored under doubts about their own state now had their doubts removed by more satisfying experience and more clear discoveries of God's love.

When this work of God first appeared and was so extraordinarily carried on among us in the winter, others round about us seemed not to know what to make of it, and there were many that scoffed at and ridiculed it, and some compared what we called conversion to certain diseases. But it was very observable that many who occasionally came among us from abroad with disregardful hearts were cured of such a temper of mind by what they saw here. Strangers were generally surprised to find things so much beyond

what they had heard, and were accustomed to tell others that the state of the town could not be conceived by those who had not seen it. The notice taken of it by the people who came to town on the occasion of the court that sat here in the beginning of March was very observable. And those who came from the neighborhood to our public lectures were for the most part remarkably affected. Many who came to town on one occasion or other had their consciences smitten and awakened, and went home with wounded hearts and with impressions that never wore off until they had hopefully a saving outcome; and those who before had serious thoughts had their awakenings and convictions greatly increased. And there were many instances of persons who came from abroad on visits or on business, who had not been long here before they were to all appearance savingly worked upon and partook of that shower of divine blessing that God rained down here, and went home rejoicing. Until at length the same work began evidently to appear and prevail in several other towns in the county.

In the month of March the people in South Hadley began to be seized with deep concern about the things of religion, which very soon became universal; and the work of God was very wonderful there, not much if anything short of what it was here, in proportion to the size of the place. About the same time it began to break forth in the west part of Suffield, where it was also very great, and it soon spread into all parts of the town. It next appeared at Sunderland and soon spread over the whole town, and I believe was for a season not less remarkable than it was here. About the same time it began to appear in a part of Deerfield called Green River, and afterward filled the town, and there was a glorious work there. It began also to be evident in the south part of Hatfield in a

place called the Hill, and after that the whole town in the second week in April seemed to be seized, as it were at once, with concern about the things of religion; and the work of God was great there. There was also a very general awakening at West Springfield and Long Meadow; and in Enfield there was for a time no small concern among some who before had been very loose persons. About the same time that this appeared at Enfield, the Reverend Mr. Bull of Westfield informed me that there had been a great change there and that more had been done in one week than in seven years before. Something of this work likewise appeared in the first precinct in Springfield, principally in the north and south extremes of the parish. And in Hadley old town there gradually appeared so much of a work of God on souls as at another time would have been thought worthy of much notice. For a short time there was also a very great and general concern of the like nature at Northfield. And wherever this concern appeared, it seemed not to be in vain; but in every place God brought saving blessings with him, and his Word attended with his Spirit, as we have all reason to think, did not return void. It might well be said at that time in all parts of the county: Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as doves to their windows?

As what other towns heard of and found in this was a great means of awakening them, so our hearing of such a swift and extraordinary spread and extent of this work did doubtless for a time serve to uphold the work among us. The continual news kept alive the conversation about religion, and greatly quickened and rejoiced the hearts of God's people, and much awakened those who

looked on themselves as still left behind, and made them the more earnest that they also might share in the great blessing that others had obtained.

This remarkable outpouring of the Spirit of God, which thus extended from one end to the other of this county, was not confined to it, but many places in Connecticut partook in the same mercy. For instance, the first parish in Windsor, under the pastoral care of the Reverend Mr. Marsh, was thus blessed about the same time as we in Northampton, while we had no knowledge of each other's circumstances. There was a very great ingathering of souls to Christ in that place, and something considerable of the same work began afterward in East Windsor, my honored father's parish, which has in times past been a place favored with mercies of this nature above any on this western side of New England, excepting Northampton; there having been four or five seasons of the pouring out of the Spirit to the general awakening of the people there since my father's settlement among them.

There was also the last spring and summer a wonderful work of God carried on at Coventry under the ministry of the Reverend Mr. Meacham. I had opportunity to converse with some of the Coventry people, who gave me a very remarkable account of the surprising change that appeared in the most rude and vicious persons there. The like was also very great at the same time in a part of Lebanon called the Crank, where the Reverend Mr. Wheelock, a young gentleman, is lately settled. And there has been much of the same at Durham under the ministry of the Reverend Mr. Chauncy, and to appearance no small ingathering of souls there. And likewise among many of the young people in the first precinct in Stratford under the ministry of the Reverend Mr. Gould, where the

work was much promoted by the remarkable conversion of a young woman who had been a great company-keeper, as it was here.

Something of this work appeared in several other towns in those parts, as I was informed when I was there last fall. And we have since been acquainted with something very remarkable of this nature at another parish in Stratford called Ripton, under the pastoral care of the Reverend Mr. Mills. And there was a considerable revival of religion last summer at New Haven old town, as I was informed by the Reverend Mr. Noyes the minister there, and by others. And by a letter which I very lately received from Mr. Noyes, and also by other information we have had, this flourishing of religion still continues and has lately much increased. Mr. Noyes writes that many this summer have been added to the church, and particularly mentions several young persons that belong to the principal families of that town.

There has been a degree of the same work at a part of Guilford, and very considerable at Mansfield under the ministry of the Reverend Mr. Eleazar Williams, and an unusual religious concern at Tolland, and something of it at Hebron and Bolton. There was also no small outpouring of the Spirit of God in the north parish in Preston in the eastern part of Connecticut, which I was informed of and saw something of when I was last autumn at the house and in the congregation of the Reverend Mr. Lord, the minister there; who, with the Reverend Mr. Owen of Groton, came here in May of last year on purpose to see the work of God. Having heard various and contradictory accounts of it, they were careful when they were here to inform and satisfy themselves, and to that end particularly conversed with many of our people; which they declared to be en-

tirely to their satisfaction, and that the half had not been told them, nor could be told them. Mr. Lord told me that when he got home he informed his congregation of what he had seen, and that they were greatly affected by it, and that it proved the beginning of the same work among them, which prevailed until there was a general awakening and many instances of persons who seemed to be remarkably converted. I have also lately heard that there has been something of the same work at Woodbury.

But this shower of divine blessing has been yet more extensive. There was no small degree of it in some parts of New Jersey, as I was informed when I was at New York on a long journey I took at that time for my health, by some people of New Jersey whom I saw. Especially the Reverend Mr. William Tennent, a minister who seemed to have such things much at heart, told me of a very great awakening of many in a place called the Mountains under the ministry of a Mr. Cross, and of a very considerable revival of religion in another place under the ministry of his brother the Reverend Mr. Gilbert Tennent, and also at another place under the ministry of a very pious young gentleman, a Dutch minister, whose name as I remember was Frelinghuysen.

This seems to have been a very extraordinary dispensation of providence. God has in many respects gone out of and much beyond his usual and ordinary way. The work in this town and some others about us has been extraordinary on account of its universality, affecting all sorts — sober and vicious, high and low, rich and poor, wise and unwise; it reached the most considerable families and persons, to all appearance, as much as others. In former stirrings of this nature, the bulk of the young people were greatly affected; but old men and little children have been so now. Many of

the latter have of their own accord formed themselves into religious societies in different parts of the town. A loose and careless person could scarcely find a companion in the whole neighborhood; and if there was any one that seemed to remain senseless or unconcerned, it would be spoken of as a strange thing.

This dispensation has also appeared very extraordinary in the numbers of those on whom we have reason to hope it has had a saving effect. We have about six hundred and twenty communicants, which include almost all our adult persons. The church was very large before, but persons never thronged into it as they did in the late extraordinary time. Our sacraments are eight weeks apart, and I received into our communion about one hundred before one sacrament, and fourscore of them at one time, whose appearance when they presented themselves together to make an open and explicit profession of Christianity was very affecting to the congregation. I took in nearly sixty before the next sacrament day. But it must be noted that it is not the custom here, as it is in many other churches in this country, to require a credible relation of inward experiences as the ground of admission to the Lord's Supper.

I am far from pretending to be able to determine how many have lately been the subjects of such mercy; but if I may be allowed to declare anything that appears probable to me in a thing of this nature, I hope that more than three hundred souls were savingly brought home to Christ in this town in the space of half a year — and about the same number of males as females. This, by what I have heard Mr. Stoddard say, was far from what was usual in years past, for he observed that in his time many more women were converted than men. Those of our young people that are on other accounts most likely and considerable are mostly, as I hope, truly pi-

ous and leading persons in ways of religion. Those that were formerly the looser young persons are generally to all appearance become true lovers of God and Christ and spiritual in their dispositions. And I hope that by far the greater part of persons in this town above sixteen years of age are such as have the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ; and so by what I have heard I suppose it is in some other places, particularly at Sunderland and South Hadley.

This has also appeared to be a very extraordinary dispensation in that the Spirit of God has so much extended not only his awakening but regenerating influences both to elderly persons and also those that are very young. It has been a thing heretofore rarely heard of that any were converted past middle age; but now we have the same ground to think that many such have in this time been savingly changed as that others have been so in more early years. I suppose there were upward of fifty persons in this town above forty years of age, and more than twenty of them above fifty, and about ten of them above sixty, and two of them above seventy years of age.

It has heretofore been looked on as a strange thing when any have seemed to be savingly worked upon and remarkably changed in their childhood; but now I suppose nearly thirty were to appearance so worked upon between ten and fourteen years of age, and two between nine and ten, and one of about four years of age. And because I suppose this last will be most difficult to believe, I will give a particular account of it hereafter. The influences of God's Spirit have also been very remarkable on children in some other places, particularly at Sunderland and South Hadley and the west part of Suffield. There are several families in this town that are all hopefully pious; yes, there are several numerous families in which,

I think, we have reason to hope that all the children are truly godly, and most of them lately become so. And there are very few houses in the whole town into which salvation has not lately come in one or more instances. There are several black persons who, from what was seen in them then and what is discernible in them since, appear to have been truly born again in the late remarkable season.

God has also seemed to have gone out of his usual way in the swiftness of his work, and the swift progress his Spirit has made in his operations on the hearts of many. It is wonderful that persons should be so suddenly and yet so greatly changed. Many have been taken from a loose and careless way of living and seized with strong convictions of their guilt and misery, and in a very little time old things have passed away and all things have become new with them.

God's work has also appeared very extraordinary in the degree of the influences of his Spirit, both in the degree of awakening and conviction, and also in the degree of saving light and love and joy that many have experienced. It has also been very extraordinary in its extent and in its being so swiftly propagated from town to town. In former times of the pouring out of the Spirit of God on this town, though in some of them it was very remarkable, yet it reached no further than this town, while the neighboring towns all around continued unmoved.

The work of God's Spirit seemed to be at its greatest height in this town in the former part of the spring, in March and April, at which time God's work in the conversion of souls was carried on among us in so wonderful a manner that, so far as I can judge by looking back from my particular acquaintance with souls in this

work, it appears to me probable to have been at the rate of at least four persons in a day, or nearly thirty in a week, taking one with another, for five or six weeks together. When God in so remarkable a manner took the work into his own hands, there was as much done in a day or two as at ordinary times, with all the means that men can use and with such a blessing as we commonly have, is done in a year.

I am very sensible how apt many would be, if they should see the account I have given here, presently to think with themselves that I am very fond of making a great many converts and of magnifying and aggrandizing the matter, and to think that for want of judgment I take every religious pang and enthusiastic notion for saving conversion. And I do not much wonder if they should be apt to think so; and for this reason I have refrained from publishing an account of this great work of God, though I have often been urged to do it. But having now, as I thought, a special call to give an account of it, upon mature consideration I thought it might not be beside my duty to declare this amazing work as it appeared to me to be indeed divine, and to conceal no part of the glory of it, leaving it with God to take care of the credit of his own work and taking the risk of any censorious thoughts which might be entertained of me to my disadvantage. But that distant persons may be under as great an advantage as may be to judge for themselves of this matter, I would be a little more at length and particular.

I therefore proceed to give an account of the manner of persons being worked upon; and here there is a vast variety, perhaps as many kinds as there are subjects of the operation, but yet in many things there is a great analogy in all.

Persons are first awakened with a sense of their miserable condition by nature, the danger they are in of perishing eternally, and that it is of great importance to them that they speedily escape and get into a better state. Those that before were secure and senseless are made sensible how much they were on the way to ruin in their former courses. Some are more suddenly seized with convictions; it may be by the news of others' conversion, or something they hear in public or in private conversation — their consciences are suddenly smitten, as if their hearts were pierced through with a dart. Others have awakenings that come upon them more gradually; they begin at first to be somewhat more thoughtful and considerate, so as to come to a conclusion in their minds that it is their best and wisest course to delay no longer but to improve the present opportunity, and have accordingly set themselves seriously to meditate on those things that have the most awakening tendency, on purpose to obtain convictions; and so their awakenings have increased until a sense of their misery, by God's Spirit moving therewith, has taken fast hold of them. Others who before this wonderful time had been somewhat religious and concerned for their salvation have been awakened in a new manner, and made sensible that their slack and dull way of seeking was never likely to attain their purpose, and so have been roused up to a greater urgency for the kingdom of heaven.

These awakenings when they first seized on persons had two effects. One was that they brought them immediately to quit their sinful practices, and the looser sort were brought to forsake and dread their former vices and extravagances. When once the Spirit of God began to be so wonderfully poured out in a general way through the town, people had soon done with their old quarrels,

backbitings, and meddling with other men's matters; the tavern was soon left empty, and persons kept very much at home. None went abroad unless on necessary business or on some religious account, and every day seemed in many respects like a Sabbath day. And the other effect was that it put them on earnest use of the means of salvation — reading, prayer, meditation, the ordinances of God's house, and private conversation. Their cry was, What shall we do to be saved? The place of resort was now changed; it was no longer the tavern but the minister's house, which was thronged far more than ever the tavern had been.

There is a very great variety as to the degree of fear and trouble that persons are exercised with before they obtain any comfortable evidences of pardon and acceptance with God. Some are from the beginning carried on with abundantly more encouragement and hope than others; some have had ten times less trouble of mind than others, in whom yet the outcome seems to be the same. Some have had such a sense of the displeasure of God and the great danger they were in of damnation that they could not sleep at nights; and many have said that when they lay down, the thought of sleeping in such a condition was frightful to them, and they were scarcely free from terror while asleep, and they awoke with fear, heaviness, and distress still abiding on their spirits. It has been very common that the deep and fixed concern on persons' minds has had a painful influence on their bodies and has disturbed their physical nature.

The awful apprehensions persons have had of their misery have for the most part been increasing the nearer they approached to deliverance, though they often pass through many changes and alterations in the frame and circumstances of their minds.

Sometimes they think themselves wholly senseless and fear that the Spirit of God has left them and that they are given up to judicial hardness; yet they appear very deeply exercised about that fear and are in great earnest to obtain convictions again.

Together with those fears and that exercise of mind which is rational and which they have just ground for, they have often suffered many needless distresses of thought, in which Satan probably has a great hand, to entangle them and block up their way. And sometimes the disposition toward melancholy has been evidently mixed; of which, when it happens, the tempter seems to make great advantage, and puts an unhappy obstacle in the way of any good effect. One does not know how to deal with such persons; they turn everything that is said to them the wrong way and most to their own disadvantage. And there is nothing the devil seems to make so great a handle of as a melancholy temperament, unless it be the real corruption of the heart.

But it has been very remarkable that there has been far less of this mixture in this time of extraordinary blessing than there was accustomed to be in persons under awakenings at other times; for it is evident that many who before had been exceedingly involved in such difficulties seemed now strangely set at liberty. Some persons who had before, for a long time, been exceedingly entangled with peculiar temptations of one sort or other, and unprofitable and hurtful distresses, were soon helped over former stumbling blocks that had hindered any progress toward saving good. And convictions worked more healthily, and they were successfully carried on in the way to life. And thus Satan seemed to be restrained until toward the latter end of this wonderful time, when God's Spirit was about to withdraw.

Many times persons under great awakenings were concerned because they thought they were not awakened, but still miserable, hard-hearted, senseless, and spiritually dull, and sleeping on the brink of hell. The sense of the need they have to be awakened, and of their comparative hardness, grows upon them with their awakenings; so that they seem to themselves to be very senseless when indeed they are most sensible. There have been some instances of persons who have had as great a sense of their danger and misery as their nature could well sustain, so that a little more would probably have destroyed them; and yet they expressed themselves much amazed at their own insensibility and dullness in such an extraordinary time as it then was.

Persons are sometimes brought to the borders of despair, and it looks as dark as midnight to them a little before the day dawns in their souls. Some few instances there have been of persons who have had such a sense of God's wrath for sin that they have been overwhelmed, and made to cry out under an astonishing sense of their guilt, wondering that God suffers such guilty wretches to live upon earth and that he does not immediately send them to hell. And sometimes their guilt so glares them in the face that they are in exceeding terror for fear that God will instantly do it. But more commonly the distresses under legal awakenings have not been to such a degree. In some, these terrors do not seem to be so sharp when near comfort as before; their convictions have not seemed to work so much that way, but they seem to be led further down into their own hearts, to a further sense of their own universal depravity and deadness in sin.

The corruption of the heart has discovered itself in various exercises, in the time of legal convictions; sometimes it appears in a great struggle, like something roused by an enemy, and Satan the old inhabitant seems to exert himself, like a serpent disturbed and enraged. Many in such circumstances have felt a great spirit of envy towards the godly, especially towards those that are thought to have been lately converted, and most of all towards acquaintance and companions, when they are thought to be converted. Indeed, some have felt many heart-risings against God, and murmurings at his ways of dealing with mankind, and his dealings with themselves in particular. It has been much insisted on, both in public and private, that persons should have the utmost dread of such envious thoughts, which if allowed tend exceedingly to quench the Spirit of God, if not to provoke him finally to forsake them. And when such a spirit has much prevailed, and persons have not so earnestly striven against it as they ought to have done, it has seemed to be exceedingly to the hindrance of the good of their souls. But in some other instances, where persons have been much terrified at the sight of such wickedness in their hearts, God has brought good to them out of evil; and made it a means of convincing them of their own desperate sinfulness, and bringing them off from all self-confidence.

The drift of the Spirit of God in his legal strivings with persons has seemed most evidently to be, to make way for, and to bring to, a conviction of their absolute dependence on his sovereign power and grace, and universal necessity of a Mediator, by leading them more and more to a sense of their exceeding wickedness and guiltiness in his sight; the pollution and insufficiency of their own righteousness, that they can in no wise help themselves, and that God

would be wholly just and righteous in rejecting them, and all that they do, and in casting them off forever. Though there is a vast variety, as to the manner, and distinctness of persons' convictions of these things.

As they are gradually more and more convinced of the corruption and wickedness of their hearts, they seem to themselves to grow worse and worse, harder and blinder, and more desperately wicked, instead of growing better; they are ready to be discouraged by it, and oftentimes never think themselves so far off from good as when they are nearest. Under the sense which the Spirit of God gives them of their sinfulness, they often think that they differ from all others; their hearts are ready to sink with the thought, that they are the worst of all, and that none ever obtained mercy that were so wicked as they.

When awakenings first begin, their consciences are commonly most exercised about their outward vicious course, or other acts of sin; but afterwards are much more burdened with a sense of heart sins, the dreadful corruption of their nature, their enmity against God, the pride of their hearts, their unbelief, their rejection of Christ, the stubbornness and obstinacy of their wills; and the like. In many, God makes much use of their own experience, in the course of their awakenings and endeavors after saving good, to convince them of their own vile emptiness and universal depravity.

Very often under first awakenings, when they are brought to reflect on the sin of their past lives, and have something of a terrifying sense of God's anger, they set themselves to walk more strictly, and confess their sins, and perform many religious duties, with a secret hope of appeasing God's anger and making up for the sins they have committed. And oftentimes, at first setting out, their

affections are moved, and they are full of tears, in their confessions and prayers, which they are ready to make very much of, as though they were some atonement, and had power to move correspondent affections in God too: and hence they are for a while full of expectation of what God will do for them; and conceive that they grow better quickly, and shall soon be thoroughly converted. But these affections are but short-lived; they quickly find that they fail, and then they think themselves to be grown worse again; they don't find such a prospect of being soon converted, as they thought: instead of being nearer, they seem to be farther off; their hearts they think are grown harder, and by this means their fears of perishing greatly increase. But though they are disappointed, they renew their attempts again and again; and still as their attempts are multiplied, so are their disappointments; all fails, they see no token of having inclined God's heart to them, they don't see that he hears their prayers at all, as they expected he would; and sometimes there have been great temptations arising from this to leave off seeking, and to yield up the case. But as they are still more terrified with fears of perishing, and their former hopes of prevailing on God to be merciful to them in great measure fail; sometimes their religious affections have turned into heart-risings against God, because that he won't pity them, and seems to have little regard to their distress, and piteous cries, and to all the pains that they take. They think of the mercy that God has shown to others, how soon, and how easily others have obtained comfort, and those too that were worse than they, and have not labored so much as they have done, and sometimes they have had even dreadful blasphemous thoughts, in these circumstances.

But when they reflect on these wicked workings of heart against God, if their convictions continue and the Spirit of God is not provoked utterly to forsake them, they have more distressing apprehensions of the anger of God toward those whose hearts work in such a sinful manner about him. And they may have great fears that they have committed the unpardonable sin, or that God will surely never show mercy to those who are such vipers, and are often tempted to leave off in despair. But then perhaps by something they read or hear of the infinite mercy of God and the all-sufficiency of Christ for the chief of sinners, they have some encouragement and hope renewed; but think that as yet they are not fit to come to Christ, that they are so wicked that Christ will never accept them. And then they set themselves on a new course of fruitless efforts in their own strength to make themselves better, and still meet with new disappointments. They are earnest to inquire what they shall do; they don't know but there is something else to be done in order to their obtaining converting grace that they have never done yet. It may be they hope they are somewhat better than they were, but then the pleasing dream all vanishes again. If they are told that they trust too much to their own strength and righteousness, they go about to strive to bring themselves off from it, and may think they have done it, when they only do the same thing under a new disguise, and still find no appearance of any good, but all looks as dark as midnight to them. Thus they wander about from mountain to hill seeking rest and finding none. When they are driven out of one refuge they flee to another, until they are as it were exhausted, broken, and subdued with legal humbling, in which God gives them a conviction of their own utter helplessness and insufficiency, and discovers the true remedy.

When they begin to seek salvation, they are commonly profoundly ignorant of themselves. They are not sensible how blind they are, and how little they can do toward bringing themselves to see spiritual things aright, and toward putting forth gracious exercises in their own souls. They are not sensible how far removed they are from love to God and other holy dispositions, and how dead they are in sin. When they see unexpected pollution in their own hearts, they go about to wash away their own defilements and make themselves clean; and they weary themselves in vain, until God shows them that it is in vain, and that their help is not where they have sought it but elsewhere.

But some persons continue wandering in such a kind of labyrinth ten times as long as others before their own experience will convince them of their insufficiency; and so it appears not to be their own experience only, but the convincing influence of God's Spirit together with their experience, that produces the effect. And God has of late abundantly shown that he does not need to wait to have men convinced by long and often repeated fruitless trials; for in multitudes of instances he has made a shorter work of it. He has so awakened and convicted persons' consciences, and made them so sensible of their exceeding great vileness, and given them such a sense of his wrath against sin, as has quickly overcome all their vain self-confidence and brought them down into the dust before a holy and righteous God.

There have been some who have not had great terrors but have had a very quick work. Some of those that have not had so deep a conviction of these things before their conversion have, it may be, much more of it afterward. God has appeared far from limiting himself to any certain method in his proceedings with sinners un-

der legal convictions. In some instances it seems easy for our reasoning powers to discern the methods of divine wisdom in his dealings with the soul under awakenings; in others his footsteps cannot be traced and his ways are past finding out. And some that are less distinctly worked upon in what is preparatory to grace appear no less eminent in gracious experiences afterward.

There is in nothing a greater difference between different persons than with respect to the time of their being under trouble; some but a few days, and others for months or years. There were many in this town who had been, before this outpouring of God's Spirit upon us, for years, and some for many years, concerned about their salvation. Though probably they were not thoroughly awakened, yet they were concerned to such a degree as to be very uneasy, so as to live an uncomfortable and disquieted life, and to continue in a way of taking considerable pains about their salvation, but had never obtained any comfortable evidence of a good estate. These, in this extraordinary time, have received light; but many of them were among the last. They first saw multitudes of others rejoicing and with songs of deliverance in their mouths, who seemed wholly careless and at ease and in pursuit of vanity, while they had been bowed down with anxiety about their souls. Yes, some had lived loosely and continued so until a little before they were converted, and then grew up to a holy rejoicing in the infinite blessings God had bestowed upon them.

And whatever minister has the like occasion to deal with souls in a congregation under such circumstances as this was in the last year, I cannot but think he will soon find himself under a necessity greatly to insist with them that God is under no manner of obligation to show mercy to any natural man whose heart is not turned

to God, and that a man can claim nothing, either in absolute justice or by free promise, from anything he does before he has believed on Jesus Christ or has true repentance begun in him. It appears to me that if I had taught those that came to me under trouble any other doctrine, I should have taken the most direct course to undo them utterly. I should have directly crossed what was plainly the drift of the Spirit of God in his influence upon them; for if they had believed what I said, it would either have promoted self-flattery and carelessness, and so put an end to their awakenings, or cherished and established their contention and strife with God concerning his dealings with them and others, and blocked up their way to that humiliation before the sovereign Disposer of life and death whereby God is accustomed to prepare them for his consolations. And yet those under awakenings have oftentimes plainly stood in need of being encouraged by being told of the infinite and all-sufficient mercy of God in Christ, and that it is God's manner to bless diligence and to bless his own means, so that awakenings and encouragements, fear and hope, may be duly mixed and proportioned to preserve their minds in a just balance between the two extremes of self-flattery and despair, both of which tend to slackness and negligence and in the end to security. I think I have found that no discourses have been more remarkably blessed than those in which the doctrine of God's absolute sovereignty with regard to the salvation of sinners, and his just liberty with regard to answering the prayers or blessing the efforts of natural men continuing as such, have been insisted on. I never found so much immediate saving fruit, in any measure, of any discourses I have offered to my

congregation, as from some based on Romans 3:19 — endeavoring to show from that text that it would be just with God forever to reject and cast off mere natural men.

In those in whom awakenings seem to have a saving outcome, commonly the first thing that appears after their legal troubles is a conviction of the justice of God in their condemnation, in a sense of their own exceeding sinfulness and the vileness of all their performances. In giving account of this they expressed themselves very variously. Some said that God was sovereign and might receive others and reject them. Some that they were convinced that God might justly bestow mercy on every person in the town and on every person in the world, and damn themselves to all eternity. Some that they saw that God might justly have no regard for all the pains they had taken and all the prayers they had made. Some that they saw that if they should seek and take the utmost pains all their lives, God might justly cast them into hell at last, because all their labors, prayers, and tears cannot make an atonement for the least sin, nor merit any blessing at the hands of God. Some have declared themselves to be in the hands of God, who can and may dispose of them just as he pleases. Some that God may glorify himself in their damnation, and they wonder that God has suffered them to live so long and has not cast them into hell long ago.

Some are brought to this conviction by a great sense of their sinfulness in general, that they are such vile wicked creatures in heart and life. Others have the sins of their lives set before them in an extraordinary manner, multitudes of them coming just then fresh to their memories and being set before them with their aggravations. Some have their minds especially fixed on some particular wicked practice they have indulged. Some are especially con-

victed by a sight of the corruption and wickedness of their hearts. Some from a view they have of the horribleness of some particular exercise of corruption which they have had in the time of their awakenings, whereby the enmity of the heart against God has been manifested. Some are convicted especially by a sense of the sin of unbelief, the opposition of their hearts to the way of salvation by Christ, and their obstinacy in rejecting him and his grace.

There is a great deal of difference as to persons' distinctness here. Some who have not so clear a sight of God's justice in their condemnation yet mention things that plainly imply it. They find a disposition to acknowledge God to be just and righteous in his threatenings, and that they deserve nothing. And many times, though they did not have so particular a sight of it at the beginning, they have very clear discoveries of it soon afterward, with great humbling in the dust before God.

Commonly, persons' minds immediately before this discovery of God's justice are exceedingly restless and in a kind of struggle and tumult, and sometimes in sheer anguish. But generally, as soon as they have this conviction, it immediately brings their minds to a calm and an unexpected quietness and composure. And most frequently, though not always, then the pressing weight upon their spirits is taken away, and a general hope arises that some time or other God will be gracious, even before any distinct and particular discoveries of mercy. And often they then come to a conclusion within themselves that they will lie at God's feet and wait his time, and they rest in that, not being sensible that the Spirit of God has now brought them to a frame whereby they are prepared for mercy. For it is remarkable that persons, when they first have

this sense of the justice of God, rarely at the time of it think anything of its being that humiliation that they have often heard insisted on and that others experience.

In many persons, the first conviction of the justice of God in their condemnation which they take particular notice of, and probably the first distinct conviction of it that they have, is of such a nature as seems to be above anything merely legal. Though it comes after legal humbling and much sense of their own helplessness and the insufficiency of their own duties, yet it does not appear to be forced by mere legal terrors and convictions, but rather from a high exercise of grace in saving repentance and evangelical humiliation. For there is in it a sort of delight of soul in the attribute of God's justice as displayed in his threatenings of eternal damnation to sinners. Sometimes at the discovery of it they can scarcely refrain from crying out, It is just! It is just! Some express themselves as seeing that the glory of God would shine bright in their own condemnation, and they are ready to think that if they are damned, they could take God's part against themselves and would glorify his justice in it. And when it is thus, they commonly have some evident sense of free and all-sufficient grace, though they give no distinct account of it, but it is evident by the great degree of hope and encouragement they then conceive, though they were never so sensible of their own vileness and ill-deserving as they are at that time.

Some, when in such circumstances, have felt such a sense of the excellency of God's justice, appearing in its vindictive exercise against such sinfulness as theirs was, and have had such a submission of mind in their view of this attribute and of these exercises of it, together with an exceeding loathing of their own unworthiness

and a kind of indignation against themselves, that they have sometimes almost called it a willingness to be damned. Though it must be acknowledged they had not clear and distinct ideas of damnation, nor does any word in the Bible require such self-denial as this. But the truth is, as some have more clearly expressed it, that salvation appeared too good for them, that they were worthy of nothing but condemnation, and they could not conceive how salvation could be bestowed upon them, fearing it was inconsistent with the glory of God's majesty, which they had so much despised and dishonored.

That calm of spirit that some persons have found after their legal distresses continues some time before any special and delightful manifestation is made to the soul of the grace of God as revealed in the gospel. But very often some comfortable and sweet view of a merciful God, of a sufficient Redeemer, or of some great and joyful things of the gospel, immediately follows or comes in a very little time. And in some, the first sight of their just desert of hell and God's sovereignty with respect to their salvation, and a discovery of all-sufficient grace, are so near that they seem to go as it were together.

These gracious discoveries that are given, from which the first special comforts are derived, are in many respects very various. More frequently Christ is distinctly made the object of the mind in his all-sufficiency and willingness to save sinners. But some have their thoughts more especially fixed on God in some of his sweet and glorious attributes manifested in the gospel and shining forth in the face of Christ. Some view the all-sufficiency of the mercy and grace of God. Some chiefly the infinite power of God, and his ability to save them and to do all things for them. And some look most

at the truth and faithfulness of God. In some, the truth and certainty of the gospel in general is the first joyful discovery they have; in others, the certain truth of some particular promise. In some, the grace and sincerity of God in his invitations — very commonly some particular invitation in the mind, and it now appears real to them that God does indeed invite them. Some are struck with the glory and wonderfulness of the dying love of Christ. Some with the sufficiency and preciousness of his blood as offered to make an atonement for sin. And others with the value and glory of his obedience and righteousness. In some the excellency and loveliness of Christ chiefly engages their thoughts; in some his divinity, that he is indeed the Son of the living God; and in others, the excellency of the way of salvation by Christ and its suitableness to their needs.

Some have an apprehension of these things so given that it seems more natural to them to express it by sight or discovery; others think what they experience is better expressed by a realizing conviction, or a lively or heartfelt sense, meaning, as I suppose, no other difference than what is merely circumstantial or a matter of degree.

There is often in the mind some particular text of Scripture holding forth some evangelical ground of consolation. Sometimes a multitude of texts, gracious invitations and promises flowing in one after another, filling the soul more and more with comfort and satisfaction. And comfort is first given to some while reading some portion of Scripture; but in some it is attended with no particular Scripture at all, either in reading or meditation. In some, many divine things seem to be discovered to the soul as it were at once; others have their minds especially fixing on some one thing at first,

and afterward a sense is given of others — in some with a swifter, and others a slower, succession, and sometimes with interruptions of much darkness.

The way that grace seems sometimes first to appear after legal humiliation is in earnest longings of soul after God and Christ — to know God, to love him, to be humbled before him, to have communion with Christ in his benefits. These longings, as they express them, seem evidently to be of such a nature as can arise from nothing but a sense of the superlative excellency of divine things, with a spiritual taste and relish for them, and an esteem of them as their highest happiness and best portion. Such longings as I speak of are commonly attended with firm resolutions to pursue this good forever, together with a hoping and waiting disposition. When persons have begun in such a frame, commonly other experiences and discoveries have soon followed, which have yet more clearly manifested a change of heart.

It must needs be confessed that Christ is not always distinctly and explicitly thought of in the first sensible Act of Grace, (though most commonly he is;) but sometimes he is the Object of the Mind only implicitly. Thus sometimes when Persons have seemed evidently to be stripped of all their own Righteousness, and to have stood self-condemned as guilty of Death, they have been comforted with a joyful and satisfying View, that the Mercy and Grace of God is sufficient for them; that their Sins, though never so great, shall be no Hindrance to their being accepted.

So sometimes disconsolate Souls amongst us, have been revived and brought to rest in God, by a sweet sense given of his Grace and Faithfulness, in some special Invitation or Promise, in which is no particular mention of Christ, nor is it accompanied

with any distinct Thought of him, in their Minds; but yet it is not received as out of Christ, but as one of the Invitations or Promises made of God to poor Sinners through his Son Jesus, as it is indeed.

It has more frequently been so amongst us, that when Persons have first had the Gospel Ground of Relief for lost Sinners discovered to them, and have been entertaining their Minds with the sweet Prospect, they have thought nothing at that time of their being converted. To see that there is such an All-sufficiency in God, and such plentiful Provision made in Christ, after they have been borne down with a sense of their Guilt and Fears of Wrath, exceedingly refreshes them; the View is joyful to them, and greatly encourages them to seek Conversion.

There is wrought in them a holy Repose of Soul in God through Christ, and a secret Disposition to fear and love him, and to hope for Blessings from him in this Way: and yet they have no Imagination that they are now converted. Very often the Reason is, that they don't see that they do accept of this sufficiency of Salvation that they behold in Christ, having entertained a wrong Notion of Acceptance; not being sensible that the obedient and joyful Entertainment which their Hearts give to this Discovery of Grace, is a real Acceptance of it.

And indeed it appears very plainly in some of them, that before their own Conversion they had very imperfect Ideas what Conversion was: It is all new and strange, and what there was no clear Conception of before. It is most evident as they themselves acknowledge, that the Expressions that were used to describe Conversion and the Graces of God's Spirit, such as a spiritual Sight of Christ, Faith in Christ, Poverty of Spirit, Trust in God, Resignedness to God, were Expressions that did not convey those

special and distinct Ideas to their Minds which they were intended to signify, in some respects no more than the Names of Colours are to convey the Ideas to one that is blind from his Birth.

This Town is a Place where there has always been a great deal of Talk of Conversion, and spiritual Experiences; and therefore People in general had before formed a Notion in their own Minds what these things were; but when they come to be the Subjects of them themselves, they find themselves much confounded in their Notions, and overthrown in many of their former Conceits. It has been very observable, that Persons of the greatest Understanding, and that had studied most about things of this nature, have been more confounded than others. Some such Persons that have lately been converted, declare that all their former Wisdom is brought to nought, and that they appear to have been mere Babes, who knew nothing.

It was very wonderful to see after what manner persons' affections were sometimes moved and wrought upon, when God did as it were suddenly open their eyes and let into their minds a sense of the greatness of his grace, and fullness of Christ, and his readiness to save, who before were broken with apprehensions of divine wrath, and sunk into an abyss under a sense of guilt, which they were ready to think was beyond the mercy of God. Their joyful surprise has caused their hearts as it were to leap, so that they have been ready to break forth into laughter, tears often at the same time issuing like a flood, and intermingling a loud weeping; and sometimes they have not been able to forbear crying out with a loud voice, expressing their great admiration. In some, even the view of the glory of God's sovereignty in the exercises of his grace has surprised the soul with such sweetness, as to produce the same

effects. I remember an instance of one who, reading something concerning God's sovereign way of saving sinners, as being self-moved, and having no regard to men's own righteousness as the motive of his grace, but as magnifying himself and abasing man, felt such a sudden rapture of joy and delight in the consideration of it; and yet then suspected himself to be in a Christless condition, and had been long in great distress for fear that God would not have mercy on him.

Many continue a long time in a course of gracious exercises and experiences, and don't think themselves to be converted, but conclude themselves to be otherwise; and none knows how long they would continue so, were they not helped by particular instruction. There are undoubted instances of some that have lived in this way for many years together; and a continuing in these circumstances of being converted and not believing it has had various consequences, with various persons, and with the same persons, at various times. Some continue in great encouragement and hope, that they shall obtain mercy, in a steadfast resolution to persevere in seeking it, and in a humble waiting for it at God's feet. But very often when the lively sense of the sufficiency of Christ, and the riches of divine grace begins to vanish, upon a withdrawal of the influences of the Spirit of God, they return to greater distress than ever; for they have now a far greater sense of the misery of a natural condition than before, being in a new manner sensible of the reality of eternal things, and the greatness of God, and his excellency, and how dreadful it is to be separated from him, and to be subject to his wrath; so that they are sometimes swallowed up with darkness and amazement. Satan has a vast advantage in such cases to ply them with various temptations, which he is not accustomed

to neglect. In such a case, persons do very much need a guide to lead them to an understanding of what we are taught in the Word of God of the nature of grace, and to help them to apply it to themselves.

I have been much blamed and censured by many, that I should make it my practice, when I have been satisfied concerning persons' good estate, to signify it to them — which thing has been greatly misrepresented abroad, as innumerable other things concerning us, to prejudice the country against the whole affair. But let it be noted, that what I have undertaken to judge of has rather been qualifications, and declared experiences, than persons. Not but that I have thought it a duty as a pastor to assist and instruct persons in applying scripture rules and characters to their own case, in doing of which I think many greatly need a guide; and have, where I thought the case plain, used freedom in signifying my hope of them to others: but have been far from doing this concerning all that I have had some hopes of; and I believe have used much more caution than many have supposed. Yet I should account it a great calamity to be deprived of the comfort of rejoicing with those of my flock, that have been in great distress, whose circumstances I have been acquainted with, when there seems to be good evidence that those that were dead are alive, and those that were lost are found. I am sensible the practice would have been safer in the hands of one of a riper judgment and greater experience; but yet there has seemed to be an absolute necessity of it on the forementioned accounts; and it has been found to be that which God has most remarkably owned and blessed amongst us, both to the persons themselves and others.

Grace in many persons, through this ignorance of their state, and their looking on themselves still as the objects of God's displeasure, has been like the trees in winter, or like seed in the spring suppressed under a hard clod of earth. And many in such cases have labored to their utmost to divert their minds from the pleasing and joyful views they have had, and to suppress those consolations and gracious affections that arose thereupon. And when it has once come into their minds to inquire whether this was not true grace, they have been much afraid lest they should be deceived with common illuminations and flashes of affection, and eternally undone with a false hope. But when they have been better instructed, and so brought to allow of hope, this has awakened the gracious disposition of their hearts into life and vigor, as the warm beams of the sun in the spring have quickened the seeds and productions of the earth: grace being now at liberty, and cherished with hope, has soon flowed out to their abundant satisfaction and increase.

There is no one thing that I know of that God has made such a means of promoting his work amongst us, as the news of others' conversion; in the awakening sinners, and engaging them earnestly to seek the same blessing, and in the quickening of saints. Though I have thought that a minister's declaring his judgment about particular persons' experiences might from these things be justified, yet I am often signifying to my people how unable man is to know another's heart, and how unsafe it is depending merely on the judgment of ministers or others, and have abundantly insisted on it with them that a manifestation of sincerity in fruits brought forth is better than any manifestation they can make of it in words alone; and that without this, all pretenses to spiritual

experiences are vain; as all my congregation can witness. And the people in general, in this late extraordinary time, have manifested an extraordinary dread of being deceived, being exceeding fearful lest they should build wrong, and some of them backward to receive hope, even to a great extreme.

Conversion is a great and glorious work of God's power, at once changing the heart, and infusing life into the dead soul; though that grace that is then implanted does more gradually display itself in some than in others. But as to fixing on the precise time when they put forth the very first act of grace, there is a great deal of difference in different persons; in some it seems to be very discernible when the very time of this was; but others are more at a loss. In this respect there are very many that don't know the time, that when they have the first exercises of grace, don't know that it is the grace of conversion, and sometimes don't think it to be so till a long time after. And many, even when they come to entertain great hope that they are converted, if they remember what they experienced in the first exercises of grace, are at a loss whether it was any more than a common illumination; or whether some other, more clear and remarkable experience that they had afterwards, was not the first that was of a saving nature. And the manner of God's work on the soul is sometimes very mysterious, and it is with the kingdom of God as to its manifestation in the heart of a convert, as is said in Mark 4:26-28: 'So is the Kingdom of God, as if a Man should cast Seed into the Ground and should sleep and rise Night and Day, and the Seed should spring, and grow up he knows not how; for the Earth brings forth of herself first the Blade, then the Ear, then the full Corn in the Ear.'

In some, converting light is like a glorious brightness suddenly shining in upon a person, and all around him: they are in a remarkable manner brought out of darkness into marvelous light. In many others it has been like the dawning of the day, when at first but a little light appears, and it may be is presently hid with a cloud; and then it appears again, and shines a little brighter, and gradually increases, with intervening darkness, till at length, perhaps, it breaks forth more clearly from behind the clouds. And many are, doubtless, ready to date their conversion wrong, throwing by those lesser degrees of light that appeared at first dawning, and calling some more remarkable experience they had afterwards their conversion; which often in great measure arises from a wrong understanding of what they have always been taught, that conversion is a great change, wherein old things are done away, and all things become new, or at least from a false arguing from that doctrine.

Persons commonly at first conversion, and afterwards, have had many texts of scripture brought to their minds, that are exceeding suitable to their circumstances, which often come with great power, and as the Word of God or Christ indeed; and many have a multitude of sweet invitations, promises, and doxologies flowing in one after another, bringing great light and comfort with them, filling the soul brimful, enlarging the heart, and opening the mouth in religion. And it seems to me necessary to suppose, that there is an immediate influence of the Spirit of God, oftentimes in bringing texts of scripture to the mind. Not that I suppose it is done in a way of immediate revelation, without any manner of use of the memory; but yet there seems plainly to be an immediate and extraordinary influence, in leading their thoughts to such and such

passages of scripture, and exciting them in the memory. Indeed in some, God seems to bring texts of scripture to their minds no otherwise than by leading them into such frames and meditations, as harmonize with those scriptures; but in many persons there seems to be something more than this.

Those that, while under legal convictions, have had the greatest terrors, have not always obtained the greatest light and comfort; nor have they always had light most suddenly communicated; but yet, I think, the time of conversion has generally been most sensible in such persons. Oftentimes, the first sensible change after the extremity of terrors, is a calmness, and then the light gradually comes in; small glimpses at first, after their midnight darkness, and a word or two of comfort, as it were softly spoken to them; they have a little taste of the sweetness of divine grace and the love of a Savior, when terror and distress of conscience begins to be turned into a humble, meek sense of their own unworthiness before God; and there is felt inwardly, perhaps, some disposition to praise God; and after a little while the light comes in more clearly and powerfully. But yet, I think more frequently, great terrors have been followed with more sudden and great light, and comfort; when the sinner seems to be as it were subdued and brought to a calm, from a kind of tumult of mind, then God lets in an extraordinary sense of his great mercy through a Redeemer.

The converting influences of God's Spirit very commonly bring an extraordinary conviction of the reality and certainty of the great things of religion; though in some this is much greater, some time after conversion, than at first. They have that sight and taste of the divinity, or divine excellency, that there is in the things of the gospel, that is more to convince them, than reading many volumes

of arguments without it. It seems to me that in many instances amongst us, when the divine excellency and glory of the things of Christianity have been set before persons, and they have at the same time as it were seen, and tasted, and felt the divinity of them, they have been as far from doubting of the truth of them, as they are from doubting whether there be a sun, when their eyes are open upon it in the midst of a clear hemisphere, and the strong blaze of his light overcomes all objections against his being. And yet many of them, if we should ask them why they believed those things to be true, would not be able well to express, or communicate a sufficient reason to satisfy the inquirer, and perhaps would make no other answer but that they see them to be true: but a person might soon be satisfied, by a particular conversation with them, that what they mean by such an answer is, that they have intuitively beheld, and immediately felt most illustrious works, and powerful evidence of divinity in them.

Some are thus convinced of the truth of the gospel in general, and that the Scriptures are the Word of God. Others have their minds more especially fixed on some particular great doctrine of the gospel, some particular truth they are meditating on, or are in a special manner convinced of the divinity of the things they are reading in some portion of Scripture. Some have such convictions in a much more remarkable manner than others. And there are some who never had such a special sense of the certainty of divine things impressed upon them with such inward evidence and strength, who yet have very clear exercises of grace — that is, of love to God, repentance, and holiness. And if they are more particularly examined, they appear plainly to have an inward firm persuasion of the reality of divine things, such as they did not use to

have before their conversion. And those who have the most clear discoveries of divine truth, in the manner that has been spoken of, cannot have this always in view. When the sense and relish of the divine excellency of these things fades, on a withdrawal of the Spirit of God, they don't have the means of the conviction of their truth at their command. In a dull frame they cannot recall the view and inward sense they had perfectly to mind; things appear very dim compared to what they did before. And though there still remains a habitual strong persuasion, yet not so as to exclude temptations to unbelief and all possibility of doubting as before. But then at particular times, by God's help, the same sense of things revives again, like fire that lay hidden in ashes.

I suppose the grounds of such a conviction of the truth of divine things to be just and rational, but yet in some God makes use of their own reason much more evidently than in others. Oftentimes persons have, so far as could be judged, received the first saving conviction from reasoning they have heard from the pulpit, and often in the course of reasoning they are led into in their own meditations.

The arguments are the same that they have heard hundreds of times; but the force of the arguments and their conviction by them is altogether new; they come with a new and previously unexperienced power. Before, they heard it was so and they allowed it to be so; but now they see it to be so indeed. Things now look exceedingly plain to them, and they wonder that they never saw them before.

They are so greatly taken with their new discovery, and things appear so plain and so rational to them, that they are often at first ready to think they can convince others; and they are apt to engage

in talk with almost everyone they meet with for this end. And when they are disappointed they are ready to wonder that their reasoning seems to make no more impression.

Many fall under such a mistake as to be ready to doubt of their good standing, because there was so much use made of their own reason in the convictions they have received. They are afraid they have no illumination above the natural force of their own faculties. And many make it an objection against the spiritual nature of their convictions that it is so easy to see things as they now see them. They have often heard that conversion is a work of mighty power, manifesting to the soul what no man or angel can give such a conviction of; but it seems to them that the things they see are so plain and easy and rational that anyone can see them. And if they are asked why they never saw so before, they say it seems to them it was because they never thought of it. But very often these difficulties are soon removed by those of another nature; for when God withdraws, they find themselves as it were blind again, they for the present lose their realizing sense of those things that looked so plain to them, and do all they can but cannot recover it, until God renews the influences of his Spirit.

Persons after their conversion often speak of things of religion as seeming new to them — that preaching is a new thing, that it seems to them they never heard preaching before, that the Bible is a new book. They find there new chapters, new psalms, new histories, because they see them in a new light. Here was a remarkable instance of an aged woman who had spent most of her days under Mr. Stoddard's powerful ministry, who reading in the New Testament concerning Christ's sufferings for sinners seemed to be surprised and astonished at what she read, as at a thing that was

real and very wonderful but quite new to her. Insomuch that at first, before she had time to turn her thoughts, she wondered within herself that she had never heard of it before; but then immediately recollected herself, and thought that she had often heard and read it, but never until now saw it as a real thing. And then she reflected how wonderful this was, that the Son of God should undergo such things for sinners, and how she had spent her time in ungratefully sinning against so good a God and such a Savior — though she was a person, as far as was visible, of a very blameless and inoffensive life. And she was so overcome by those considerations that her physical strength was ready to fail under them. Those who were around her, not knowing what was the matter, were surprised and thought she was dying.

Many have spoken much of their Hearts being drawn out in Love to God and Christ; and their Minds being wrapped up in delightful Contemplation of the Glory, and wonderful Grace of God, and the Excellency, and dying Love of Jesus Christ; and of their Souls going forth in longing Desires after God and Christ. Some Persons have had longing Desires after Christ, which have risen to that degree, as to take away their natural Strength. Several Persons have had so great a Sense of the Glory of God, and Excellency of Christ, that Nature and Life has seemed almost to sink under it. Such Persons amongst us as have been thus distinguished with the most extraordinary Discoveries of God, have commonly in no wise appeared with the assuming, and self-conceited, and self-sufficient Airs of Enthusiasts, but exceedingly the contrary; and are eminent for a Spirit of Meekness, Modesty, Self-diffidence, and low Opinion of themselves: No Persons seem to be so sensible of their need of Instruction, and so eager to receive it, as some of them; nor so

ready to think others better than themselves. They very often speak much of their Sense of the Excellency of the way of Salvation, by free and sovereign Grace, through the Righteousness of Christ alone; and how it is with delight that they renounce their own Righteousness, and rejoice in having no Account made of it. Many have expressed themselves to this purpose, that it would lessen the Satisfaction they hope for in Heaven to have it by their own Righteousness, or in any other way than as bestowed by free Grace, and for Christ's sake alone.

Many, while their Minds have been filled with spiritual Delights, have as it were forgot their Food; their bodily Appetite has failed, while their Minds have been entertained with Meat to eat that others knew not of. The Light and Comfort which some of them enjoy, gives a new relish to their common Blessings, and causes all Things about them to appear as it were beautiful, sweet and pleasant to them: All Things abroad, the Sun, Moon and Stars, the Clouds and Sky, the Heavens and Earth, appear as it were with a Cast of divine Glory and Sweetness upon them.

The Joy that many of them speak of as that to which none is to be paralleled, is that which they find when they are lowest in the Dust, emptied most of themselves, and as it were annihilating themselves before God, when they are nothing, and God is all, seeing their own Unworthiness, depending not at all on themselves, but alone on Christ, and ascribing all Glory to God: Then their Souls are most in the Enjoyment of satisfying Rest. Many express earnest Longings of Soul to praise God; but at the same time complain that they can't praise him as they would do, and they want to have others help them in praising him.

While God was so remarkably present among us by his Spirit, there was no book so delighted in as the Bible, especially the book of Psalms, the prophecy of Isaiah, and the New Testament. Some by reason of their esteem and love for God's Word have at some times been greatly and wonderfully delighted and affected at the very sight of a Bible. And at that time also there was no time so valued as the Lord's Day, and no place in this world so desired as God's house. Our converts then remarkably appeared united in dear affection to one another, and many have expressed much of that spirit of love which they felt toward all mankind, and particularly to those that had been least friendly to them. Never, I believe, was so much done in confessing injuries and making up differences as in the last year. Persons after their own conversion have commonly expressed an exceeding desire for the conversion of others. Some have thought that they would be willing to die for the conversion of any soul, even of one of the meanest of their fellow creatures or of their worst enemies; and many have indeed been in great distress with desires and longings for it. This work of God also had a good effect in greatly uniting the people's affections to their minister.

There are some persons I have been acquainted with, but more especially two who belong to other towns, who have been overwhelmed with a sense of the awful greatness and majesty of God. Both of them told me to this effect: that if they, in the time of it, had had the least fear that they were not at peace with this so great a God, they would have instantly died.

It is worthy of remark that some persons by their conversion seem to be greatly helped as to their doctrinal understanding of religion. This was particularly remarkable in one who, having been

taken captive in his childhood, was brought up in Canada in the Roman Catholic religion, and some years since returned to this his native place and was in a measure brought away from Roman Catholicism; but seemed very awkward and slow in receiving any true and clear understanding of the Protestant teaching, until he was converted, when he was remarkably changed in this respect.

There is a vast difference, as has been observed, in the degree and also in the particular manner of persons' experiences, both at and after conversion. Some have grace working more perceptibly in one way, others in another. Some speak more fully of a conviction of the justice of God in their condemnation; others more of their consenting to the way of salvation by Christ. Some more of the actings of love to God and Christ. Some more of acts of trust, in a sweet and assured conviction of the truth and faithfulness of God in his promises. Others more of their choosing and resting in God as their whole and everlasting portion, and of their ardent and longing desires after God to have communion with him. Others more of their abhorrence of themselves for their past sins and earnest longings to live to God's glory for the time to come. Some have their minds fixed more on God, others on Christ, as I have observed before. But it seems evidently to be the same work, the same thing done, the same habitual change wrought in the heart; it all tends the same way and to the same end, and it is plainly the same Spirit that breathes and acts in various persons. There is an endless variety in the particular manner and circumstances in which persons are worked upon, and an opportunity of seeing so much of such a work of God will show that God is further from confining himself to certain steps and a particular method in his work on souls than it may be some imagine. I believe it has led

some good people among us, who were before too ready to make their own experiences a rule for others, to be less judgmental and more broad in their charity. The work of God has been glorious in its variety; it has the more displayed the manifoldness and unsearchableness of the wisdom of God, and has produced more charity among his people.

There is a great difference among those that are converted as to the degree of hope and satisfaction they have concerning their own state. Some have a high degree of satisfaction in this matter almost constantly. And yet it is rare that any enjoy so full an assurance of their interest in Christ that self-examination should seem needless to them, unless at particular seasons while in the actual enjoyment of some great discovery that God gives of his glory and rich grace in Christ, drawing forth extraordinary acts of grace. But the greater part, as they sometimes fall into dull and cold frames of spirit, are frequently exercised with doubts and fears concerning their condition.

They generally have an awful apprehension of the dreadfulness and ruinous nature of a false hope; and there has been observable in most a great caution, lest in giving an account of their experiences they should say too much and use too strong terms. And many after they have related their experiences have been greatly distressed with fears that they have played the hypocrite and used stronger terms than their case would fairly allow of, and yet could not find how they could correct themselves.

I think the main ground of the doubts and fears that persons, after their conversion, have been exercised with about their own state has been that they have found so much corruption remaining in their hearts. At first their souls seem to be all alive, their hearts

are fixed and their affections flowing; they seem to live quite above the world and meet with but little difficulty in religious exercises; and they are ready to think it will always be so. Though they are truly humbled under a sense of their vileness by reason of former acts of sin, yet they are not then sufficiently sensible of how much corruption still remains in their hearts. And therefore they are surprised when they find they begin to be in dull and cold frames, to be troubled with wandering thoughts in the time of public and private worship, and to be utterly unable to keep themselves from them. Also when they find themselves unmoved at seasons in which they think there is the greatest occasion to be moved. And when they feel worldly dispositions working in them — and perhaps pride and envy and stirrings of revenge, or some ill spirit toward some person who has injured them, as well as other workings of indwelling sin. Their hearts are almost sunk with the disappointment, and they are ready presently to think that all they have met with is nothing and that they are mere hypocrites.

They are ready to argue that if God had indeed done such great things for them as they hoped, such ingratitude would be inconsistent with it. They cry out at the hardness and wickedness of their hearts; and say there is so much corruption that it seems to them impossible that there should be any goodness there. And many of them seem to be much more sensible of how corrupt their hearts are than ever they were before they were converted; and some have been too ready to be impressed with the fear that instead of becoming better they have grown much worse, and make it an argument against the goodness of their state. But in truth the case seems plainly to be that now they feel the pain of their own wound; they have a watchful eye on their hearts that they did not used to

have. They take more notice of what sin is there, and sin is now more burdensome to them; they strive more against it and feel more of the strength of it.

They are somewhat surprised that they should in this respect find themselves so different from the idea they generally had entertained of godly persons. For though grace is indeed of a far more excellent nature than they imagined, yet those who are godly have much less of it and much more remaining corruption than they thought. They never realized that persons were accustomed to meet with such difficulties after they were once converted. When they are thus exercised with doubts about their state through the coldness of their frames of spirit, as long as these frames last they are commonly unable to satisfy themselves of the truth of their grace by all their self-examination. When they hear of the signs of grace laid down for them to try themselves by, they are often so clouded that they do not know how to apply them; they hardly know whether they have such and such things in them or not, and whether they have experienced them or not. That which was sweetest and best and most distinguishing in their experiences they cannot recover a sense or idea of. But on a return of the influences of the Spirit of God to revive the lively actings of grace, the light breaks through the cloud and doubting and darkness soon vanish away.

Persons are often revived out of their dull and dark frames by religious conversation. While they are talking of divine things, before they are aware their souls are carried away into holy exercises with great pleasure. And oftentimes while they are relating their past experiences to their Christian brothers and sisters, they have a fresh sense of them revived, and the same experiences renewed

in some degree. Sometimes while persons are exercised in mind with various objections against the goodness of their state, they have scriptures coming to their minds one after another to answer their doubts and unravel their difficulties, exceedingly fitting and proper to their circumstances; by which means their darkness is scattered. And often before the bestowing of any new remarkable comforts, especially after long-continued coldness and ill frames, there are renewed humblings in a great sense of their own exceeding vileness and unworthiness, as before their first comforts were bestowed.

Many in the country have entertained a low opinion of this great work that has been among us, from what they have heard of impressions made on persons' imaginations. But there have been exceeding great misrepresentations, and innumerable false reports, concerning that matter. It is not, as far as I know, the profession or opinion of any one person in the town that any weight is to be laid on anything seen with the bodily eyes. I know the contrary to be a received and established principle among us. I cannot say that there have been no instances of persons ready to give too much heed to vain and useless imaginations; but they have been easily corrected, and I believe it will not be wondered at that a congregation should need a guide in such cases to assist them in distinguishing wheat from chaff. But such impressions on the imagination as have been more usual seem to me to be plainly nothing other than what is to be expected in human nature in such circumstances, and is the natural result of the strong exercise of the mind and impressions on the heart.

I do not suppose that they themselves imagined that they saw anything with their bodily eyes; but only had within them ideas strongly impressed, and as it were vivid pictures in their minds. For instance, some when in great terror through fear of hell have had vivid ideas of a dreadful furnace. Some, when their hearts have been strongly impressed and their affections greatly moved with a sense of the beauty and excellency of Christ, it has worked on their imaginations so that together with a sense of his glorious spiritual perfections there has arisen in the mind an idea of one of glorious majesty and of a sweet and gracious aspect. So some when they have been greatly affected with Christ's death have at the same time a vivid idea of Christ hanging upon the cross and of his blood running from his wounds. These things will not be wondered at by those who have observed how strong affections about temporal matters will excite vivid ideas and pictures of different things in the mind.

But yet the vigorous exercise of the mind does doubtless more strongly impress it with imaginative ideas in some than others, which probably may arise from difference of constitution, and seems evidently in some to arise partly from their particular circumstances. When persons have been exercised with extreme terrors and there is a sudden change to light and joy, the imagination seems more susceptible of strong ideas, and the physical powers and even the frame of the body are much more affected and worked upon than when the same persons have as great spiritual light and joy afterward. The aforementioned reverend gentlemen, Mr. Lord and Mr. Owen, who I believe are esteemed persons of learning and discretion where they are best known, declared that they found these impressions on persons' imaginations quite dif-

ferent things from what reputation had before represented to them, and that they were what none need to wonder at or be troubled by.

There have indeed been some few instances of impressions on persons' imaginations that have been somewhat mysterious to me, and I have been at a loss about them. For though it has been exceedingly evident to me by many things that appeared in them, both then when they related them and afterward, that they indeed had a great sense of the spiritual excellency of divine things accompanying them, yet I have not been able to satisfy myself well whether their imaginative ideas have been more than could naturally arise from their spiritual sense of things. However, I have used the utmost caution in such cases; great care has been taken both in public and in private to teach persons the difference between what is spiritual and what is merely imaginary. I have often warned persons not to lay the stress of their hope on any ideas of any outward glory or any external thing whatsoever, and have met with no opposition in such instructions. But it is not strange if some weaker persons, in giving an account of their experiences, have not so prudently distinguished between the spiritual and imaginary part, which some who have not been well disposed toward religion might take advantage of.

There has been much talk in many parts of the country as though the people here had sympathized with the Quakers, and the Quakers themselves were moved by such reports and came here once and again, hoping to find good waters to fish in; but without the least success, and they seem to be discouraged and have left off coming. There have also been reports spread about the country as though the first occasion of so remarkable a concern on people's

minds here was an apprehension that the world was near its end, which was altogether a false report. Indeed, after this stirring and concern became so general and extraordinary as has been related, the minds of some were filled with speculation about what so great a dispensation of divine providence might foreshadow; and some reports were heard from abroad as though certain divines and others thought the end of the world was near. But such reports were never generally looked upon as worthy of notice.

The work that has now been wrought on souls is evidently the same that was wrought in my venerable predecessor's days, as I have had abundant opportunity to know, having been in the ministry here two years with him and so conversed with a considerable number whom my grandfather thought to be savingly converted in that time, and having been particularly acquainted with the experiences of many who were converted under his ministry before. And I know no one of them who in the least doubts that it is the same Spirit and the same work. Persons have now been no otherwise subject to impressions on their imaginations than formerly. The work is of the same nature and has not been attended with any extraordinary circumstances, excepting such as are in keeping with the extraordinary degree of it before described. And God's people who were formerly converted have now partaken of the same shower of divine blessing in the renewing, strengthening, and edifying influences of the Spirit of God that others have in his converting influences. And the work here has also been plainly the same as that which has been wrought in those of other places mentioned as partaking of the same blessing. I have particularly conversed with persons about their experiences who belong to all

parts of the county and in various parts of Connecticut where a religious concern has lately appeared, and have been informed of the experiences of many others by their own pastors.

It is easily perceived by the foregoing account that it is very much the practice of the people here to converse freely with one another about their spiritual experiences, which is a thing that many have been displeased with. But however our people may have in some respects gone to extremes in it, yet it is doubtless a practice that the circumstances of this town and neighboring towns naturally led them into. Whenever people are in such circumstances where all have their minds engaged to such a degree in the same concern that it is ever uppermost in their thoughts, they will naturally make it the subject of conversation with one another when they get together, in which they will grow more and more open. Restraints will soon vanish, and they will not conceal from one another what they are experiencing. And it has been a practice which in general has been attended with many good effects, and which God has greatly blessed among us. But it must be confessed there may have been some ill consequences of it, which yet are rather to be attributed to the indiscreet management of it than to the practice itself. And none can wonder that among such a multitude some fail to exercise as much wisdom in choosing the time, manner, and occasion of such conversation as would be desirable.

But to give a clearer idea of the nature and manner of the operations of God's Spirit in this wonderful outpouring of it, I would give an account of two particular instances. The first is an adult person, a young woman whose name was Abigail Hutchinson. I chose her especially because she is now dead, and so it may be more fitting to speak freely of her than of living instances; though I

am under far greater disadvantages on other accounts to give a full and clear account of her experiences than I might be of some others, nor can any account be given but what has been retained in the memories of her near friends and some others of what they heard her express in her lifetime.

She was of a rational and understanding family; there could be nothing in her upbringing that tended to enthusiasm, but rather to the contrary extreme. It is in no way the temper of the family to be ostentatious about experiences, and it was far from being her temper. She was before her conversion, to the observation of her neighbors, of a sober and inoffensive manner; and was a still, quiet, reserved person. She had long been in poor health, but her infirmity had never been observed at all to incline her to be notional or fanciful, or to occasion any religious melancholy. She was under awakenings scarcely a week before there seemed to be plain evidence of her being savingly converted.

She was first awakened in the Winter Season, on Monday, by something she heard her Brother say of the Necessity of being in good earnest in seeking regenerating Grace, together with the News of the Conversion of the young Woman before mentioned. This News wrought much upon her, and stirred up a Spirit of Envy in her towards this young Woman, whom she thought very unworthy of being distinguished from others by such a Mercy; but withal it engaged her in a firm Resolution to do her utmost to obtain the same Blessing. She continued reading till Thursday; and then there was a sudden Alteration, by a great Increase of her Concern, in an extraordinary sense of her own Sinfulness, particularly the Sinfulness of her Nature, and Wickedness of her Heart, which came upon her as a Flash of Lightning, and struck her into an ex-

ceeding Terror. Upon which she left off reading the Bible in Course as she had begun, and turned to the New Testament, to see if she could not find some relief there for her distressed Soul.

Her great Terror she said was, that she had sinned against God: Her Distress grew more and more for three Days, until she saw nothing but Blackness of Darkness before her, and her very Flesh trembled for fear of God's Wrath; she wondered and was astonished at herself, that she had been so concerned for her Body, and had applied so often to Physicians to heal that, and had neglected her Soul. Her Sinfulness appeared with a very awful Aspect to her, especially in three things: her Original Sin, and her Sin in murmuring at God's Providence, in the Weakness and Afflictions she had been under, and in want of Duty to Parents.

While her Mind was in this Posture, her Heart seemed to fly to the Minister for Refuge, hoping that he could give her some Relief. She seemed that Day to feel in herself an Enmity against the Bible, which greatly affrighted her. Her sense of her own exceeding Sinfulness continued increasing from Thursday till Monday; and she gave this account of it, that she had entertained an Opinion, which till now she had held, that she was not guilty of Adam's Sin, because she was not active in it; but that now she saw she was guilty of that Sin, and all over defiled by it; and that the Sin which she brought into the World with her, was alone sufficient to condemn her.

As she awaked on Monday Morning, a little before Day she wondered within herself at the Easiness and Calmness she felt in her Mind, which was of that kind which she never felt before; and these Words came to her Mind: the Blood of Christ cleanses from all Sin; which were accompanied with a lively sense of the

Sufficiency of Christ, and his Sufficiency to satisfy for the Sins of the whole World. By these things her Mind was led into such Contemplations and Views of Christ, as filled her exceeding full of Joy. She told her Brother in the Morning that she had seen Christ the last Night, and said, God can make it quite easy! She had a Repetition of the same Discoveries of Christ three Mornings together, brighter and brighter every time.

At the last time, on Wednesday morning, while in the enjoyment of a spiritual view of Christ's glory and fullness, her soul was filled with distress for Christless persons, considering the miserable condition they were in. And she felt within herself a strong inclination to go forth immediately to warn sinners, and proposed the next day to her brother that he assist her in going from house to house. But her brother restrained her, telling her of the unsuitableness of such a method. She told one of her sisters that day that she loved all mankind, but especially the people of God. Her sister asked her why she loved all mankind; she replied, because God had made them. After this there happened to come into the shop where she was at work three persons thought to have been lately converted; seeing them as they stepped in one after another through the door so affected her and drew forth her love to them that it overcame her, and she almost fainted. And when they began to talk of the things of religion, it was more than she could bear; they were obliged to stop on that account. It was a very frequent thing with her to be overcome with a flow of affection toward those she thought godly, in conversation with them, and sometimes only at the sight of them.

She had many extraordinary discoveries of the glory of God and Christ, sometimes in some particular attributes and sometimes in many. She gave an account that once, as these four words passed through her mind — wisdom, justice, goodness, and truth — her soul was filled with a sense of the glory of each of these divine attributes, but especially the last. Truth, said she, sank the deepest! And as these words passed, that word was repeated: truth, truth! Her mind was so overwhelmed with a sense of the glory of God's truth and other perfections that she said it seemed as though her life was going, and that she saw it would be easy for God to take away her life by discoveries of himself. Soon after this she went to a private religious meeting, and her mind was full of a sense and view of the glory of God all the time. When the exercise was ended, some asked her concerning what she had experienced, and she began to give them an account; but as she was relating it, it revived such a sense of the same things that her strength failed, and they were obliged to take her and lay her on the bed. Afterward she was greatly affected and rejoiced with these words: Worthy is the Lamb that was slain.

She had several days together a sweet sense of the excellency and loveliness of Christ in his meekness, which disposed her continually to be repeating over these words, which were sweet to her: meek and lowly in heart, meek and lowly in heart. She once expressed herself to one of her sisters to this effect — that she had continued whole days and whole nights in a constant ravishing view of the glory of God and Christ, having enjoyed as much as her life could bear. Once as her brother was speaking of the dying love of Christ, she told him that she had such a sense of it that the mere mention of it was ready to overcome her.

Once when she came to me, she told how at such and such a time she thought she had seen as much of God and had as much joy and pleasure as was possible in this life, and that yet afterward God discovered himself yet far more abundantly, and she saw the same things she had seen before yet more clearly, and in another and far more excellent and delightful manner, and was filled with a more exceeding sweetness. She likewise gave me such an account of the sense she once had from day to day of the glory of Christ and of God in his various attributes, that it seemed to me she dwelt for days together in a kind of beatific vision of God, and seemed to have, as I thought, as immediate an intercourse with him as a child with a father. And at the same time she appeared most remote from any high thought of herself and of her own sufficiency; but was like a little child, and expressed great desire to be instructed, telling me that she longed very often to come to me for instruction, and wanted to live at my house, that I might tell her her duty.

She often expressed a sense of the glory of God appearing in the trees and growth of the fields and other works of God's hands. She told her sister who lived near the center of the town that she once thought it a pleasant thing to live in the middle of the town, but now, she said, I think it much more pleasant to sit and see the wind blowing the trees, and to behold what God has made. She sometimes had the powerful breathings of the Spirit of God on her soul while reading the Scripture, and would express a sense she had of the certain truth and divinity of it. She sometimes would appear with a pleasant smile on her face; and once when her sister took notice of it and asked why she smiled, she replied, I am brimful of a sweet feeling within! She often expressed how good and sweet it was to lie low before God, and the lower, said she, the bet-

ter! and that it was pleasant to think of lying in the dust all the days of her life, mourning for sin. She was accustomed to manifest a great sense of her own lowliness and dependence. She often expressed an exceeding compassion and pitying love which she found in her heart toward persons in a Christless condition, which was sometimes so strong that as she was passing such persons in the streets, or those she feared were such, she would be overcome at the sight of them. She once said that she longed to have the whole world saved; she wanted, as it were, to draw them all to herself; she could not bear to have one lost.

She had great longings to die that she might be with Christ, which increased until she thought she did not know how to be patient to wait until God's time should come. But once when she felt those longings, she thought to herself: if I long to die, why do I go to physicians? Whereupon she concluded that her longings for death were not well regulated. After this she often put it to herself which she should choose — whether to live or to die, to be sick or to be well. And she found she could not tell, until at last she found herself disposed to say these words: I am quite willing to live and quite willing to die; quite willing to be sick and quite willing to be well; and quite willing for anything that God will bring upon me! And then, said she, I felt myself perfectly at ease, in a full submission to the will of God. She then lamented much that she had been so eager in her longings for death, as it showed a lack of such resignation to God as ought to be. She seemed henceforth to continue in this resigned frame until death.

After this her illness increased upon her; and once after she had spent the greater part of the night in extreme pain, she woke out of a little sleep with these words in her heart and mouth: I am

willing to suffer for Christ's sake; I am willing to spend and be spent for Christ's sake; I am willing to spend my life, even my very life, for Christ's sake! And though she had an extraordinary resignation with respect to life or death, yet the thoughts of dying were exceeding sweet to her. At a time when her brother was reading in Job concerning worms feeding on the dead body, she appeared with a pleasant smile; and being asked about it, she said it was sweet to her to think of being in such circumstances. At another time, when her brother mentioned to her the danger that seemed to be that the illness she then labored under might be an occasion of her death, it filled her with joy that almost overcame her. At another time, when she met a company following a corpse to the grave, she said it was sweet to her to think that they would in a little time follow her in like manner.

Her illness in the latter part was largely in her throat, and the swelling inward filled up the passage so that she could swallow nothing but what was perfectly liquid, and but very little of that, with great and long struggling, what she took in flying out at her nostrils, until at last she could swallow nothing at all. She had a ravenous appetite for food, so that she told her sister when talking about her circumstances that the worst scrap she threw to her pigs would be sweet to her. But yet when she saw that she could not swallow it, she seemed to be as perfectly content without it as if she had no appetite for it. Others were greatly moved to see what she underwent, and were filled with wonder at her unexampled patience. At a time when she was striving in vain to get down a little liquid food and was very much spent with it, she looked up at her sister with a smile, saying: O sister, this is for my good! At another time, when her sister was speaking of what she underwent, she

told her that she lived a heaven upon earth for all that. She used sometimes to say to her sister under her extreme sufferings: It is good to be so! Her sister once asked her why she said so; why, says she, because God would have it so. It is best that things should be as God would have them; it looks best to me. After her confinement, as they were leading her from the bed to the door, she seemed overcome by the sight of things abroad as showing forth the glory of the Being who had made them. As she lay on her deathbed, she would often say these words: God is my friend! And once looking up at her sister with a smile, said: O sister! How good it is! How sweet and comfortable it is to think of heavenly things! And she used this argument to persuade her sister to dwell much in such meditations.

She expressed on her deathbed an exceeding longing both for persons in a natural state, that they might be converted, and for the godly, that they might see and know more of God. And when those who looked on themselves as in a Christless state came to see her, she would be greatly moved with compassionate affection. One in particular who seemed to be in great distress about the state of her soul and had come to see her from time to time — she desired her sister to persuade her not to come any more, because the sight of her so worked on her compassions that it overcame her strength. The same week that she died, when she was in distressing circumstances as to her body, some of the neighbors who came to see her asked if she was willing to die. She replied that she was quite willing either to live or die; she was willing to be in pain; she was willing to be as she then was always, if that were the will of God. She willed what God willed. They asked her whether she was willing to die that night. She answered, Yes, if it be God's will. And

she seemed to speak it all with that perfect composure of spirit, and with such a cheerful and pleasant face, that it filled them with wonder.

She was very weak a considerable time before she died, having wasted away with famine and thirst, so that her flesh seemed to be dried upon her bones; and therefore could say but little, and manifested her mind very much by signs. She said she had matter enough to fill up all her time with talk, if she had but strength. A few days before her death, some asked her whether she held her integrity still, whether she was not afraid of death. She answered to this effect, that she had not the least degree of fear of death. They asked her why she would be so confident. She answered: if I should say otherwise, I should speak contrary to what I know. There is, said she, indeed, a dark entry that looks somewhat dark, but on the other side there appears such a bright shining light that I cannot be afraid! She said not long before she died that she used to be afraid of how she should grapple with death; but, says she, God has shown me that he can make it easy in great pain. Several days before she died, she could scarcely say anything but just yes and no to questions that were asked her, for she seemed to be dying for three days together. But she seemed to continue in an admirable sweet composure of soul, without any interruption, to the last, and died as a person that went to sleep, without any struggling, about noon on Friday, June 27, 1735.

She had long been in poor health, and had often been exercised with great pain; but she died chiefly of famine. It was doubtless partly owing to her bodily weakness that her strength was so often overcome and ready to fail with gracious affection. But yet the truth was that she had more grace, and greater discoveries of God

and Christ, than the present frail state did well agree with. She wanted to be where strong grace might have more freedom and be without the hindrance of a weak body; there she longed to be, and there she doubtless now is. She was looked upon among us as a very eminent instance of Christian experience. But this is but a very broken and imperfect account I have given of her. Her eminency would much more appear if her experiences were fully related, as she was accustomed to express and manifest them while living. I once read this account to some of her pious neighbors who were acquainted with her, who said to this effect, that the account fell much short of the reality, and particularly that it failed to represent duly her humility and that admirable lowliness of heart that at all times appeared in her. But there are, blessed be God, many living instances of much the like nature, and in some things no less extraordinary.

But I now proceed to the other instance that I would give an account of, which is of the little child before mentioned. Her name is Phebe Bartlet, daughter of William Bartlet. I shall give the account as I took it from the mouths of her parents, whose truthfulness none who know them doubt.

She was born in March in the year 1731. About the latter end of April or beginning of May 1735, she was greatly affected by the talk of her brother, who had been hopefully converted a little before, at about eleven years of age, and then seriously talked to her about the great things of religion. Her parents did not know of it at that time, and were not accustomed in the counsels they gave to their children to direct themselves particularly to her, by reason of her being so young, and as they supposed not capable of understanding. But after her brother had talked to her, they observed her very

earnestly listening to the advice they gave to the other children. And she was observed very constantly to retire several times a day, as was concluded, for secret prayer; and grew more and more engaged in religion, and was more frequent in her closet, until at last she was accustomed to visit it five or six times a day. She was so engaged in it that nothing would at any time divert her from her accustomed closet exercises. Her mother often observed and watched her when such things occurred as she thought most likely to divert her, either by putting it out of her thoughts or otherwise engaging her inclinations; but never could observe her to fail. She mentioned some very remarkable instances.

She once of her own accord spoke of her unsuccessfulness, in that she could not find God, or to that purpose. But on Thursday, the last day of July, about midday, the child being in the closet where it used to retire, its mother heard it speaking aloud, which was unusual and had never been observed before. And her voice seemed to be that of one exceedingly earnest and engaged; but her mother could distinctly hear only these words, spoken in her childish manner but with extraordinary earnestness and out of distress of soul: Pray, blessed Lord, give me salvation! I pray, beg pardon all my sins! When the child had done praying she came out of the closet and came and sat down by her mother and cried out aloud. Her mother very earnestly asked her several times what the matter was before she would make any answer; but she continued exceedingly crying, and writhing her body to and fro, like one in anguish of spirit. Her mother then asked her whether she was afraid that God would not give her salvation. She answered: yes, I am afraid I shall go to hell! Her mother then endeavored to quiet her, and told her she would not have her cry, she must be a good girl and pray

every day, and she hoped God would give her salvation. But this did not quiet her at all, but she continued thus earnestly crying and distressed for some time, until at length she suddenly ceased crying and began to smile. And presently she said with a smiling face: Mother, the kingdom of heaven is come to me! Her mother was surprised at the sudden change, and at the speech, and knew not what to make of it, but at first said nothing to her. The child presently spoke again and said: there is another come to me, and there is another, there are three. And being asked what she meant, she answered: one is, 'Your will be done,' and there is another, 'Enjoy him for ever.' By which it seems that when the child said there are three come to me, she meant three passages of her catechism that came to her mind.

After the child had said this, she retired again into her closet; and her mother went over to her brother's, who was next door neighbor. When she came back, the child, having come out of the closet, met her mother with this cheerful speech: I can find God now! referring to what she had before complained of, that she could not find God. Then the child spoke again and said: I love God! Her mother asked her how well she loved God, whether she loved God better than her father and mother. She said yes. Then she asked her whether she loved God better than her little sister Rachel. She answered: yes, better than anything! Then her eldest sister, referring to her saying she could find God now, asked her where she could find God. She answered: in heaven. Why, said she, have you been in heaven? No, said the child. By this it seems not to have been any imagination of anything seen with bodily eyes that she called God when she said I can find God now. Her mother asked her whether she was afraid of going to hell, and that was

what had made her cry. She answered: yes, I was; but now I shall not. Her mother asked her whether she thought that God had given her salvation. She answered: yes. Her mother asked her when. She answered: today. She appeared all that afternoon exceeding cheerful and joyful. One of the neighbors asked her how she felt. She answered: I feel better than I did. The neighbor asked her what made her feel better. She answered: God makes me. That evening as she lay in bed she called one of her little cousins to her who was present in the room, as having something to say to him; and when he came, she told him that heaven was better than earth. The next day, being Friday, her mother asking her the catechism asked her what God made her for. She answered: to serve him. And added: everybody should serve God and get an interest in Christ.

The same day the older children, when they came home from school, seemed much affected by the extraordinary change that seemed to be made in Phebe. And her sister Abigail standing by, her mother took occasion to counsel her now to improve her time and prepare for another world. On this Phebe burst out in tears and cried out: Poor Nabby! Her mother told her she would not have her cry, she hoped that God would give Nabby salvation; but that did not quiet her, and she continued earnestly crying for some time. And when she had in a measure stopped, her sister Eunice being by her, she burst out again and cried: Poor Eunice! And cried exceedingly; and when she had almost done, she went into another room and there looked at her sister Naomi and burst out again, crying: Poor Amy! Her mother was greatly affected at such behavior in the child, and did not know what to say to her. One of the neighbors coming in a little after asked her what she had been cry-

ing for. She seemed at first reluctant to tell the reason; her mother told her she might tell that person, for he had given her an apple. Upon which she said she cried because she was afraid they would go to hell.

At night a certain minister who was occasionally in the town was at the house and talked considerably with her about the things of religion. After he was gone she sat leaning on the table with tears running from her eyes. Being asked what made her cry, she said it was thinking about God. The next day, being Saturday, she seemed for much of the day to be in a very affectionate frame, had four turns of crying, and seemed to endeavor to restrain herself and hide her tears, and was very reluctant to speak of the occasion of it. On the Sabbath Day she was asked whether she believed in God; she answered yes. And being told that Christ was the Son of God, she made ready answer and said: I know it.

From this time there has appeared a very remarkable and abiding change in the child. She has been very strict on the Sabbath, and seems to long for the Sabbath Day before it comes, and will often in the week be asking how long it is to the Sabbath Day, and must have the days counted over one by one before she will be content. And she seems to love God's house and is very eager to go there; her mother once asked her why she had such a mind to go, whether it was not to see fine people. She said no, it was to hear Mr. Edwards preach. When she is in the place of worship, she is very far from spending her time there as children at her age usually do, but appears with an attention that is very extraordinary for such a child. She also appears very desirous at all opportunities to go to private religious meetings, and is very still and attentive at home during prayer time, and has appeared moved during family

prayer. She seems to delight much in hearing religious conversation. When I once was there with some others that were strangers, and talked to her something of religion, she seemed more than ordinarily attentive; and when we were gone, she looked longingly after us and said: I wish they would come again! Her mother asked her why. Says she: I love to hear them talk!

She seems to have very much the fear of God before her eyes, and an extraordinary dread of sinning against him, of which her mother mentioned the following remarkable instance. Some time in August of last year, she went with some bigger children to get some plums in a neighbor's lot, knowing nothing of any harm in what she did. But when she brought some of them into the house, her mother mildly reproved her and told her that she had taken plums without leave, because it was sin — God had commanded her not to steal. The child seemed greatly surprised, and burst out in tears, and cried out: I won't have these plums! And turning to her sister Eunice, very earnestly said to her: why did you ask me to go to that plum tree? I should not have gone if you had not asked me. The other children did not seem to be much affected or concerned, but there was no pacifying Phebe. Her mother told her she might go and ask leave, and then it would not be sin for her to eat them; and sent one of the children for that purpose. When she returned, her mother told her that the owner had given leave; now she might eat them and it would not be stealing. This quieted her a little while; but presently she broke out again into an exceeding fit of crying. Her mother asked her what made her cry again, why she cried now since they had asked leave, what it was that troubled her now. She asked her several times very earnestly before she made any answer; but at last said: it was because it was sin. She contin-

ued crying for a considerable time, and said she would not go again if Eunice asked her a hundred times; and she retained her aversion to that fruit for a considerable time, under the remembrance of her former sin.

She at some times appears greatly affected and delighted with texts of Scripture that come to her mind. Particularly, about the beginning of November last year, the text came to her mind: 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in and sup with him, and he with me' (Revelation 3:20). She spoke of it to those of the family with a great appearance of joy, a smiling face, and an elevated voice. Afterward she went into another room where her mother overheard her talking very earnestly to the children about it, and particularly heard her say to them three or four times over, with an air of exceeding joy and wonder: why, it is to sup with God! At some time about the middle of winter, very late in the night when all were in bed, her mother perceived that she was awake and heard her as though she was weeping. She called to her and asked her what was the matter. She answered with a low voice so that her mother could not hear what she said; but thinking that it might be occasioned by some spiritual feeling, said no more to her, but perceived her to lie awake and continue in the same frame for a considerable time. The next morning she asked her whether she did not cry the last night. The child answered: yes, I did cry a little, for I was thinking about God and Christ, and they loved me. Her mother asked her whether thinking of God and Christ's loving her made her cry. She answered: yes, it does sometimes.

She has often manifested a great concern for the good of others' souls, and has been accustomed many times affectionately to counsel the other children. Once about the latter end of September last year, when she and some of the other children were in a room by themselves husking Indian corn, the child after a while came out and sat by the fire. Her mother noticed that she appeared with a more than ordinary serious and thoughtful face, but at last she broke silence and said: I have been talking to Nabby and Eunice. Her mother asked her what she had said to them. Why, said she, I told them they must pray and prepare to die, that they had but a little while to live in this world, and they must be always ready. When Nabby came out, her mother asked her whether the child had said that to them. Yes, said she, she said that and a great deal more. At other times the child took her opportunities to talk to the other children about the great concern of their souls, sometimes so as much to affect them and set them into tears. She was once exceedingly earnest with her mother to go with her sister Naomi to pray. Her mother endeavored to put her off, but she pulled her by the sleeve and seemed as if she would by no means be refused. At last her mother told her that Amy must go and pray herself; but, says the child, she will not go — and persisted earnestly in begging her mother to go with her.

She has shown an uncommon degree of a spirit of charity, particularly on the following occasion. A poor man who lives in the woods had lately lost a cow that the family much depended on, and being at the house, he was telling of his misfortune and the difficulties they were reduced to by it. She took much notice of it, and it worked greatly on her compassions. After she had attentively heard him a while, she went away to her father who was in the

shop, and entreated him to give that man a cow, and told him that the poor man had no cow, that the hunters or something else had killed his cow! And she entreated him to give him one of theirs. Her father told her that they could not spare one. Then she entreated him to let him and his family come and live at their house. And she had much more talk of the same nature, whereby she manifested a heart of compassion toward the poor.

She has manifested great Love to her Minister: Particularly when Mr. Edwards returned from his long Journey for his Health, when she heard of it, she appeared very joyful at the News, and told the Children of it, with an elevated Voice, as the most joyful Tidings, repeating it over and over, Mr. Edwards is come home! Mr. Edwards is come home! She still continues very constant in secret Prayer, and every Night, before she goes to Bed, will say her Catechism, and will by no means miss of it.

In the former part of this great Work of God amongst us, till it got to its height, we seemed to be wonderfully smiled upon and blessed in all respects. Satan seemed to be unusually restrained: Persons that before had been involved in Melancholy, seemed to be as it were waked up out of it; and those that had been entangled with extraordinary Temptations, seemed wonderfully to be set at liberty; and not only so, but it was the most remarkable time of Health, that ever I knew since I have been in the Town. We ordinarily have several Bills put up, every Sabbath, for Persons that are sick; but now we had not so much as one for many Sabbaths together.

In the latter part of May, it began to be very sensible that the Spirit of God was gradually withdrawing from us, and after this Time Satan seemed to be more let loose, and raged in a dreadful

manner. The first Instance wherein it appeared, was a Person's putting an end to his own Life, by cutting his Throat. He was a Gentleman of more than common Understanding, of strict Morals, religious in his Behaviour, and an useful honourable Person in the Town; but was of a Family that are exceeding prone to the Disease of Melancholy. After this, Multitudes in this, and other Towns, seemed to have it strongly suggested to them, and pressed upon them, to do as this person had done. And many that seemed to be under no Melancholy, some pious Persons, that had no special Darkness or Doubts about the goodness of their State, yet had it urged upon them, as if somebody had spoke to them, Cut your own Throat, now is a good Opportunity. Now; now! So that they were obliged to fight with all their might to resist it, and yet no Reason suggested to them why they should do it.

About the same time, there were two remarkable Instances of Persons led away with strange Enthusiastick Delusions. The Man at South-Hadley, whose Delusion was, that he thought himself divinely instructed to direct a poor Man in melancholy and despairing Circumstances, to say certain Words in Prayer. He was exceedingly rejoiced and elevated with this extraordinary Work, so carried on in this part of the Country: and was possessed with an Opinion that it was the beginning of the glorious Times of the Church spoken of in Scripture. But he since exceedingly laments the Dishonour he has done to God, and the Wound he has given Religion in it, and has lain low before God and Man for it.

After these things the instances of conversion were rare here in comparison with what they had been before, though that remarkable instance of the little child was after this. And the Spirit of God not long after this time appeared very perceptibly withdrawing

from all parts of the county, though we have heard of his work going on in some places of Connecticut, and that it continues to be carried on even to this day. But religion remained here, and I believe in some other places, the main subject of conversation, for several months after this. And there were some seasons in which God's work seemed somewhat to revive, and we were ready to hope that all was going to be renewed again; yet in the main there was a gradual decline of that general, engaged, lively spirit in religion which had been before. Several things have happened since that have diverted people's minds and turned their conversation more to other affairs, particularly his Excellency the Governor's coming up, and the Committee of the General Court on the treaty with the Indians; and afterward the Springfield controversy; and since that, our people in this town have been engaged in the building of a new meetinghouse. And some other occurrences might be mentioned that seemed to have this effect. But as to those who have been thought to be converted among us in this time, they generally seem to be persons who have had an abiding change wrought on them. I have had particular acquaintance with many of them since, and they generally appear to be persons who have a new sense of things — new apprehensions and views of God, of the divine attributes, and Jesus Christ, and the great things of the gospel. They have a new sense of the truth of them, and they affect them in a new manner; though it is very far from being always alike with them, neither can they revive a sense of things whenever they please. Their hearts are often touched, and sometimes filled, with new sweetnesses and delights; there seems to be an inward ardor and burning of heart that they express the like of which they never experienced before, sometimes occasioned only by the men-

tion of Christ's name or some one of the divine perfections. There are new appetites, and a new kind of breathings and longings of heart, and groanings that cannot be uttered. There is a new kind of inward labor and striving of soul toward heaven and holiness.

Some who before were very rough in their temper and manners seem to be remarkably softened and sweetened. And some have had their souls exceedingly filled and overwhelmed with light, love, and comfort, long since the work of God has ceased to be so remarkably carried on in a general way; and some have had much greater experiences of this nature than they had before. And there is still a great deal of religious conversation continued in the town among young and old; a religious disposition appears to be still maintained among our people by their keeping up frequent private religious meetings. And all sorts are generally worshipping God at such meetings on Sabbath nights and in the evening after our public lecture. Many children in the town still keep up such meetings among themselves. I know of no one young person in the town who has returned to former ways of looseness and extravagance in any respect; but we still remain a reformed people, and God has evidently made us a new people.

I cannot say that there has been no instance of any one person who has conducted himself so that others should justly be troubled concerning his profession; nor am I so vain as to imagine that we have not been mistaken concerning any whom we have entertained a good opinion of, or that there are none passing among us for sheep who are indeed wolves in sheep's clothing, who probably may some time or other discover themselves by their fruit. We are not so pure but that we have great cause to be humbled and ashamed that we are so impure; nor so religious but that those

who watch for our stumbling may see things in us from which they may take occasion to reproach us and religion. But in the main, there has been a great and marvelous work of conversion and sanctification among the people here; and they have paid all due respect to those who have been blessed of God to be the instruments of it. Both old and young have shown a readiness to hearken not only to my counsels but even to my reproofs from the pulpit.

A great part of the country has not received the most favorable thoughts of this affair; and to this day many retain a suspicion concerning it and a prejudice against it. I have reason to think that the lowliness and weakness of the instrument that has been made use of in this town has prejudiced many against it; it does not appear to me strange that it should be so. But yet this circumstance of this great work of God is in keeping with other circumstances of it. God has so ordered the manner of the work in many respects as very signally and remarkably to show it to be his own peculiar and immediate work, and to secure the glory of it wholly to his own almighty power and sovereign grace. And whatever the circumstances and means have been, and though we are so unworthy, yet so it has pleased God to work! And we are evidently a people blessed of the Lord! And here, in this corner of the world, God dwells and manifests his glory.

Thus, Reverend Sir, I have given a large and particular account of this remarkable affair; and yet, considering how manifold God's works have been among us that are worthy to be written, it is but a very brief one. I should have sent it much sooner had I not been greatly hindered by illness in my family and also in myself. It is probably much larger than you expected, and it may be than you would have chosen. I thought that the extraordinariness of the

thing, and the innumerable misrepresentations which have gone abroad of it, many of which have doubtless reached your ears, made it necessary that I should be particular. But I would leave it entirely with your wisdom to make what use of it you think best — to send a part of it to England, or all, or none if you think it not worthy; or otherwise to dispose of it as you may think most for God's glory and the interest of religion. If you are pleased to send anything to the Reverend Dr. Guyse, I should be glad to have it signified to him as my humble desire that since he and the congregation to which he preached have been pleased to take so much notice of us as they have, they would also think of us at the throne of grace, and seek there for us that God would not forsake us, but enable us to bring forth fruit answerable to our profession and our mercies, and that our light may shine before men, that others seeing our good works may glorify our Father who is in heaven.

When I first heard of the notice the Reverend Dr. Watts and Dr. Guyse took of God's mercies to us, I took occasion to inform our congregation of it in a discourse from these words: 'A city that is set upon a hill cannot be hidden.' And having since seen a particular account of the notice the Reverend Dr. Guyse and the congregation he preached to took of it, in a letter you wrote to my honored uncle Williams, I read that part of your letter to the congregation and labored as much as I could to enforce their duty from it. The congregation were very sensibly moved and affected on both occasions.

I humbly request of you, Reverend Sir, your prayers for this county in its present melancholy circumstances, into which it is brought by the Springfield quarrel, which above all things that have happened has most tended to put a stop to the glorious work

here, and to prejudice this country against it, and to hinder the propagation of it. I also ask your prayers for this town, and would particularly beg an interest in them for him who is,

Honored Sir, with humble respect, your obedient son and servant, Jonathan Edwards. Northampton, November 6, 1736.

## THANKS FOR READING



If you spotted a typo or have feedback, the email is **[sam@goodsoilapps.com](mailto:sam@goodsoilapps.com)** — or use the in-app feedback form in *Christian Reader*.